

Military Resistance 12A9



“Those Fighting The Government Are Largely Local Tribesmen And Civilians Who Have Taken Up Arms To Defend Themselves And Fight For Their Rights”

“They Have Rejected The Government, And They Refuse To Let It Oppress Them Again”

“The Government Is Accusing Us Of Terrorism To Justify The War Against Us — That’s Why We Decided To Defend Our People”

“They Are Normal People Who Have Taken Up Arms Against Maliki’s Regime, Unable To Cope With Being Brutally Repressed Under The Facade Of A Fight Against Terrorism”

The reality is that much of Anbar province has fallen out of Iraqi government hands, not because of the power of al-Qaeda, but because the government has simply made itself hated.

Those fighting the government are largely local tribesmen and civilians who have taken up arms to defend themselves and fight for their rights.

January 10, 2014 by Ben Allinson-Davies, unfetteredfreedom.wordpress.com/ [Excerpts]

On January 4th 2014, the news was swiftly plastered over every mainstream and ‘alternative’ media outlet imaginable; as of January 4th 2014, the Iraqi city of Fallujah, which coalition forces (predominantly US troops) had so painstakingly fought to secure (twice) in 2004 (at a cost of over 100 lives of US and coalition troops, and untold thousands of innocent civilians), had once again fallen out of the control of the Iraqi government, as a result of an offensive by militias composed (largely) of Sunni militants.

You can’t escape the knee-jerk narrative which was once again utilised from the media’s seemingly timeless bag of increasingly repetitive tricks; the city of Fallujah, in the province of Anbar (a majority-Sunni province) had fallen into the hands of “al-Qaeda” or “al-Qaeda linked militants” once again.

The all-pervading saturation of the word “al-Qaeda” in the overwhelming majority of reports which covered the unfolding story, was dismally echoed by all manner of media outlets.

The language used, as well as the moral selectivity of the reports (especially those designed to pull at the heart-strings of the readers) has been, as it usually is when involving Muslims (especially Sunni ones) nothing short of falling into the very same category of discrimination and sectarianism which these same media outlets so bemoan. Vilification is implicit at least every few lines.

Here's a taste of the coverage given to this story.

An article by TIME, published on January 5th:

"Al-Qaeda Takes Over Iraqi City That Cost 100 U.S. Lives 10 Years Ago

"The Iraqi government that the U.S. put into power during eight years of war lost the key city of Fallujah over the weekend. While you weren't paying attention, al-Qaeda has returned to western Iraq with a vengeance, in the guise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant."

An Article put up on the Daily Star (and various other outlets), also published on January 6th:

"Iraq PM urges Falluja to expel Al-Qaeda-linked militants

"BAGHDAD: Iraq's prime minister urged people in the besieged city of Falluja on Monday to drive out Al-Qaeda-linked insurgents to pre-empt a military offensive that officials said could be launched within days."

All of them sensationalise the story by putting the allegation that al-Qaeda is spearheading the assault on Fallujah in the headlines, and giving little to no regard for a closer analysis of the story, or any other factors which could be driving the rebels' recent gains.

The real story is not nearly as black-and-white, good-and-evil, as they attempt us to believe.

The origins of the (ongoing) Sunni insurgency itself can decisively be traced to 2009-2010 and onwards.

After the US withdrawal in 2011, violence naturally increased slightly, but not substantially.

The fault seems not to have originated with the US (although it definitely could have been said to have done in invading Iraq in the first place), but with the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's aloof, condescending, sectarian attitude towards the Sunnis, which alienated them as allies.

"There Is Only So Much People Can Take, And The Government Was Swiftly Pushing Them To The Limit"

Maliki's Shiite-dominated government was thus shooting itself in the foot by homogenising the Sunnis as potential terrorists, imposing harsh anti-terrorism laws which are clearly directed against their sect, and disenfranchising them from mainstream society.

To make matters worse, the Maliki government had also been very vocally and very openly pushing Sunni ministers and political figures out of the political

process (thus also depriving the Sunnis of any meaningful representation in the government).

Maliki even openly, and without presenting evidence, accused the deputy prime minister of being connected to al-Qaeda only hours after the US soldiers had left US soil, and issued a warrant for his arrest.

Violence has now returned to 2008 levels as a result of popular anger, notably in Sunni-majority areas.

However, it has to be said at this point that this is still simplifying the situation.

The fact remains that a large proportion of the Sunni insurgents (and a majority in many areas) fighting in Iraq are not al-Qaeda at all; merely, they are normal people who have taken up arms against Maliki's regime, unable to cope with being brutally repressed under the facade of a fight against terrorism (an all too common tactic of nascent despots).

There is only so much people can take, and the government was swiftly pushing them to the limit.

When peaceful protests erupted in 2011-2013, Maliki's government had a key chance to reach out to the Sunnis once again.

But Maliki reverted to type and did what many foolish leaders only seem to know how to do; he used repressive measures.

In total, 235 prisoners were shot dead by his 'security' forces, hundreds were injured (many of them seriously) and arresting protest leaders.

This alone may not have been enough to cause an armed rebellion.

But the line was finally crossed on December 28th 2013.

Protesters had a key protest hub in the majority-Sunni city of Ramadi, in western Iraq. The camp had been around for some months; Maliki and friends had long been shooting withering rhetoric about it, accusing the protesters (yes, you've guessed it) of being tied to al-Qaeda.

A peaceful protest camp was suddenly condemned as having been "turned into a headquarters for the leadership of al-Qaeda", and the Iraqi army was deployed to tear down the protest camp.

The stage was set for chaos; the Sunni tribes were angry and armed; protesters' tempers were running high, and the army was bearing down upon them with sectarian Shiite slogans openly painted on Maliki's tanks.

This isn't, and wasn't, going to end well for many people involved, especially the Iraqi government.

On December 28th, Maliki's security services again violently arrested another high-profile Sunni dissident.

MP Ahmed al-Alwani was a vocal critic of Maliki and advocated against the government's brutal measures.

He had thus been branded a terrorist, and was keeping a low profile after terrorism charges were (in an all too common pattern) filed against him.

His whereabouts were discovered, and a battle ensued between the 'security' forces and his guards at his home, killing his brother and five of his men.

This caused widespread outrage among Sunnis; armed rebels and tribes alike demanded he release Alwani. Ultimatums were delivered.

Members of his tribe attacked and burned government armoured vehicles. Armed demonstrators took to the streets. This anger was clear, as was the implicit threat of sectarian conflict.

Not that it woke Maliki up from his sectarian slumber.

The security forces moved on the 'al-Qaeda' protesters on December 30th.

Maybe Maliki was genuinely ignorant enough to think that the Sunnis and his repressed opponents would continue to bow their heads and cow before his sectarian troops.

Maybe he was hoping for this sort of a reaction, to justify further repression against the Sunnis. Either way, 10 people were killed by the police violence.

But it didn't end there.

"The Tribes Had Had Enough"

Disenfranchised Sunnis who had armed themselves as a precaution shot back at Maliki's men, resulting in gun battles which culminated in several people being killed, apparently including members of the security forces.

The tribes had had enough.

Fallujah, Ramadi and other towns quickly fell out of government control as a combination of tribal militias and rebel groups took advantage of the situation to attack government military posts, police stations, government offices, and anything associated with Maliki's regime.

Maliki's response was shrewd, apt, and wise as usual.

His forces arbitrarily shelled the city, killing some 30 people (some of whom were civilians).

As history has shown us, such events only increase popular anger, and do nothing to address the fundamental issues which need to be solved if this is to end. Namely, anti-Sunni sectarianism. How does killing people do any good?

The reality is that much of Anbar province has fallen out of Iraqi government hands, not because of the power of al-Qaeda, but because the government has simply made itself hated.

Those fighting the government are largely local tribesmen and civilians who have taken up arms to defend themselves and fight for their rights.

As history has shown, from Yugoslavia to Syria; no matter how large or how powerful your military is, it is very difficult to hold densely populated areas when the population despises your leadership.

“They Have Rejected The Government, And They Refuse To Let It Oppress Them Again”

They will fight, and that’s exactly what the Sunni tribes are doing in the Sunni areas of Iraq.

They have rejected the government, and they refuse to let it oppress them again.

It is no wonder that they have driven the army out, as this report illustrates:

“They’ll only enter Fallujah over our dead bodies,” said Khamis Al Issawi, who said he’s part of a 150-strong brigade in the city 64-kilometres west of Baghdad.

“We are ready and prepared to fight Maliki forces if they decide to begin their offensive on the city.”

Mr Al Issawi said most of the region’s tribes are fighting in his brigade, without saying whether it had any connections with Al Qaeda. Government officials say Sunni tribesmen are also fighting on the army’s side.

In a bid to win support, Iraq’s cabinet said families of tribesmen who die fighting “terrorists” will receive government benefits, while those injured in combat will receive free medical treatment.

Garma Falls To The Insurgents

Yet, in Garma, a city north-east of Fallujah, Sheikh Rafei Mishen Al Jumaily, head of the Jumelat tribe said thousands of his fighters evicted the military from the town after fierce fighting. The Al Jumaily are one of the biggest tribes in Anbar.

“The Iraqi army began entering the cities and humiliating the people instead of protecting them,” he said. “The government is accusing us of terrorism to justify the war against us — that’s why we decided to defend our people.”

He said his fighters have captured about 100 government soldiers.

Both Mr Al Issawi and Mr Al Jumaily said they were fighting against Iranian influence over Iraq.

The street battles in Anbar add to the turmoil caused by the daily car bombs that have complicated Mr Al Maliki's struggle to assert control over the country following the withdrawal of US troops. The premier also faces political unrest, with 44 members of parliament resigning last week because the government used force to dismantle Sunni-led protests in Anbar, an event that was a catalyst for the current violence.

As the evidence clearly shows when it is much more closely scrutinised; ISIS (AKA an offshoot of al-Qaeda) has a presence in these events, which is inevitable.

In every walk of life, especially in the context of an unstable country like Iraq, extremism will inevitably flourish.

However, ISIS is by no means the dominant force in this instance; locals spearhead the fight. If you read any of the aforementioned articles in both 'mainstream' and 'alternative' media outlets, you would get the impression that every single Sunni Muslim who dares to raise a weapon is a terrorist.

Which is, of course, the intention.

So what's really going on here? A review of some common assertions.

Al-Qaeda has taken over Anbar Province.

No. It hasn't.

The first challenge is defining "Al Qaeda." Since the moment that a group calling itself Al Qaeda in Iraq was established in the country, shortly after the US-led invasion that overthrew Saddam Hussein in 2003, there's been a lot of confusion about the precise nature of the connection between the Sunni jihadis fighting inside the country and the original Al Qaeda led by Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden and his successor Ayman al-Zawahiri saw the US invasion as a great opportunity and got in contact with the group, which was then run by the Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (killed in a US airstrike in 2006). By 2004, Mr. Zarqawi had given a bay'a, an oath of allegiance, to bin Laden, and in the media narrative the two groups became intertwined.

But Zarqawi rarely followed orders from Al Qaeda central in Pakistan and Afghanistan – and a string of communications between his group and Zarqawi recovered by US forces during the war showed an enormous amount of frustration from Al Qaeda central over how its supposed Iraqi affiliate wouldn't do as it was told.

Part of the problem was that the militants fighting in Iraq had to cooperate with local Sunnis angry at the US occupation of the country – and the Shiite rise it was enabling –

and less interested in Al Qaeda's mission of global jihad to create a multinational caliphate.

The fact that the Iraqi group's goals were largely national was clear as early as October 2006, when the group changed its name to the Islamic State in Iraq. It has also been made clear by the lack of any plots targeting the US or its European allies – something that would be a top objective if bin Laden and Zawahiri had control over the organization.

Ok, but Al-Qaeda's fellow travelers have seized control of Fallujah and Ramadi, right?

Well, again, not exactly.

The Sunni Arab tribes along the Euphrates River in Syria and Iraq's Anbar Province have strong cultural and familial ties, and many Syrians flocked to Iraq to fight the US and its allies in the area in the mid-2000s. That's a key reason that the Islamic State in Iraq was able to merge relatively seamlessly with Syrian jihadis to become the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) last year.

But while the group has been on a high the past few weeks, roaming relatively unhindered and prompting the Iraqi police to abandon their posts in both towns, "controlling" is something else.

During the US war in Iraq, the group quickly wore out its welcome with the major local tribal confederations and the general public. Summary executions of locals for violating Islamic law, floggings, and general contempt for tribal practices and authority saw to that – as did the direct threat they posed to the economic interests of powerful figures in the region, who had long controlled lucrative smuggling routes and didn't appreciate the interference of the so-called mujahideen.

That opened the door for the Sahwa, or "awakening," in which Sunni Arab tribes took up arms against the jihadis in exchange for money and political influence promised by the US military.

The same dynamics are in place today.

Anbar hates and fears the central government in Baghdad since, after all, the Shiite-dominated government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has treated the region and its leaders like dirt.

But many leading tribal figures don't much like the jihadis either.

They may passively support them, or even join forces with them against what they see as a greater enemy – the fighting in Fallujah and Ramadi was touched off by Mr. Maliki's decision to use the military to violently clear year-old protest encampments against his government on Dec. 30.

But longterm, they don't want to be run by any outsiders.

MORE:

“The Media Accepts The Overly Simple Narrative That Al-Qaida Took Over”

“The Reality Is Maliki Is Crushing Dissent With US-Made Arms”

“It Was Local, Tribal People – People Not Affiliated With Transnational Jihadist Movements – Who Have Taken The Lead In This Fight Against The Iraqi Government”

“Today, I Hope I Can Say That I Am Somewhat Wiser, More Responsible, More Morally Engaged Than I Was When I Helped Destroy Falluja In 2004”



Members of Albu Alwan tribe protest against the military operation in Fallujah city, western Iraq. Photograph: Mohammed Jalil/EPA

10 January 2014 by Ross Caputi, the Guardian

I am having flashbacks to my time as a marine during the second siege of Falluja in 2004.

Again, claims are being published that al-Qaida has taken over the city and that a heavy-handed military response is needed to take the city back from the control of terrorists.

The first time around, this claim proved to be false.

The vast majority of the men we fought against in Falluja were locals, unaffiliated with al-Qaida, who were trying to expel the foreign occupiers from their country.

There was a presence of al-Qaida in the city, but they played a minimal and marginal role in the fighting. The stories about Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the alleged leader of al-Qaida in Iraq who was said to be recruiting an army in Falluja, were wildly exaggerated. There is no evidence that Zarqawi ever even set foot in Falluja.

This week, the Iraqi Ministry of Interior's assertion that al-Qaida's affiliate, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, has taken over half of Falluja is being parroted in headlines by almost every major media network.

But again, it appears that the role of al-Qaida in Falluja is being exaggerated and used as a justification for a military assault on the city.

The violence began just over a week ago, when Iraqi security forces disbursed a protest camp in Falluja and arrested a politician who had been friendly to the protestors' goals. This camp was part of a non-violent protest movement – which took place mostly in Sunni cities, but was also receiving some support from the Shia community – that began a year ago.

Iraqi security forces have attacked protestors in Falluja and other Sunni cities on several occasions, the most egregious example taking place in Hawija, when over 50 protestors were killed.

One of the results of the US occupation was that Sunnis came out feeling like a targeted community, with Falluja being more marginalized than most Sunni cities because of its history as a center of resistance.

These feelings have only been exacerbated over the past year of protests and government repression.

The Iraqi government's recent actions in Falluja turned the non-violent movement violent.

When the protest camp in Falluja was cleared, many of the protestors picked up arms and began fighting to expel the state security forces from their city.

It was local, tribal people – people not affiliated with transnational jihadist movements – who have taken the lead in this fight against the Iraqi government.

However, it is being reported that Falluja has "fallen", that it was "captured" by ISIS, who has now raised their flag over the city, declaring Falluja an Islamic emirate. The Iraqi Ministry of Interior's claim that half of Falluja is controlled by Isis (the Islamic State of Iraq in Syria) has been accepted as fact and has framed all discussion of these events.

Feurat Alani, a French-Iraqi journalist with family ties in Falluja, has reported that Isis is not playing a significant role in the fighting in Falluja. Much has been said and written about Isis raising their flag over a building in Falluja. This has been taken to be a sign of their power in the city.

But Alani told me:

"They took the flag down five minutes later when ordered to by tribal leaders. This shows that the tribes control Falluja."

Already over 100 civilians have been killed in this violence, violence that has been facilitated by US weapons.

The Independent reported that Iraqi security forces are bombing Falluja with Hellfire missiles sold to them by the US. But the US has supplied the Iraqi state with far more than this single weapon system. Recently, Congress has shown some reluctance to continue arms trade with the Maliki government, for fear that it would use the weapons for internal repression, a fear that appears to have some justification.

It is being reported that Falluja has fallen, but the voices from inside Falluja insist that their city is standing up, once again.

Undoubtedly, Fallujans are being harmed because of how the outside world perceives their struggle.

Too much of the world has been satisfied with the overly simple narrative of al-Qaida capturing Falluja (twice), and of government forces battling for freedom and security.

As Falluja relives a nightmare, once inflicted by my own hand, I find myself in a very different position from before. Today, I hope I can say that I am somewhat wiser, more responsible, more morally engaged than I was when I helped destroy Falluja in 2004.

This time around, I cannot sit back and do nothing as the unreliable and self-serving claims of the government are reported without question, and repeated until they become conventional wisdom.

I cannot just watch as Fallujans are again forced to flee from their homes, and as their bodies are again shredded by weapons made in my homeland. I do not want to feel complicit in their suffering anymore.

MORE:

2004:

The Destruction Of Falluja Was An Act Of Barbarism That Ranks Alongside My Lai, Guernica And Halabjay

[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade; United Auto Workers GM Retiree]

Nov 9, 2005 By Mike Marqusee, The Guardian (U.K)

One year ago this week, US-led occupying forces launched a devastating assault on the Iraqi city of Falluja.

The mood was set by Lt Col Gary Brandl: "The enemy has got a face. He's called Satan. He's in Falluja. And we're going to destroy him."

The assault was preceded by eight weeks of aerial bombardment. US troops cut off the city's water, power and food supplies, condemned as a violation of the Geneva convention by a UN special rapporteur, who accused occupying forces of "using hunger and deprivation of water as a weapon of war against the civilian population". Two-thirds of the city's 300,000 residents fled, many to squatters' camps without basic facilities.

As the siege tightened, the Red Cross, Red Crescent and the media were kept out, while males between the ages of 15 and 55 were kept in.

US sources claimed between 600 and 6,000 insurgents were holed up inside the city - which means that the vast majority of the remaining inhabitants were non-combatants.

On November 8, 10,000 US troops, supported by 2,000 Iraqi recruits, equipped with artillery and tanks, supported from the air by bombers and helicopter gunships, blasted their way into a city the size of Leicester. It took a week to establish control of the main roads; another two before victory was claimed.

The city's main hospital was selected as the first target, the New York Times reported, "because the US military believed it was the source of rumors about heavy casualties".

An AP photographer described US helicopters killing a family of five trying to ford a river to safety.

"There were American snipers on top of the hospital shooting everyone," said Burhan Fasa'am, a photographer with the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation.

"With no medical supplies, people died from their wounds. Everyone in the street was a target for the Americans."

The US also deployed incendiary weapons, including white phosphorous.

"Usually we keep the gloves on," Captain Erik Krivda said, but "for this operation, we took the gloves off".

By the end of operations, the city lay in ruins. Falluja's compensation commissioner has reported that 36,000 of the city's 50,000 homes were destroyed, along with 60 schools and 65 mosques and shrines.

The US claims that 2,000 died, most of them fighters.

Other sources disagree.

When medical teams arrived in January they collected more than 700 bodies in only one third of the city. Iraqi NGOs and medical workers estimate between 4,000 and 6,000 dead, mostly civilians - a proportionately higher death rate than in Coventry and London during the blitz.

The collective punishment inflicted on Falluja - with logistical and political support from Britain - was largely masked by the US and British media, which relied on reporters embedded with US troops.

The BBC, in particular, offered a sanitized version of the assault: civilian suffering was minimized and the ethics and strategic logic of the attack largely unscrutinized.

Falluja proved to be yet another of the war's phantom turning points.

Violent resistance spread to other cities.

In the last two months, Tal-Afar, Haditha, Husaybah - all alleged terrorist havens heavily populated by civilians - have come under the hammer.

Falluja is still so heavily patrolled that visitors have described it as "a giant prison". Only a fraction of the promised reconstruction and compensation has materialized.

Like Jallianwallah Bagh, Guernica, My Lai, Halabja and Grozny, Falluja is a place name that has become a symbol of unconscionable brutality.

As the war in Iraq claims more lives, we need to ensure that this atrocity - so recent, so easily erased from public memory - is recognized as an example of the barbarism of nations that call themselves civilized.

TROOPS INVITED:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

MILITARY NEWS



MEL!
HI, JEN. GOOD TIME?



SURE, ALTHOUGH EVERYTHING'S A LITTLE CRAZY HERE. I'M LATE FOR A PEDICURE, AND I'M COVERED IN CAT HAIR...



HOLD ON, MEL, THERE'S SOMEONE AT THE DOOR. WHERE ARE YOU?
AFGHANISTAN.



STILL? EW.
I KNOW. BUT THANKS FOR ASKING.



I CANNOT BELIEVE YOU'RE STILL IN AFGHANISTAN, MEL!
WHY'S THAT, JEN?



WELL, THERE'S NO BUZZ ABOUT THE WAR AT ALL ANYMORE...



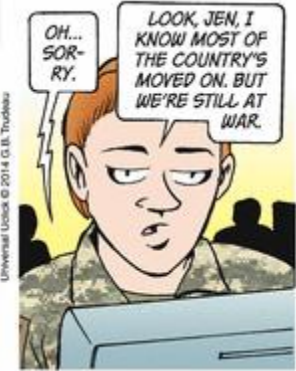
AT LEAST NOT THAT I'M AWARE OF... HOLD ON, LET ME CHECK...



NOPE. ZERO TRENDING ON TWITTER.
WOW. MAYBE WE'RE NOT ACTUALLY HERE.



SORRY, MEL, IT'S JUST THAT IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE AFGHANISTAN BLEW UP ON TWITTER...
DID YOU JUST SAY THAT?



OH... SORRY.
LOOK, JEN, I KNOW MOST OF THE COUNTRY'S MOVED ON. BUT WE'RE STILL AT WAR.



I KNOW, I KNOW...
WHAT?
OH, NO...



MY TEXT MESSAGES ARE PILING UP. CALL YOU RIGHT BACK?
TAKE YOUR TIME. I'LL BE HERE. SERVING.



SO I'M CALLING JEN FROM FREAKIN' AFGHANISTAN, AND SHE'S WORRIED IT'LL MAKE HER LATE FOR HER PEDICURE! WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?



I MEAN, I CAN SEE HOW A DEPLOYMENT DOESN'T SEEM EXCEPTIONAL ANYMORE. THE WAR FEELS ENDLESS. I GET THAT...



WE'VE BEEN PROPPING UP A CORRUPT, FAILED NARCO-STATE FOR 13 YEARS! NO WONDER PEOPLE LIKE JEN TUNE OUT.



I LOVE WATCHING YOU WALK STUFF BACK. AND FRANKLY, I COULD USE A PEDICURE MYSELF.

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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

But out of this complicated web of material and psychic forces one conclusion emerges with irrefutable clarity: the more the soldiers in their mass are convinced that the rebels are really rebelling – that this is not a demonstration after which they will have to go back to the barracks and report, that this is a struggle to the death, that the people may win if they join them, and that this winning will not only

The Nixon administration claimed and received great credit for withdrawing the Army from Vietnam, but it was the rebellion of low-ranking GIs that forced the government to abandon a hopeless suicidal policy.

-- David Cortright; Soldiers In Revolt



**“Guns, Rifles And Munitions
Are Excellent Servants Of
Order, But They Have To Be Put
Into Action”
“For That Purpose People Are
Needed”**

**“And Even Though These People Are Called Soldiers, They Differ From Guns Because They Feel And Think, Which Means They Are Not Reliable”
“The People Seize This Moment To Go Among The Ranks Of The Soldiers And Convince Them, Face To Face, To Come Over To The People’s Side”**

A dictator enjoys no moral support; on the contrary, he runs into obstacles every minute; around him forms a network of contradictory influences and recommendations; orders are given and then withdrawn; confusion grows; and the government’s demoralisation spreads and deepens at the same time as it feeds the self-confidence of the people

From: “After the Petersburg Uprising: What Next?” (Munich, 20 January 1905) by L. Trotsky [Excerpts]

As the soldiers file by on their way to the scene of ‘military action’, people will shower them from the windows with thousands of brief but fervent appeals; the troops will encounter passionate words from speakers on the barricades, who will take advantage of the slightest moment of indecision on the part of the military authorities; there will also be the powerful revolutionary propaganda of the crowd itself, whose enthusiasm will be transmitted to the soldiers through exclamations and appeals.

Moreover, the soldiers have already been affected by the prevailing revolutionary attitude; they are irritated and exhausted, and they loathe their role of executioner.

They tremble as they await the malicious command of their officer.

The officer orders them to open fire — but then he himself gets shot down, maybe as a result of a previously agreed plan, maybe just in a moment of bitter resentment.

Confusion breaks out among the troops.

The people seize this moment to go among the ranks of the soldiers and convince them, face to face, to come over to the people’s side.

If the soldiers obey the officer’s command and let loose a volley, the people respond by throwing dynamite at them from the house windows. The result, once again, will be disorder in the ranks, confusion among the soldiers, and an attempt by the revolutionaries — through appeals or by having the people mingle directly with the

soldiers — to convince them to throw down their arms or bring them with them as they join up with the people.

If this fails in one instance, there must be no hesitation in using the same means of fear and persuasion again, even with the same units of troops.

Ultimately, the moral authority of military discipline, which restrains the soldiers from following their own thoughts and sympathies, will break down.

Such a combination of moral and physical action, inevitably leading to a partial victory of the people, depends more on organised and purposeful street movements than on arming the masses in advance — and this, of course, is the main task of the revolutionary organisations.

By winning over small units of the army, we will win control of larger units and eventually of the whole army, because victory over one part will give the people weapons.

Both during the Great French Revolution and again in 1848, the army, as an army, was stronger than the people.

The revolutionary masses triumphed not because of the superiority of their military organisation or military technology, but because they were able to infect the national atmosphere that the army breathed with the germs of rebellious ideas.

Of course, it makes a difference for the to and fro of street battles whether the range of a gun is only a few hundred sazhen or several versts, whether it kills a single person or hits tens of people, but this is still only a secondary question of technology when compared to the fundamental question of revolution — the question of the soldiers' demoralization.

'Whose side is the army on?'

That is the question that decides everything, and it has nothing to do with what type of rifles or machine-guns may be used.

Guns, rifles and munitions are excellent servants of order, but they have to be put into action.

For that purpose people are needed.

And even though these people are called soldiers, they differ from guns because they feel and think, which means they are not reliable.

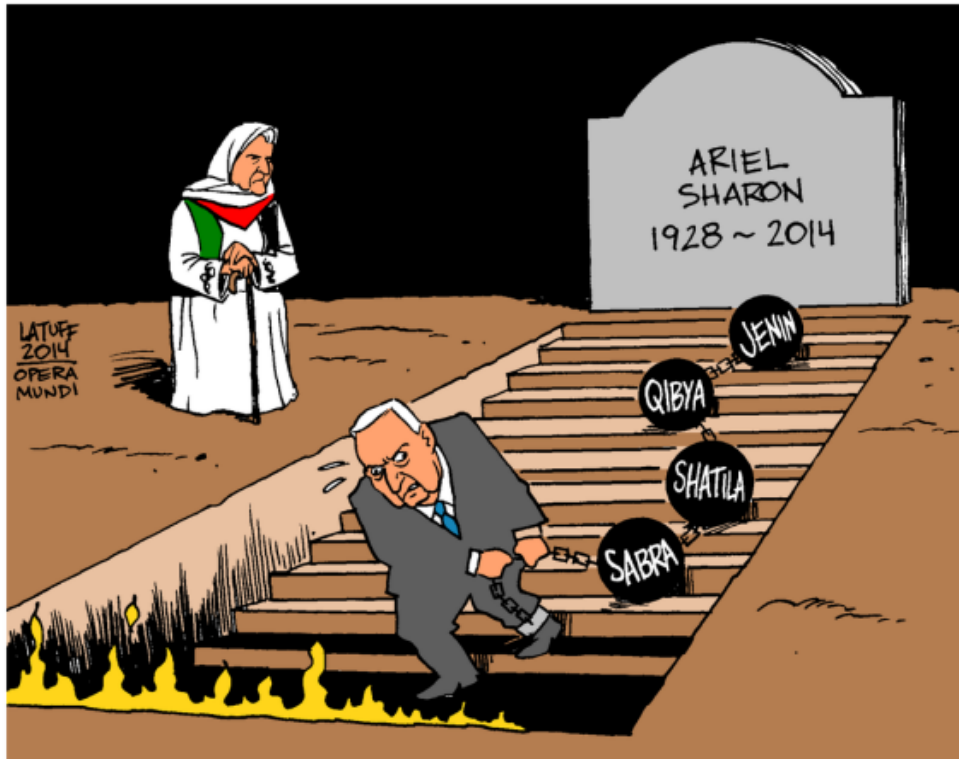
They hesitate, they are infected by the indecision of their commanders, and the result is disarray and panic in the highest ranks of the bureaucracy.

A dictator enjoys no moral support; on the contrary, he runs into obstacles every minute; around him forms a network of contradictory influences and recommendations; orders are given and then withdrawn; confusion grows; and

the government's demoralisation spreads and deepens at the same time as it feeds the self-confidence of the people

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

The Butcher Is Dead



January 11, 2014 by Philip Weiss, Mondoweiss.net [Excerpt]

Sharon made a name for himself in 1953 by leading a massacre of Palestinian civilians in Jordan.

In 1982, he was Israel's Defense Minister and led the invasion of Lebanon, during which Israeli soldiers allowed Christian militias to enter two Palestinian refugee camps, Sabra and Shatilla, and massacre hundreds of civilians, including many women and children.

Some reports put the death toll at 2,000-3,000.

Hundreds Face Imminent Death In Palestinian Yarmouk Camp

“Residents In The Camp Are Eating Grass In Order To Ward Off Starvation”

“There Was An Attempt To Transfer 300 Patients From The Camp To Receive Medical Treatment But Snipers From The Syrian Government Fired At Them”

10/01/2014 Ma'an

BETHLEHEM (Ma'an) -- Hundreds of Palestinian refugees in the besieged Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus face imminent death in the coming 10 days unless a safe supply line is opened, a Palestinian official told Ma'an Thursday.

Ayman Abu Hasham, director of the Palestinian Refugees Support Network in Syria, said that residents in the camp are eating grass in order to ward off starvation, which he says will kill hundreds if supply lines are not opened soon.

On Thursday, there was an attempt to transfer 300 patients from the camp to receive medical treatment but snipers from the Syrian government fired at them, injuring the director of a relief committee Fuad al-Omar, Abu Hashem said.

"Claims that there are militants in the camp are just to justify the siege," Abu Hashem said.

"According to international law, citizens must be protected by the military force controlling the area -- meaning the Syrian regime."

Any side which undermines initiatives to bring food into the camp are participating in the siege, Abu Hashem said, accusing the PFLP-GC and the Syrian government of blockading the refugee camp.

UNRWA spokesman Chris Gunness told Ma'an Friday that "the profound civilian suffering in Yarmouk deepens, with reports of widespread malnutrition and the absence of medical care, including for those who have severe conflict-related injuries, and including for women in childbirth, with fatal consequences for some women."

"From a humanitarian perspective, Yarmouk remains closed to humanitarian access and remains a place where extreme human suffering in primitively harsh conditions is the norm for Palestinian and Syrian civilians living there. The imperative remains that that Syrian authorities and other parties must allow and facilitate safe and open humanitarian access into Yarmouk to enable us to assist civilians trapped there."

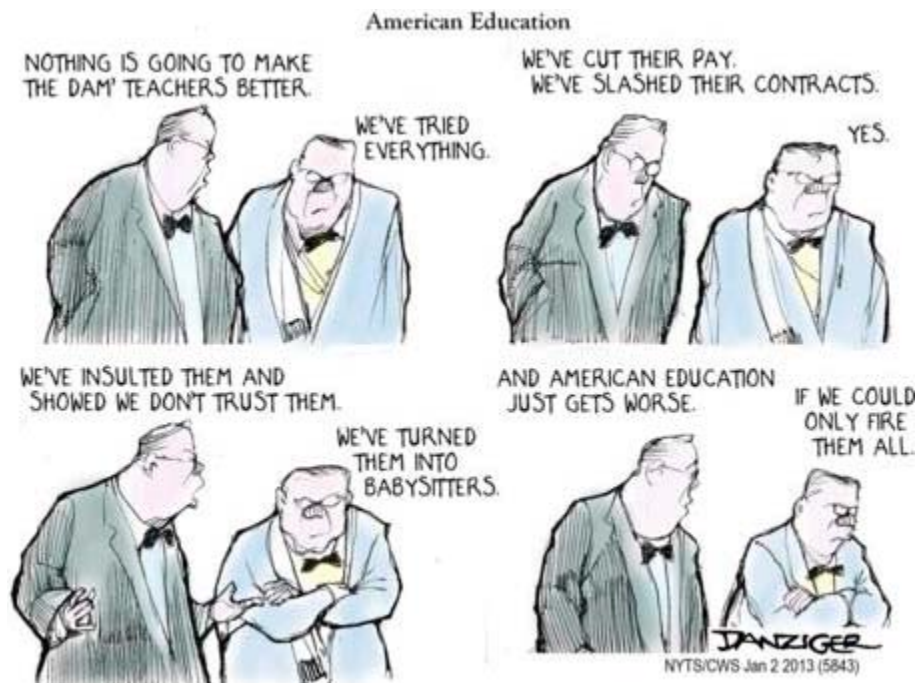
Electricity and heating have been absent in the camp for nearly one year and there is an infrequent supply of water, Guinness added.

After rebels seized control of Yarmouk in December 2012, the camp became embroiled in the armed fighting taking place across Syria and came under heavy regime assault.

Regime forces eventually encircled the camp and in July imposed a siege on the camp, leading to a rapid deterioration of living conditions.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

CLASS WAR REPORTS



Egypt:

**“Down With The Military Regime”
“The First Time Since The July 3
Military Takeover That
Revolutionaries Had Gone Onto The
Streets And Made The Political
Headlines”
“We Have Seen The Progressive Coming
Apart Of The Ruling Coalition”**

8 January 2014 by Jacques Chastaing, Internationalviewpoint.org/

On the second anniversary of the massacres of Mohamed-Mahmoud Street in Cairo on November 19, 2011 by the police forces of the military government, Egyptian revolutionaries went onto the streets to denounce the army and the Moslem Brotherhood and to demand the bringing to justice of the soldiers and police responsible for these massacres.

Several marches called by the Revolutionary Socialists and the April 6 Movement as well as by prominent personalities started from various university buildings to converge on Mohamed-Mahmoud street with cries of “Down with the military regime”, “Against Al-Sissi, the Moslem Brotherhood, long live revolution”.

The street was barred off with a banner “Reserved for revolutionaries, forbidden to Moslem Brothers, the army and feloul” (former apparatchiks of the Mubarak period).

The army had tried to prevent this demonstration by calling on supporters of general Sissi to come onto the streets in support of the military regime.

They also built a monument to the martyrs which they hoped would absolve them of any responsibility.

Finally, they placed giant screens in Tahrir square to broadcast the Ghana-Egypt soccer World Cup qualifying match.

But Sissi’s supporters were few. They were chased out of Tahrir square by the revolutionaries, the monument built by the army was destroyed by the demonstrators, and the giant screens distracted nobody.

This was the first time since the July 3 military takeover that revolutionaries had gone onto the streets and made the political headlines.

Up until then, since the massacres of Moslem Brothers by the army in mid July, Egypt has seen the Brothers going onto the streets every week or several times a week to denounce the illegitimacy of the military regime and the government it has set up. But the army's very violent repression — a thousand or more dead, and several thousand arrested including all the main leaders, with the Brotherhood currently saying more than 10,000 of its members are imprisoned — and the total absence of support from the Egyptian people for the Islamist cause have led to the demonstrations gradually melting away. To the extent that the Brotherhood has recently proposed a peaceful negotiated solution to the regime.

The terrorism of Islamist groups in the Sinai, whether or not it is linked to the Brotherhood, only increases the hatred people feel for them while allowing the army to justify its attacks on civil liberties and its opposition to strike actions.

In late October 2013 the regime introduced legislation limiting the right to demonstrate, go on strike and even put up graffiti.

Several journalists were sentenced for having criticized the army, while the famous humorist Bassem Youssef, adored by the people, was subjected to prosecution for having mocked the military.

Strikes (which continue despite everything) have been repressed, most recently that of the textile workers at the Samanoud factory in Gharbiya, on strike for three weeks to claim payment of their wages for September and improvement of working conditions, with dozens of arrests.

This political capitulation by the Brotherhood has probably freed up enough political terrain to allow revolutionaries to go back on the streets without being suspected by the people of being allies of the Islamists. Because if the Egyptian people do not support the army, they above all do not want the Brotherhood or their allies back in power. To attack the army, popular action cannot appear as support for the Brotherhood.

At the same time this demonstration shows that the Egyptian people no longer believe in the promises of the government and the military.

For if the regime hits the Brotherhood violently and directly, it maintains a prudent double language with respect to the people.

On the one hand, a wide ranging repression against civil liberties in the name of the fight against terrorism, and thus a fight also against strike action, and on the other a demagogic Bonapartist policy with respect to the poor and in relation to the more high profile strikes.

The government claims to represent the objectives of the massive mobilizations of late June and claims to draw its power from this people in struggle, against Morsi certainly, but also for "bread, social justice and freedom".

Thus the regime has given in to the demands of workers on strike at the symbolic Misr Spinning enterprise in Mahalla by using its own funds to grant them increases equivalent to around two months wages.

It has promised a near doubling of the minimum wage in the public sector as of January 1, 2014. It has promised to limit the highest wages, an end to military courts for civilians and the end of censorship on state media, the recognition of new trade unions, gender equality and so on.

If these promises have sown momentary illusions and led to a wait and see attitude on the part of the people it is increasingly clear to many that these are only empty promises.

Thus the increase in the minimum wage does not affect the private sector and seems to amount to not very much as the concrete details emerge.

The limitation on maximum salaries will be at 35 times higher than the minimum wage, whereas for example in the world's 10 richest countries the ratio is "only" 20 times higher.

Gender equality is promised in the context of Sharia, which means nothing will change. The least religious pressure will be reflected by prosecutions of atheists. And everything is subject to amendment.

Thus we have seen the progressive coming apart of the ruling coalition.

In early November 2013 a split occurred in Tamarod (Rebellion), which supports the regime, with some of its members saying they would return to the street, while its leadership demanded the resignation of a prime minister incapable of meeting popular expectations.

The left wing Tagammu movement took its distances, accusing the constitutional committee (of 50 selected persons) that is drawing up the draft of the new Constitution of favouring the rich and ignoring women, Christians and Nubians.

While Sabahi, the Nasserite candidate at the last presidential elections, has withdrawn from the next ones in favour of Sissi, his supporters have demonstrated recently to demand that he reverse his decision.

On October 26, 2013 there was the first non-Islamist demonstration against the law restricting rights to demonstrate and go on strike. On November 6, 2013 the Ultras football fans surrounded the High Court to denounce the arrest of some of their members.

On November 14, 2013 the regime cancelled the curfew which most people did not respect and suppressed the state of emergency. Finally, on November 16, 2013 a revolutionary activist, Ahmed Harara, for the first time in months, dared to attack general Sissi on television, accusing him of being a criminal, responsible for the November 2011 massacres.

The atmosphere is changing. And this could well accelerate given an inflation rate of 11.5% in November while many Egyptians go hungry.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

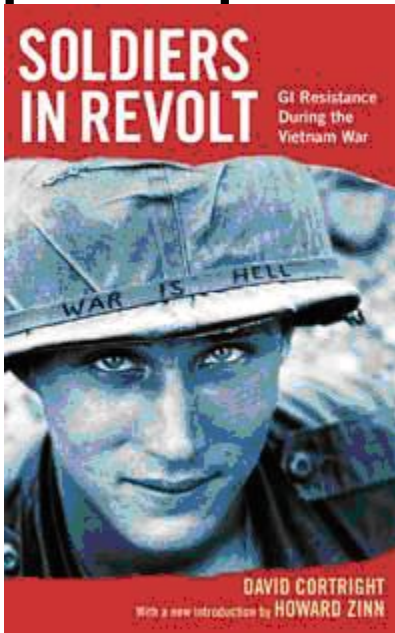


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