

Socialist Fight: Defeat the forces of Imperialism!

No support for Mahmoud Jibril and Interim Transitional National Council!

Defeat imperialist intervention!

No to an imperialist proxy regime!

Statement on the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and the rest of the Arab world

The world economic crisis has produced a string of uprisings in the Arab world beginning in Tunisia which has inspired the oppressed of the world. They were produced by the fightback of the international working class; the French strike waves, the Greek strikes, the British the Irish student fightback to mention a few. The Arab uprisings in turn have produced a powerful response from the US working class in Wisconsin and elsewhere to the massive onslaught of US finance capital. The latter may prove by far the most significant in the long run if it presages the re-awakening of that most powerful of all sleeping giants, the US working class. But the Arab events have produced the most dramatic results so far and have also posed the greatest test for Marxists.

Many self-proclaimed revolutionary socialists have failed this test on the question of Libya in particular. But their orientation to the events in Tunisia and Egypt, falling for imperialist demagogy about 'freedom' and 'democracy' and the 'democratic revolution' have prepared this failure, as well as the previous history of some in accommodating to imperialism in the Balkans on the basis of 'humanitarian intervention'. But freedom and democracy for whom and to do what? In a class-dominated world there can be no such non-class slogans, international finance capital wants freedom and democracy smash the organisations of the metropolitan working class and to open up the economies of the semi-colonial world to its unfettered penetration, to reduce these countries to the state of Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and the Congo. The international working class must deny them this freedom and democracy if they are to survive and advance to world revolution.

In many cases this involves forming a military block, a united front without political support, with the most brutal of dictators, Ahmadinejad of Iran and Gaddafi of Libya, who at least defy the dictates of international finance capital to some extent. We must emphasise that this cannot involve giving any political support to such regimes; we must not put our heads in the noose of the national bourgeoisie as Stalin did with the Kuomintang which led to the horrific massacre of the Shanghai Soviet in 1927. No 'victory to Gaddafi' slogans are permissible, just as Trotsky never said 'victory to Stalin'. At the same time it is an unpardonable dereliction of revolutionary duty by the so-called Trotskyist 'revolutionaries' that they accept the bona fides of the Libyan Transitional National Council, whose slogans are 'Freedom, Justice and Democracy'. The vast majority never question the politics of this Council and the few that do, like Workers Power, do not allow these questions to make any difference to their support for these obviously counter-revolutionary scoundrels.

The method we will employ in this piece is that which Trotsky used in his defence of the USSR as a degenerate workers state. That is we will attempt to defend the gains of the 1969 revolution led by Muammar Gaddafi which deposed King Idris without defending the character of or means used by Gaddafi

in doing so and only defending him in direct conflict with imperialism and its agents and never against his own working class. In like manner Trotsky defended the gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution in the USSR against imperialism and capitalist restoration without defending Stalin or the corrupt bureaucracy represented by Stalin. Of course the analogy is limited in that property relations were never overturned in Libya however the interests of world imperialism were severely curtailed and continue to be so to this day, a fact that all our leftist 'rebel' supporters studiously ignore.

Not any type of revolution but a counter-revolution

We must emphasize at the outset that the uprising in Libya is not any type of revolution but a counter-revolution, with an imperialist-backed and CIA sponsored leadership. It is a continuation of a whole series of reactionary attempts to restore the Monarchy and tribal privileges on behalf of US and western imperialism which began soon after Gaddafi took power in 1969 and have continued sporadically ever since. The only flag flown by the rebels is that of the imperialist-imposed monarchy of King Idris (1951-69). This uprising has become in fact the central stratagem of imperialism to counter and defeat the great progressive uprising in Tunisia, Egypt and Bahrain in particular, all of which have a powerful working class at their base and therefore the inherent possibility of moving towards socialist revolution if a revolutionary Trotskyist leadership can emerge to lead on this on the political perspective of Trotsky's Permanent Revolution.

Having taken the side of the rebels in the mistaken belief that this was a continuation of the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings our 'revolutionaries' (so dubbed by *The Guardian*, for instance, who see no irony in imperialism backing 'revolutionaries') have accepted the backing of every imperialist government in the world and every reactionary regime in the Gulf. Their leftist supporters can draw no conclusion from how the balance of class forces internationally has developed. According to the Agence France Presse (March 7), "The Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) demands that the UN Security Council take all necessary measures to protect civilians, including enforcing a no-fly zone over Libya".

France has recognised the rebels as the legitimate government of Libya and the Arab League has sided with them (against the opposition of Syria and Algeria), demanding imperialist intervention. David Cameron and Nicolas Sarkozy have been to the forefront in demanding urgent imperialist intervention. A meeting on March 2 in the British parliament of the Henry Jackson Society "urged the Prime Minister to stand fast in his commitment to put a stop to the crimes of Colonel Gaddafi, including through the implementation of a no-fly zone and active assistance to Libyan opposition movements in conjunction with our allies". Stars of the meeting were that fearless champion of the oppressed and seeker after truth whom Israel asked to conduct the whitewash investigation into its murderous commando raid on the aid flotilla to Gaza, Nobel Peace Prize Winner Lord David Trimble, joined by such fellow fearless champions of the world revolution as Khaeri Aboushagor (UK Representative of the [CIA-sponsored] Libyan League for Human Rights) and Air Vice-Marshal Tony Mason, CB, CBE, DL, the former Air Secretary for the RAF.

As for the naïve notion that these 'masses' must be the same as the masses in Tunisia and Egypt have we forgotten about the deluded pro-imperialist masses that brought about the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Velvet revolution, the Orange revolution and all the other 'coloured' so-called revolutions (in reality counter-revolutions) that imperialism sponsored and the CIA facilitated in recent years? There is no indication whatsoever in Libya of any progressive political tension let alone conflict between the base and

the leadership of the rebels, unlike in Egypt and Tunisia. But there are al Qaeda CIA backed opponents who are even more opposed to the organised working class. In Tunisia in particular the masses are pressing on with the revolution and succeeding in pushing aside more leaders from the old regime who have emerged hoping to stabilise their rule. Egypt will also succeed in deepening its revolution in like manner as with the Bahrainis, we are absolutely confident.

Trotsky was somewhat more sanguine about these 'masses':

"But the masses are by no means identical: there are revolutionary masses, there are passive masses, there are reactionary masses. The very same masses are at different times inspired by different moods and objectives. It is just for this reason that a centralized organization of the vanguard is indispensable. Only a party, wielding the authority it has won, is capable of overcoming the vacillation of the masses themselves."¹

In Libya we had a reactionary leadership who knew how to divert these masses against black workers first and then in favour of imperialism.

According to David Rothscum, "The main opposition group in Libya now is the National Front for the Salvation of Libya. This opposition group is being funded by Saudi Arabia, the CIA, and French Intelligence. This group unified itself with other opposition groups, to become the National Conference for the Libyan Opposition. It was this organization that called for the "Day of Rage" that plunged Libya into chaos on February 17 of this year."² Despite the fact that there was a huge and unexpected response to this call, no doubt inspired by the events in Tunisia and Egypt, we are not foolish enough to think that the CIA is capable of fostering that out of nothing. However there was never any suggestion that the reactionary leadership were under political threat from the risen masses. Indeed the targeting of the 'black mercenaries' as agents of Gaddafi and the reported execution of 100 of them was surely a move by this leadership to ensure that no opposition could emerge from the working class.

Al Qaeda cell in Libya

There are many reports on the involvement of Al Qaeda cell in Libya and there are numerous sources testifying on their attempts to assassinate Gaddafi. According to Martin Bright, home affairs editor in *The Observer*, Sunday 10 November 2002 British intelligence paid large sums of money to an al-Qaeda cell in Libya in a doomed attempt to assassinate Colonel Gaddafi in 1996 ... The latest claims of MI6 involvement with Libya's fearsome Islamic Fighting Group, which is connected to one of bin Laden's trusted lieutenants, will be embarrassing to the Government, which described similar claims by renegade MI5 officer David Shayler as 'pure fantasy'... The Observer can today reveal that the MI6 officers involved in the alleged plot were Richard Bartlett, who has previously only been known under the codename PT16 and had overall responsibility for the operation; and David Watson, codename PT16B. As Shayler's opposite number in MI6, Watson was responsible for running a Libyan agent, 'Tunworth', who was providing information from within the cell. According to Shayler, MI6 passed £100,000 to the al-Qaeda plotters.

Imperialism, in the shape of the CIA, is hedging its bets in Libya today. The Transitional National Council is losing credibility and the fundamentalists are gaining it in the ranks of the rebels. According to Michel Chossudovsky, "the Central Intelligence Agency using Pakistan's ISI as a go-between played a key role in training the Mujahideen. In turn, the CIA-sponsored guerrilla training was integrated with the teachings of Islam. The madrasahs were set up by Wahabi fundamentalists financed out of Saudi Arabia" ³ There were a

substantial number of Libyan Jihadists in Afghanistan in those years and when they returned to Libya as the Islamic Fighting Group they retained their CIA connections as Shayler and the Observer have proved. It is now being put to good use as the following extract from Stratfor, *Jihadist Opportunities in Libya* tells us:

“Outside Benghazi’s courthouse, these multiple Islamist groups have proved assiduous in asserting their presence. The Muslim Brothers, Libya’s oldest political party established by Egyptian émigrés fleeing Nasser’s repression in the 1950s, appears to be the best organized. Hitherto an elitist group concentrated in Libyan academe, it is rapidly acquiring a grassroots reach through the mosques, a newly acquired forum the liberals lack. Scrapping their previous reformist agenda, the Brothers now preach revolution and an anti-Qaddafi jihad... Within days, the academics outside the courthouse were outnumbered by would-be mujahedeen staging prayers “fi sabil Allah,” in the path of God, for the fight against the colonel. “We control the street and the fighting at the front,” says Juma’ Muhammad, one of hundreds of former Abu Salim inmates helping to rally the crowds behind the Islamists. “We’re with the people; the Council is not.” In open-air prayers and graffiti, they repetitively denounce Qaddafi -- not least because of his bushy curls -- as an unbeliever, a Mossad agent and a Jew. Another Abu Salim inmate notes that two rebel fighters killed in the first battle for the oil port of Ra’s Lanouf were Libyan veterans of the Afghan jihad, as is a 41 year-old rebel commander.”⁴

The three-fold agenda of US imperialism

The agenda pursued by the US in WWII and after was three fold. It did not simply want to defeat Germany and Japan, its economic trade rivals in Europe and the Pacific. It also wanted to defeat the USSR but was forced to postpone this objective to a later date. And thirdly it wanted to defeat the colonial empires of old Europe to open up these economies to the penetration of finance capital, to exploit their raw materials and to secure markets for the manufactures of its huge corporations. It was forced to downgrade the war against the USSR and China to a Cold War, until it was eventually successful in 1989-92, although this produced new imperialist rivals. In the former colonial world it and old Europe was faced from the late 1950s on by an upsurge of nationalism, the leaders of which attempted to protect their home markets and build up native industries to reduce their dependence on imperialism’s manufactures goods. Brutal wars like the British against Kenya, the French against Algeria and Vietnam ensued where the MI5 and the CIA had not succeeded by assassinations and plots in achieving puppet regimes (Mossadegh in Iran in 1953, Lumumba in the Congo 1961, etc). Those economies that ringed the USSR were assisted by Marshall Aid to revive in Europe, Germany in particular. Japan, South Korea and the ‘Asian Tigers’ were assisted and permitted to impose their tariff barriers to develop their native industries as a bulwark against Chinese communism; they were thereby very successful.

But the rest of the world suffered a far different fate. Though most were free from their direct colonial masters by the late 1960s a no less exploitative but more ideologically challenging and invidious system of semi-colonial exploitation was replacing it, a system already perfected in the Latin American lands as theorised by Lenin in *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism* as far back as 1916. Economic crises like the oil price hikes after the Six Day war of 1967, the Yom Kippur war of 1973 and the Iranian revolution of 1979 were utilised by the US and Europe via the IMF and World Bank to impose policies which opened up practically all the economies of Africa and South Asia to the penetration of US and European finance capital and manufactured goods. Imperialism thereby destroyed nascent native industries in countries typified by Tanzania in those years far more effectively than Britain de-industrialised India under its direct rule: they forced them to abandon protective tariffs and import substitution programmes as the price of bail out and

investment projects. Expansion depended on developing manufactured goods, consumer hardware and a home market, increasingly dependent on a technological sophistication only possible with vast capital expenditure on research and development. This was denied to the entire semi-colonial third world apart from to the strategic allies discussed above. Finance capital is a far more efficient weapon of exploitation than colonialism ever was.

Hopes of the 'developing countries' actually developing balanced economies to escape the fate of monoculture producers of coffee and other primary commodities or being forced to sell their natural mineral resources in the extractive mining industries via imperialist multi-national companies for the metropolitan markets and industries were dashed. But there was resistance to this imposed poverty and exploitation programme which went under the name of 'development'. North Korea, Vietnam, Algeria and Egypt came first. Many middle sized economies, "beginning with India, pursued a version of the Soviet planned economy, with import substitution and subsidies to native industries because they were conscious that reliance on primary produce left them vulnerable to the world market where the price of primary produce was relative inelastic. That is the metropolitan consumers would only drink so much tea and coffee, and require so much clothing and footwear no matter how cheap; overproduction inevitable led to a drop in the price."⁵

Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt

The prime champion of the post-war defencist movement was Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt and for many years he was the hope of the oppressed throughout the Arab world and much wider. He was vilified no less vilely than Gaddafi is today but most leftists were political and principled enough to see through imperialist propaganda then, few are today. But we must acknowledge another, intertwined factor in this fightback. Countries like Egypt and India pursued the protectionist policy of Nasser and Jawaharlal Nehru under the protection of the USSR. Protecting their economies, as in the USSR, involved of necessity, the denial of some democratic rights taken for granted in the open western metropolitan countries. In particular, as in the USSR, pro-imperialist (capitalist restorationist) political parties were banned and individuals who espoused such policies were imprisoned and the CIA/MI5 were effectively combated; they learned the lessons of Mossadegh and Lumumba. We have no problem with that.

Nasser died in 1970 to be replaced by Sadat and then, after his assassination in 1981, by Hosni Mubarak. These reversed Nasser's policies of protectionism and import substitution; they capitulated totally to the agenda of US imperialism and signed a peace deal with Zionist Israel to betray the struggles of the oppressed Palestinian masses in return for very large subsidies, in fact second only to Israel. India followed suit after the Hindu bigots of the BJP gained the ascendancy following their destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh on 6 December 1992 claiming it was built on the Hindu holy site Ram Janmabhoomi. The economies of the former states of the USSR and Yugoslavia were progressively 'liberated' to the shackles of the free market after 1989.

A new Nasser, Muammar Gaddafi

In 1969 a new Nasser, Muammar Gaddafi, emerged in Libya. Before oil was discovered there in 1958 Libya was officially the poorest country in the world, after the devastation wrought in it by genocidal Italian colonialism – up to 30% of the population slaughtered in the decade of the 1920s and then another terrible devastation in WWII. When Gaddafi took power in 1969 he set about a massive redistribution of the oil wealth.⁶ And in order to do so he had to prevent the big multi-nationals siphoning all that wealth out of the

country. Indeed he was the prime moving force behind the 1973 OPEC embargo which secured such a massive transfer of wealth to the oil producers from the US, Europe and Japan. But only Iraq and Libya used their oil wealth for the benefit of their own people, the Saudis, the Shah of Iran and the Gulf States re-invested in the West to assist them out of their crisis. Iraq suffered its dismal fate because of that and now the imperialists hope it is the turn of Libya, egged on by our bogus revolutionaries.

Wikipedia reports on what this movement was:

“The Free Officers Movement, which claimed credit for carrying out the coup, was headed by a twelve-member directorate that designated itself the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). This body constituted the Libyan government after the coup. In its initial proclamation on September 1, the RCC declared the country to be a free and sovereign state called the Libyan Arab Republic, which would proceed "in the path of freedom, unity, and social justice, guaranteeing the right of equality to its citizens, and opening before them the doors of honourable work." The rule of the Turks and Italians and the "reactionary" regime just overthrown were characterized as belonging to "dark ages," from which the Libyan people were called to move forward as "free brothers" to a new age of prosperity, equality, and honour.”⁷

Let us set out just how far Gaddafi honoured these pledges and what he did that outraged, and continues to outrage, world imperialism so much. We can guarantee they are not outraged at how he deals with his working class opponents, just how he deals with his pro-imperialist ones. Our leftists should be able to distinguish these two now. These extracts are from *LIBYA, a country study* by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, edited by Helen Chapin Metz. We can scarcely accuse such a source of a pro-Gaddafi bias:

“In December (1970) the Libyan government suddenly nationalized the holdings of British Petroleum in Libya... In 1973 the Libyan government announced the nationalization of a controlling interest in all other petroleum companies operating in the country. This step gave Libya control of about 60 percent of its domestic oil production by early 1974, a figure that subsequently rose to 70 percent.”⁸

“A property law was passed that forbade ownership of more than one private dwelling, and Libyan workers took control of a large number of companies, turning them into state-run enterprises. Retail and wholesale trading operations were replaced by state-owned "people's supermarkets", where Libyans in theory could purchase whatever they needed at low prices... While measures such as these undoubtedly benefited poorer Libyans, they created resentment and opposition among the newly dispossessed. The latter joined those already alienated, some of whom had begun to leave the country. By 1982 perhaps 50,000 to 100,000 Libyans had gone abroad; because many of the emigrants were among the enterprising and better educated Libyans, they represented a significant loss of managerial and technical expertise.”

“Internal opposition came from elements of the middle class who opposed Gaddafi's economic reforms and from students and intellectuals who criticized his ideology...The most serious challenges came from the armed forces, especially the officers' corps, and from the RCC.”

Reactionary opposition to this redistribution of wealth

So having seen the history of reactionary opposition to this redistribution of wealth (in contrast with Nigeria, for instance) we can now we can see the source of the revolt not as confused workers fighting unemployment and oppression (and there are many of these, of course) but as disgruntled capitalists and

tribal leaders represented by reactionary army officers who were either expropriated or denied a far greater cut of the national cake that they felt their tribal and social status entitled them to. And they hope to get that as agents of imperialism, they have made their willingness to do this very plain. "The provisional government has promised that whoever assists them in this will be rewarded in any post Gaddafi regime, a very dangerous offer to the imperialist plunderers from Europe who still have blood on their hands from Iraq and Afghanistan (as well as the historical record of slaughter across the world during the days of colonial empire)" Indeed in Libya "the lack of a revolutionary working class is a central factor why Libya was different to the other countries" admits Simon Hardy on 10/03/2011 in Workers Power document *A revolutionary civil war*.

In fact our 'revolutionaries' have turned viciously on the working class and are killing black African workers wherever they get the opportunity. But note too how these appalling racist attacks by the rebels on the working class turns out to be all the fault of Gaddafi and the perpetrators are almost innocent of their own crimes. The Christian Science Monitor headlined *How Qaddafi helped fuel fury toward Africans in Libya*, March 6, http://news.yahoo.com/s/csm/20110306/wl_csm/367708

"Accra, Ghana – As Libya erupts into civil war, migrant labourers from sub-Saharan Africa are coming under increasing threat of mob violence *due to reports that African mercenaries are helping Muammar Qaddafi brutally quash a nation-wide uprising against his 41-year rule...* thousands (of migrant workers) remain too scared to try to make their way out of the country for fear of being beaten or killed by *rebel mobs flush with animosity for anyone with dark skin and African features*. Many experts – and African migrant workers themselves – say the animosity stems from anti-African racism found throughout the Arab world. But some say the anger has been made much worse by Mr. Qaddafi's moves to buy the loyalty of black Libyans from the south of the country as well as his decades-long efforts to build Africa-wide patronage *networks at great cost to the country's Arab majority.*"

Twisted imperialist propaganda

One could not get better in the way of twisted imperialist propaganda than that highlighted above, so typical of the Goebbels style stuff we are getting on behalf of the rebels now! So reports of African mercenaries helping Gaddafi cause outbreaks of mob violence by our 'revolutionaries' "flush with animosity for anyone with dark skin and African features". And the "anti-African racism found throughout the Arab world" is excused because Gaddafi is just as bad because, "his decades-long efforts to build Africa-wide patronage networks at great cost to the country's Arab majority". Like the 'British jobs for British workers' reactionary campaign in Britain it is not possible for the working class to advance their cause, let alone make revolution, under such reactionary ideological domination.

On March 14 *Somaliland News* published the following article on these events, *LIBYA: Rebels execute black immigrants while forces kidnap others*:

"In east Libya, African hunt began as towns and cities began fall under the control of Libyan rebels, mobs and gangs. They started to detain, insult, rape and even executing black immigrants, students and refugees. In the past two weeks, more than 100 Africans from various Sub-Sahara states are believed to have been killed by Libyan rebels and their supporters."

"According to Somali refugees in Libya, at least five Somalis from Somaliland and Somalia were executed in Tripoli and Benghazi by anti-Gaddafi mobs. Dozens of refugees and immigrants workers from Ethiopia,

Eritrea, Ghana, Nigeria, Chad, Mali and Niger have been killed, some of them were led into the desert and stabbed to death. Black Libyan men receiving medical care in hospitals in Benghazi were reportedly abducted by armed rebels. They are part of more than 200 African immigrants held in secret locations by the rebels.”⁹

UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights

One wonders what kind of a revolution is possible not only without but by oppressing the working class in 2011? But perhaps this civil war, helped into being no doubt by the events in Tunisia and Egypt, is in reality one of those ‘democratic revolutions’ which bestows stable parliamentary democracy on third world countries too poor to afford it up to now? The communist programme for revolution, even in advanced metropolitan countries, is called ‘the dictatorship of the proletariat’ not any type of bourgeois democracy at all, simply workers democracy that suppresses the capitalists and removes their democratic rights.

We are presuming that all readers who have made some study of Marxism know that the lack of parliamentary democracy is a symptom of great economic and political crisis in a metropolitan country and poverty and oppression imposed by world imperialism in the semi-colonial world. They must not swallow the lie that it is as a result of corrupt and evil dictators who will not apply the basic humanitarian values of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights to its people. Even the ‘perfect’ parliamentary democratic system is only a cover for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. They will have read their Marx and know that a regime of rights is pie in the sky; rights are a product of competition for scarce resources and no good to those without the effective economic means to exercise them. We might point to India in contradiction but we can recall the Dalit rat catchers there and the explanation of the father of the family who had absolutely no money at all and was so oppressed and discriminated against that he said in a memorable TV programme, “I have to catch fifteen rats a day to feed my family”.¹⁰ But he had far more rights than the citizen of Libya with the highest standard of living in Africa, comparable to the west in many ways, so his plight and that of his family does not merit our concern.

This is how Marx makes the distinction between political emancipation, liberal rights and liberties, and human emancipation as explained by the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

“Liberal rights and ideas of justice are premised on the idea that each of us needs protection from other human beings. Therefore liberal rights are rights of separation, designed to protect us from such perceived threats. Freedom on such a view is freedom from interference. What this view overlooks is the possibility — for Marx, the fact — that real freedom is to be found positively in our relations with other people. It is to be found in human community, not in isolation. So insisting on a regime of rights encourages us to view each other in ways which undermine the possibility of the real freedom we may find in human emancipation.”¹¹

Thus the ignoring of the real conditions of the masses in Libya and the championing of idealised ‘freedoms’ and ‘rights’ sets them up for imperialist super-exploitation. We understand that the entire culture of the working class is in opposition to this path which fails to distinguish workers rights from bourgeois rights and workers democracy from bourgeois democracy. John Rawls's 2001 book, *Justice as Fairness* is the modern day ideological attack on Marx's great historic argument against this fraud of perpetrated on us by the liberal bourgeoisie and swallowed whole by so many anti-Marxist ‘socialists’.

Imperialism did not bring freedom to the citizens of the Congo 4,000 kilometres to the south of Libya. Their drive for freedom from imperialist exploitation was expertly blocked by the CIA assassination of their leader Patrice Lumumba in 1961.¹² This country is now devastated by a murderous civil war sponsored by rival imperialist powers the better to extract its mineral wealth, diamonds, gold and particularly its coltan (80% of the world's supply), so necessary in the micro circuits of mobile phones and similar indispensable gadgets. The 5.5 million dead, the greatest casualties since WWII, has been almost totally ignored in the west, not because there is no mineral wealth, but because they have unrestricted access to it whilst the central (client) government is unable to police its own disintegrated 'failed' state because of the never-ending war. We know who to support in the Ivory Coast, not the pro-imperialist 'democratically elected' President Alassane Ouattara, who has gained the assistance of world imperialism in banning the export of cocoa to deny his rival the opportunity to raise funds but the hold-out President Laurent Gbagbo who has nationalised the Ivory Coast's cocoa industry to rally the anti-imperialist masses. Truly in Iraq, Afghanistan, north western Pakistan, the Congo and the Ivory Coast imperialism hath wrought its masterpiece. Perhaps they hope to surpass that in Libya with all their 'freedom', 'justice' and 'democracy'.

'Democratic revolution'

There is no such thing as a 'democratic revolution'. That was always the term for a bourgeois revolution. And the bourgeoisie definitely are not revolutionary. The failure of the 'springtime of peoples in Europe in 1848 showed that but our modern-day imperialist hacks still dub these uprisings the 'Arab Spring' to invoke the illusions and hope we will forget the reality of cowardly capitulation to feudal reaction then and imperialism today. The bourgeoisie cannot lead a revolution so there can be no such revolution now. And it is equally foolish to demand that the working class leads this bourgeois democratic revolution, as the Weekly Worker does. That is the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry which Lenin rejected so decisively in the April Theses in 1917 and which Trotsky replaced by the theory of Permanent Revolution.

Petty bourgeois nationalists and Stalinists can claim to be leading such anti-imperialist revolutions and can be supported up to a point as long as they fight imperialism. When they side with imperialism, like in the whole series of counter-revolutions around the fall of the Berlin Wall, in former Yugoslavia or in Libya and Iran now and simply demand 'democracy' they are demanding the right of international finance to penetrate those economies without let or hindrance from troublesome opponents who may well be bloody dictator themselves who nonetheless defend some aspects of the living standards and welfare of the masses but are not 'our' (imperialism's) bloody dictators so must be ousted.

Sincere Revolutionaries

What do we say to the sincere revolutionists who want to overthrow Gaddafi and who are opposed to the reactionary agenda of their own leadership? There must be many such among the rebels. Surely it is permissible to make an alliance 'with the devil or his grandmother' (Trotsky) to achieve a progressive goal like the overthrow of Gaddafi? And when it comes to personal survival against Gaddafi's onslaught is not any action justified in order to fight another day? We can only say to such comrades what Trotsky said to the workers and oppressed of Brazil in 1938:

"In Brazil there now reigns a semi fascist regime that every revolutionary can only view with hatred. Let us assume, however, that on the morrow England enters into a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict will the working class be? I will answer for myself personally—in this case I will be on the

side of "fascist" Brazil against "democratic" Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism. If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat. Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy. Under all masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners, and robbers!"¹³

Bonapartist regimes: Imperialism's 'Bad Boy' returns to the fold

However these Bonapartist regimes (that is the Marxist term for them), as in the USSR, also suppressed the working class, either making trade unions illegal, or, more frequently incorporating them into the state intuitions. Strikes were and mainly are still illegal, in countries like Libya, Egypt, Tunisia etc. Strikers face long prison terms. If our Bonapartist were blocking the penetration of imperialist finance capital into their countries to a certain extent they were even more ruthlessly blocking the development of the opposition to global imperialism from developing to socialist and world revolution.

With the fall of the USSR in 1992 Libya was left dangerously exposed to the onslaught of neo-liberal world imperialism, now enormously strengthened by that victory. Libya was framed for the Lockerbie bombing of 1988 (Paul Foot sat through the whole of Megrahi's trial in the Netherlands in 2001 and condemned the prosecution's case was farcical). In fact the bombing was carried out on the instructions of Iran via a Syrian group in retaliation for the downing of the civilian Iran Air Flight 655 in the Persian Gulf in July 1987 with the loss of 290 civilian lives by an unrepentant US navy. It did not suit the US to implicate Syria and Iran when it needed their support in the invasion of Iraq in 2003. So Gaddafi was forced to accept the blame and pay compensation. He destroyed such the "weapons of mass destruction" as he possessed and restored diplomatic relations with the United States in 2006. He then embarked on a massive neo-liberal attack on Libyan workers, at the behest of imperialist companies, privatising, sacking and decimating the state sector, up till then the outlet for all university graduated in Libya. Unemployment reached 21% by 2009, according to official statistics.¹⁴ He signed an agreement with the EU to stop the flow of immigrant workers to Europe, and carried out that agreement with considerably brutality.

This is the appalling report of *The Times Live* (*The Times* online) on Gaddafi's visit to Italy in August 2010:

Gaddafi seeks EU cash to prevent 'black Europe'

"Gaddafi's visit to mark the second anniversary of a friendship treaty with former coloniser Italy had already stumbled into controversy after he said Europe should convert to Islam. Speaking at a ceremony late on Monday, standing next to Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, Gaddafi said his plan to "put an end to" illegal immigration was backed by Italy, but Berlusconi remained silent. Backing Libya's request for cash would be in the interests of Europe which otherwise "tomorrow, with the advance of millions of immigrants, could become (another) Africa," Gaddafi affirmed. Libya "is the entry door for unwanted immigration" which should be "stopped at the Libyan borders," he went on.

"Tomorrow Europe might no longer be European and even black as there are millions (of Africans) who want to come in," Gaddafi argued, describing the migratory movements as "something very

dangerous". "We don't know what will happen, what will be the reaction of the white and Christian Europeans faced with this influx of starving and ignorant Africans," the Libyan firebrand said, adding: "We don't know if Europe will remain an advanced and united continent or if it will be destroyed as happened with the barbarian invasions."¹⁵

Therefore we can lay the responsibility for the popularity of the uprising squarely on Gaddafi. By his banning of the trade unions, making strikes illegal, by his fostering racism, by his neo-liberal policies he created the conditions for the imperialist inspired and CIA sponsored leadership of the rebels to gain control. But all of this does not excuse our so-called leftists' capitulation to imperialism.

How the British left has fared on Libya

In Britain we got a total capitulation to imperialist propaganda from the SWP; opposed to imperialist intervention except in its proxy form of the Council: in Issue: 2243 dated: 19 March 2011 they castigated Obama for his lack of will in tackling Gaddafi: "If the US's motive was to see the revolution succeed, it would release Gaddafi's frozen assets to the interim government. But "No-fly zone' is no way to free Libya" however "People are prepared to die for this revolution and they are fighting for their freedom, not for the imperialist control of Libya." Sometimes "people" are conned by their leaders, we would suggest. But, in memory of Paul Foot, they acknowledge that sometimes imperialism can be bad: "He also agreed to pay compensation to the families affected by the Lockerbie bombing, and accepted the false conviction of Abdelbaset al-Megrahi—the Libyan who was framed for the bombing."

The Socialist Party too capitulated and sided with the rebels, as we would expect but it made some correct demands in *The Socialist*, 3 March 2011. If these demands, for committees to represent the workers, for independent trade unions for a constituent assembly, etc. were equally pitched at Gaddafi's supporters and called for a united front against the rebel leaders then they would form part of a programme for the Permanent Revolution. As it is they are simply a cover for imperialism.

Most liberal and confused of all must be Socialist Resistance: Fourth International in Britain. In an article by 'Terry' on March 6, 2011 4:49 am, *Support the Libyan revolution! Gaddafi out!* she opines:

"Gaddafi takes control of the situation again, with thousands of deaths, the process (of the revolution) will be slowed down, contained or even blocked. If Gaddafi is overthrown, the whole movement will as a result be stimulated and amplified. For this reason, all the ruling classes, all the governments, all the reactionary regimes of the Arab world are more or less supporting the Libyan dictatorship."

Obviously she has missed the newspapers and only heads a bit of the ITV news on who was supporting who in this conflict as well as mistaking the intentions of imperialism.

In the *Statement of the Liaison committee of the CWG (NZ) and HWRS (USA)*¹⁶ IMPERIALISM: HANDS OFF LIBYA! The US and EU are planning a military intervention to protect their oil interests! We get the following:

"Libya is on a knife edge poised between victorious workers revolution that can defeat both the dictatorship and imperialism, and turn the Arab Revolution into socialist revolution in the whole region, and the counter-revolution that will halt, reverse and defeat the Arab Revolution and prevent the formation of a United Socialist States of North Africa and the Middle East. The outcome will depend on whether or not the international working class can stop the US and EU imperialists from invading Libya and imposing a new

compliant national leadership. The aim of the Transitional National Council is to steer Libya during the interim period that will come after its complete liberation and the destruction of Gaddafi's oppressive regime. It will guide the country to free elections and the establishment of a constitution for Libya."

This is a total capitulation to imperialist propaganda, particularly the ridiculous notion that not only was there something called "the Arab Revolution" which was above class, but that it moved forward of its own objective volition irrespective of the leadership that it had and that the counter-revolution was represented only by Gaddafi and world imperialism. And the notion that the imperialist-sponsored and CIA directed and funded Transitional National Council was going to "guide the country to free elections and the establishment of a constitution for Libya" is just too silly for words.

No survey of the British left would be complete without a look at Workers Liberty. With some dread we opened the page and our worst expectations were met. Here it is:

Libyan rebels in retreat Submitted on 16 March, 2011 Author: Martyn Hudson

"The appointed leader of the liberated areas is Mustafa Abdul Jalil who has some record on human rights, at least verbally, but continued until the uprising as Justice minister under Qaddafi. There is said to be a degree of unhappiness in Benghazi at his close association with the old regime and there are certain parallels with politics in post-Ceausescu Romania in his statements such as "Qaddafi alone bore responsibility for the crimes that have occurred". That is patently ludicrous. Any emergence of workers' organisations in the free zone must exploit any democratic openings but there should be no illusions that the National Transitional Council will do much for workers' rights. Nor for tribal minorities, minority faith groups, migrant workers, and for the large LGBT population in the cities which has been dreadfully treated under Qaddafi. There will be no "carnival of the oppressed" in the liberated areas, as the Libyan masses look towards military victory, military defeat or a tense and unsustainable stalemate. But there is real hope and excitement in the free cities. **It may be that a potential No Fly Zone could tip the balance in the favour of the rebels — in that sense we should not take a stand against such a policy, even if we would not critically support it with all that that that implies.** Let us look towards the elimination of the Qaddafi regime and its crimes. The vengeance of history is more powerful than the vengeance of the most powerful General Secretary, as Trotsky wrote in similar circumstances. Solidarity with the revenge of the Libyan working class!"

Martin has no illusions in the leadership of the 'rebels' will do to the workers, nevertheless he has picked his (pro-imperialist naturally) side so he is for bombing by imperialist forces – won't take a stand against it – but will not critically endorse it either. The three 'that's' in the piece is him stuttering in amazement at what he was writing. If he keeps running into himself coming back like this he will end up up his own rectum!

Programme to Emulate the Method of Trotsky

As mentioned above we seek to emulate the method Trotsky used in defence of the USSR. We can see that he defended all the remaining gains of the Russian Revolution whilst urging a political revolution to depose the corrupt Stalinist bureaucracy.

“But, fortunately, among the surviving conquests of the October revolution are the nationalized industry and the collectivized Soviet economy. Upon this foundation Workers’ Soviets can build a new and happier society. This foundation cannot be surrendered by us to the world bourgeoisie under any conditions. It is the duty of revolutionists to defend tooth and nail every position gained by the working class, whether it involves democratic rights, wage scales, or so colossal a conquest of mankind as the nationalization of the means of production and planned economy. Those who are incapable of defending conquests already gained can never fight for new ones. Against the imperialist foe we will defend the USSR with all our might. However, the conquests of the October revolution will serve the people only if they prove themselves capable of dealing with the Stalinist bureaucracy, as in their day they dealt with the Tsarist bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie.

...Advanced workers! Be the first to rally to the banner of Marx and Lenin which is now the banner of the Fourth International! Learn how to create, in the conditions of Stalinist illegality, tightly fused, reliable revolutionary circles! Establish contacts between these circles! Learn how to establish contacts through loyal and reliable people, especially the sailors, with your revolutionary co-thinkers in bourgeois lands! It is difficult, but it can be done.

Down With Cain Stalin and his Camarilla!

Down With the Rapacious Bureaucracy!

Long Live the Soviet Union, the Fortress of the Toilers!

Long Live the World Socialist Revolution!¹⁷

In this spirit we put forward the following programme in defence Libya and the remaining gains of the 1969 revolution against the attacks of world imperialism and Gaddafi’s betrayals of those initial progressive goals:

- **For a united front with the Libyan army against the pro-imperialist Transitional National Council and against all CIA sponsored groups!**
- **For Revolutionary Committees in all workplaces, colleges and regions, linked up nationally!**
- **For a national Constituent Assembly based on these Revolutionary Committees.**
- **For a workers’ and peasants government!**
- **For free and independent trade unions!**
- **No immigration controls; equal rights and conditions for all immigrant workers!**
- **For workers control of workplaces and the oilfields; for substantial subsidies in food and essential goods, decent wage and conditions for all workers and jobs for all; expropriate all imperialist assets!**
- **For a Socialist Federation of North Africa and the Middle East, full support for the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and Bahrain!**
- **Victory to the strikers in Wisconsin and all workers in the metropolitan countries!**
- **For permanent revolution for the victory of the socialist revolution!**
- **Build the Trotskyist world party of Socialist Revolution!**

¹ Leon Trotsky, *Moralists and Sycophants Against Marxism, Peddlers of Indulgences and Their Socialist Allies, or the Cuckoo in a Strange Nest*. (June 1939) <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1939/06/moral.htm>

² <http://thetruthiswhere.wordpress.com/2011/03/02/world-cheers-as-the-cia-plunges-libya-into-chaos/>

³ Al Qaeda and the "War on Terrorism", by Michel Chossudovsky, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=7718>

⁴ STRATFOR, Jihadist Opportunities in Libya, <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20110223-jihadist-opportunities-libya>

⁵ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/19117853/Minority-Imperialism-New>.

⁶ Human Development Report, The Human Development Index - going beyond income, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/LBY.html>.

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya's HDI is 0.755, which gives the country a rank of 53 out of 169 countries with comparable data. The Human Development Index of Arab States as a region increased from 0.398 in 1980 to 0.590 today, placing Libyan Arab Jamahiriya above the regional average.

⁷ History of Libya under Gaddafi, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Libya_under_Gaddafi

⁸ <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-8145.html>.

⁹ <http://somalilandpress.com/libya-rebels-execute-black-immigrants-while-forces-kidnap-others-20586>

¹⁰ "Rat meat is a healthy alternative to rice and grains," Vijay Prakash of the Bihar state welfare department told a press conference in Patna, "and should be eaten by one and all. Rat and chicken have equal food values, not only in protein but throughout the entire spectrum of nutrition. I haven't tried it myself, but my mother has and she finds it delicious. In fact, whoever has eaten rat says it is more spongy and better than even chicken meat." The welfare secretary's words were greeted with dismay by listeners. "Indian culture is based on vegetarianism," said Chef P. Soundararajan of the Mahindra resort chain. "Our culture and customs are based on not harming any living beings. And besides rats are dirty creatures that only the very poor would eat."

¹¹ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/marx/>

¹² "In a Leopoldville apartment, I heard a CIA man, who had had too much to drink, describe with satisfaction exactly how and where the newly independent country's first Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, had been killed a few months earlier. He assumed that any American, even a visiting student like me, would share his relief at the assassination of a man the United States government considered a dangerous leftist troublemaker." Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998.

¹³ Leon Trotsky, *Anti-Imperialist Struggle is Key to Liberation, An Interview with Mateo Fossa*, (September 1938) <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1938/09/liberation.htm>.

¹⁴ Business News Print, Libya's Unemployment at 20.7 Percent. 2009-03-09, Libya's unemployment rate is 20.74 percent according to recent census figures released recently by the authorities. That would give Libya the highest jobless rate in the five-country Maghreb region of 80 million people, where the proportions of workers without jobs in the four other states range from around 9 to 15 percent, according to official figures.

"Libyans with jobs numbered 1.3 million, which represent 79.26 percent of the whole workforce. This means that the jobless rate in Libya is around 20.74 percent," Oea newspaper reported as quoted by Reuters.

<http://www.libyaonline.com/business/details.php?id=8161>

¹⁵ Times Live, Aug 31, 2010 By Sapa-AFP <http://www.timeslive.co.za/africa/article631492.ece/Gaddafi-seeks-EU-cash-to-prevent-black-Europe>

¹⁶ <http://davebrownz.amplify.com/2011/02/23/libya-imperialist-hands-off/>

¹⁷ Leon Trotsky, Letter to the Workers of the USSR, May 1940, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1940/05/workers.htm>