



Statement on the Killings in Sousse

Political Committee of Workers Power, Britain Mon, 29/06/2015 - 11:34

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Workers Power condemns the 26 June terrorist attack by gunmen claiming allegiance to Daesh (Isis), which resulted in the deaths of at least 37 holidaymakers in the vacation resort of Sousse in Tunisia, many of whom appear to be British. Nothing can justify such attacks, as also was the case with the 22 people killed at the Bardo museum in Tunis in March.

A major motivation for these attacks is economic sabotage, to hurt the country's tourist industry worth 15 per cent of the country's GDP and employing 473,000 workers, 13.8 per cent of the country's labour force, in a country with 17.5 per cent unemployment.

It is therefore also an attack on the Tunisian working class, whose unions and socialist parties have resisted the reactionary pressure emanating from Salafist parties and other takfiri formations, including assassinations of leftists and trade unionists by armed jihadists.

These killings are part of an ongoing attack by radical Islamists on the democratic results of Tunisia's Arab Spring of 2011. The horrific results of the counter-revolutionary role played by these and similar formations elsewhere can be seen most clearly in Syria and in Iraq; although they share the culpability for these consequences with the murderous regime of Syria's Bashar al-Assad, and with the Western imperialist-led alliance that has intervened militarily there and in Iraq.

Unlike in so many other Arab states, however, in Tunisia the democratic conquests of the masses made in the revolutions of 2011 have not been obliterated - mainly thanks to the resilience and resistance of the Tunisian workers' movement.

Elsewhere, pro-US and pro-EU dictatorships, like that of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Egypt, have largely restored the old order, while an alliance of the petro-monarchies of the Gulf and the Arabian peninsula has crushed the youthful revolutionary forces, primarily in Bahrain.

Meanwhile, competing reactionaries in Iraq and Syria, both pro-US (Saudi Arabia, Jordan etc.) and anti-US (Daesh, the Assad regime, Iran and the Shi'a-sectarian Iraqi State) have wreaked devastation on both countries.

The attack in Tunisia came on the same day that a man was decapitated and several others injured near Lyons in France in an attack that has also been linked to Daesh. In an audio message calling on its sympathisers abroad to carry out attacks in their own countries, Syria-based Daesh spokesman Abu Mohammed al-Adnani issued a call last week: 'Muslims, embark and hasten toward jihad. [?] O mujahedeen everywhere, rush and go to make Ramadan a month of disasters for the infidels.'

The intentions of those inspiring and perpetrating such attacks mirrors the intentions of racist Islamophobes in Europe: to further isolate and alienate members of Europe's Muslim minorities from their non-Muslim fellow citizens.

In Kuwait too, Daesh claimed responsibility for an explosion that struck a Shi'a mosque in the capital after Friday prayers on the same day as the Tunisian and French atrocities. This is the other side of the strategy of takfiri-jihadist reaction to that of their provocations in Europe: to encourage and then feed upon sectarian hatreds in Arab and Muslim countries. It should not be forgotten that most of their victims are Muslims.

The propaganda strategy of imperialism is to identify 'radicalism' as a broad trend which encompasses not only Muslim reaction but also opposition to imperialism and war. This strategy was developed after the mass mobilisations of 2003 when millions - Muslim and non-Muslim - took to the street against the war. The purpose is to cow Muslims into pledging allegiance or at the very least abandoning opposition to the western imperialist occupation and subjugation of the Middle East. This strategy cannot work because of the reactionary and bloody nature of imperialism's crimes.

The statements made by David Cameron, François Hollande and Barack Obama, condemning the barbarism of Islamist terrorism, are total hypocrisy coming from states that have bombed and terrorised ('shock and awe') populations across the Middle East and Central Asia and that back the criminal Wahhabi Saudi monarchy that has been bombing Yemen since 25 March, and the Bahrain monarchy that brutally suppressed the democracy movement with the support of Saudi and Qatar with the connivance of Britain and the US. The casualties and the terror that they have inflicted on innocent people far outnumbers those carried out by all the jihadist groups in Europe or North America combined.

Though al-Qaeda, IS and a whole spectrum of jihadist groups have authentic roots as counter-revolutionary forces within the political struggles of the Arab world over the last forty years, it should not be forgotten that the Western powers played an enormous role in promoting and arming them in the last decade of the Cold War, helping Western imperialism to win the Cold War and in the process helping their jihadist former clients to win their present position particularly in Afghanistan of credibility, as the supposed vanguard of an Islamic struggle against foreign encroachment.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, former US President Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor, not only admits that he deliberately provoked the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, but deliberately fostered jihadist terrorism there - and that he has no regrets about his actions.

In an interview with the French news magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur* in January 1998, Brzezinski responded when asked if he regretted 'having supported the Islamic fundamentalism, having given arms and advice to future terrorists' with the question: 'What is most important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the cold war?'.
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The 'stirred up Muslims' moreover have provided the USA with a much-needed excuse for their invasions and occupations since.

Thus it is the Western powers' 'War on Terror' - in the name of which the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq were carried out - that has fuelled the growth of reactionary jihadist formations, who present themselves as the only effective force against the new 'Crusaders'. Without the effects of this on young people in the West whose families come from Muslim countries, no 'mysterious process' of online 'radicalisation' alone would be able to mobilise them to join Daesh or to commit terrorist attacks 'at home'. Attempts by police forces to spy on and victimise such young people will only have a counterproductive effect, feeding into a reactionary feedback loop by which young people see counter-revolutionary forces as a genuine anti-imperialist resistance.

The workers' movement and the left have to prove to them that there is a better way 'a real way' to fight imperialism in the Middle East and the likes of Cameron and company at home. Our appeal to them is to join us in exposing our rulers' crimes and in supporting progressive and anti-imperialist movements in the Middle East.

Socialists and antiwar activists in Europe must unequivocally oppose all forms of Islamophobia and attacks on Muslims, holding out a hand of joint defence and comradeship to Muslim communities across the continent. We need to prove too that significant social forces exist here that are totally opposed to the Western imperialist invasions and exploitation of the countries of the Arab and Muslim world.

Whatever horrific attacks the jihadist terrorists can inflict, we must emphasise that the origins of the conflicts in the Middle East lie in the division and plunder of the region over the last century by the imperialist powers of Europe and North America. It is only by overthrowing the ruling classes of these countries at home and by overthrowing their

dictatorial client regimes abroad, that peace, freedom and an end to exploitation can be achieved for all peoples.

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