

Libyan rebels massacre black Africans

By Wolfgang Weber
31 March 2011

The opposition forces in Libya attempting to march on Tripoli with the assistance of American, French and British bombs are far removed from the image of innocent civilians fighting for freedom and democracy promoted by the media and political circles.

This is made clear in a March 22 article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* by Gunnar Heinsohn, the author of *Encyclopaedia of Genocide* (Rowohlt, 1998).

Heinsohn cites a report by the well-known Zimbabwean journalist and documentary filmmaker Farai Sevenzo dealing with barbaric, pogrom-like massacres perpetrated by the so-called “rebels” against black African workers in Libya. The article states:

“Because mercenaries from Chad and Mali are presumed to be fighting for him [Gaddafi], the lives of a million African refugees and thousands of African migrants are at risk. A Turkish construction worker told the British radio station BBC: ‘We had seventy to eighty people from Chad working for our company. They were massacred with pruning shears and axes, accused by the attackers of being Gaddafi’s troops. The Sudanese people were massacred. We saw it for ourselves.’ ”

The genocide authority Heinsohn explains: “It is standard knowledge in genocide research that minorities come under attack in civil wars because at least one party to the conflict accuses them of collaborating with the enemy....

“Whoever wants to prevent crimes against humanity with the use of force...is always in danger of helping one side in the neutralisation or even extermination of the other side.... UN Security Council Resolution 1973 of March 17 against the Libyan government provides a perfect example.

“All the stops of international criminal law have been pulled against those prepared to bloodily defend their power. The material assets at risk are meticulously

listed. But neither in the text of the resolution nor in the speeches of US Secretary of State Clinton or French President Sarkozy is any mention made of warnings or legal threats directed to the insurgents. The use of ‘mercenaries’ by the Libyan leadership is expressly condemned. But genocidal acts conducted under the same pretext—such as the mass killings of black African workers reported by Farai Sevenzo—go unmentioned.... A cloak of complete silence is being thrown up surrounding the deeds of his [Gaddafi’s] opponents.”

On February 28, the Arab TV station Al Jazeera reported the racist massacre of black African workers by so-called “freedom fighters” as follows: “Dozens of workers from sub-Saharan Africa, it is feared, have been killed and hundreds are hiding because angry opponents of the government are hunting down black African mercenaries, witnesses reported.... According to official reports, about 90 Kenyans and 64 people from southern Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Zambia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Burundi landed in Nairobi today.

“One of them, Julius Kiluu, a 60-year-old construction manager, told Reuters: ‘We were attacked by people from the village. They accused us of being murderous mercenaries. But in reality they simply refuse to tolerate us. Our camp was burnt down. Our company and our embassy helped us get to the airport.’

“Hundreds of black immigrants from the poorest African countries, who work mainly as low-wage day labourers in Libya, have been wounded by the rebels. From fear of being killed, some of them have refrained from going to a doctor.”

At the time of the outbreak of civil war, about 1.5 million black Africans were employed in Libya as labourers in the oil industry and the construction, agriculture and service sectors.

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>

