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**Communist Party
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(Marxist-Leninist)**



**Stop the
War's dirty
role in the
criminal war
against Libya**

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Since the start of the Libyan crisis, the conduct of the Stop the War Coalition (StW) has been both shameful and scandalous. While an armed counter-revolutionary opposition rose up against the Libyan government, and imperialist butchers sharpened their knives in readiness for a massive assault on the country, the disgraceful coterie who run StW organised a demonstration – not against imperialism and its mercenaries in Benghazi, but against the Gaddafi government!

Following the launch of imperialist air attacks on Libya, the StW leadership hurried to change its tactics. It declared its opposition (in words) to the imperialist bombing campaign – *not* because it was unjust and predatory, against which the Libyan people and their government had a right and a duty to defend themselves, but because that bombing campaign would merely serve to bolster Gaddafi's position, and thus *undermine the cause of the overthrow* of the Gaddafi regime!

The StW website carried an article by one Owen Jones: "*Let's be clear. Other than a few nutters, we all want Gaddafi's overthrow, dead or alive. In both his anti-western and pro-western incarnations, his record is that of a brutal and unquestionably slightly unhinged dictator. I will not caricature supporters of the bombing campaign as frothing-at-the-mouth neocons.*"

Character of the war and the rebels

Andrew Murray, StW chairman and prominent CPB member, seems to have become somewhat alarmed by the possibility that this stance threatens to undermine the StW leadership's credibility in the anti-war movement. On 22 April he attempted some damage limitation in a *Morning Star* article which claimed that "*the character of the war has become clearer over the last month*" and that "*the Nato attack has changed the nature of the uprising. Whatever democratic content the rebellion had at the outset, it has now lost.*"

The war, he said, is "*entering a new phase*" to which the anti-war movement must respond with greater unity, but added that "*it is wrong to assert that the rebellion based in Benghazi was some sort of pro-imperialist plot from the outset*". The attack has led to a "*new leadership*" being introduced into the uprising, "*based on elements imported from the US and pro-imperialist defectors from Gaddafi's camp*". As this "*leadership is now urging still more Nato bombing*", the "*rebellion has become subordinated to the attack on its own country*".

War, said Lenin, is a continuation of politics by other means. Marxists need to look at the imperialist policy towards Libya over the past four decades, not just the past few weeks. We must also look at the character of the Libyan regime: its internal and external policy. If we do so, we find that Libya has been pursuing an independent anti-imperialist line for 40 years.

We also see that imperialism, even while it pretended friendship with Libya, has all along desired to overthrow Gaddafi, funding and training his opponents for decades in the hopes of establishing a pliant puppet administration in the country – for the sole purpose of grabbing its fabulous mineral wealth.

These are simple facts. By its war, imperialism is pursuing the same policy violently that it has pursued more 'peacefully' over the past four decades, during which time Libya has been under constant pressure through crippling sanctions, armed plots, vicious air strikes and assassination attempts.

It is sheer nonsense to assert that that the Nato attack has "*changed the nature of the uprising*". What democratic content or social base did the rebellion have before the Nato at-

tack? What were the policies of the rebels, their connections with imperialism, their aims?

A toxic mix of royalists (supporters of the former US/British puppet King Idris), feudalists (who oppose all modernity, including the rights gained by Libyan women), Arab supremacists (who hate Gaddafi's stance on African unity), Islamic fundamentalists (whom Gaddafi has upset by questioning their interpretation of Islam), disgruntled defectors and straightforward paid agents make up the opposition that has been portrayed in such glowing terms by the imperialist spokesmen.

The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), a major participant in the rebellion, has been an important 'asset' of both the CIA and MI6 for 20 years. After fighting the USSR in Afghanistan, it moved into conducting Islamic jihad against Libya's secular government. Its 1996 attempt on Gaddafi's life killed several of his bodyguards and was reportedly funded by MI6.

Murray offers no proof for his assertion that the rebellion is *not* an imperialist plot. If there are legitimate reasons justifying the Libyan people in overthrowing their government, he should reveal them through a concrete study of the state of affairs prevailing in Libya and the politics, economics and policy of its government, instead of abstractly asserting that there *could* be some "*legitimate*" reasons for an uprising.

There are rebellions and rebellions. Progressives warmly and enthusiastically support the uprisings that have overthrown the Tunisian and Egyptian dictatorships, directed as they were against imperialism's trusted servants and the enemies of the peoples of these countries. On the other hand, we do *not* support the opposition movements in Libya and Syria, whose aim is to bring these countries back into the grip of imperialism.

An examination of the history and political make-up of the Libyan opposition leads inevitably to the conclusion that it is a counter-revolutionary tool manipulated by imperialism. The coming to power of this reactionary clique would be an unmitigated disaster – for the Libyan and African peoples in particular and for the world anti-imperialist movement generally.

The Egyptian and Tunisian stooges of imperialism deserved to be overthrown and they were. Why should the Libyans follow suit when their government safeguards Libyan national interests, uses the country's wealth for the wellbeing of its people (workers' rights, free health care, free housing, free education etc), and resists imperialism all over Africa and the world?

An opportunity wasted

Comrade Murray pointed to the unpopularity of the Libyan war: "*Never has the anti-war movement had such a proportion of the public on its side at such an early stage of a conflict.*" He ought to have added: never has the anti-war movement squandered such an opportunity to build a truly anti-imperialist movement through the mobilisation of the working class against a predatory war, while enlightening the masses about the inextricable link between war and imperialism.

Comrade Murray is trying to please too many masters – from the counter-revolutionary Counterfire Trots to the revisionist CPB cretins – all of them tied hand and foot to the imperialist Labour party. If he wants to play a *useful* role in the anti-war movement, he should have the courage to break out of their suffocating embrace. He cannot continue to be in the pro-imperialist and anti-imperialist camps at the same time.

Victory to the Libyan people; death to imperialism!

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