

Further deepening of the crisis in the Arab region -

Christian Babel

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"Socialism is our perspective, the revolutionary party is our means"

Tunisia / Press release of the League of the Workers' Left

Wednesday, 27 November 2013

broad participation of all comrades in the debates around the present situation in Tunisia, the analysis of the evolution of the political situation since the beginning of the revolutionary uprising and the evaluation of the continuing revolutionary crisis, characterized on the one hand by the success of the forces of the counter-revolution in regaining control of the state apparatus, and on the other by the continuation of the revolutionary momentum and popular protests.

The League of the Workers' Left (LGO) held its founding congress on 27, 28 and 29 September 2013 in Tunis. The opening evening at the Trade Union Hall was marked by the broad participation of members and sympathizers of the League.

On this occasion, the party greeted and thanked all those friends and comrades who had contributed to the success of the opening ceremony, and especially our comrades of the Popular Front and the Fourth International.

The congress took place in a political situation characterized by the continuing revolutionary crisis that began in December 2010. Although the revolution succeeded in driving out Ben Ali, the head of the dictatorial regime, and the symbols of that regime, it has experienced ebbs and flows which have led to the forces of the counter-revolution regaining control over the state apparatus through the successive governments of Ghannouchi and Essebsi, and then the government of the Troika, headed by Ennahdha, as a result of the elections held on 23 October 2011. This government has worsened the economic, social and political crisis by adopting capitalist policies that are hostile to the demands of the masses struggling against poverty, marginalization and unemployment and aspiring to social justice and an equitable balance between the regions. The crisis reached its peak with the assassination of the martyrs Chokri Belaid and Mohamed Brahmi.

In these circumstances, the work of the conference took place in a democratic atmosphere and with a

The congress also discussed the position to take towards the political, social and civil forces in the social movement, as well as how to clarify and determine the urgent and immediate social and economic demands of the popular masses and the need to link them to strategic demands capable of preparing a break with the present capitalist system and its overthrow.

The congress also discussed plans to crystallize the party structures of the LGO to ensure democracy at rank-and-file level and the active participation of all comrades who are members of the party.

The congress discussed the position as regards the Salvation Front that was established after the assassination of comrade Mohamed Brahmi. For the LGO, it is by no means a strategic alliance but a coming together around well-defined tasks contained in the press release dated July 26, 2013, namely the overthrow of the institution resulting from the elections of 23 October which was politically involved in the targeting of the Popular Front for political assassinations and the non-respect of the demands of the revolution. Today we consider that the Salvation Front has abandoned these essential demands and failed in its tasks because of the manoeuvres of the liberal components of the Front and the lack of qualitative initiatives from the Popular Front to give a political lead to the movements of protest. Therefore, the LGO has decided to withdraw from the Salvation Front. But it will continue to engage in the social movement and maintain its activities in the Popular Front, with the perspective of building a workers'

and people's pole, with the aim of supporting and radicalizing the revolutionary process, for the achievement of the objectives of the revolution of 17 December.

The congress completed its work with the election of the leading bodies of the League of the Workers' Left.

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Syria between Revolution and Counter-Revolution
Arab uprisings: /
Monday, 7 October 2013 / Terry Conway /

Terry Conway is one of the editors of International Viewpoint and a leading member of Socialist Resistance, British Section of the Fourth International

, / **Gilbert Achcar** /

Gilbert Achcar grew up in Lebanon and teaches political science at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. Among his books are *The Clash of Barbarisms*, which came out in a second expanded edition in 2006; a book of dialogues with Noam Chomsky on the Middle East, *Perilous Power: The Middle East and U.S. Foreign Policy* (2nd edition in 2008); and most recently *The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives* (2010). His next book analysing the Arab upheaval will come out in the spring of 2013.

Gilbert Achcar, author of the new book *The People Want* was interviewed by Terry Conway for *Socialist Resistance* in London in September.

TC: Could you assess the present state of the

Arab uprising in general before we focus more specifically on Syria?

GA: What is happening now is a confirmation of what could be said from the start; the fact that what began in December 2010 in Tunisia, was not a 'Spring' as the media called it, a brief period of political change during which one despot or another is overthrown, opening the way for a nice parliamentary democracy, and that's it. The uprisings were portrayed as a 'Facebook revolution', another one of these 'colour revolutions'. I, for one, insisted from the beginning that this was a misrepresentation of reality. What started unfolding in 2011 was a long-term revolutionary process, which would develop over many, many years if not decades, especially if we take into account its geographic extension.

From that perspective, what we have had so far is just the opening phase of the process. In some countries they have managed to go beyond the initial stage of overthrowing existing governments; this was the case in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya – the three countries where the regimes were overthrown by the uprising. And you can see that these countries are still in a state of turmoil, instability, which is usual in revolutionary periods.

Those eager to believe that the Arab uprising has ended or was stillborn focused on the initial victory of Islamic forces in elections in Tunisia and Egypt. Against such doomsayers, I stressed the fact that this was actually unavoidable since elections held shortly after the overthrow of the despotic regime could only reflect the balance of organised forces that existed in these countries. I argued that the Islamic fundamentalists' period in power would not last long, if we consider the real roots of the revolutionary process.

This long-term revolutionary process is rooted in the social reality of the region, characterised by many decades of stalled development – a higher rate of unemployment, especially youth

unemployment, than in any other region in the world over several decades. These were the real basic causes of the explosion, and as long as these causes are not addressed, the process will continue. Any new government which has no solutions to these root problems will fail. It was predictable that the Muslim Brotherhood would fail: in my book *The People Want*, which was of course written before Morsi's overthrow in Egypt, I argued that the Muslim Brotherhood would fail inevitably.

I wrote the same about Ennahda in Tunisia, which is now faced with a very strong protest movement that puts the future of the government in question.

So there is an ongoing process throughout the region, which, like any revolutionary process in history, has ups and downs, periods of advances and periods of setbacks – and sometimes ambiguous periods. The most ambiguous event in the whole process until now has been the recent experience in Egypt where we saw this huge mass mobilisation against Morsi on 30 June, which was a very advanced experience in democracy by a mass movement asking for the recall of an elected president who had betrayed the promises he made to the people. But at the same time, and here lies the ambiguity of course, you had the military coup and widespread illusions that the army could play a progressive role, including amongst dominant sections of the broad left as well as amongst liberals.

TC: So how does your analysis of the situation in Syria today fit into this overall framework of what is going across the region?

GA: There can be no doubt that what started in Syria in 2011 is part of the same revolutionary process alongside other countries. It is part of the same phenomenon and driven by the same basic causes – of stalled development, of unemployment and particularly youth unemployment. Syria is definitely no exception – in fact it's one of the most acute cases of social and economic crisis in the

region. This came as a result of the neo-liberal policies implemented by the Assads – father and son, but especially by the son since he came to power a dozen years ago after his father's death.

Syria is a country which has seen massive impoverishment over the last decade, especially in the rural areas; the level of poverty has been rising and reached a situation where almost one third of the population were below the national poverty line, with unemployment on the rise. On the eve of the uprising the understated official figures for unemployment were 15% overall, and more than one third for young people between 15-24 years.

All this was taking place against a background of huge social inequality, a very corrupt regime – where Bashar Assad's cousin became the richest man in the country, controlling – it is widely believed – over half of the economy. And that's only one member of the ruling clan – all members of which were gaining huge material benefits. The clan functions as a real mafia, and has been ruling the country for several decades.

This constitutes the deep root of the explosion, in combination with the fact that the Syrian regime is one of the most despotic in the region. Compared to Assad's Syria, Mubarak's Egypt was a beacon of democracy and political freedom!

So it was no surprise that after Tunisia and Egypt, Libya, Yemen etc., Syria also went into the movement. And it was no surprise likewise, for those like me who were familiar with the character of the Syrian regime, that the movement could not achieve what it achieved in Tunisia and Egypt through mass demonstrations.

What is specific to this regime is that Assad's father has reshaped and reconstructed the state apparatus, especially its hard nucleus – the armed forces – in order to create a Pretorian guard for itself. The army, especially its elite forces, is tied to the

regime itself in various ways, most prominently through the use of sectarianism. Even people who had never heard of Syria before know now that the regime is based on one minority in the country – about 10% of the population; the Alawites.

With a military that is completely loyal to the regime, any illusion (and there were many illusions in the movement at the beginning) that the regime could be overthrown merely through mass demonstrations was false. It was in a sense inevitable that the uprising would turn into a civil war because there is no way to overthrow a regime of this nature without a civil war.

In the history of revolutions, peaceful revolutions are actually the exception, not the rule. Most revolutions, if they didn't start with a civil war like the Chinese revolution, led very quickly to civil wars like the French, the Russian, etc.

This said, the Syrian regime is but one of the counter-revolutions that are facing the Syrian uprising, even though it is by far the deadliest. A second counterrevolution is constituted by the Gulf monarchies, the main bastion of reaction in the whole region. These monarchies reacted to the Arab uprising in the only way they could, especially given that their godfather, US imperialism, was not in a position to intervene as a counterrevolutionary force against the uprisings. They tried therefore to co-opt them, to recuperate the movement. And for the Gulf monarchies, this meant striving to turn social and democratic revolutions into movements led by forces which are no threat to them ideologically. That goes for the Muslim Brotherhood which was heavily backed by the Emirate of Qatar as well as for all sorts of Salafists – from the 'moderate' to the jihadists – backed by the Saudi kingdom or various Wahhabi-Salafi networks in the Gulf countries.

These monarchies have done their best to help and promote the outcome that is in their interests within the Syrian uprising; that is turning the democratic

revolution – which would be a threat to them – into a sectarian war. Here you have an actual convergence between them and the first counterrevolution – that is the regime.

At the beginning what you had in Syria were demonstrations, like everywhere else in the region; organised and led by young people, networking through the social media, very brave mobilisations with clear social, democratic and anti-sectarian demands. But from day one the regime claimed that they were led by Al Qaeda, exactly like Gaddafi pretended in Libya; in both cases, that was a message addressed to the West. They were saying to Washington: 'Make no mistake – we are your friends, we are fighting the same enemy, we are fighting Al Qaeda, so you shouldn't stand against us, but support us instead'. The Syrian regime did more than waging a propaganda war – it let jihadists out of its jails in order to boost the development of this current within the uprising. In the Syrian opposition there is a very widespread belief that the Al Qaeda groups are infiltrated and manipulated by the regime. This is not a farfetched view actually – there is some level of involvement for sure, even if no one can tell how much.

Then, there is still a third counterrevolutionary force working against the Syrian uprising: it is of course the US – and I would add Israel. The US is counterrevolutionary in the full sense of the term with regard to Syria as it is in relation to all other countries in the region. Washington does not want any state to be dismantled. It wants what it calls 'an orderly transition'; power changing hands but within a basic continuity of the state structure. In Washington and London, they keep talking about the 'lessons of Iraq' and explaining that they were wrong to dismantle the Ba'athist state. 'We should have kept that state and just removed Saddam Hussein, and if we had done so we wouldn't have faced so much trouble.'

You may ask: what about Libya? Well, before the fall of Gadhafi, I wrote a long piece explaining that

NATO's intervention in Libya was an attempt to co-opt the uprising, to steer it and manage it while they were involved in negotiations with Saif al-Islam, Gadhafi's son, who was seen by the West as the good member of the ruling family. They wanted him to get his father to step down in his favour which would have very much suited Washington, London, Paris and the rest. But of course the Libyan uprising went beyond that when the insurrection in Tripoli led to the collapse of the whole regime.

of Staff, Martin Dempsey, put it in writing: 'Syria today is not about choosing between two sides but rather about choosing one among many sides. It is my belief that the side we choose must be ready to promote their interests and ours when the balance shifts in their favour. Today, they are not.'

TC: You didn't mention Russia when you talked about counter-revolutionary forces. Would it be accurate to describe them as the fourth column in this case?

For Syria, Washington very clearly says – even during the recent crisis over chemical weapons – 'We don't want the regime to be overthrown, we want a political solution', what Obama also called 'Yemen solution' one year ago. What did happen in Yemen? The President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, after one year of uprising, handed power with a big smile on his face to the vice-president and remained since then in the country where he still pulls many strings. This is just a mockery, a real frustration for the radical forces in that country. That's also why it is far from over in Yemen, even if you don't hear about it in the news here in the West. The movement is going on in Yemen, as it is in Bahrain and all over the region.

GA: I didn't mention them because they are obviously a key force propping up the Assad regime. In that sense, Putin's Russia is part of the first column, not a fourth one.

TC: Is it not true that their involvement has not only an important material effect through their supply of arms to Assad but also an important ideological one in that they disorient some who you would expect to support the uprising?

It is this sort of solution that the USA wants for Syria. It doesn't want to intervene militarily like it did in Libya. The recent flare up was because Washington felt under pressure, with its 'credibility' at stake after Obama had set down his 'red line' regarding the use of chemical weapons. But even when they were contemplating strikes, they explained that they would be very limited strikes which would not affect the balance of forces. The *New York Times* ran a long article reporting that Israel wished exactly the same: limited strikes that wouldn't alter the balance of forces within Syria.

GA: In the final analysis, the Syrian uprising has very few friends. Even amongst people that one would expect to be friendly to revolutions you can see some hostile attitudes, people taken in by the propaganda of the Syrian regime which portrays the whole uprising as jihadist as well as that of Moscow. And some people look to Russia as if it were still the Soviet Union, even though in terms of its political and social character the United States appears as rather progressive compared to what Putin's Russia is: an authoritarian government, wild capitalism, a flat income tax rate of 13%, robber barons, and so on. There is much more ground to consider Russia as an imperialist country than an anti-imperialist one.

Western powers would not lend substantial support – especially military support – to anyone, for they have no confidence in any force among the opposition. As the US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs

As for those who believe that the Syrian regime is 'anti-imperialist', they just ignore the history of this regime and the sheer opportunism on which it bases its foreign policy. Assad's Syria intervened in 1976 to crush the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese

left in Lebanon and prevent their victory over the Lebanese far right. In the 1983-5, it waged or backed wars against the Palestinian camps in Lebanon. In 1991, the Syrian regime fought the war against Iraq under US command; it was part of the US-led coalition; from the 1990s until 2004, the Syrian regime was the protector of the neoliberal pro-US Hariri government in Lebanon; and during all these years, the Syrian border has been the quietest and safest of all Israel's borders. So there is no sense in which the Syrian regime can be described as 'anti-imperialist': it is a very opportunist regime which does not hesitate to switch sides and alliances in order to further its own interests.

TC: Could you say something about the balance of forces within the Syrian opposition?

GA: From reports by friends whom I trust and who have visited all the areas controlled by the opposition, the two Al Qaeda groups represent no more than 10% of the fighters, while the Salafists probably represent about 30%. This leaves a majority of forces acting under the Free Syrian Army (FSA) banner, although part of them are also Islamic-leaning. This is the outcome of the fact that the main sources of funding for Syrian anti-regime forces have been Islamic and based in the Gulf, from the monarchies to various religious networks. That's talking about the armed groups – as for the popular resistance, in their vast majority people are not interested in any kind of Islamic state but in the democratic and social aspirations which have been the objectives of the uprising since it began.

TC: Could you say something about how the resistance organises and what its main demands are?

GA: The resistance is very heterogeneous. During the first months of the uprising, the original leaders were, as indeed they were everywhere else in the region, mostly young people networking through the internet. They organised themselves through

local coordination committees (LCCs) and elaborated a progressive programme: democratic, anti-sectarian, and secular-oriented. Overall a clearly progressive set of demands, which you could not fail to support if you are on the left.

The second stage was the constitution of the Syrian National Council (SNC) – abroad. This is a major difference with Libya where the National Transitional Council was formed inside the country and recognised as legitimate by most of the Libyan uprising, although even there, there were some problems. The SNC was formed abroad by people who had no real role in the leadership of the uprising itself, but had connections. It was created with the interference of Turkey, and that of Qatar. The Emirate funded the SNC, especially the Muslim Brotherhood who were and are still an important component of this official opposition in exile.

But in the same SNC you could find people who belong to the Syrian left like the People's Democratic Party, which originates in a split from the Syrian Communist Party. And the LCCs themselves got represented in the SNC and recognised its leadership of the opposition. Here again one can agree with the bulk of the SNC's programme from a left-wing point of view – it is democratic, anti-sectarian and broadly secular-oriented. Of course we could say it is not social enough but this is not at a radical left leadership, to be sure.

The SNC has now been superseded by the Syrian National Coalition. It remains basically a coalition of forces whose range is similar to that of the forces that were involved in the Egyptian and Tunisian uprisings. One shouldn't forget that in Egypt as well, the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists were there, in the uprising, along with liberals and the left. Then with the militarisation of the struggle, the mutation of the uprising into a civil war which happened progressively from the autumn of 2011 on, we have seen the emergence of hard-line Islamic jihadist groups including two groups

working under the banner of Al Qaeda with differences between them, and Salafi groups. Of the two Al Qaeda affiliates, one has mostly fighters coming from outside Syria and the other is mainly Syrian and there are tensions between them. There have been increasing clashes between the FSA, the armed wing of the official opposition, and the Al Qaeda groups.

It is reassuring to see the hard-line jihadists being more and more rejected by the mainstream opposition but one also understands that the latter cannot wage a war on two fronts – they already have enough problems with the very unequal balance of forces between them and the regime. Unfortunately there is no left wing presence in the armed struggle. The radical left in Syria is anyway very marginal. And the broader left has not tried to organise separately within the FSA.

TC: How have the opposition responded to the regime's attempt to portray them as sectarian?

GA: They have responded in various ways – through statements and proclamations, banners in demonstrations, using the names of Alawite or Christian or Druze figures from history for their Friday mobilisations, etc.

The fact is that there is no possible comparison between the sectarian killings that have been carried out by the regime and its shabbihas – its militias – who perpetrated most mass sectarian killings, and sectarian killings by anti-regime forces. The latter are mostly perpetrated by the jihadists, whom I consider as another counterrevolutionary force. Of course there are wild reactions from people with poor political consciousness reacting in a sectarian way to the regime's brutality. Well, what do you expect? This is not an army of Marxist intellectuals facing the regime; it is a popular uprising, and without a political leadership able to educate the people. So there are sectarian actions on the part of the opposition in reaction to the massive sectarianism

of the regime. We had the same in the Lebanese civil war with much higher symmetry in sectarian killings between both sides – if that were the criteria, everyone should have equally rejected both sides in the Lebanese civil war.

Of course we should denounce all sectarian acts whenever they happen – and they are actually denounced by the opposition and the FSA. But we shouldn't fall into the trap of ignoring the difference in scale between the regime's mass sectarian killings and those perpetrated by anti-regime forces.

TC: What is the relationship with the Kurdish struggle?

GA: Both the regime and the opposition courted the Kurds at the beginning. The regime did this because it didn't want the Kurds to join the uprising, and the uprising did so because they wanted to get them on board. The SNC included in its programme the recognition of minority rights – not to the extent of acknowledging the right to self-determination – but then that's not even a unanimous demand of the Kurds in Syria, though of course I would be strongly in favour of defending this right.

The Syrian Kurdish movement seized the opportunity and took control of the Kurdish areas. The dominant force amongst the Syrian Kurds is linked to the PKK, which is dominant in the Turkish-controlled part of Kurdistan and has cultivated links with the Syrian regime over the years. But the Kurds are not directly interfering in the civil war; they are busy controlling their own area, establishing de facto autonomy like what happened in Iraq. I could hardly imagine they would lose this in the future – so that's an achievement for them. They keep some distance from the civil war apart from clashes with the jihadists every now and then.

TC: How would you describe the situation in the Socialist Resistance areas controlled by the FSA? Clearly the humanitarian situation is a disaster but how would you describe it politically?

GA: Yes the humanitarian situation is definitely appalling. In many of the areas where the opposition has taken over and got rid of the Ba'athist state, we have seen the creation of local democratic committees, with some form of election. This is definitely positive, but it is somewhat normal when the authority disappears in a locality to try to organise something to replace it. One shouldn't portray such committees as 'soviets' or anything like that – that would be completely over the top. These structures can represent an interesting potential for the future, but for the time being they are but measures of self-organisation in order to replace a vacuum of power created by the collapse of local state agencies.

TC: How would you sum up what the left should be doing with regard to Syria?

GA: It is really important to come out in solidarity with the Syrian uprising and not to be shy about it. If we believe in the right of people to self-determination, if we believe in the right of people to freely elect whoever they want, then even if we had an uprising where Islamic forces were leading, this shouldn't change our position – as it didn't for example with Gaza and Hamas, or with the Iraqi resistance which I would remind people was far more under Islamic control than anything you have in Syria.

For all these reasons I think that it is very important to express solidarity with the Syrian revolution, to build links with the progressives among the Syrian opposition, to counter the regime's propaganda as well as that of Moscow, and to denounce Washington's and the West's complicity in the crime against humanity that is perpetrated in Syria.

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Statement on Syria

We Stand Behind the Syrian People's Revolution - No to Foreign Intervention Sunday 1 September 2013

Revolutionary socialists , Revolutionary Left (Syria) , Union of Communists , Al Mounadil-a , Socialist Forum , LGO
29 August 2013

Over 150 thousand were killed, hundreds of thousands injured and disabled, millions of people displaced inside and outside Syria. Cities, villages, and neighborhoods were destroyed fully or partially, using all sorts of weapons, including warplanes, scud missiles, bombs, and tanks, all paid for by the sweat and blood of the Syrian people. This was under the pretext of defending the homeland and achieving military balance with Israel (whose occupation of Syrian land is, in fact, being protected by the Syrian regime, which failed to reply to any of its continuing aggressions).

Yet, despite the enormous losses mentioned above, befalling all Syrians, and the calamity inflicted on them, no international organization or major country – or a lesser one – felt the need to provide practical solidarity or support the Syrians in their struggle for their most basic rights, human dignity, and social justice.

The only exception was some Gulf countries, more specifically Qatar and Saudi Arabia. However, their aim was to control the nature of the conflict and steer it in a sectarian direction, distorting the Syrian revolution and aiming to abort it, as a reflection of their deepest fear that the revolutionary flame will reach their shores. So they backed obscurantist takfiri groups, coming, for the most part, from the four corners of the world, to impose a grotesque vision for rule based on Islamic sharia. These

groups were engaged, time and time again, in terrifying massacres against Syrian citizens who opposed their repressive measures and aggressions inside areas under their control or under attack, such as the recent example of villages in the Latakia countryside.

A large block of hostile forces, from around the world, is conspiring against the Syrian people's revolution, which erupted in tandem with the uprisings spreading through a large section of the Arab region and the Maghreb for the past three years. The people's uprisings aimed to put an end to a history of brutality, injustice, and exploitation and attain the rights to freedom, dignity, and social justice.

However, this did not only provoke local brutal dictatorships, but also most of the imperialist forces seeking to perpetuate the theft of the wealth of our people, in addition to the various reactionary classes and forces throughout those areas and in surrounding countries.

As for Syria, the alliance fighting against the people's revolution comprises a host of reactionary sectarian forces, spearheaded by Iran and confessional militias in Iraq, and, to much regret, Hezbollah's strike force, which is drowning in the quagmire of defending a profoundly corrupt and criminal dictatorial regime.

This unfortunate situation has also struck a major section of the traditional Arab left with Stalinist roots, whether in Syria itself or in Lebanon, Egypt, and the rest of the Arab region – and worldwide – which is clearly biased towards the wretched alliance surrounding the Assad regime. The justification is that some see it as a “resilient” or even a “resistance” regime, despite its long history – throughout its existence in power – of protecting the Zionist occupation of the Golan Heights, its constant bloody repression of various groups resisting Israel, be it Palestinian or Lebanese (or Syrian), and remaining idle and subservient, since the October 1973 war, concerning Israel's aggressions on Syrian territories. This bias will have serious ramifications on ordinary Syrians' position regarding the left in general.

The United Nations and the Security Council, in particular, was unable to condemn the crimes of a

regime, which the Syrian people rejected continuously and peacefully for more than seven months, while the bullets of the snipers and shabbiha took demonstrators one by one and day after day and while the most influential activists were being detained and subjected to the worst kinds of torture and elimination in the prisons and detention centers. All the while, the world remained completely silent and in a state of total negativity.

The situation persisted with small difference after the people in revolution decided to take up arms and the emergence of what became known as the Free Syrian Army (FSA) – whose command and soldiers came, to a large extent, from the regular army. This led to the horrific escalation of crimes by the regime.

Russian imperialism, the most important ally of the Baathist regime in Damascus, which provides it with all sorts of support, remains on the lookout to block any attempt to condemn those crimes in the Security Council. The United States, on the other hand, does not find a real problem in the continuation of the status quo, with all the apparent repercussions and destruction of the country. This is despite the threats and intimidation utilized by the US president, every time someone in the opposition raises the question of the use of chemical weapons by the regime, up until the latest escalation, when it was considered crossing a “red line.”

It is clear that Obama, who gives the impression that he will go ahead with his threats, would have felt great embarrassment if he did not do so, since it will not only impact negatively on the president, but also on the image of the mighty and arrogant state that he leads in the eyes of subservient Arab countries and the entire world.

The imminent strike against the Syrian armed forces is led by the US in essence. However, it occurs with the understanding and cooperation of allied imperialist countries, even without rationalizing it through the usual farce, known as international legitimacy (namely the decisions of the UN, which was and remains representative of the interests of major powers, whether in conflict or in alliance, depending on the circumstances, differences, and balances among them). In other

words, the strike will not wait for the Security Council due to the anticipated Russian-Chinese veto.

Unfortunately, many in the Syrian opposition are gambling on this strike and the US position in general. They believe this would create an opportunity for them to seize power, skipping over the movement and of the masses and their independent decision. It should not be a surprise, then, that the representatives of this opposition and the FSA had no reservations on providing information to the US about proposed targets for the strike.

In all cases, we agree on the following: The western imperialist alliance will strike several positions and vital parts of the military and civilian infrastructure in Syria (with several casualties, as usual). However, as it was keen to announce, the strikes will not be meant to topple the regime. They are merely intended to punish, in Obama's words, the current Syrian leadership and save face for the US administration, after all the threats concerning the use of chemical weapons. The US president's intentions to punish the Syrian leadership does not stem, in any way or form, from Washington's solidarity with the suffering of children who fell in the Ghouta massacres, but from its commitment to what Obama calls the vital interests of the US and its homeland security, in addition to Israel's interests and security. The Syrian army and its regional allies, led by the Iranian regime, will not have enough courage, most probably, to fulfil what seemed to be threats by their senior officials that any western attack on Syria will ignite the entire region. But this option remains on the table, as a final option with catastrophic results. The imminent western imperialist assault does not intend to support the Syrian revolution in any way. It will aim to push Damascus into the bargaining table and allow Bashar al-Assad to retreat from the foreground, but keeping the regime in place, while greatly improving conditions to strengthen the position of US imperialism in the future Syria against Russian imperialism. The more those participating in the continuing popular mobilization – who are more aware, principled, and dedicated to the future of Syria and its people – realize these facts, their consequences, results, and act

accordingly, the more this will contribute to aiding the Syrian people to successfully pick a true revolutionary leadership. In the process of a committed struggle based on the current and future interests of their people, this would produce a radical program consistent with those interests, which could be promoted and put into practice on the road to victory.

No to all forms of imperialist intervention, whether by the US or Russia.

No to all forms of reactionary sectarian interventions, whether by Iran or the Gulf countries.

No to the intervention of Hezbollah, which warrants the maximum of condemnation.

Down with all illusions about the imminent US military strike.

Break open the arms depots for the Syrian people to struggle for freedom, dignity, and social justice.

Victory to a free democratic Syria and down with the Assad dictatorship and all dictatorships forever.

Long live the Syrian people's revolution.

Revolutionary Socialists (Egypt) - Revolutionary Left Current (Syria) - Union of Communists (Iraq) - Al-Mounadil-a (Morocco) - Socialist Forum (Lebanon) — League of the Workers' Left (Tunisia)

* <http://www.al-manshour.org/en/state...>

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