

Military Resistance 9A11

In Tunisia, Soldiers And Citizens Together Defy The Stupid, Corrupt New Government's Curfew Order



Tunisians citizens and a soldier discussing the political situation as they defy the curfew in the center of Tunis, Jan. 19. 2011. (AP Photo/Thibault Camus)

**“Mort A La Dictature”
[Death To The Dictatorship”
Tunisians Condemning The
Government Break Through A Line
Of Riot Police In Front Of The Prime
Minister’s Office:**

“Protesters In Tunisia, Emboldened By Their Overthrow Of The President A Week Ago, Took To The Streets Saturday To Try And Force Out His Lieutenants, Whom They Accuse Of Clinging To Power In The Face Of Popular Anger”



Thousands of Tunisians rallied against the inclusion of old regime figures in the new government on January 19. Protesters, emboldened by their overthrow of the president a week ago, took to the streets January 22 to try and force out his lieutenants, whom they accuse of clinging to power in the face of popular anger. (AFP/Fred Dufour)



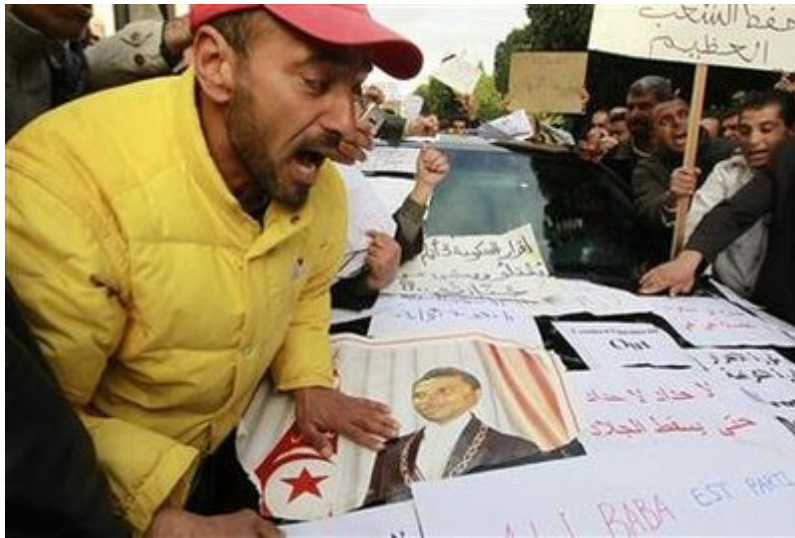
Thousands of Tunisians rallied against the inclusion of old regime figures in their new government on January 19. (AFPTV)



Tunisians condemning the government break through a line of riot police in front of the Prime Minister's office during a demonstration in downtown Tunis, January 22, 2011. REUTERS/ Finbarr O'Reilly



Tunisian protesters stand in front of the prime minister's building during a demonstration in Tunis, January 21, 2011. REUTERS/Zohra Bensemra



Tunisians place banners and a photo of Mohamed Bouazizi on the prime minister's car during a protest in Tunis, January 21, 2011. Bouazizi was a Tunisian street vendor whose self-immolation, on December 17, 2010, in protest at the confiscation of his wares, became the catalyst for the 2010–2011 Tunisian revolution. REUTERS/Zohra Bensemra

MORE:

Corrupt Algerian Dictatorship Stupidly Orders Police Attack On Citizens Protesting Ban On Public Meetings



January 22, 2011: Algerians mass outside the opposition Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) party's headquarters in Algiers. The Algerian dictatorship ordered police to attack pro-democracy protesters in the capital on Saturday, leaving multiple casualties, as they blocked a march on parliament. (Photo: AFP)



Riot police in Algiers Jan. 22, 2011 broke up a planned march by hundreds of protesters who want Algeria to scrap a law banning public gatherings, causing multiple casualties. Inspired by protests in neighboring Tunisia, organizers at democratic opposition party RCD draped a Tunisian flag next to the Algerian flag on a balcony of the party headquarters where the march was to begin. REUTERS/Farouk Batiche

MORE:

**Thousands Of Yemenis Fed Up
With Their President's 32-Year
Dictatorship Demand He Get
Out Of The Country:
"The Government Is Widely Seen
As Corrupt And Is Reviled For Its
Alliance With The United States"
"There Are Few Political Freedoms"
"The Government Has Little Control
Outside The Capital"**



Thousands of Yemeni citizens demonstrated in the streets, calling on their president Ali Abdullah Saleh to leave the government and follow Tunisian ousted President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali into exile during a protest in Sanaa, Yemen, Saturday, Jan. 22, 2011. (AP Photo/Hani Mohammed)



January 22, 2011 (AP)

ADEN, Yemen

Drawing inspiration from the revolt in Tunisia, thousands of Yemenis fed up with their president's 32-year rule demanded his ouster Saturday in a noisy demonstration that appeared to be the first large-scale public challenge to the strongman [translation: murderous dictator].

The protests in Yemen appeared to be the first of their kind. The nation's 23 million citizens have many grievances: they are the poorest people in the Arab world, the government is widely seen as corrupt and is reviled for its alliance with the United States, there are few political freedoms and the country is rapidly running out of water.

Still, calling for President Ali Abdullah Saleh to step down had been a red line that few dissenters dared to test.

In a reflection of the tight grip Saleh's government and its forces have in the capital — outside the city, that control thins dramatically — Saturday's demonstration did not take place in the streets, but was confined to the grounds of the University of Sanaa.

Around 2,500 students, activists and opposition groups gathered there and chanted slogans against the president, comparing him to Tunisia's ousted President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, whose people were similarly enraged by economic woes and government corruption.

“Get out get out, Ali. Join your friend Ben Ali,” the crowds chanted.

One of the organizers, Fouad Dahaba, said the demonstration was only a beginning and they will not stop until their demands are met.

“We will march the streets of Sanaa, to the heart of Sanaa and to the presidential palace. The coming days will witness an escalation,” said Dahaba, an Islamist lawmaker and head of the teachers' union.

Making good on that pledge will be difficult. Like other entrenched regimes in the Arab world, Yemen's government shows little tolerance for dissent and the security forces — bolstered by U.S. military aid — are quick to crack down.

Police fired tear gas at the demonstrators, whose grievances include proposed constitutional changes that would allow the president to rule for a lifetime.

Around 30 protesters were detained, a security official said.

Since the Tunisian turmoil, Saleh has ordered income taxes slashed in half and has instructed his government to control prices. He also ordered a heavy deployment of anti-riot police and soldiers to several key areas in the capital and its surroundings to prevent any riots.

Nearly half the population lives below the poverty line of \$2 a day and doesn't have access to proper sanitation. Less than a tenth of the roads are paved. Tens of thousands have been displaced from their homes by conflict, flooding the cities.

The government is riddled with corruption, has little control outside the capital, and its main source of income — oil — could run dry in a decade.

Protests were also held in the southern port city of Aden, where calls for Saleh to step down were heard along with the more familiar slogans for southern secession. Police fired on demonstrators, injuring four, and detained 22 others in heavy clashes.

Military forces responded harshly to two similar protests a day earlier in four cities in the nearby southern province of Lahj, even firing mortar shells that killed one woman. The response forced residents to flee.

MORE:

**Albanian Dictatorship Stupidly
Orders Police To Kill Citizens
Protesting Corruption And
Election Fraud:
20,000 In The Streets To Demand
The End Of The Government:
“‘An Intolerable Regime’ Of Thieves
Ruling Europe’s Poorest Nation”**



Albanians fighting police after police killed citizens at an anti-dictatorship rally in Tirana, Albania, 21 Jan 2011. Photo: AP

22 January 2011 Stefan Bos, Budapest [Excerpts]

The United States and the European Union are among those appealing for calm in Albania, after at least three people were killed and dozens were injured in anti-government protests in the capital Tirana.

Albania’s Prime Minister Sali Berisha says he will not allow a similar overthrow of his government as in Tunisia, but the opposition has vowed more demonstrations.

Supporters of the opposition Socialists accuse the government of financial wrong doing and vote rigging during the 2009 elections. Tensions further increased this week when the country's deputy prime minister, Ilir Meta, resigned amid an alleged corruption scandal.

Albania's Prime Minister Sali Berisha has accused his opponents of attempting a "Tunisia-style uprising," a reference to the bloody overthrow of Tunisia's president in which scores were killed by government agents.

But those watching the recent demonstrations have already described them as the worst violence to erupt in the volatile Balkan nation in over a decade.

Video footage of Friday's protest shows that shots are fired at the demonstrators as security forces try to push back an estimated 20,000 demonstrators.

Protesters shout words such as "get out, get out" as they gather outside Conservative Prime Minister Berisha's office in the capital. Other protesters carry red-and-black Albanian flags.

A tense calm has returned to the streets of Tirana. But the leader of the Socialist Party, Tirana Mayor Edi Rama, says the opposition will hold more demonstrations after observing a day of mourning for those who died.

Rama has made clear he does not want to wait till the scheduled elections in 2013. He says the opposition will not tolerate what he calls "an intolerable regime" of thieves ruling Europe's poorest nation.

The European Union already rejected Albania's application to become an official candidate to join the organization, saying it should first fight corruption and establish a functioning democracy.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Traveling Soldier is the publication of the Military Resistance Organization.

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

North Carolina Soldier Killed In Afghanistan



01/21/11 U.S. Department of Defense News Release & AP: Pfc. Amy R. Sinkler, 23, of Chadbourn, N.C., died in a nighttime rocket propelled grenade attack by insurgents Jan. 20 in Baghlan province, Afghanistan. The Anchorage Daily News says Sinkler was married and arrived at Fort Richardson in January 2010 after joining the Army in August 2009. She was a member of the 109th Transportation Co. (AP Photo/Ft Richardson, Alaska)

Two Foreign Occupation “Servicemembers” Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan: Nationality Not Announced

January 22, 2010 Reuters

Two foreign servicemember died following an improvised explosive device attack in eastern Afghanistan today.

Florida Soldier Killed In Helmand

01/21/11 U.S. Department of Defense News Release

Sgt. Jason G. Amores, 29, of Lehigh Acres, Fla., died Jan. 20 while conducting combat operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan.

Sister of Fallen Soldier Describes Brother



January 14, 2011 By Lindsey Reiser - Multimedia Journalist

The sister of fallen soldier Omar Aceves says her brother had a great sense of humor and wanted to be a role model to his kids.

Aceves' children range in age from one year to eight years.

His sister says he last saw his children in August, when he got a break in rotation. He was supposed to come home after his tour in April.

His sister also says he had a wonderful smile, was always playful, and that his children were his life.

Original story:

EL PASO - A soldier who was killed Wednesday in Afghanistan leaves behind a wife and 6 children.

Fort Drum officials say 30-year-old Staff Sergeant Omar Aceves, who was from El Paso, was killed by an improvised explosive device along with three other soldiers in Ghazni Province.

Aceves was stationed at Fort Drum in New York. Aceves had also served in Operation Iraqi Freedom from October 2006 to January 2008.

Aceves graduated from Ysleta High School.

Winder Marine Dies In Line Of Duty

January 14, 2011 by Susan Norman, Barrow Journal

A 24-year-old U.S. Marine from Winder will be buried with full military honors on Saturday at the Georgia National Cemetery in Canton.

Lance Cpl. Joseph Ryan Giese was on foot patrol Jan. 7 in Afghanistan's Helmand Province when he stepped on an improvised explosive device and was killed.

The young Ohio native was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force that is based in Camp LeJeune, N.C.

He was the only son of Winder resident Connie Wascovich and Larry Giese, a retired Ohio police officer now residing in Nevada.

The senior Giese talked to the Barrow Journal on Tuesday about his son's life and devastating death. He said Ryan moved to Georgia as a boy and lived in Lawrenceville before his mother purchased a home in Winder.

He then moved for a year to Nevada, where he finished high school. And in July 2007, at the age of 20, he followed his father's footsteps into the Marines.

His first deployment was to Iraq. "He said it was not enough," said Giese. "He wanted to see more action. He wanted to go over and take care of the enemy."

Last February, before his second deployment, he called his father and said he was getting married.

"I tried to talk him out of it because of what could happen in Afghanistan. But now I'm glad he did it. I'm glad he had that."

Giese said he brought Ryan and his bride out to Las Vegas and gave them a week's honeymoon. When it was over, they agreed they would come back to Nevada after the upcoming deployment for "a lobster dinner" mission.

“Brittany said she wants to come back and fulfill that mission,” Giese said.

Ryan left for Afghanistan six months ago. Soon after, he was promoted to lance corporal and was in line for a promotion to corporal after his return from the seven-month, combat tour.

With communications limited in Afghanistan, Giese said he wasn’t able to talk often with his son during his second deployment to the Middle East. Their last conversation was more than a month ago.

“He said he was tired, very tired, with the hours they keep and all of the foot patrols, but he was doing his job. They had seen a lot of action. Three of his buddies had been killed already.”

After that conversation and only weeks before the end of the deployment, Ryan’s unit was moved to another province. Another Marine company had been getting casualties and needed backup.

“They were not real happy about going there,” Giese said.

“They were short — which means they were close to getting back home — and they didn’t want to go back into that full craziness because they pretty well had cleaned up in their area. But the other Marines needed help.”

On his final foot patrol the morning of Jan. 7, the young lance corporal was third in line.

Two soldiers in front of him had moved ahead of him with no problem. Then he took one life-ending step.

“I don’t know if the guys ahead of him just stepped over it or missed it,” Giese said. “He didn’t. Whatever happened right then and there, it’s hard to get the vision out of your head. It was one step.”

Giese said his son had just 10 days of actual combat ahead of him. He was to have arrived at Camp LeJeune in early February, when he also would have celebrated his first wedding anniversary.

Instead, his heartbroken family flew to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware to be there when his remains were returned Jan. 9 in a “dignified transfer” to American soil.

There will be a second dignified transfer of Ryan’s casket Friday morning at Dobbins Air Force Base in Marietta. The remains then will be transported to A.S. Turner & Sons Funeral Home in Decatur.

Visitation will be at the funeral home Friday from 6-9 p.m. The service will be held Saturday at 11 a.m. at First Christian Church of Atlanta, 4532 LaVista Road in Tucker, where Ryan’s maternal grandfather was a former pastor.

Burial with full military honors will follow at the Georgia National Cemetery.

Giese said that in the days since his son's death, he has been touched particularly by the words and actions of two Marines — one a former grunt who had served in another time and another era; the other a young grunt who was there when the roadside bomb took his son's life.

He said the Marines had nicknamed Ryan "The Goose" because of the pronunciation of his last name, which sounds like "Geesie."

"His Marine buddy called me and said, 'I was there when The Goose got hit. His last words were, 'I want to go to sleep.'"

"Then he went into God's arms," Giese added. "He had no clue what happened."

The second Marine to reach out was one of his own Nevada neighbors. Like Larry Giese, he had served in Vietnam, but they had never discussed that experience.

"He had been in Marine reconnaissance in Vietnam and was a grunt and in the same stuff Ryan was in," Giese said. "Guys had been blown up right with him. He said it had changed him.

"He brought me his Marine Corps flag and said, 'I want you to have this.' I said, 'No, I can't take that.' He said, 'You have to have this flag.'"

Giese said seeing his son buried this weekend would be the toughest challenge of his life.

"It's going to bring me to my knees," he said. "I can tell you that."

But he said he knows the Marines would properly honor his son's sacrifice.

"Marines do not leave their fallen," he said. "A Marine has been with him since the incident took place, 24/7, and the Marines won't leave him until he is buried."

In addition to his wife and parents, Lance Cpl. Joseph Ryan Giese is survived by three older sisters.

On the day of his death, one of them posted a moving video tribute to her brother on YouTube that can be found by searching under the fallen soldier's name.

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

More Fuel Tankers Supplying Afghan Occupation Troops Burned

Jan 21 Associated Press

In Pakistan's southwest on Friday, insurgents torched two tankers carrying fuel for U.S. and NATO forces, wounding two drivers.

Police official Abdul Zahoor says one tanker was attacked in the Qilat area of Baluchistan province, where militants over the weekend burned 14 fuel tankers. The other tanker was hit in the Mastung area.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

**THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR
HEALTH;
ALL HOME, NOW**



A US soldier inspects a pomegranate orchard with a mine detector during a patrol in Arghandab Valley of Kandahar province on January 6. (AFP/File/Behrouz Mehri)

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Islamist Insurgents “Have Taken Huge Attack” Against U.S.-Backed Regime

1.21.11 (Mareeg)

Mogadishu -At least 2 people killed and 3 others wounded in the north Mogadishu after heavy shells and fighting took place between Islamist militias of Shabab and T.F.G [government] forces backed by the African union peace keeping [translation: foreign occupation] forces, residents said.

The fighting was going several hours last night in Boondheere district of north Mogadishu between warring parts in the capital killing 3 innocent people and injuring 5 others

The battle came as Islamist insurgents of Shabab have taken huge attack against the T.F.G and Amisom military bases in north Mogadishu.

Insurgents Move Against Government Radio Station

19 January 2011 AllAfrica

Mogadishu — The Islamist fighters of Harakat Al-shabab Mujihideen have formally started fighting against Shabelle Media Network blocking Shabelle’s frequencies 101.50 MHz to other 4 FM radio waves in the Somali capital Mogadishu until Tuesday night.

A research made by Shabelle Media Network was known that the radio could not be listened in several neighborhoods including Suka-holaha, Bakara market, Elasha biyaha, Lafole and other villages between Afgoi, a town which is 30 kilometers to south of the Somali capital Mogadishu.

Shabelle Media Network had relocated from its headquarter in Bakara market in mid 2010 as Al-shabab killed many of Shabelle’s senior correspondents including two radio directors deliberately killed in the market that caused

Shabelle administration to move to its currently main head quarter around Aden Adde airport of Mogadishu which is under the control of AMISOM and the transitional government troops in the capital.

MILITARY NEWS

**NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



The remains of Cpl. Jacob A. Tate Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2011 at Dover Air Force Base, Del. Tate, 21, of Columbus, Ohio, died Jan. 2, 2011 in combat in Helmand province, Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Steve Ruark)

J.P. Morgan Confesses To Financial Rape Of Active Duty Military Families: Bankers “Wrongly Foreclosed On 14 Active-Service Military Families And Overcharged Thousands More”

JANUARY 19, 2011 By DAVID BENOIT, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]. Alan Zibel contributed to this article.

NEW YORK—J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. admitted that it wrongly foreclosed on 14 active-service military families and overcharged thousands more on their mortgages, a continuing internal bank review has found.

The bank said about a year ago it launched the internal audit and found it made mistakes when accounting for active military service under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

That law says active-duty military families' interest rates on homes can be no more than 6%, and they aren't subject to the delinquency process including foreclosures.

The bank said it is in the process of refunding about \$2 million to more than 4,000 families that were overcharged. The bank said some refunds were only for minor fees, and it has quickly resolved 13 of the 14 foreclosures.

But the bank's payments don't put related legal woes behind it. And politicians were quick to seize on the mistake as evidence of a more troubled foreclosure system.

Sen. Jack Reed (D., R.I.) said Tuesday he asked Attorney General Eric Holder to examine the issue. "Soldiers who are fighting on the front lines to protect our country shouldn't have to needlessly fight with banks to protect their homes," Mr. Reed said in a statement.

The payment doesn't stop a lawsuit filed by one service member in a South Carolina federal court who alleges the bank violated the act.

Richard A. Harpootlian, an attorney for U.S. Marine Capt. Jonathan Rowles, said returning the money isn't enough. He said the lawsuit, which seeks class-action status, is trying to obtain punitive damages as well.

The mistakes were earlier brought to light by NBC News, when Capt. Rowles discussed his fight with the bank.

Mr. Harpootlian also said J.P. Morgan lawyers said in a hearing that federal prosecutors are looking into the incident and, separately, that he received an inquiry from a congressional committee.

The latest situation is likely to be particularly embarrassing to Chief Executive James Dimon, who has repeatedly touted the bank's policies in dealing with military personnel, particularly the fact that the bank pays the salaries of employees who are called to military duty. In November, Mr. Dimon vowed to hire more military veterans.

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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



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

“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.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

Hope for change doesn’t cut it when you’re still losing buddies.
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War

**“In 2008, People In Some 30
Countries Took Part In Angry**

**Riots Against Food Price
Increases”**
**“It’s Not That There Isn’t Enough
Food To Feed The World’s
Population--The Problem Is That The
World’s Poor Don’t Have Enough
Money To Buy It”**
**“Their System Has Proved Itself A
Failure--And With That Ugly Truth
Exposed, The Opportunities Will Grow
Everywhere For Resistance To Develop
And Burst Onto The Scene”**

January 19, 2011 Editorial, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

“WE WANT bread and water and no Ben Ali,” read protesters’ handwritten signs as they took to the streets in cities and towns across Tunisia.

Some waved loaves of bread, symbols of the hunger that drew people into a struggle that ultimately toppled the corrupt 23-year reign of Tunisian President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali.

Tunisia isn’t alone in suffering the effects of a new global food crisis that has pushed up prices for staples by one-third in the past six months, according to the United Nations.

It isn’t alone in witnessing furious protests over the failure of the system to provide for people’s most basic needs.

And it may not be alone for long in seeing hated rulers overthrown.

ACCORDING TO a report released last week, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) food price index jumped 32 percent in the second half of 2010.

The price of sugar, grain and oilseed drove world food prices to a record high in December, the report said, even surpassing levels during the food crisis of 2008 that sparked rioting in countries around the world.

It's not that there isn't enough food to feed the world's population--the problem is that the world's poor don't have enough money to buy it.

In 2008, for example, 2.2 billion tons of cereal grains were produced--an all-time production record. And yet there was a food shortage that caused unrest around the world, and greater suffering even in wealthy countries like the U.S.

THE WARPED priorities of capitalism, which put profit over human need, breed artificial scarcity of the most basic necessities for human existence--while pretending such shortages are "natural." So we live in a world where part of the population is always on the verge of starvation--and the majority of people have to struggle hard to make sure they put food on the table.

But alongside this irrational system exists the possibility of revolt.

In 2008, people in some 30 countries took part in angry riots against food price increases--among the sites of the biggest protests were Haiti, Mexico, Indonesia and Egypt. Now, the protests are reemerging.

In Algeria, according to Emad Mekay of Inter Press Service, "staple food prices such as flour, cooking oil, milk and sugar averaged a 30 percent increase in the four days prior to the break-out of the protests" earlier this month.

"The unrest," Mekay reported, "saw thousands of young people hurl stones at the police, set tires on fire, storm mail offices and government banks, and demand better living conditions and a greater share of the country's oil wealth."

The mainstream media here portrays Tunisia's uprising as largely a rebellion against a corrupt dictator.

But the revolt is linked to something more fundamental--it's an indictment of capitalism itself.

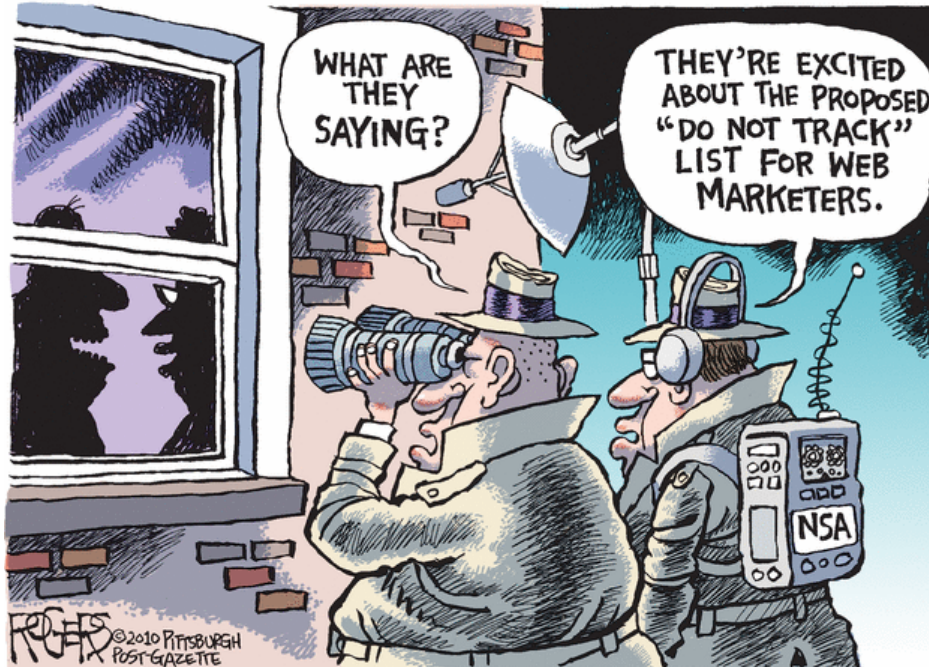
The true face of capitalism has been exposed as a system that can't feed its poor, but can enrich a small elite at the top a million times over--and the only answer of governments, whether authoritarian or supposedly answerable to the people, is bitter austerity.

Their system has proved itself a failure--and with that ugly truth exposed, the opportunities will grow everywhere for resistance to develop and burst onto the scene.

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 send email to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Tunisia:
**“The State Apparatus Was Still In
Place And Functionaries Remained
Party Members”**
**“We Want The Government To Return
The People’s Wealth That They
Plundered”**

20 January 2011 Angelique Chrisafis in Tunis, The Guardian [Excerpts]

Ministers were last night trying to hold together the government after three trade union ministers quit and political sources said minor changes would have to be made to the government in the coming days. A fourth minister, Mustafa Ben Jaafar, head of the small Democratic Forum for Freedom and Labour, who had hesitated over a full resignation, did so yesterday. “We have pulled out of the government officially,” his party said.

One insider at the transport ministry said nothing had changed in the civil service, the state apparatus was still in place and functionaries remained party members.

“You had to be in the party to progress in your career. At work, we still daren’t even talk about the revolution, people are still afraid of talking,” he said.

Tunisian state television reported the government had released 1,800 prisoners sentenced to less than six months for minor offences. Chebbi of the PDP opposition party said these included political prisoners, particularly members of the banned Islamist movement Ennahda.

But figures were not available of how many people had been released. Secrecy under the ousted dictator Ben Ali meant that the number of those detained for political reasons was never made public.

As Switzerland moved to freeze Ben Ali’s assets, demonstrators in the Tunis crowd included people whose homes had been appropriated by the family of Ben Ali and his wife. A businessman said his 13th century villa in a prime Tunis suburb was taken over by a relative of the first lady, Leila Trabelsi.

He had complained to the justice system and was harassed and had his passport taken away.

“We want the government to return the people’s wealth that they plundered,” he said.

MORE:

**“The Struggle Over The Future Of
Tunisia Is Continuing”**

**“We Forced A Dictator Out The Door,
And Now He’s Come Back In The
Window”**

**“Citizens And Martyrs, The Government
Is Still The Same...”**

January 20, 2011 By Gary Lapon and Alan Maass, Socialist Worker[Excerpts]

THE STRUGGLE over the future of Tunisia is continuing in the days following the overthrow of dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali after 23 years of brutal and corrupt rule.

The cabinet for a supposed “unity government” met for the first time on Wednesday, but it was without ministers representing the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT, by its French initials) and several opposition parties, who resigned over the presence of numerous officials from Ben Ali’s old regime in the new government.

While the cabinet met, hundreds of protesters rallied in the capital of Tunis, demanding that members of Ben Ali’s Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD) be excluded from the government. As demonstrator Salem Ben Yahia, a filmmaker and former political prisoner, told the Guardian:

“We don’t want our revolution hijacked. We forced a dictator out the door, and now he’s come back in the window. His old ministers are still in a majority in this transition government, and that has to change.”

The true character of the “unity government” is evident at the very top.

The president is Fouad Mebazaa, the former speaker of parliament, and Mohamed Ghannouchi remains prime minister. Both men were members of the RCD.

They attempted to distance themselves from Ben Ali by resigning from the party on Tuesday, and Mebazaa promised “a complete break with the past” in his first televised speech as president the next day.

But that won’t fool protesters.

The announcement of the new government the day before was greeted with anger.

In addition to Mebazaa and Ghannouchi, RCD leaders were left in charge of the ministries of interior, defense, foreign affairs and finance.

Members of moderate opposition parties and three UGTT officials were given minor posts, such as the ministries of health and regional development. The Tunisian Workers’ Communist Party and Islamist parties were excluded.

Demonstrations erupted anew.

According to the New York Times, more than 1,000 people marched down the main road of the capital, chanting, “Citizens and martyrs, the government is still the same...We will protest, we will protest, until the government collapses!”

Police fired tear gas and rubber bullets, but the demonstrations continued in different parts of the city into the night.

A member of the moderate opposition Progressive Democratic Party (PDP), outraged that PDP leader Ahmed Najib Chebbi had accepted a post in the new government, reportedly told Chebbi: “The people, who bled and died for us and our children, need to decide! How can the murderer (Ghannouchi) be our leader today?”

The three UGTT ministers led the resignations from the government the same day it was announced--and the union federation held a general meeting that decided to withhold recognition of the government, according to reports.

As British socialist Richard Seymour commented on his Lenin's Tomb blog:

“The significance of this is clear. The political elite, the ruling class it is integrated into, and in all probability a phalanx of EU and U.S. diplomats wanted a constitutional lash-up that would preserve the same basic pyramid of control, with some more inclusive, and slightly more representative, structures...

“The ruling class is clearly weak and divided, its institutions of repression unable to keep control. In some cities, the population has been able to effectively take full over. No government that does not include organized labor in some capacity will have any legitimacy.”

Mebazaa and the government will attempt to masquerade as opponents of the old regime.

As the cabinet met on Wednesday, 33 members of Ben Ali's family were arrested on suspicion of “crimes against Tunisia,” according to local television reports that showed images of gold and jewelry seized in raids.

But, of course, RCD members like Mebazaa were collaborators with the Ben Ali kleptocracy until last week.

To call for “stability” under an interim government headed by a party that oversaw more than two decades of corruption and human rights abuses is to ask the Tunisian people to acquiesce to injustice and surrender the gains they sacrificed so much for.

Furthermore, it would be absurd to trust leaders of Ben Ali's own party to oversee a “transition to democracy” or to investigate the wrongdoing for which their party is responsible--never mind to look out for the interests of the Tunisian people who, until a few days ago, they were openly engaged in repressing.

For the last two decades, “stability” in Tunisia has meant worsening economic inequality, sharp increases more recently in food prices and unemployment, and a repressive security state that denied ordinary Tunisians any semblance of human, civil or democratic rights.

It was “instability”--caused by the Tunisian people rising up against injustice--that finally toppled the Ben Ali dictatorship.

“The Algerians Are Rising”

“Against The Rulers’ Respective Clients And Supporters From All Sides, Whether They Are Islamists Or Self-Proclaimed Democrats”

“Their Revolt Is Accompanied By Applause From Residents, And Ululations And Shouts From Mothers Standing On Balconies And In Windows”

“The Clashes Between The Population And The Riot Police Took Place In No Fewer Than 20 Departments Of Algerian Territory”



Endemic unemployment, housing crises, corruption, abuses of authority, diminishing purchasing power, lack of opportunities, favoritism, injustice at each turn, ill-gotten gains, inequality and perpetual contempt.

There is no shortage of reasons to be angry.

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IT IS 11:30 p.m. in Ihaddaden, a popular quarter in the new center of Béjaïa, a city in the Kabyle region situated in the east of Algiers, the confrontations between protesters and riot police have not abated.

Not more than 20 years old, these young people--who didn't experience the other grand popular revolt for an independent Algeria, in October of 1988, nor had they taken part in the uprising which gripped Kabylie in 2001, when there were 129 deaths--are not ready to go home.

Their revolt is accompanied by applause from residents, and ululations and shouts from mothers standing on balconies and in windows. To the provocations of protesters who shout for them to approach "if you are men," the assembled police retaliate by emptying their tear gas canisters, forcing the inhabitants to take refuge in their homes.

But the young people aren't impressed.

For hours, they confront the riot police, constructing barricades with random objects, burning tires, broken road signs.

They continue to play cat and mouse with the forces of order, armed with only rocks and their hatred for the despised Algerian regime, a hatred shared by all the Algerian people.

In fact, today, these scenes aren't limited to the rebellious Kabylie region.

From east to west, all of Algeria is rising.

From Tebessa, on the Eastern border, only a few kilometers from the city of Sidi-Bouزيد where the Tunisian revolt is taking place; to Oranie and the western borders, a region perhaps not so used to these sorts of popular expressions of dissent; and passing by Guelma, Djelfa and Laghouat cities in the south.

As if word were spread beforehand, this Friday, January 7, around 3 p.m., just after the big Friday prayer, thousands of young people occupied public spaces and the main arteries of their towns, determined to fight.

The clashes between the population and the riot police took place in no fewer than 20 departments of Algerian territory.

This wave of youth is launching its cry of revolt against the leaders it did not choose.

In first place, against Bouteflika, the immovable president who changed the constitution to be able to obtain a third mandate and keep power.

Against the generals, who sowed war and terrorized the population with impunity, and who hoard the riches of the people by directly tapping the coffers of Sonatrach (national hydrocarbon company) and public goods as if they were their own.

Against the rulers' respective clients and supporters from all sides, whether they are Islamists or self-proclaimed democrats, senators and deputies, whose silence is grossly rewarded (the salary of an Algerian deputy in parliament is equivalent to 30 times the minimum salary, which is around \$200 a month).

The insurrectionists of Algiers, of Tizi-Ouzou, of Oran and Annaba are all united in declaring they've had enough of a system that is deaf and blind to their legitimate demands.

Endemic unemployment, housing crises, corruption, abuses of authority, diminishing purchasing power, lack of opportunities, favoritism, injustice at each turn, ill-gotten gains, inequality and perpetual contempt.

There is no shortage of reasons to be angry.

THIS REVOLT is the expression of Algerians' difficulty in surviving--even with a "bad life" that pushes the youngest to exile on makeshift rafts called "haragas." The others try to subsist on their wits: as street vendors and traders of all sorts, which is made more difficult by restrictions imposed on imports by the Ouyahia government in 2009, and which the youths consider another injustice.

The Algerian "middle class" watched its purchasing power collapse with the rise in cost of living. Its wages barely cover the necessities of life and the price of food. As for the poorest strata, it's simply destitution.

These last days, rumors announced the rise in price of flour, and those rumors contributed to this "warming of spirits" or the escalation of the situation. Not to mention the Algerian government removed subsidies for food staples, like sugar, oil and semolina, making them inaccessible to the poorest people.

There is, therefore, a cry of indignation and of disgust about this republic of social inequities and about this great pauperization that the Algerians are shouting out while they take to the streets. At the cost of their lives? The state of emergency has been out in full force for 20 years, and we remember here that on many past occasions, the Algerian state didn't hesitate to shoot live ammunition at protesters.

These protests were very violent and took as targets the usual symbols of the state: courts, police stations, banks. But for the first time, the offices of Sonelgaz have been adversely affected. We can't help but see a link here with the previous affairs of corruption, which tarnished this business linked to Sonatrach, and which represents one of the country's principal sources of foreign exchange.

The minister of finance announced January 4 that the country was holding...\$155 billion in reserves--a first since Algerian independence. But if the Algerian regime is bragging in front of the entire world that they have this unimaginable sum, the population doesn't

even see the color of the money. Whether in Béjaïa, Algiers or Oran, we talk of “hogra”--this daily injustice of indignity, that the little people, the rank-less, the connection-less, those with absolutely nothing, merely subsist because an arrogant power allows retirees to forage in its garbage cans or steal food.

But it would be a mistake to believe that Algerians rose up for that. This revolt is also for dignity--that which you don't feel without being free. And above all else, freedom of expression, if it existed, would have provided democratic and legal channels for the people's demands and would have avoided this payment in blood.

The Algerians are rising against those who confiscated independence and the ideals of the war of independence 50 years ago. Against those who hoarded the immense riches that should have made each Algerian citizen free and prosperous.

Those tyrannical oligarchs who continue to cling to power, decrepit though their power is, are causing intrigue in the corridors of El Mouradia (the Presidential palace) and the headquarters of the DRS (the all-powerful Algerian secret service) to perpetuate their power and leave behind them, as a legacy, a deformed dynasty or scavenging opportunists.

To those people who sold the country to fill their personal bank accounts and who buy the indulgence of European followers with rubies for their fingernails, while they serve the people their corrupted ideological stew and their false declarations of faith, the insurgents of Algiers square, of Soumam and of Oranie assert that it was not for this that a million Algerians gave their lives [in the war of independence]. Nor was it so the people who proclaim themselves, with drunken shame, the martyrs of the Revolution, dressing in the clothes of the oppressors of yesterday, could trample on the ideals of the struggle for independence while destroying any chance of its existence.

The protesters are shouting out to them that they are fighting because “independence has yet to arrive.” But it will certainly arrive tomorrow.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Afghanistan, Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

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