

Libya after Gaddafi

Independent workers' action needed

Robert Bechert

Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

Almost every day there are warning signs of the dark shadows that Nato's intervention has thrown over the Libyan revolution.

In a country with hardly any tradition of a workers' movement the distorting effects and dangers posed by the manner of Gaddafi's overthrow are starting to come into the open.

The newly published correspondence confirming the close links between the Gaddafi regime and imperialist agencies like the US's CIA and Britain's MI6 show the western powers' utter hypocrisy. Their 'concern' for the Libyan people under Gaddafi did not amount to much. Trade and assistance with the 'war on terror' were the west's priorities.

Only when they saw a chance to both replace Gaddafi with a more reliable ally and to take a grip over the revolution starting in Libya, did Washington, Paris, London, etc, suddenly start calling for "regime change". This should serve as a warning not just to the Libyans but also to those in Syria and elsewhere who might have hopes in outside intervention against tyrants.

Already it is clear that the imperialist powers' plans, particularly regarding the Transitional National Council (TNC), are not working out smoothly and they are preparing for the possibility of using the UN as a cover to intervene to try to stabilise situation.

The TNC is still largely a fiction and is continually hesitating over when it moves to Tripoli, where around one-third of the country's population live.

The TNC leaders also have problems over who they should accept as representatives from the west and south of the country and have not, so far, been able to appoint a new 'cabinet' to replace the one that resigned after the TNC's military commander, General Younes, was killed by some of his erstwhile rebel allies.

Independent

The tragedy of the first stage of the Libyan revolution is that the largely spontaneous initial uprising did not really result in the development of democratic, self-organisation of the working masses and youth.

This has meant, especially in

Tripoli, that in the absence on the ground of democratic independent organisations in communities and workplaces etc, militias and mosques are taking the lead in maintaining security and getting services restarted. But they are not democratically run or controlled and their leaders have their own agendas.

In the absence of a workers' movement and left forces, Islamist groups have started to attempt to build wider support by making populist attacks on the western powers and warning that the revolution could be "lost".

Rebels

The revelations confirming US, British, German and other governments' security services collaboration with Gaddafi in so-called 'rendition' (ie kidnapping and abduction) and torture have been seized upon by Islamist leaders to build their own support and weaken that of the pro-western NTC leadership.

Belhaj, the rebel forces military commander in Tripoli, recently told the New York Times that "many Libyans feared that the revolution would be 'stolen' by rich, Westernised secularists on the TNC". At this moment they seem to be especially targeting the TNC's so-called "prime

minister" Jibril and this is why he seems to be trying to delay his move to Tripoli for as long as possible.

Belhaj himself is the former leader of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) who was kidnapped in 2004 in Bangkok in a joint CIA-MI6 operation. He became the rebels' Tripoli commander after the TNC was forced by rebel fighters to withdraw its initial appointment of a former Gaddafi general, Shkal, to the post.

But these are still early days, Libyan workers and youth have still not put their demands on the table. A key factor in the revolution was the revolt of the youth against the Gaddafi regime's suffocating corruption and nepotism. 30% of Libya's 6.5 million population is under the age of 15, there are nearly a quarter of a million university and college students, and their voice will be heard.

Workers' alternative

It is likely that the pro-western leaders of the TNC would, if they are able to form a government, proceed carefully with a neoliberal agenda. They would use Libya's oil and gas income to maintain, at least for a time, public services and subsidies.

But a renewed world economic crisis would fundamentally change the situation and threaten to plunge

the country into disaster. When the oil price fell in the 1980s, Libya's GDP collapsed by over 40%.

Now more than ever the creation of independent, democratic workers' organisations, including a workers' party, are vital if working people, the oppressed and youth are to achieve a real revolutionary transformation of the country and thwart the imperialists' plans, end dictatorship and transform the lives of the mass of the people.

To achieve these goals such a movement would need to defend all democratic rights, involve and defend the rights of migrant workers, be against the privatisation of Libya's assets, demand the withdrawal of all foreign military forces and oppose all foreign military intervention. They must demand the democratic election of a constituent assembly and, above all, reject participation in any government based on capitalism.

Instead it would strive for a government of representatives of the workers and poor based upon democratic structures in the workplaces and communities that would use Libya's resources for its population. This would be the real victory for the Libyan revolution and set an international example of ending both dictatorial rule and the miseries of capitalism.

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The Committee for a Workers' International

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated.

The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world.

For more details including CWI publications write to: CWI, PO Box 3688, London E11 1YE. email cwi@worldsoc.co.uk

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The CWI website contains news, reports and analysis from around the world. Recent articles include:

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Italy: General strike against Berlusconi's crisis measures

The main trade union federation, Cgil, calls for an eight-hour stoppage.

Antongiulio Mannoni, Controcorrente (CWI Italy)

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Kazakhstan: Terror continues against oil workers

Striker's daughter murdered... Arrest of socialists threatened. Step up the solidarity campaign!

CWI reporters, Moscow

Indian high commission protest over Tamil death sentences

Manny Thain

Tamil Solidarity national secretary

'End the death penalty in India', was the slogan chanted by over 700 people outside the Indian high commission on 30 August.

Called by Tamil Solidarity, the protest demanded the cancellation of the execution of Murugan, Santhan and Perarivalen, then scheduled for 9 September. Later in the evening of the protest, an eight-week 'stay of execution' was announced.

The three men have been held in solitary confinement for over 20 years for their alleged involvement in the assassination of Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991. This judgment, made in the frenzied political atmosphere at the time, has long been questioned.

Rajiv Gandhi was allegedly killed by a Tamil Tiger suicide bomber, and a further 25 people were convicted. The sentences of the other 22 have been commuted to life imprisonment.

Murugan's sister joined Tamil Solidarity members to hand a protest letter to the high commissioner. She implored the crowd to continue the protests and to struggle for the rights of Tamil-speaking people in India and Sri Lanka, and to win democratic rights for all.

The campaign to end the death penalty in India is also backed by Paul Murphy, Socialist Party Ireland MEP.

It has gained considerable international support, including from people such as Arundhati Roy, activist/author, Noam Chomsky, academic/activist, and Desmond Tutu,

anti-apartheid campaigner.

Tamil Solidarity supports the call to commute the death penalty – and to end its use – and for a retrial. An online petition can be signed on the Tamil Solidarity website: tamilsolidarity.org

Repression

We also demand a full public inquiry into the brutal slaughter of Tamil-speaking people during the decades-long civil war in Sri Lanka.

The only way this inquiry could be free from the influence of president Mahinda Rajapaksa's regime and his international collaborators would be if it were made up of representatives from the working class, poor and oppressed from all communities in Sri Lanka, aided by workers' and human rights

organisations internationally.

Although damning evidence is being amassed of the genocidal policies of Sri Lanka's Rajapaksa regime, many governments are anxious to maintain links with the small but strategically important island.

The Indian and Sri Lankan governments have close links – and India fears the growing influence of China in the region.

The Indian government gave political and military support to the Sri Lankan regime throughout its war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam which ended two years ago with tens of thousands of Tamil civilians dying in the last few weeks alone.

Clearly, the execution of Murugan, Santhan and Perarivalen would be celebrated by Rajapaksa.

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Nigeria: Bombing of UN offices

Terrorism takes root in Nigeria amidst deep social and economic crises.

HT Soweto, DSM (CWI Nigeria)