

Algerian massacres cover for London land grab

by Our Special Correspondent

Alas, poor Country,
Almost afraid to know it self. It cannot
Be called our Mother, but our Grave; where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile:
Where sighs and groans, and shrieks that rend the air,
Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasie: the dead-man's Knell
Is there scarce ask'd, for whom: and good mens lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps;
Dying, or ere they sicken.

—*Macbeth*, Act IV, Scene iii

Unless action is taken on the international level to halt the bloodshed in Algeria, 1998 may well prove to be the year in which that nation died. As the New Year opened, and just before it, the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, the violence which has been wracking the country since the coup d'état of Jan. 11, 1992, entered into a qualitatively new phase, with not dozens, but hundreds of innocent civilians being butchered in one-night raids. The reports of the atrocities, which have even appeared in selected Algerian newspapers, have finally provoked an alarmed reaction abroad, and, following the pained cry of outrage uttered by Pope John Paul II, leading political figures, from Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi, to German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel and U.S. President Clinton, have called for action.

If, even at this eleventh hour, action is taken, it will lead to success, only on condition that the root causes of the bloodshed, within Algeria as well as abroad, be addressed, and those responsible be brought to justice. This means, the responsibility of the British, and their complicit French colleagues, in protecting the terrorist infrastructure in London,

on the one hand, and providing massive lethal weaponry, as well as political support from Paris, to the “exterminator” faction of the Algerian military, on the other, must be acknowledged publicly. It means as well, that following such public denunciation, punitive actions, for example, international sanctions, must be imposed on Britain for its crucial role. If the United Kingdom and France, as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, move to block such sanctions, then the bankruptcy of the UN should be acknowledged, and the institution dissolved.

A new phase in genocide

During the night of Tuesday, Dec. 30, the first day of Ramadan, a massacre was perpetrated in the province of Relizane, 300 kilometers west of Algiers. According to press accounts, 412 civilians were murdered by well-organized terrorists, who fought throughout the night, until they had overcome the last resistance. On the following Saturday, another village in the same province, named Remka, 150 kilometers west of the capital, was hit, and 117 people died. The next night, the village of Had Chekala in Relizane province, and all its inhabitants, were eliminated. Men, women, and children had been indiscriminately killed in all cases. Babies were killed by being hurled against the wall. Women and men were killed with knives, swords, and axes, their throats cut, and their bodies mutilated. By Monday, Jan. 5, German radio reported that tens of thousands of civilians from the area, mostly farmers, were travelling by truck, tractor, or any other means, with their families, to flee the province, which has been targetted by a scorched-earth policy. And, on Thursday, Jan. 8, reports came in of another massacre carried out during the night, during which over 100 were killed.

Press accounts and the Algerian authorities ritually ascribe such atrocities as the work of “Islamists,” usually identified as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). Yet, as the violence has escalated in dimensions and brutality over the past four years in particular, and military factions in the regime of Gen. Liamine Zeroual have boasted that they have “eradicated” the terrorists, it has become obvious, that the conflict is of a different nature.

Increasingly, accusations have been raised, of complicity of the military regime in the terrorist organizations. In the wake of the most recent atrocities, an account was published in the German daily *Die Welt* on Dec. 31, of explicit charges to this effect, made by a former member of the Sécurité Militaire (SM), Algeria’s military security apparatus. The same man was interviewed, with scrambled voice, on German television news, on Jan. 7.

The SM ex-officer, who is identified under a code name, Adlane Chaabane, was a collaborator for years, of Gen. Mohamed Betchine, who is seen as the closest adviser to the President. He also worked for the man who headed the SM, Gen. Mediane Mohamed, a.k.a. “Tewfik.” Chaabane managed to flee Algeria for Europe six months ago. He spoke of “the disintegration of the Army’s reputation among the Algerian population, corruption among the leading military cliques, arbitrariness, and ‘permanent torture’ in the barracks and police stations,” reported *Die Welt*. Chaabane swore to the authenticity of his report, saying, “I am ready to testify in front of an international commission of inquiry.”

The *Die Welt* account, whose veracity has been confirmed by Algerian sources, laid out the following: “The first massacres against civilians were, according to Chaabane, the work of the SDO (Sous direction de l’operationnel), a special unit of the central direction of the Military Security Service (DCSA, Direction centrale de la securite de l’armée). The SDO, led by Lt. Tartag Othmane, alias Bachir, was supposed to terrorize the families of suspected Islamist terrorists and isolate them from the rest of the population.”

Chaabane stated: “In units of 6 to 10 men, they would appear around midnight in residential areas, hidden in trucks and disguised as religious fighters (Islamists), as if they were sympathizers with the two big Islamist terror organizations—the radical Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) (the armed wing of the banned Islamic Salvation Front, FIS).”

Chaabane described how these units never took prisoners, but murdered all inhabitants. He added that later, police and militia members joined in the slaughter, also because of the rich booty that was to be had. Thus, he said, the regime had introduced a “cutthroat syndrome.”

Chaabane said he thought the Army was completely controlled and surveilled by the SM, and that officers had lost all sense of belonging to what was once a liberation force. Inside the Army and among the soldiers, he said, the situation was

explosive. Between 1992 and 1994, some 2,000 officers were expelled because of suspected Islamist sympathies, which has not been accepted by all. Among the expelled were the chief of the political commission, Gen. Larbi Si Lahcen, and the head of the Near East Terror Department, Lt. Mohamad Tahar Abdesallam. When mutinies occurred, Chaabane said, quick trials were set up, the accused were hanged, and collaborators were thrown into Gulags. Some deserters joined up with the GIA and AIS, but, he said, since both of these are fully infiltrated by the SM, any such deserters would be immediately killed.

Chaabane completed his report, with several examples of corruption at the highest levels of the military and ministers.

This testimony, which is the most detailed to appear in any German daily thus far, coheres with the evidence left by the terrorists, for example, in the massacres in Relizane. But it does not explain the entire dynamic or rationale behind the phenomenon.

Civil war or genocide?

The situation which exists in Algeria today, is the result of six years of bloodshed, triggered by the decision, on the part of the Algerian government, in January 1992, to abolish the second round of elections, which the Islamist political party, Islamist Salvation Front (FIS), was slated to win. The GIA was created artificially to counter any legitimate resistance to the coup d’etat, and was led by terror specialists known as the Afghansi (see *EIR*, Oct. 1995, “London’s Afghansi Spawned a Global Narco-terrorist Force,” p. 9; and, in the same issue, “The Case of the GIA, Afghansi Out of Theater,” p. 34). From the beginning, the group was infiltrated, and therefore controlled by sectors of the SM. According to the account given by Chaabane to German television, the government released convicted criminals, killers, from prison, and deployed them into the GIA. At the same time, the SM launched an all-out military campaign, ostensibly against the GIA, but more precisely against the FIS; thousands of political activists of the FIS were imprisoned, others, forced to flee the country. As the violence escalated, nominally on the part of the GIA, against civilians, the military government intervened, to arm the population, thus creating militias, which number well above 300,000.

Increasingly over the past two years, the armed conflict has been between the GIA and the civilian militias, both, ultimately controlled by the military security forces, which, in turn, have split up into a myriad of separate “armies.” The old mafia tactic has been used, to force reluctant citizens to take up arms; a raid by a GIA unit against a village sufficed to convince the neighboring villagers of the need to accept arms distributed by the government. Often, even militias would accuse unarmed civilians of harboring sympathies for the Islamists, and threatened them if they did not join the militias. Algerian General Abderrahmane has been quoted in

the wake of the recent murders, saying, “The state cannot put a soldier in front of every house” to protect people, so villagers only have one choice: “take up arms individually, form groups and arm a group of youth, or leave, and go to the cities.”

While this artificially created civil war scenario has been implemented in the populous northern part of the country, the south has been literally cordoned off and placed under total military control, to protect the hydrocarbon deposits and installations which are located there. Even Algerian citizens are not allowed to move freely in the south, but are forced to display identity cards at check-points, and so forth. Indeed, the fact that none of the hydrocarbon installations has ever been touched by terrorists, proves that where the regime wants to guarantee security, it can and will. The bloodshed in the north, is therefore deliberate policy.

The land grab as the “final solution”

There is a further aspect of the geography of the warfare which must be understood. Over the past two years, the killings between GIA and militias, have been concentrated in the Mitidja plain, south of the capital. More recently, the atrocities have taken place in the western part of the country, for example, in the Relizane province.

The reasons are economic and political. At the end of 1996, when Blida was at the center of the massacres, the FIS

organization in exile, issued a statement, pointing out, that such violence must be the work of the military regime, given that the “primary garrison of the country and the first military region including the capital,” were located there—but did nothing to prevent massacres. Furthermore, the larger area of the Mitidja plain is the most fertile region of the entire country’s arable lands. Now, the area has been slated for privatization, and therefore, said the FIS, “the blind violence of the . . . GIA has provided the pretext for the junta to ‘organize’ the evacuation of the villages. . . .”

In short, this is a second edition of the notorious land grab on Israel’s West Bank, organized by the circles of Sir Henry Kissinger, through which massive areas were stolen from Arab residents, and sold, through middlemen, to international speculators. The military junta in Algeria, which has bled the country’s raw materials resources and imposed vicious austerity on the people, to maintain payments to the International Monetary Fund and others, on an ever-increasing foreign debt, is now turning to loot the last of its resources: the land. The same mentality is at work, as that behind the Nazi looting policy in Germany, which led, in the infamous “final solution,” to looting the gold from dentures, and the skin from human victims.

A report on this bloody land grab, appeared on Jan. 2 of this year, in the French daily *Libération*, which laid out the parameters of the “war of the land.” Author José Garçon, reviewed the process by which Algeria, after independence, nationalized the land. Since 1986, peasants have been guaranteed “the permanent and transferable use of land” as long as they cultivated it. But, with the presentation in September 1995, of a bill for privatizing this land, this right was placed in jeopardy. Although the amount of land, 2.8 million hectares, is not very large, the “privatizable” areas are exclusively in the Mitidja, which is the richest agricultural area, the granary of the country. To sell off the best land for real estate speculation, in a country which already imports food, is scandalous, Garçon correctly concluded.

Finally, as the government itself has made clear, those who are to be offered the land, are the country’s military leaders and their families. Although the law is supposed to guarantee farming, the facts speak differently. Already, Garçon reports, the “executive delegates,” i.e. the officials put into office locally by the central government, to replace mayors of the FIS who were expelled for political reasons, have been illegally selling, or granting licenses to build villas and other personal real estate.

If, in the course of the last two years, the massacres have centered on this region, the concentration now in the western part of the country, is due to political considerations, in addition. As the FIS explained in a press release issued from its German headquarters on Jan. 7, “the systematic campaign of collective assassination of Algerian citizens” is focussing on Tlemcen, Tiaret, Chlef, Ain Defla, Blida, Medea, M’sila, Djelfa, Bouira, and the capital itself. These are areas of politi-

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- that Washington and Franklin championed Big Government?
- that the Founding Fathers promoted partnership between private industry and central government?



Edited by Nancy Spannaus and Christopher White

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cal support for the FIS, historically. The FIS points out that “after the cleansing of Mitidja, the forces of evil are attacking the bastions in the west of the FIS. Relizane is one of these.”

To be specific: “In the local elections of 1990, the citizens of this region elected 38 FIS city councilors out of 38, and in the legislative elections of December 1991, this district won 8 FIS deputies, out of 9 seats. . . .” The massacres perpetrated in the new year in Relizane, were the work of “the El Ahoual faction (which means “horrors” in Arabic), 400 men strong, which split from the GIA of Zitouni 18 months due to strife over the distribution of booty.” The group has been targeting in particular the AIS, which is the armed wing of the FIS. The reason lies in the ceasefire which the AIS negotiated with one part of the Algerian military, under Gen. Smail Lamari in October 1997. The civilians targetted by this GIA splinter group, have been unarmed persons, who have refused to join the militias.

Uprooting the evil

Since the atrocities of this Ramadan have far exceeded even the bloody events of last year’s fasting month, external political forces have given some sign of motion. The first to demand action, were the Iranians. Foreign Minister, Dr. Kamal Kharrazi sent a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, denouncing the brutal massacres, and the indifference and silence of the “international community.” Kharrazi called on the UN to take constructive measures, through consultations with all concerned, in search of a solution. Days later, *Iran News* editorialized, that Iran, as rotating chairman of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), should mobilize that institution, to intervene to find a political solution, “so that there will be no need for another Nuremberg trial.” On Jan. 4, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel issued a statement, condemning the terrorist violence, and proposing that the European Union send a delegation to the country to consult with the Algerian government. The United States’s position, as presented by the State Department’s Jamie Rubin Jan. 6, has been to offer to send an international commission of inquiry.

Until very recently, the response of the Algerian government was categorical. The U.S. Ambassador in Algiers, Cameron Humon, was summoned by the Algerian authorities, who demanded an explanation. According to an official Algerian government communiqué of Jan. 6, he was served the “categorical rejection of any idea of an international commission of inquiry, regardless of its origin, shape or form.” The communiqué added, that the idea that such a commission could be linked to any “doubt as to the identity of the authors of terrorism, would objectively serve the endeavor to exculpate the terrorists, while they are perpetrating their odious crimes and claiming responsibility for them.”

Following its weekly cabinet meeting, the government issued another statement Jan. 7, deploring “all attempts at interference in its internal affairs,” and heaped praise on “the

security forces of the republic, National Popular Army, National Police, National Security and Communal Guard” for their efforts. The communiqué also appealed “again to the population to redouble its mobilization and vigilance . . . to the citizens around the national struggle against barbarous terrorism.” In short: Algiers will neither cooperate with outside forces, nor desist in arming its civilians into militias. It will collaborate only in “fighting terrorism.”

On Jan. 8, the Algerian government finally yielded somewhat to international pressure, and agreed to host a European Union troika delegation in Algiers, but only on condition that the talks center on fighting terrorism.

At the recent meeting in Tunis, of the Arab interior ministers, it was Algerian Interior Minister Mustafa Benmansour, who pointed vaguely to unnamed countries which were behind the violence. Algerian television reported that the government, rejecting outside interference, focussed attention on terrorist organizations in London, Paris, Brussels and Bonn, which it said should be shut down, if the Europeans wanted to stop the violence.

Of the four locations mentioned by the Algerian authorities, the only one which harbors the GIA, is London. In Brussels and Bonn, there may be representatives of the FIS, which is the opposition group that has been in the forefront of international efforts to end the war.

The Armed Islam Group: a model satanic cult

The publication of the GIA, *Al Ansar*, is full of the satanic ideology, which is behind the mass murders of entire villages in Algeria. It carries statements by so-called sheiks who support the GIA, and offer justification for the ritual satanic murder of women and children, using Islamic rhetoric and the holy Qur’an as an ideological base. For example, *Al Ansar* wrote about the “Death Brigades” and the “Signers-with-Blood Brigades,” and promoted slogans like, “Hang the last infidel ruler from the intestines of the last (Christian) priest!” It ranted that “this spirit is enriched with the love of death,” and glorified the kinds of decapitations and bodily mutilations which have become the group’s gruesome trademark: “my dear brothers . . . mutilated corpses . . . skulls . . . terrorism, how beautiful these words are!” “no doubt that the crack of bullets and the glistening of knives are the best cure for the ill chests;” “the greatest nations in history has been the nations that mastered the *death industry*,” “blood and corpses create glory . . . and death creates life” (emphasis in original).

London is a different case. As *EIR* has documented, it is in London, that the GIA enjoys refuge and protection. The GIA's satanic publication, known as *Al Ansar*, is printed in London, and distributed weekly in front of mosques, without any interference from the British authorities. *Le Figaro*, on Jan. 27 and 28, 1997, reported on how GIA supporters, like Qamareddine Kherbane, roamed freely in London, distributing leaflets, or video cassettes, issued by the GIA, showing scenes of murders. Members of the GIA have been interrogated by them in the past, but have not been arrested, or prevented from continuing their activities. Therefore, any commission of inquiry into the phenomenon, must start by investigating this fact. Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, who has expressed his "deep concern" at the "appalling violence," and offered to head up a delegation of the EU troika, would like nothing better, than to control such an inquiry, lest the role of British Intelligence be identified. All the more reason, why London should be put under the magnifying glass.

Furthermore, if there is to be peace in Algeria, it must proceed from a political solution, in which all forces of the democratic, non-violent opposition can participate in talks aimed at ending the violence, and charting a path toward normalization of political life. In 1995, an ambitious and realistic initiative was launched by the Community of Saint Egidius, a lay organization in Rome, which succeeded in bringing together all the opposition parties, who forged a common platform for the restoration of peace, and democracy in Algeria. At the time, the Algerian government rejected the initiative, as "interference into its internal affairs."

In summer 1997, some contacts were developed, between FIS circles and those of President Zeroual, which led to the release of jailed FIS leader Madani, and to a ceasefire between one part of the army, under Gen. Smail Lamari, and the FIS's military organization. The ceasefire, which became operational in October, has functioned, albeit on a limited scale; several other groups joined it, two of them officially, others, de facto. Some sectors of the army therefore know that a ceasefire could work, and, if it were to be declared the official basis for talks between the President and the FIS, a political solution could be found. It is to prevent this development, that other sectors of the military, belonging to the "eradicator" tendency, have mobilized their assets, to escalate the conflict.

What is unfolding in Algeria is a tragedy comparable only to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Driven by the ambition for power, military leaders, once valiant in battle, have corrupted themselves and embraced sheer terror to enhance their aims. The more crimes they have committed, directly or through proxies, the more obsessively they are driven to commit more, to "eradicate" all perceived enemies and threats, including women and children, until there is no one left. In Shakespeare's great work, the solution *had* to come from the outside.

Islamic states fight British terrorism

by Joseph Brewda

The Egyptian government of President Hosni Mubarak scored a major victory in its ongoing campaign against British sponsorship of "Islamic" terrorism, when the Arab League's Interior Ministers Council, meeting in Tunis on Jan. 5-6, unanimously adopted an Egyptian resolution "to press foreign countries to hand over terrorists under their protection." The meeting also endorsed an anti-terrorism draft treaty, binding the 20 member-states to common action. An emergency summit of the Arab League member heads of state, now set for April 22 in Cairo, will put the treaty into effect.

The gathering follows that of the Islamic Organization Conference, which brought together 56 Islamic nations, in an unprecedentedly high-level summit in Teheran, Iran, on Dec. 9-11, and a Gulf Coordination Council meeting in Kuwait, on Dec. 22, both of which issued statements condemning foreign safehousing of "Islamic" terrorists, in direct reference to Britain.

Egypt's current war against British terrorism began after the Nov. 17, Luxor massacre of 62 people, by the London-headquartered Islamic Group, which President Mubarak has repeatedly specified could not have occurred without British protection. President Mubarak is not acting alone, however, but as a leader of a large group of "moderate" Islamic states, which have also joined forces with Iran, and which operate with the implicit backing of China. The basis for their new alliance is that all are under British attack, whether through terrorism, as with Egypt; threatened military action, as in the case of Iran; or devastating financial warfare, as shown by ongoing developments in Southeast and East Asia. One figure who has publicly made this connection, is Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad, who, in motivating Egypt's resolution against British-run terrorism at the Teheran summit, also denounced the use of "economic fire" to destroy Islamic states' economies.

Egypt's actions come in the context of its realization that reports it had received blaming Sudan for terrorist attacks against Egypt, including the 1995 attempted murder of President Mubarak, are false, as are similar accusations against Iran. Moreover, Egypt is concerned that the continuing British and Israeli-run rebellion in southern Sudan, could put Israel in control of the headwaters of the Nile, precisely at a time when the Israeli regime of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is gunning for a new Arab-Israeli war.