

Britain out of Syria; Victory to Assad!



The British imperialist forces' bombing of Syria is a crime that workers must take no part in. British bombs in Syria are part of the problem, not part of the solution.

A war of intervention has now been raging in Syria for nearly five years. This war is being fought by imperialism through its proxies, which include a handful of local Syrian crazed fundamentalists alongside nearly 100,000 foreign – including European – jihadis. These fighters have been unleashed by imperialism with the aim of overthrowing the legitimate, sovereign and independent government of the Syrian Arab Republic. So far, more than a quarter of a million Syrians, including nearly 100,000 soldiers, have died in the conflict.

The war in Syria is not, as some will have us believe, the result of 'mistaken policies' by western governments. It is a product of imperialism's relentless drive for world domination – of monopoly capitalism's insatiable drive to maximise profit by controlling raw materials, markets and avenues for profitable investment. Any government that pursues an economic or foreign policy that stands in the way of this drive for domination makes itself a candidate for overthrow in the eyes of the free-market fundamentalists in Washington, London, Paris and elsewhere.

Syria's independent government has been an obstruction to this agenda for decades, and the US has invested huge resources in various attempts to create the conditions for ousting it. Former head of the US Defence Intelligence Agency, retired Lt Gen Michael T Flynn, has admitted that the US government took a "wilful decision" to create and nurture terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and Islamic State (IS) for use in such campaigns all over the Middle East and beyond.

Since 2011, the Obama regime alone has sent more than \$7.7bn worth of 'military aid' to the jihadis in Syria. US regional proxies and allies Turkey, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have all joined it in providing funding, training, safe havens and logistical support.

The road to Tehran runs through Damascus

Ruling circles in the US have been preparing the ground for Syria's destruction for many years. Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, has emphasised the need to "deconstruct" Syria to serve US interests, for only through such 'deconstruction' will the US achieve the next vital step in its regional domination plans: *regime change in Iran*.

In 2009, O'Hanlon detailed the steps the US would need to take to achieve this goal. Before attacking Iran, he said, both Hizbollah and Syria would need to be eliminated. This report was not just an academic exercise: the Brookings Institute is backed by giant finance, armaments, oil and other monopolies, including JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America, Goldman Sachs, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, General Electric, Exxon, BP, Shell, Chevron, Conoco Phillips, Comcast, Google, Facebook, Verizon, AT&T, Pepsi and Coca Cola. These monopoly corporations have a stranglehold over the imperialist governments, and are the driving force behind wars both in Syria and in the entire region stretching from the Middle East through Central Asia to the borders of the Russian Federation – all in the interests of grabbing mineral resources, markets and investment opportunities.

In the pursuit of domination, there is no crime that imperialism will not commit; no cruelty it will not stoop to; no mean method to which it will not resort. Through its jihadi proxies in Syria, it has been responsible for the murder of more than a quarter of a million Syrians and the displacement of 11 million more, five million of whom have been forced to flee the country. Some of these unfortunate victims are now turning up in Europe as refugees, there to be met with suspicion and hostility. In their desperate attempts to reach the safety of Europe, more than 3,000 refugees have lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea.

Russian intervention and Paris bombing

Two events have had a dramatic and transformational effect on the war in Syria. The first has been Russia's intervention on the side of the Syrian government. At Syria's invitation, the Russian air force started bombing jihadi targets on 30 September – with devastating effects on the terrorists' infrastructure, bases and hideouts, ammunition dumps, oil exporting facilities and training camps. Closely coordinating with these aerial attacks, the Syrian army has advanced successfully into many areas that had been occupied by jihadi outfits such as IS and Jabhat al-Nusra. This joint effort has in two months inflicted more defeats on the jihadis than did US bombers in over a year.

The reason for the Russian/Syrian successes and the imperialists' failure is simple: while the Russian/Syrian side is *genuinely* engaged in a fight to destroy the jihadis, the imperialist invasion force, while *pretending* to fight against the terrorists, has *actually* been focusing on its decades-old policy of regime change in Syria. Since only the terrorist groups (albeit with the support of imperialism and its stooge Gulf regimes) have the potential to overthrow the Syrian government, their destruction would undermine completely the imperialists' aims. That is why, after a year of the US's 'fight against IS', Syrians were reporting that *the terrorists had actually grown stronger, not weaker*.

Meanwhile, the only forces on the ground capable of defeating the terrorists are those of the Syrian army, which enjoys mass popular support and is under the command of the sovereign and legitimate government of Syria, headed by President Bashar al-Assad. And this is precisely what the Syrian army is doing, in close cooperation with the Russian air force. The Russian sorties have rattled imperialism and exposed its 'anti-terrorist' operations for what they really are – a PR exercise and a cover for the *illegal destruction of Syrian civilian infrastructure*.

Recently, the Washington Post was obliged to report: "Posters of Putin are popping up on cars and billboards in parts of Syria and Iraq, praising the Russian military intervention in Syria as one that will redress the balance of power in the region. The Russian leader is winning accolades from many in Iraq and Syria who see Russian air strikes in Syria as a turning point after more than a year of largely ineffectual efforts by the US-led coalition to dislodge Islamic State militants."

The second of these events was the coordinated jihadi onslaught in Paris on 13 November, which killed 129 innocent

people and wounded another 350. This caused such an outrage in France and elsewhere that the imperialist powers were dragged into effecting (no matter how insincerely) a change of front. Having poured scorn on Russia's President Vladimir Putin for years, the leaders of the US, Germany, Britain and France were suddenly queuing up to meet him and to seek his advice.

The result of all this has been a deep split in the imperialist camp between those who still wish to prioritise regime change in Syria and those who consider terrorism to be the greater danger. Through the force of events, and of public pressure demanding a serious fight against terrorism, the latter camp is presently gaining strength.

As a result of the Russian intervention and the Paris massacre, imperialism is on the back foot, while the Russian government and parliament (duma) are setting the agenda. On 17 November, the duma approved a resolution calling for solidarity with all nations that have suffered attacks, and for the creation of an international anti-terror coalition, modelled on the anti-Nazi coalition created during the second world war.

This resolution listed IS, Jabhat al-Nusra and other such outfits as terrorist groups and called for the elimination of all sources of financial support for them, including funding through stolen and smuggled oil and antiquities (trades that have been openly facilitated by Turkey, the US and others). The duma's legislators reminded "their foreign colleagues that Russia had repeatedly warned the international community about the dangers that came with destabilising the Middle East by nations that seek global dominance, first of all the United States".

Such a coalition, however, would only have validity – and only have any chance of being effective in its mission – if its members focused solely on carrying out targeted actions against terror groups *in coordination with the government and people* of the countries concerned – whether in Syria, Iraq or elsewhere. By contrast with such a coordinated, agreed effort, the presence of Nato forces in Syria today is in total violation of the wishes of the Syrian people and government, and Nato's hostile actions there are in total contravention of international law.

The events in Paris have shone a spotlight on the imperialist powers' collusion with murderous jihadi gangs. Nearly all the jihadis involved in the Paris massacre were home-grown fundamentalists from France and Belgium, who, despite being known to the security services, were able to travel freely between Europe and Syria. In fact, while they were acting as stooges of imperialism in the fight to overthrow the Syrian government, they were seen as 'good' jihadis and were facilitated in their crimes.

These mercenaries were brainwashed through Saudi Arabia's mediaeval, fundamentalist brand of Islam (wahhabism) in mosques built with Saudi money and facilitated by imperialist governments, so it is entirely hypocritical for the representatives of imperialism now to feign shock and horror over the actions and 'values' of the very terrorists they themselves have brought into existence and nurtured with such tender, loving care.

British bombs – part of the problem

Meanwhile, the British parliament has voted to join the imperialist invading forces in Syria, enabled in no small part by our great 'anti-war leader' Jemerny Corbyn, who granted the rabidly pro-imperialist Parliamentary Labour Party a free vote on the

question. Corbyn *had* been a lonely voice in verbally 'opposing' the bombing of Syria, but, in practice, his opposition amounted to precisely nothing, since granting a free vote to his MPs meant facilitating the very thing he claimed to be 'taking a stand' against. As everyone knew, a free vote for Labour MPs meant that Syrian civilians and Syrian infrastructure would soon be being bombed by the RAF. Indeed, the planes were on the runway before the debate was over, and their first target was, predictably, a Syrian oil refinery.

So it was that Stop the War's former chair effectively gave a green light for war to be unleashed, confirming Britain's peculiar status as a country where the anti-war movement is controlled by the very people waging war. Fearing mass resignations from the shadow cabinet, and despite a clear warning from Syria's president that British military action in Syria would be *unlawful and uninvited*, Corbyn put his own political ambition and party politicking above the lives of the Syrian people, betraying workers everywhere in the service of Britain's imperialist rulers.

This betrayal will not be enough to lose Corbyn the support of his fake-left fanclub, of course. Praise of his 'long game' is already emerging. And, as has historically been the case, this game is being played with the lives of Johnny Foreigner. But, given the knife edge on which events are presently turning in Syria, the blood price may ultimately be paid by *British workers, too*, and far sooner than we might imagine, if we continue to allow ourselves to be sucked into the vortex of a third world war.

British workers need to understand what neither the imperialist ruling class nor our servile trade-union and anti-war leaders will tell us, which is that, unlike the Nato invaders, Russia was *invited* by Syria's popular government to support its army and people. Russia is *wanted* in Syria; it is *trusted* by Syrians. Russia is helping target *all* terrorist groups that are attacking Syria's people and trying to overthrow their elected government; Nato targets only those it cannot control. Russia is invested in the national independence of a free, secular, sovereign Syria; Nato wishes to destroy all vestiges of Syrian independence.

Despite these facts, Stop the War continues to parrot a nonsensical 'neither Nato nor Moscow' line, informing us that: "Stop the War has made clear its opposition to all foreign military intervention in the Middle East, including Vladimir Putin's." StW's leaders stubbornly refuse to recognise that Syria's invitation to Russia is *an expression of the Syrian people's self-determination* – something they have repeatedly claimed they wish to see!

We in the CPGB-ML are clear, however: the request for help by the legitimate Syrian government to its trusted ally is to be welcomed, and can in no way be put on a par with the *illegal and aggressive* bombing campaigns of Nato imperialism. Whatever the outcome of Russia's present efforts to assemble an international coalition against terrorism, in the final analysis *all* war, including wars waged using reactionary proxy forces, can only be ended by the successful overthrow of imperialism – this bloody system that has for so long subjected humanity to the torments of war, hunger, racism, poverty and disease.

There is no other way out of the cycle of imperialist wars, which make way for the imperialist bandits' 'peace', and which in turn merely prepare the ground for yet more imperialist wars.

Victory to the Syrian people; death to imperialism!

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