

The Lynching of Libya

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Global Research, November 03, 2011

[The News](#) 3 November 2011

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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British writer and political thinker George Orwell died at 46. In the short span of his writing life, he left behind lucid pieces of prose in which he articulated his brilliant political thought. Had he lived longer, the world would have been further enriched by his political philosophy. In his essay "Shooting an Elephant," Orwell wrote, "When the white man turns tyrant, it is his own freedom that he destroys." After having launched unprovoked wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the white man has now inflicted tyranny on Libya.

Before finally murdering Libyan leader Col Muammar Qaddafi together with his son as they fled the town of Sirte on Oct 20, and then having put their bloodied, rotting bodies on display, the US-led Nato forces had been bombing and systematically destroying Libya for nine months with the specific objective of regime change. According to Barack Obama, the war in Iraq was of choice, in Afghanistan of necessity and in Libya simply to change regime. As renowned documentary filmmaker John Pilger said of Obama, "The son of Africa claims a continent's crown jewels." That was the title of his article on Oct 26 on Obama's thrust into Libya and then Uganda. Obama announced on Oct 14 that he was dispatching US Special Forces to join the civil war in that county.

NATO particularly focused on destroying Sirte, Qaddafi's hometown with a population of 100,000. For months, thousands of citizens were trapped without food and medicines while they faced bombardment by American, British and French aircraft round the clock. Consequently, many thousands were killed, but the mainstream Western media remained shamelessly silent.

As Qaddafi and his retinue left the city in a small convoy, the vehicles were spotted by American AWACS aircraft, which in turn called in French fighter jets that bombed them. The Libyan leader was seriously wounded in the raid. Soon the so-called rebels "liberating" Libya caught up with him. One of them, Sanad al-Sadek al-Ureibi, claimed to have shot Qaddafi twice, hitting him in the head and the chest. But before being murdered, Qaddafi was humiliated and brutally beaten – and according to Seamus Milne's Guardian article (Oct 26), even sodomised with a knife.

Would the International Criminal Court in The Hague reconsider who deserves to be tried for war crimes, Qaddafi posthumously, or his tormentors, and all those who perpetrated the genocide of the people of a country? The barbarity has removed the thin mask of civility from the face of Western civilisation. Rest well, Orwell: your observation stays valid.

Behind the "liberation" and "humanitarian intervention" is a mad scramble for Libya's energy resources. The United States and Europe targeted Qaddafi because he stood in the way of their establishing Western control over the African continent and its vast energy and

minerals reserves, including those hitherto untapped.

Just a day after the Libyan leader's assassination, British defence secretary Philip Hammond – who did concede that the new Libyan regime's image was “a little bit stained” by the murder – told the BBC: “I expect British companies and their sales directors to pack their suitcases and go to Libya to participate in the reconstruction of the country as soon as they can. Libya is a rich country with oil reserves, and I expect there will be opportunities for British companies to get involved.”

British Conservative MP Daniel Kwaczynski did one better. He demanded that Libya pay for Britain's bombing raids on it during the NATO campaign.

Meanwhile, US politicians are apprehensive that Britain and France might carve out a larger share of the spoils. Republican senator Lindsey Graham urged the United States: “Let's get in on the ground [in Libya]. There's a lot of money to be made in the future in Libya. Lot of oil to be produced.”

The kings, princes and princelings of the oil-rich Arab should take warning from Qaddafi's fate. Nicholas Sarkozy threatened right at the start of the US/Nato intervention in Libya: “Every ruler, and especially every Arab ruler, could confront a similar situation.”

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