

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 the imperialist plan to get control of Libya's oil resources through either the balkanisation of Libya, or through turning it into a client state and a base for attacking the democratic movements now surging elsewhere in the Arab world and Africa.

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 equate the opponents of the Libyan regime as rising up in the interests of freedom alongside the peoples of those Arab countries that are, or were until recently, clients of western imperialism.

To compare Libya with Tunisia, Egypt or Bahrain is to compare chalk with cheese. Libya has a standard of living comparable to Britain's – the highest in Africa. Not bad for a country that in 1951 was officially the poorest in the world. Yes, Libya has oil wealth, 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 extraction of oil has gone hand in hand with 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, free, good quality health care and free education. This is hardly the situation in those countries of the Arab world that meet with imperialist approval!

Most of the Arab economies where popular revolts have broken out are based on rents from minerals and tourism, which account for the bulk of state revenues. These export enclaves are not linked to a diversified productive domestic economy. While minerals are exported, manufactured products, as well as financial and high-tech services, are all imported and controlled by foreign monopolies connected to the local ruling class.

While this state of affairs produces fabulous wealth for imperialist monopolies and their local stooges, it devastates the lives of ordinary people. This is certainly *not* the situation in Libya, so why are we witnessing a civil war there?

Opponents of the Libyan government

Gaddafi's regime is far from acceptable to all Libyans, despite its economic and social successes. 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 that rejects their medievalist tenets, such as women's inferiority and a predilection for cruel and unusual punishments for crimes. In addition, there are the straightforward mercenaries and agents of imperialism.

All these elements, manipulated by imperialism, and taking advantage of the genuine grievances of a few Libyan youth, such as a recent rise in unemployment, have risen in rebellion against the Gaddafi government.

In Libya, this rebellion is centred around Benghazi – the area, incidentally, which is the centre of Libya's oil industry. This region, called Cyrenaica, is home to the Senoussi clan of the former King Idriss, the puppet of British imperialism, who was overthrown by Gaddafi's coup 40 years ago. The area also has a long tradition of religious fundamentalism. In the rest of the country, the Gaddafi government enjoys widespread support.

Western imperialism, outraged by the nationalisation of Libyan oil under Gaddafi, and by Gaddafi's support for anti-imperialist causes (South Africa, Palestine, Ireland, etc), has always been opposed to his regime, and has long been supporting disaffected sections of the Libyan population, waiting for an opportunity to topple the government. This opportunity arose in the middle of February this year with the outbreak of rebellion in Benghazi.

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, for to fail to suppress these enemies of the Libyan revolution would certainly amount to betraying the revolution and the people.

Friends of Libya have, in recent years, been concerned at the concessions Gaddafi felt constrained to make to the outrageous demands of western imperialism. The concessions were made in order to break the vice of sanctions that was beginning to destroy the social gains that had been so painstakingly built up. They were also made at the time of the war against Iraq, when the threat of imperialist invasion was very real.

So Libya 'accepted' responsibility for the Lockerbie bombing, although the evidence is perfectly clear that the country had no involvement in the affair. It gave up

its right to develop an independent nuclear industry. It accepted some of the demands made by the IMF, allowed some privatisation and withdrew some subsidies.

But, despite all the concessions made with a gun pointed at its head, Libya did not descend to the level of a client state in the way that Egypt and Tunisia had, or Saudi Arabia, Bahrain or Yemen – which is precisely what imperialism has been yearning for. It retained control of its economy – preventing investors from extracting all their profits out of the country, and insisting not only on workers' employment rights but also on a certain proportion of Libyan ownership in any foreign enterprise.

Tellingly, despite a certain 'opening up', Libya remains in the top 10 list of countries that are currently deemed by the imperialists to be *least* accommodating to foreign businesses. Seven of the top 10 (North Korea, Zimbabwe, Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Myanmar, Libya) are open targets of regime change by western governments – all under the cover of 'protecting human rights', of course.

Moreover, Libya has made a huge financial contribution to projects like Rascom, the African satellite that broke the western monopoly on advanced telecoms technologies in Africa, and the African Monetary Fund, whose aim is to help African countries break free of the strangulating grip of imperialist corporations.

A 'humanitarian' intervention

In order to ensure Gaddafi's defeat, western imperialism, in addition to inflicting economic sanctions, managed to coerce the UN Security Council into passing Resolution 1973 for the imposition of a 'no-fly zone' over Libya, authorising member states to use "*all necessary measures*" (a euphemism for military force) allegedly to "*help protect civilians*".

Within two days of the passing of this resolution, the US, Britain and France, having already assembled an armada of fighter jets, aircraft carriers, frigates, destroyers and other deadly armaments, and giving the widest possible interpretation to the Security Council's resolution, unleashed a savage air assault on Libya. The barbaric bombing, which has destroyed Libyan infrastructure, and killed hundreds of civilians whose 'protection' was their supposed objective, has been continuing for nearly two months.

The mission to "*protect civilians*" has shown its true colours – ie, that it is a blatant attempt to change the regime in Tripoli. This has become clear even to the dull-witted following two attacks that targeted the home of the Gaddafi family. The second of these attacks succeeded in killing 29-year-old Saif al-Arab Gaddafi, the youngest son of the Libyan leader, and three of the Colonel's grandchildren – two-year old Carthage, 15-month-old Seif Mohammed and five-month-old Mastura.

Sickeningly, this massacre of the Gaddafi family, whose object was clearly to wipe out the Colonel himself along with all his closest relations, was described by the shameless David Cameron and his fellow criminals in France and the US as an attack on "command and control" sites of the Libyan government, carried out in order to *prevent* a loss of civilian life by "targeting Gaddafi's war-making machine"!

Some people and organisations, such as Stop the War, have been bamboozled by the non-stop and ubiquitous Goebbelsian imperialist propaganda, which portrays Gaddafi as a lunatic and a monster who must be overthrown at all costs. In view of his record in defending the interests of the Libyan people, this analysis 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: its only real reason for opposing imperialist military intervention is that the bombing may be harmful to the cause of imperialism's local agents in Libya!

Those who are genuinely opposed to imperialist war against Libya must expose the shameless stance of the leading elements of Stop the War and bring the truth about the imperialist predatory war against Libya to the masses of people. They must do their best to convince the working class not to cooperate in the prosecution of this criminal war.

Down with social-democratic treachery; down with imperialism!

VICTORY TO THE LIBYAN REVOLUTION; VICTORY TO GADDAFI!

HANDS OFF LIBYA!

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