

NO TO BOMBING SYRIA!

BUILD THE MOVEMENT AGAINST TRUMP AND MAY

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NO TO IMPERIALIST ATTACKS

“Hell on earth” was how one UN chief described eastern Ghouta earlier this year. Now the appalling misery of buildings bombed to rubble, hospitals with no supplies, and food at critically low levels, has been added to by the horror of a chemical weapons attack.

In response Donald Trump has vowed to ‘take action’ against those responsible, adding there was ‘not much doubt’ about who was to blame - meaning it seems the Assad regime, or even Russia directly.

Over the last seven years more than half a million Syrians have been killed and millions more have fled as their country has been torn apart by civil war and competing global and regional powers. Dropping more bombs on this devastated country will only add to the nightmare.

It is the role of imperialism in the Middle East which is central to the horror that has developed in the region. Its legacy, with decades of military intervention, divide-and-rule policies, support for brutal dictatorships and flirtations with jihadist forces left Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan in ruins. In Syria their interventions contribute to what is in reality several wars taking place now in that country.

The events in Syria confirm the analysis the Socialist made at the start of the conflict. At the time there were widespread predictions, including from the Tory-led government in Britain, that President Assad would rapidly be defeated.

We argued that, unlike in Libya, this would not be the case. Assad had greater reserves of support from ethnic and religious minorities within the country; with the increasingly sectarian character of the rebels driving them towards the regime.

At the start the uprising was part of the Arab Spring - and was a genuine popular revolt against the Assad dictatorship. But this changed with Assad’s war to hold onto power and the outside intervention of reactionary forces supporting different sides in Syria - including the brutal dictatorial regimes of Saudi Arabia and Iran - backed up by imperialist forces.

Today US imperialism - while still the most powerful military force on the planet - is increasingly a bit player in Syria. The Assad regime, backed by Russia, now controls most of the populated areas of the country. At the end of March it seems to have largely taken control of Eastern Ghouta.

It is not obvious why the Syrian regime or Russia would have launched a chemical weapons attack after their brutal siege had succeeded. It is possible of course, but so could it possibly have been carried out by remnants of Isis or others.

Inevitably, Jeremy Corbyn is already under attack from the right-wing press for correctly refusing to apportion blame without evidence, and for failing to beat the Trumpian drums of war. This when, as Patrick Cockburn rightly says in the Independent, there is a real danger that the Middle East could face the catastrophe of a regional war, and that Trump, backed by May, could fan the flames.

The workers’ movement needs to clearly oppose all the warmongering of the imperialist powers and capitalist politicians (including Blairites), and instead support the rebuilding of the workers’ movements across the region on a multi-ethnic, non-sectarian basis.

At the same time socialists internationally need to spearhead movements against imperialist intervention in the Middle East.

We say:

- No to imperialist intervention! The withdrawal of all foreign forces from Syria and from other occupied countries.
- For the building of united, non-sectarian defence committees to defend workers, the poor and others against sectarian attacks from all sides.
- Independent trade unions and the building of mass workers’ parties with a programme of land to the masses and the factories to the workers, implemented through a programme for a socialist democratic planned economy.
- A democratic socialist confederation of the Middle East and North Africa.

The Socialist Party is affiliated to the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI) which organises in more than 45 countries worldwide.

We stand in solidarity with the workers and oppressed of the planet in the struggle for a socialist world.

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