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Algeria

Another policy is possible!

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Bouteflika has announced a small step backwards on his authoritarian course. The formidable mobilizations of students and youth, the massive strikes, the revolts of those in precarious employment and the unemployed, our struggles have forced Bouteflika to promise to reconsider his undemocratic policy and perhaps reverse the monarchical drift of state institutions.

Worried by the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions, Bouteflika is promising to demolish the legislative arsenal of political repression and the system of circumscribing freedoms which he himself put in place during his first two terms of office (criminalization of the violation of press laws, the repressive electoral law of 2007) and the communal code in progress, sanctifying the supervision the wali (male person in authority).

But he still intends to keep control over our freedom of expression, our freedom to demonstrate, to establish a party, a trade union or an association... whereas these rights are not negotiable! No one has asked for authorization to march or to organize their struggle.

Worse, he intends to decide alone on the project of a new constitution. Whereas in a democracy, a free national debate would be necessary, with access to the media for all opinions, and then the election of representatives of the people, with proportional representation of the positions expressed, to a constituent assembly charged with concretising in the constitution the aspirations of workers, of young people, of the majority of working people.

His self-satisfaction on the economic and social level is contradicted by thousands of struggles. If everything is going so well, why are there all these demonstrations?

Admittedly, he affirms that he has not completely capitulated to the ultraliberal lobbies, those of the importing racketeers, of the barons of informal trade, of the private agribusiness monopolies. Admittedly, he maintains timid reservations about the imperialist aggression in Libya. But he maintains a policy of low wages, precarious work and massive public expenditure for the profit of the multinationals, while Algeria's ability to produce and market goods is being dismantled. His repentance on this ground is expressed in the protectionist policy that has been in operation for several years, which works to the advantage of foreign partners and local capitalists, whereas it is necessary to abolish this liberal option which increases dependence and social precariousness.

We think that it is necessary to restore to the people the public property that Bouteflika has sold off, and to nationalize or re-nationalize essential strategic sectors and public services.

But it is up to the workers, to the popular masses to conduct another policy which would represent a real change. And it is possible.

Because if Bouteflika intends to restore freedoms to the state in which he found them in 1999, we want more. We want a real democracy which allows the expression and the sovereignty of the hard-working and poor majority our people.

If Bouteflika undertakes protectionist mini-reforms to correct the damage from his ultraliberal course, we want a real policy of national development in the service of the people's needs, a development which creates genuine decent jobs.

Another policy is possible!

To change the government, the assembly and the president is necessary, but it is not enough for us. We want another social order which banishes exploitation and oppression.

Algiers, April 16, 2011