

# Hands off Libya: victory to Gaddafi !



The CPGB-ML calls for support for the Libyan government in its fight to crush attempts to take control of Libyan oil out of the hands of the Libyan people.

We must resist attempts by foreign powers, especially western imperialists, who, in the interests of gaining control over its oil resources, want to Balkanise Libya, or to turn it into a client state and a base for attacking the democratic movements now surging in the rest of the Arab world and Africa.

The CPGB-ML denounces as fraudulent the attempts by the imperialist media to portray the Libyan government in the same light as those of the puppet dictators in Tunisia, Egypt and Bahrain are totally fraudulent, as are attempts to depict the opponents of the Libyan regime as rising up in the interests of freedom alongside the peoples of those Arab countries that are clients of western imperialism.

To compare Libya with Tunisia, Egypt or Bahrain is to compare chalk with cheese. To start with, Libya has a standard of living comparable to Britain's – one of the highest in Africa. Not bad for a country that in 1951 was officially the poorest in the world.

Yes, Libya has acquired oil wealth since then, but this does not lead automatically to a high standard of living for the population: one has only to look at Nigeria or Equatorial Guinea, where the exploitation of oil resources has led to a dramatic *fall* in general living standards.

## Gains of the revolution

Under the Gaddafi regime in Libya, women have gained full legal equality with men. Everybody has enough food on the table and every Libyan is provided with decent rent-free housing, has free access to good quality health care and to education services. This is hardly the situation in those countries of the Arab world that meet with imperialist approval!

James Petras has very well explained the imperialist oppression to which these countries are subjected, which leads directly to the dire poverty of most of the population and the intense frustration of the middle class:

*"... most of the Arab economies where the revolts are taking place are based on 'rents' from oil, gas, minerals and tourism, which provide most of the export earnings and state revenues. These economic sectors are, in effect, export enclaves employing a tiny fraction*

*of the labour force ... [they] do not have links to a diversified productive domestic economy: oil is exported and finished manufactured goods as well as financial and high tech services are all imported and controlled by foreign multinationals and ex-pats linked to the ruling class ...*

*"Rent-based income may generate great wealth, especially as energy prices soar, but the funds accrue to a class of 'rentiers' who have no vocation or inclination for deepening and extending the process of economic development and innovation ...*

*"Beyond pillaging the public treasury, the ruling class promotes 'free trade', ie, importing cheap finished products, thus undermining any indigenous domestic start-ups in the 'productive' manufacturing, agricultural or technical sector." ('Roots of the Arab revolts and premature celebrations', [axisoflogic.com](http://axisoflogic.com), 3 March 2011)*

In such countries, the ruling class that facilitates the imperialist pillage of its country enjoys luxury beyond all dreams, while the poor have nothing but their religion to console them. This simply is not the situation in Libya, where the oil wealth has been used to provide a high standard of living for the people.

## Opponents of the regime

Why then are we now witnessing civil war in Libya?

Gaddafi's regime is far from acceptable to all Libyans, notwithstanding the fact that it is not at all an economic failure. It has to be remembered that Gaddafi has been leading his country out of feudalism into the modern world, and the vested interests of the old regime don't much like this.

Feudal tribal chiefs do not like to see their power ebbing away. Their religious ideologues do not like to see a society arising that rejects their medievalist tenets, such as women's inferiority and a predilection for cruel and unusual punishments for crimes – dating from the times when nomadic societies had no resources to develop more humane methods of dealing with offenders.

And of course, since as yet the world has never known a society that is capable of providing to all its members everything that they need, there will always be people who are disgruntled enough to be mobilised – against their own interests – by reactionaries making all kinds of empty promises in their endeavour to over-

turn progressive regimes. In Libya today, unemployment is a problem, even if hunger is not.

### Oil and imperialism

In Libya most of the country's problems are centred in the east, around Benghazi – the area, incidentally, which is the centre of Libya's oil industry. This region is in the part of the country called Cyrenaica, home to the Senoussi clan to which King Idriss, the puppet of British imperialism who was overthrown by Gaddafi's coup, belonged.

It is obvious that clan loyalties that no longer have any relevance in the modern world have been conjured up by reactionaries hoping to recapture their lost glory, no doubt with appeals to the most medieval of religious traditions.

Western imperialism, outraged by Libya's nationalisation of its oil under Gaddafi, and by Gaddafi's unflinching support for anti-imperialist causes (South Africa, Palestine, Ireland etc), has also always opposed the Gaddafi regime, and will certainly have been making contacts among disaffected sections of the Libyan population, waiting for happier days when enough forces could be mustered for overthrow of the Libyan government from within.

### Defence of the revolution

In these circumstances, it should be obvious that for the Gaddafi regime to survive at all and to continue implementing its progressive programme, it had to resort to repression of its most dangerous enemies.

We are in no position to say whether or not that repression was taken too far since we have no evidence either way, but to fail to suppress dangerous enemies of the revolution – and to take timely measures firmly to discourage ordinary people from being seduced by their weasel words – would certainly amount to betraying the revolution and the people.

Friends of Libya have, in recent years, been alarmed at the concessions Gaddafi felt constrained to make to the outrageous demands of western imperialism in order to break the vice of sanctions that was beginning to destroy the social gains that had been so painstakingly built up.

We have not been happy that Libya should have accepted responsibility for the Lockerbie affair, although the evidence is perfectly clear that this had nothing to do with Libya. We are even less happy that Libya gave up its right to develop an independent nuclear industry.

However, whatever concessions Libya has made with a gun pointed at its head, it has still not descended to the level of a client state in the way that Egypt and Tunisia had, or Saudi Arabia, Bahrain or Yemen.

In order to ensure Gaddafi's defeat, western imperialism has already begun imposing economic sanctions that include freezing Libyan assets abroad. Now it is seriously considering military intervention, initially in the form of imposing no-fly-zones over Libya's sovereign territory – a clear act of war.

SAS officers have been intercepted trying to provide military support to insurgents, while the French imperialist government has already leapt in to 'recognise' the council formed in the east of Libya, led by former minister Mustafa Jalil, which is fighting for the government's overthrow.

Some people and organisations, such as Stop the War, have been bamboozled by the non-stop and ubiquitous Goebbelsian propaganda that has spewed forth from the imperialist media ever since Gaddafi's regime was put in place into believing that he is some kind of a monster who must be overthrown at all costs. In view of his record in defending the interests of the Libyan people, such an approach is absurd.

Stop the War, dominated as it is by organisations that devote themselves to spreading illusions in social democracy (ie, futile hopes that solutions for the working class and oppressed people are to be found within capitalism), still finds itself cheerleading for Gaddafi's opponents: their only reason for opposing imperialist military intervention is that it may be harmful to the cause of imperialism's local agents in Libya!

Down with social-democratic treachery; down with imperialism!

VICTORY TO THE LIBYAN REVOLUTION; VICTORY TO GADDAFI!

**HANDS OFF LIBYA!**

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