

Military Resistance 9E17

“MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY JOINED ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTESTERS”



Members of the military joined anti-government protesters during a rally to demand the ouster of Yemen's Dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh in Sanaa, Yemen May 21, 2011.
REUTERS/Khaled Abdullah

**Afghanistan:
“All My Guys Are Hurt. No One Cares. A Guy With Fractured Foot Is Still Going Out On Missions”**

“We Survived A Crash And All The NCO Wanted To Know Was When We Were Going To Be Back To Work”

“They Are Not Engaged And Have No Concept About What Is Going On Out There”

“Nobody Advocates For Us”

Thanks to Redvet, who sent this in.]

May 19, 2011 Posted by Mark Thompson, Time.com [Excerpts]

The Army-led seventh Mental Health Advisory Team surveyed combat soldiers and Marines (as opposed to those in support units) in both Afghanistan last summer to get an accurate picture of how they're faring, mentally, after nearly a decade of war. They surveyed 911 (a coincidence, I'm sure) and 335 Marines.

It's a pretty impressive feat; in past conflicts such studies generally were conducted among soldiers after they returned home. It's known as "MHAT-7" around the Pentagon.

The Army quoted many of the soldiers it surveyed.

It certainly offers an unvarnished look inside a war that you can't get at a Pentagon briefing or Capitol Hill hearing.

It's also more candid than reporters get when talking to troops; here, they are speaking, more or less, among themselves:

Leaving home station, we didn't have a clue what we were going to do here. Mission set has changed 6 times since in country ... be flexible, but not THAT flexible! We are mission jumping constantly.

Goals/standards are ridiculous ... you can't meet them if they keep changing. Doing the right thing here is wrong."

"There was no guidance from leadership on the goal of specific missions.

Role? I don't know if I am a platoon sergeant, squad leader, or team leader ... I still don't know my role and we are 58 days out from coming home.

Info comes down, but we don't have a good understanding of it, but then we have to take it, try to make sense of it, and try to give it to our Joes. I know it doesn't make sense to them.

We had a large white board in the TOC (tactical operations center) for the purpose of writing down changes to the mission but the NCO wouldn't use it...instead he would keep the changes to himself.

You never get positive feedback, but you will get an -ss-chewing if you screw up ... They tell you what is not going to work.

There is no feedback at all from leadership.

Our platoon sergeant usually tells us that 'You guys are s--t bags for making me look bad.'

You want to throw 20 people into a 10 man tent and have us live like that for the past 9 months....REALLY.

Leadership was never NOT breathing down my neck...poor planning on many issues.

They use any sign of error to belittle you...focus is on failure to make themselves look better. Cruise control once we got here... it is not a problem until it is a catastrophe.

Nobody advocates for us. They never listen to the experts...they don't listen to the people that know. But I go toe-to-toe with them. I have to serve as the advocate. I get the blame though for everything that could go wrong.

Leadership is giving us [un] junior enlisted] no support. They let themselves be walked all over.

They challenge us in unrealistic ways ... good idea fairy.

Leadership isn't teaching you how to fish, but instead they are just giving you a fish.

They are not engaged and have no concept about what is going on out there. They just don't get involved.

He (NCO) will send us to work while he stays back and watches TV.

They dictate methodology, don't innovate, and don't let others innovate either. Appearance means more than anything.

There is one solution and it's his solution.

It's their way or the highway.

They tell us to do it ourselves all the time...It's frustrating that when we do it ourselves they then come back and get mad at us because we didn't do it their way even though they didn't tell us how they wanted it done.

All my guys are hurt. No one cares. A guy with fractured foot is still going out on missions.

We survived a crash and all the NCO wanted to know was when we were going to be back to work.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

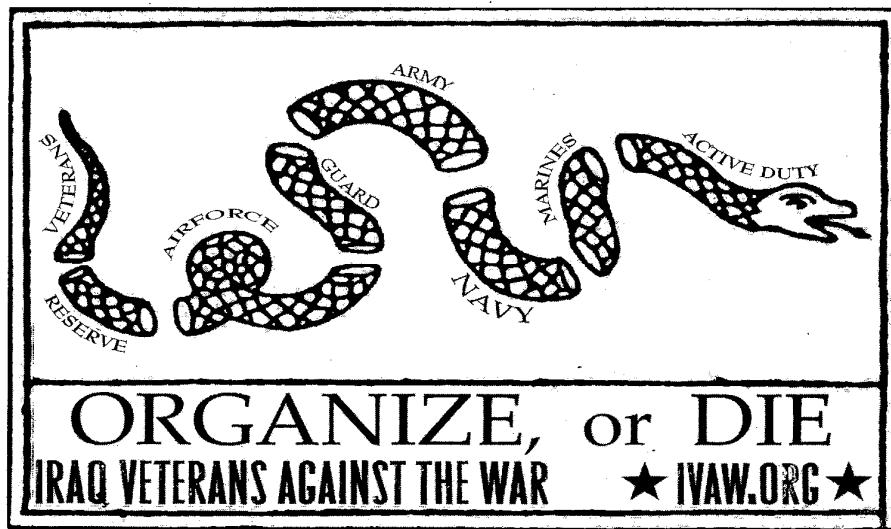
Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Afghanistan, Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the 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

ACTION REPORTS

**“FREE COFFEE From Under
The Hood Cafe Is Being Passed
Out Before Morning Formation
At The East Gate”**

**“Of Course We Are Passing Out
Under The Hood And GI Rights
Cards With The Coffee”**

“It All Seems Overwhelming, But All Great Social Transformations Have Started Off This Way”
“With Individuals Wrenching Themselves Out Of The Comforts Of Everyday To Take On Power”



[Operation Recover Deployment: Fort Hood]

Week One May 17 2011, by Aaron Hughes, Iraq Veterans Against The War
(www.ivaw.org/)

I am still arriving in many ways to the belly of the beast. Thinking of what is ahead of us.

The work of taking on Gen. Campbell. The work of altering power at the heart of power.

It all seems overwhelming, but all great social transformations have started off this way. With individuals wrenching themselves out of the comforts of everyday to take on power.

In a book titled SNCC Howard Zinn wrote, “How do you measure commitment? Is it the willingness to take a day out of life and sacrifice for history, to plunge for one morning or one afternoon into the unknown, to engage in one solitary act of defiance against all the arrayed of established society? ... Is commitment more than that - the willingness to wrench yourself out of your environment and begin anew, almost alone, in a social jungle which the most powerful forces in the nation have dared to penetrate? Then the number is reduced to 16: those 16 college youngsters who, in the fall of 1961, decided to drop everything - school and family and approved ambition - and move into the deep

south to become the first guerrilla fighters of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.”

Fifty years ago with just 16 organizers SNCC dove into the south not only to change the course of history over the next five years but to radically transform themselves. This history is one that I look back at am inspired by and thankful for the strategies left to learn from.

Fifty years later we are still in battle against the “the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism” that Martin Luther King Jr. spoke so honestly about in his 1967 Beyond Vietnam speech.

I try and take heed to these lessons and thats why I dove into the belly of the beast, Ft. Hood, to become one of the gorilla fighters of our movement for a better world.

This first week has been one focused on preparing for the outreach drive by;

- reordering the coffee shop so it was more suitable and welcoming to guests
- clean, clean some more, and more cleaning
- yard work
- searching for cheep bunk beds, rugs, bedding, food, and other little things
- talking and I mean just talking to other local businesses

Outreach, it is on everyones minds but seems at times so hard to get done.

At other times it is just apart of our day.

On Wednesday we passed fliers out at the PX for Fatigue Clothesline, a new women’s veterans organization that Under the Hood is hosting on Sundays.

On Saturday two pages of pledges were collected from Service Members outside of a local book store.

Today and yesterday from 08:30 - 09:00 a new experiment in outreach began.

FREE COFFEE from Under the Hood Cafe is being passed out before morning formation at the east gate. A gesture of kindness that is received by the soldiers waiting to enter Ft. Hood.

Of course we are passing out Under the Hood and GI Rights cards with the coffee. Just another way to get the conversation started.

Their is a drought of culture in this worn down military town.

Every other Friday pulling from the depths of life a group of dedicated poets gather to Howl.

For a moment these poets transform the desert town into words, textures, beats, dreams, pains, sensual and crass feelings ... in to soul.

Under the Hood attends as a group and this turn we howled on Kyle as he read three poems ... one titled appropriately Therapy.

This is our therapy ...

Therapy



By Kyle Wesolowski

*In this town therapy is secondary
To the needs of our cities' health and humanity
The powers that decide our livelihood make another primary priority
Deciding to fill up our bathroom cabinets instead of giving us therapy
Its all good
They like to prescribe medication to GIs
Its easier to control them when they've made them dependent on a drug forming
habit
Forget about fixing combat stress
Just hop us up on benzodizipines
So we forget the past
dulling our painful reality
Of what war does to our mentality
For some of us we may not have scars or limbs lost
Its taboo in this town
We all know war effects every solider not just physically*

*For the pill popping solider
Fort Hood makes it easier for us who suffer from over medication
A normality in our health care society
Don't worry about it
If you get the shakes there's a new expressway lane for your quick fix
It just open up for business*

*Roll up in your ride to Thomas Moore clinic
10 mikes later you got your fill of dependency
All thats left to do is grab a bottle of water to swallow down handicapped half-
assed therapy*

So quick so easy, you'll make it back in time to your motor pool duties

The military clearly would rather find their own quick fix to the mental health epidemic

Where did the battle buddy system go?

Anyone can be your battle buddy even General Campbell.

It doesn't exist anymore

A soldier is no better than an Afghan or Iraqi

Put their problems to the side and worry about it years later after they forgot about us

Pills have there place but without therapy the veterans can't live this way forever

For many the help won't come

Suicides happen in regularity

If they're lucky they will at least see the pearly gates

The gates that big book we all know talks about.

CHARLIE MIKE:

**Iraq Veterans Against the War is a 501(c)(3) charity,
and welcomes your tax deductible contributions**

https://org2.democracynaction.org/o/5966/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content_item_KEY=3055

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

“The UK’s Military Operation In Iraq Will Officially End At Midnight”

22 May 2011 BBC

The UK’s military operation in Iraq will officially end at midnight, the Ministry of Defence has confirmed.

It comes after the Royal Navy completed its training of Iraqi sailors, with the last personnel leaving the country on Friday.

While Operation Telic, the name for the UK mission in Iraq since 2003, will finish, a handful of staff will remain at the British embassy in Baghdad.

At its peak the operation involved some 46,000 personnel.

Resistance Action

May 22 (Reuters) & By Ned Parker and Raheem Salman, Los Angeles Times

A bomber Sunday killed 10 police officers and wounded 19 others who had gathered at the site of a failed car bomb attack on the U.S. military just north of Baghdad.

The car bomb blew up as a U.S. military convoy passed near Taji, the site of a major military installation north of Baghdad, but caused no damage to the Americans, according to an Iraqi security official. When police gathered by the site, a bomber approached and blew himself up, the security official said.

TAJI - At least nine Iraqi troops were killed when a bomber blew up his car among a group of soldiers investigating a car bomb near a checkpoint in Taji, 20 kilometers (12 miles) north of Baghdad, said security spokesman, Major-General Qassim al-Moussawi.

BAGHDAD - Two roadside bombs targeted the car of a government spokesperson's aide, wounding the driver and a passenger in eastern Baghdad, a police source said.

BAGHDAD - Four roadside bombs plus a parked car bomb targeted a Federal Police base in Amil District, southwestern Baghdad, killing a policeman wounding three policemen, an Interior Ministry source said.

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/>

And join with Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Militants Storm Afghan Gov't Building; 3 Police Dead In Four Hour Battle



The police traffic department building is attacked by insurgents, in Khost, eastern of Afghanistan on May 22, 2011. At least five people were killed in ongoing fight it as a fire raged through the structure. (AP Photo/Nishanuddin Khan)

May 21, 2011 Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Militants wearing explosive vests stormed a government building in eastern Afghanistan early Sunday and engaged in a shootout with Afghan security forces who surrounded the compound, officials said. At least three police officers were killed in ongoing fighting.

In Sunday's incident, three or four men armed with assault rifles and wearing explosives strapped to their bodies shot their way into a compound that houses the traffic department on the edge of Khost city shortly after dawn, said Gen. Raz Mohammad Oryakhail, the army commander for Khost province.

They killed a police guard as they entered and then took over the second floor of the building, from which they shot down at police and soldiers outside, he said.

The gunbattle was still going on more than four hours later, and flames were shooting out of the building, said provincial Police Chief Gen. Abdul Hakim Ishaqzai. At least two more police were killed, he said. Ishaqzai said security officials believed some of the attackers were also dead.

Police and soldiers were trying to avoid launching a full assault because they didn't want the insurgents to detonate their suicide vests, Ishaqzai said. Afghan security forces had the compound surrounded, he said.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the attack in a text message to The Associated Press.

In Kandahar, two police officers suffered injuries Sunday when a motorcycle laden with explosives detonated as they tried to disarm it, the ministry said.

NO MISSION; POINTLESS WAR: ALL HOME NOW



U.S. troops arrive at the site of an explosion in Kandahar city May 19, 2011.
REUTERS/Ahmad Nadeem

“U.S. Forces In Southern Afghanistan Shot A Governor’s Spokesman In The Foot Sunday” [No, Not From The Onion]

May 21, 2011 Associated Press]

U.S. forces in southern Afghanistan shot a governor's spokesman in the foot Sunday as he arrived to work. Spokesman Zalmi Ayubi leaned on a cane as he spoke with reporters, his left foot bandaged.

Ayubi said U.S. forces shot him as he arrived at the gate of the Kandahar governor's office for no reason.

ANNIVERSARIES

May 23, 1838: Infamous Anniversary



Carl Bunin Peace History May 21-27

U.S. General Winfield Scott ordered the forced removal of the Cherokee Indians from the east to the "Indian Nation" (what is now Oklahoma).

Approximately one quarter of the 10,000 died on this march called "The Trail of Tears."

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

“We Were Going Home”

**“One Young Man Carried His
Grandmother In His Arms”
“Israeli Soldiers Fired Live Ammunition
At The Protesters, Who Were Armed
Only With The Deeds To Their Property,
Or Ageing Photographs Of Their Parents’
Farms”**



Palestinians climb the border fence between Syria and the Golan. Photograph: Jalaa Marey/Reuters

19 May 2011 By Karma Nabulsi, The Guardian

It was the moment for which we had all been holding our breath for decades – for 63 years to be precise.

Palestinians everywhere watched the unfolding scene transfixed and awed.

The camera followed the movements of a small group of people advancing from the mass of protesters.

They were carefully making their way down a hill towards the high fence that closed off the mined field separating Syria from its own occupied territory of the Golan that borders historic Palestine, now Israel.

They were mostly young Palestinians, drawn from the 470,000-plus refugee community in Syria: from Yarmouk refugee camp inside Damascus, from Khan el-Sheikh camp

outside it, from Deraa and Homs refugee camps in the south, from Palestinian gatherings all over the country.

Slowly, and in spite of the shouted warnings from the villagers from Majdal Shams about the lethal landmines installed by the Israeli military right up to the fence, these remarkable ordinary young people – Palestinian refugees – began to both climb and push at the fence.

We were going home.

It was a profoundly revolutionary moment, for these hundreds of young people entering Majdal Shams last Sunday made public the private heart of every Palestinian citizen, who has lived each day since 1948 in the emergency crisis of a catastrophe.

Waiting, and struggling, and organising for only two things: liberation and return.

What made this moment and others like it across the region so radical in gesture, democratic in purpose, and universal in intent?

It brought the entire world suddenly face to face with the intimate and immediate in the very human struggle for freedom of each Palestinian, whether refugee or not.

Sixty-three years ago the entire body politic of the people of Palestine was violently destroyed and dispersed. All Palestinians, whether refugee or not, share that terrible history – it is what unites us.

This is the shared experience we commemorate every year on Nakba Day: the year-long expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians that began in 1947 and continued straight through 1948 into the terrible snowstorm winters of 1949, creating what is now the world's largest refugee population.

On Sunday, this moment of return was enacted simultaneously in Haifa and among Palestinians displaced inside Israel, on the borders of Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, and Gaza, in the West Bank near the Qalandia refugee camp – wherever the more than 7 million stateless Palestinian refugees now live, very near their original villages and towns.

Just out of sight, over the hill, across the border.

This basic injustice has yet to be addressed by any of the schemes currently on the table to solve the Palestinian issue.

For this is not about the reconciliation of political parties, the search for a state or the establishment of two, negotiations or the lack of them, the enfranchisement of a third of our people over the disenfranchisement of the rest.

Indeed, what happened on Sunday was not the plan of Salam Fayyad, the Palestinian Authority prime minister, nor that of Fatah or Hamas; it most certainly wasn't the American, European or Israeli plan for dealing with the Palestinian people.

Like the rest of the Arab people who have taken their fate into their own hands – and in doing so provided lessons and models in the meaning of democracy and citizenship to the rest of the world for years to come – the Palestinians have demonstrated, quite perfectly and with great courage, what it is to be fully human, and how to hold on to one’s humanity in spite of more than six decades of violent oppression.

Activists living in Majdal Shams had not been expecting them, and were completely surprised to see the dozens of buses pull up on the other side of the valley.

Organised largely on the phone and internet, many of these young Palestinian refugees, mostly university students, didn’t even know each other.

They certainly didn’t know what was about to happen to them.

Israeli soldiers fired live ammunition at the protesters, who were armed only with the deeds to their property, or ageing photographs of their parents’ farms. One young man carried his grandmother in his arms.

Qais Abu Alheija (from Houd, Haifa district), Bashar Ali Shahabi (from Lubya, Tiberias district), Samer Khartabeel (from the town of Tiberias), Abadah Zaghmout (from the village of Safsaf, Haifa district – an effort to save his life at the clinic of Golan for Development in Majdal Shams failed): all died on Sunday in the Golan, walking home.

The Palestinian spring has certainly arrived: this is just the beginning, and summer is on its way.

MORE:

“A Jew to Zionist Fighters, 1988” Do You Really Want To Be The New Gestapo? The New Wehrmacht? The New SA And SS?

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in. She writes:]

Something very different: a poem.

Have you heard of Erich Fried who is often referred to as the greatest modern, Jewish, poet?

He was born in Vienna in 1921 and escaped to England, with his mother, after his father was tortured to death by the Gestapo, in 1938.

Because of his experiences with racism and Fascism he became involved in the Palestinian cause.

He was a leader in the fight against both Fascism and Zionism.

I'm sending a copy of his best poem, in my opinion. It was first published in 1988 just before he died.

Please take the time to read it.

I think it's wonderful.

A Jew to Zionist Fighters, 1988

What do you actually want?
Do you really want to outdo
those who trod you down
a generation ago
into your own blood
and into your own excrement
Do you want to pass on the old torture
to others now
in all its bloody and dirty detail
with all the brutal delight of torturers
as suffered by your fathers?
Do you really want to be the new Gestapo
the new Wehrmacht
the new SA and SS
and turn the Palestinians
into the new Jews?
Well then I too want,
having fifty years ago
myself been tormented for being a Jewboy
by your tormentors,
to be a new Jew with these new Jews
you are making of the Palestinians
And I want to help lead them as a free people
into their own land of Palestine
from whence you have driven them or in which you plague them
you apprentices of the Swastika
you fools and changelings of history
whose Star of David on your flags
turns ever quicker
into that damned symbol with its four feet
that you just do not want to see
but whose path you are following today

MORE:



Aug. 12, 2006. Photo from Cornelius Cardew

MORE:

Comment: T

Zionism is not a religion.

Zionism has nothing to do with religion.

Zionism is a racist political tendency, combining the most vicious expansionist nationalism with force of arms.

Neo-Nazis and other bigoted political scum would like the world to think that all Jews are Zionist.

That is a despicable lie.

Zionists would like the world to think that all Jews are Zionists.

That is another despicable lie.

There have always been, and are to this day, political tendencies among Jews all over the world that have fought Zionism implacably, and still fight Zionism for the evil it is: nothing but a reactionary, odious, bloodthirsty politics that says a bunch of people can walk into Palestine, slaughter the people living there, reduce the survivors to objects of scorn and abuse, and stuff them in huge open air concentration camps, where they may be killed more conveniently.

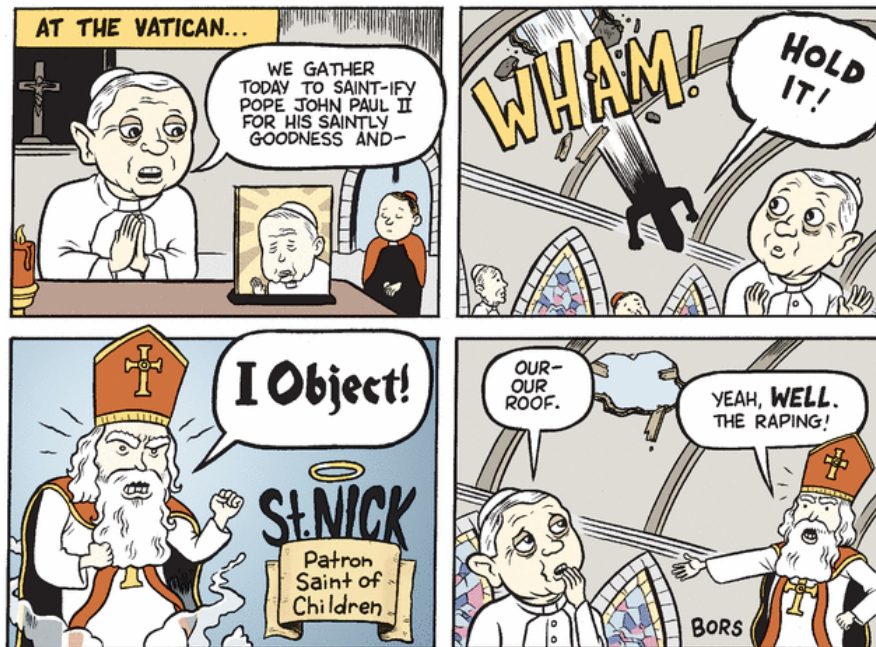
Zionism, like fascism, or any other form of expansionist militarized nationalism, has nothing whatever progressive or redeeming about it.

It is no more possible to defend the politics of Zionism than to defend the slaveholders in the United States who formed a regime founded on similar principles of structured inequality: The Confederate States Of America.

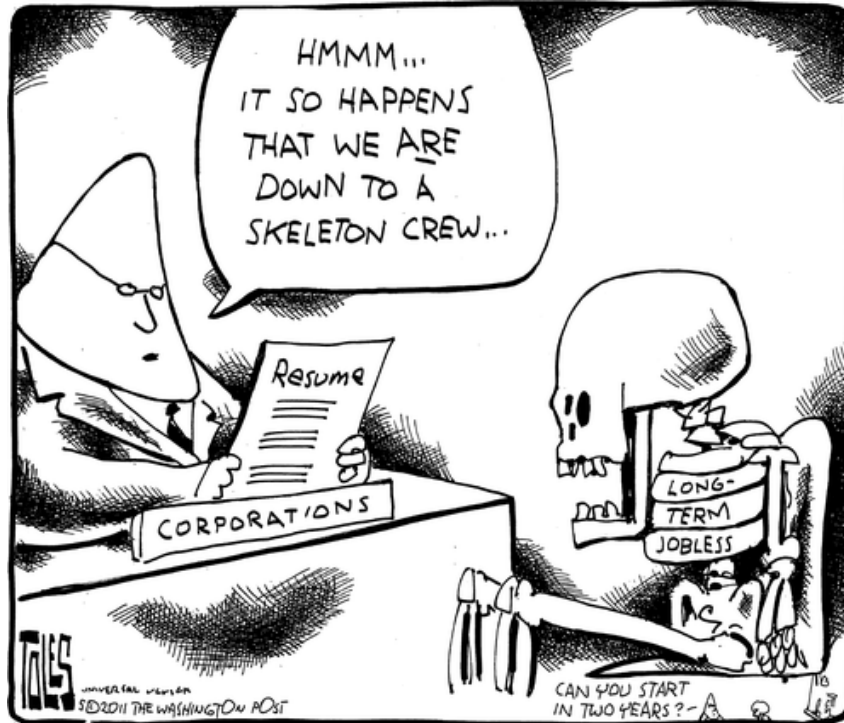
As finally occurred in South Africa, where a regime founded on similar murderous racist tyranny eventually was destroyed by mass resistance, it may be hoped that one day, the area comprised now by every inch of Israel, including every inch of the occupied territories, will form one political entity, with one person, one vote, and where all, regardless of their background, have equal rights, including the right of the Palestinians to return to their homes.

[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."]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS



**Spanish Defy Protest Ban
Ahead Of Elections:
Thousands Continue To Occupy
Puerta Del Sol Square In Madrid In
Protest Against Government Cuts
And Government Corruption;
“Now We Are All Illegal”
“The Political People Do Not Represent
The Good For The Most Of The People”**



Thousands of demonstrators swarm Madrid's central Puerta del Sol square, defying a protest ban by the country's electoral commission. Photograph: Arturo Rodriguez/AP

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

21 May 2011 Guardian UK & Lauren Frayer, Madrid; VOANews & CNN & 5.18.11
MSNBC & By ROBERT MACKAY, New York Times [Excerpts]

Tens of thousands of Spaniards angry over soaring unemployment rates defied a protest ban Saturday and crowded town squares across the nation for the seventh day to demonstrate against unemployment and the economic crisis ahead of local elections on Sunday.

Thousands more rallied in more than 50 other Spanish cities, including Barcelona, Valencia and Zaragoza.

“We need a change and I’m not surprised people have risen up, albeit belatedly,” said one of the protesters, 38-year-old Robert, who works for an advertising production company.

Robert had brought along his three-month-old daughter “so she can start learning young,” he said.

Saturday is a so-called “Day of Reflection,” when political campaigning - and demonstrations - are banned.

But demonstrators have been here for seven days, protesting high unemployment and perceived government corruption, ahead of local elections on Sunday.

A man shouts into a megaphone, “They don’t represent us. We are here to change society!”

Protester Raquel Almendros explains why she is here. “We do not have jobs, there’s a lot of unemployment, we’re having social cuts. The political people do not represent the good for the most of the people,” she said.

Police walk past but do not intervene. They are cheered by the crowd, in scenes hauntingly similar to anti-government protests in Cairo’s Tahrir Square during Egypt’s revolution in February.

“We intend to continue, because this is not about Sunday’s elections it’s about social cutbacks,” Carmen Sanchez, a spokeswoman for the protesters in Madrid’s Puerta del Sol square, told Agence-France Presse.

As a ban ordered by Spain’s election commission took effect at the chimes of midnight, the protesters chanted: “Now we are all illegal” and “the people united will never be defeated,” according to the agency.

The supreme court’s decision to overturn an appeal against the ban came two days ahead of local and regional elections that are scheduled across the Iberian nation. The ruling meant no such protests could legally occur on Saturday.

“The government does not want to have any sort of violence taking place the day prior to the elections. This would have a very large political cost and electoral cost,” Fernandez told CNN.

“People want to participate. This is a fiesta of democracy,” Sofia de Roa, another spokeswoman for the protesters, told CNN.

She said the protests also are expected to continue nightly, even after the elections.

“We’re not leaving until there’s a change,” she said, standing amid thousands of protesters in Madrid’s emblematic central square. “Until a politician commits to implementing the proposals here.”

Some in the crowd said they would vote on Sunday, including de Roa. But she said she would change her vote from the Communist-led United Left to an even more leftist party, which she hadn’t chosen yet.

Demonstrators are protesting Spain’s 21% unemployment rate, the highest in the euro zone, and a record 4.9 million people who are out of work. The jobless rate for youth -- those between ages 15 and 24 -- is 42%.

Protesters say that many temporary labor contracts offer few or no job benefits. In addition, some are protesting against the political and financial establishment that they say is to blame.

The protests appear to have gained momentum in the closing days of the campaign. They have captured considerable news media coverage, and all major parties have acknowledged them.

Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero said in an interview with SER radio on Friday that voters ultimately will decide whether and how much change will be made.

On Sunday, voters in Spain's 8,000 cities and towns will elect mayors, along with 13 out of 17 regional presidents and parliaments. The results are expected to be a bellwether for national elections, which must happen no later than March 2012.

Beatriz Elosegui, a government worker, said Thursday she had been to several protests since they started on Sunday. Her husband, an advertising executive, is out of work and her son is about to finish his training to become an electrician but has few job prospects, she said.

Two young men who appeared to be the only ones wearing suits and ties in the crowd said they showed up Thursday for the first time.

Both said they work as accountants, and one, Andres Maldonado, complained of tight credit that is squeezing homeowners and small businesses. He said government efforts to inject liquidity into the financial system are not working.

A new Spanish youth group, Democracia Real Ya, or True Democracy Now, inspired by the pro-democracy movements in the Arab world, used social networks to help organize the demonstrations, which began on Sunday.

As El País explained, the organizers are a diverse lot, yet “so well organized that they put together a security team of 200 people to prevent any trouble during the Madrid demonstration; they also had enough vision to use all the tricks in the book to keep the protest among Twitter’s most popular conversation topics in the world for the entire day,” using the tag #15m, to claim the date of May 15 for the start of their #SpanishRevolution.



Susana Vera/Reuters

Syrian Protesters Defy Crackdown And Gain Momentum: “In A Town On The Border With Iraq, Residents Said Protesters Burned A Municipal Building And Stormed A Jail, Freeing Detainees” “Reports Proliferate Of Some Protesters Resorting To Arms”

One of them, who had his fingernails pulled out, had taken a lead in the protests on Friday in Baniyas.

“They can’t make people afraid anymore,” he said. “This is evidence, but they just don’t get it. The crackdown is not working, and it’s becoming personal.”

May 21, 2011 By ANTHONY SHADID, New York Times [Excerpts]

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Thousands of Syrians took to the streets in virtually every region of the country on Friday in what appeared to be a sign of new momentum and a potentially dangerous turn in the nine-week uprising.

Activists said security forces killed at least 26 people and wounded hundreds.

The resilience of the protests seemed to surprise even the activists themselves.

The message delivered at many of the demonstrations, from Damascus, the capital, to the distant east to towns that had been the target of ferocious repression, was that the killing of hundreds and detention of thousands would not stifle opposition to four decades of authoritarian rule.

“No dialogue with tanks and soldiers,” went one slogan.

Some of the worst unrest has erupted along the Sunni-Alawite fault lines in the cities of Baniyas, Latakia and Homs, and there are reports, though unconfirmed, of assassinations of security personnel and sectarian bloodletting.

To minorities, the middle class and the business elite, the government has warned that it is “us or chaos.”

But, an analyst based in Damascus argued, repression may be intensifying instability.

“If you can’t restore stability, then it becomes ‘us and chaos,’ “ said the analyst, who asked not to be identified given the danger of the situation.

By all accounts, the government signaled its intention to persist with the crackdown, even as it tentatively offered to talk with some opposition figures.

It blamed armed gangs for the violence on Friday, and activists said it had deployed the military against yet another city, Ma’arrat an Nu’mān, and carried out another campaign of arrests in Baniyas.

Across the country, there were signs of disorder in the response of the notoriously unaccountable security forces.

While some troops used water cannons and fired in the air, others shot at protesters in places like Homs, the city in central Syria that is emerging as a locus of the challenge to Mr. Assad’s authority, and Ma’arrat an Nu’mān, a town to the north that, like Homs, is perched in a region of Sunni Muslims and minority Alawites.

In a town on the border with Iraq, residents said protesters burned a municipal building and stormed a jail, freeing detainees.

In the most restive neighborhood of Homs, activists said they raised a flag predating the Assad family’s rule.

Despite a military assault on Baniyas, along the Mediterranean coast, thousands returned to the streets there, in a sign that once the tanks were withdrawn, crowds would find a way to organize more protests.

Wissam Tarif, executive director of Insan, a Syrian human rights group, said he had interviewed young men tortured just days ago.

One of them, who had his fingernails pulled out, had taken a lead in the protests on Friday in Baniyas.

“They can’t make people afraid anymore,” he said. “This is evidence, but they just don’t get it. The crackdown is not working, and it’s becoming personal.”

Mr. Assad himself said in an interview with a Syrian newspaper this week that the unrest would soon come to an end.

But opposition figures and activists warned that the stalemate between a state bent on repression and protests that remain relatively small but remarkably persistent could prove dangerous, as sectarian tensions grow and reports proliferate of some protesters resorting to arms.

Some insisted that time was, in fact, running out.

“The longer this crisis goes on, the longer it takes the government to recognize the legitimacy of the protesters and their demands, the bigger the gap between the two will

become,” said Louay Hussein, an opposition figure who has met with government officials.

“What the street would have accepted yesterday, it won’t accept tomorrow.”

Just months ago, Mr. Assad was a relatively popular figure in a country where stories often circulated of his common touch, about how he drove his own car or frequented popular restaurants with his family. In recent weeks, though, a deep current of anger has emerged that is directed at Mr. Assad.

And analysts say that a leadership that once drew its members from the countryside and saw one of its constituencies as the poor and disenfranchised now suffers from the myopia of living in Damascus and Aleppo, the two largest cities.

Perhaps unwittingly, the crackdown may serve as a force for greater militancy in the countryside, which the government, with few resources, has neglected.

“The regime is a factor of radicalization in the street,” the Damascus-based analyst said. “It’s not the state stepping in to restore order. The regime’s response has been disorderly, chaotic and illegal, and the security forces are running havoc.”

Throughout the uprising, a crucial question asked even by Syria’s allies — namely Turkey — is whether Mr. Assad is unwilling or unable to carry out reforms. “Even until today, Assad can lead a real reform process, but day by day his opportunities are becoming less,” said a human rights advocate in Damascus who asked not to be named.

“The more they kill and the more pro-democracy protesters they arrest will make Syrians go to the end — the change of the regime, not change in the regime.”

That sentiment was echoed by some activists. They scoffed at the tentative dialogue with opposition figures who readily admitted that they did not represent the protesters.

“The regime wants to bring light to the dialogue to put an end to the demonstrations in the streets,” said Anas, a 28-year-old activist on the outskirts of Damascus. “Then the two sides will spend five years in dialogue sessions.”

“We know this regime,” he added.

MORE:

**Thousands Of Syrians Protested
Friday “With People Emerging Friday
In Areas That Have Been Quiet For
Weeks”**

“Activists Characterized The Protests As The Largest In Syria Over The Past Two Weeks”

5.21.11 By NOUR MALAS, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

Thousands of Syrians protested Friday.

Demonstrations took place in Baniyas on the Mediterranean coast, Idlib and Aleppo in the northwest, Qamishli in the northeast, Homs in central Syria and a few towns surrounding Deraa in the south, with people emerging Friday in areas that have been quiet for weeks.

Activists characterized the protests as the largest in Syria over the past two weeks, a period that included a military crackdown and large-scale detentions in several cities.

“I am not afraid of dying at all. ... We have started this and felt what dignity is. I will live in dignity or die fighting for it,” said one 24-year old man in Homs, where roads were closed with yellow plastic signs and bricks, stones and dustbins to prevent protesters from converging.

In Baniyas, security forces fired in the air and sprayed crowds with water from fire trucks, dispersing a protest of thousands after two hours, said a resident reached by satellite phone.

Hundreds of soldiers and security forces blocked the streets, the resident said, but families came out together, hoping that more women among the protesters would urge troops to show restraint.

He said members of the security forces grabbed women out of the crowd and forced them to hand over their cellphones, and then raided homes in the neighborhood, confiscating cellphones and other electronics.

Several hundred people marched in Suwaida, a city in the southwest, near the border with Jordan, whose residents are predominantly Druze.

In Damascus, nearly 1,000 people marched in the Kurdish residential area of Rokn al-Deen, activists said.

Protesters had marched in those two places just once before, according to activists. Activists called Friday’s demonstrations “Azadi Friday,” using the Kurdish word for freedom.

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Here, There, Everywhere



5.21.11: An image taken from a video posted on YouTube shows a police car burning during an anti-regime protest in Homs, Syria. (AFP/YouTube)



5.20.2011: Anti-government demonstrators protest demanding the resignation of Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, in the capital Sanaa, Yemen. (AFP/Mohammed Huwais)



May 21, 2011: A demonstrator confronts riot policemen during an anti-government rally of thousands in Valparaiso city, Chile. REUTERS/Victor Ruiz Caballer



Demonstrators shout and wave signs in the State Capitol rotunda during a Peoples Rally for a Fair Minnesota May 21, 2011 in St. Paul, Minn. Lawmakers are working Saturday with less than three days left in the legislative session, as the Capitol filled with demonstrators opposed to cuts in funding for schools and other public services. (AP Photo/Jim Mone)

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.



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

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

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