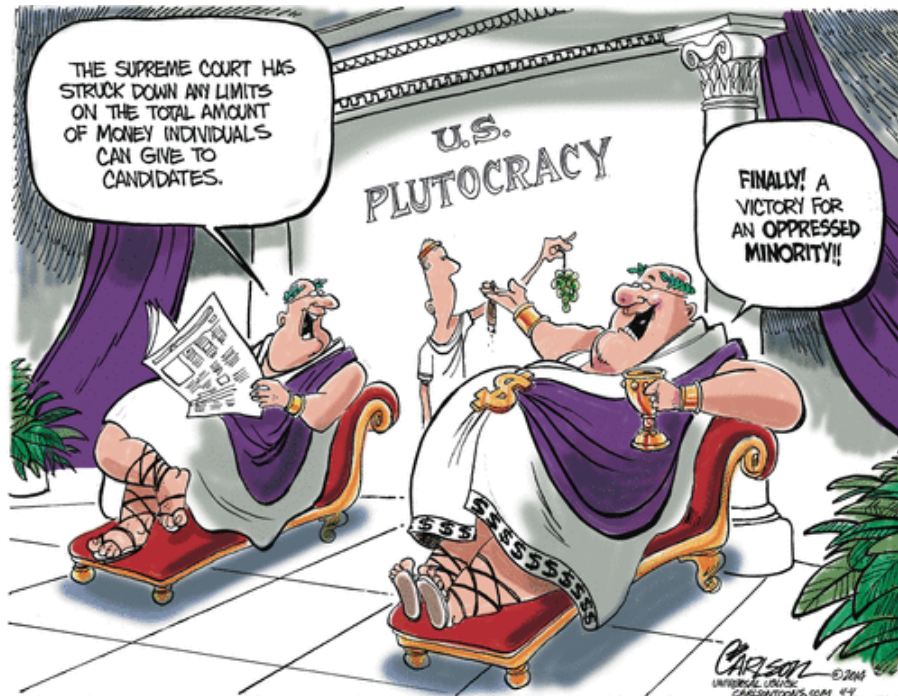


## Military Resistance 12D6



**Afghanistan “One Of The Most Corrupt Countries On The Planet”**

**“USAID Officials Have Routinely Trusted Corrupt Afghan Ministries With Billions In Funds”**

**“Money Meant For Reconstruction Projects May Have Ended Up In The Hands Of Terrorist Groups Instead”**

# “No Reliable Mechanism For Screening Contractors For Terrorist Ties Is In Place At The Agency”

Apr. 3, 2014 By Leo Shane III, Staff Writer; Army Times [Excerpts]

Officials from the U.S. Agency for International Development denied reports that they are covering up fraud and abuse of reconstruction funds in Afghanistan, saying that necessary steps are taken to protect American taxpayers' investments there.

But in testimony before Congress on Thursday, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction John Sopko said USAID officials have routinely trusted corrupt Afghan ministries with billions in funds, then brushed aside questions surrounding how that money has been used.

Since 2002, the development agency has spent more than \$18 billion on rebuilding efforts in Afghanistan, including a variety of health care, education and agriculture projects.

But Sopko said his office's investigation found numerous cases of USAID losing track of cash — amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars — given to Afghan ministries for work later deemed unsatisfactory or unfinished.

**In some cases, he said, the agency withheld information about the problems, citing ambiguous security issues.**

“Too much money spent too quickly without proper safeguards is a recipe for disaster,” he said. “More than lip service needs to be given to oversight.”

On Thursday, USA Today reported that documents it obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests show money meant for reconstruction projects may have ended up in the hands of terrorist groups instead, and that no reliable mechanism for screening contractors for terrorist ties is in place at the agency.

Lawmakers said they were dismayed by the poor accountability. Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, called Afghanistan “one of the most corrupt countries on the planet” and questioned why better checks aren't in place to protect taxpayer funds.

The report came just one day after SIGAR investigators found serious structural flaws in the \$11 million-plus Baghlan prison in Afghanistan, which members cited as another example of wasted spending in Afghanistan.

In 2011, the Commission on Wartime Spending estimated that U.S. agencies lost nearly \$60 billion in the first decade of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan due to poor oversight, fraud and waste.

## **DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?**



U.S. soldier in Beijia village Iraq, Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

**Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the email address if you wish and we'll send it regularly with your best wishes. Whether in Afghanistan or at 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 injustices, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657.**

## **SOMALIA WAR REPORTS**

### **Somali Government Troops Kill Each Other, As Usual**

Apr 5, 2014 Garowe Online

MOGADISHU, Somalia-

Five Somali Federal Government soldiers died and nine others sustained bullet wounds after infighting at a checkpoint in El Ade vicinity in Middle Shabelle region of southern Somalia on Saturday, Garowe Online reports.

According to witnesses, the fighting broke out when soldiers in armored fighting vehicle ordered men in military fatigues to lift unauthorized roadblock.

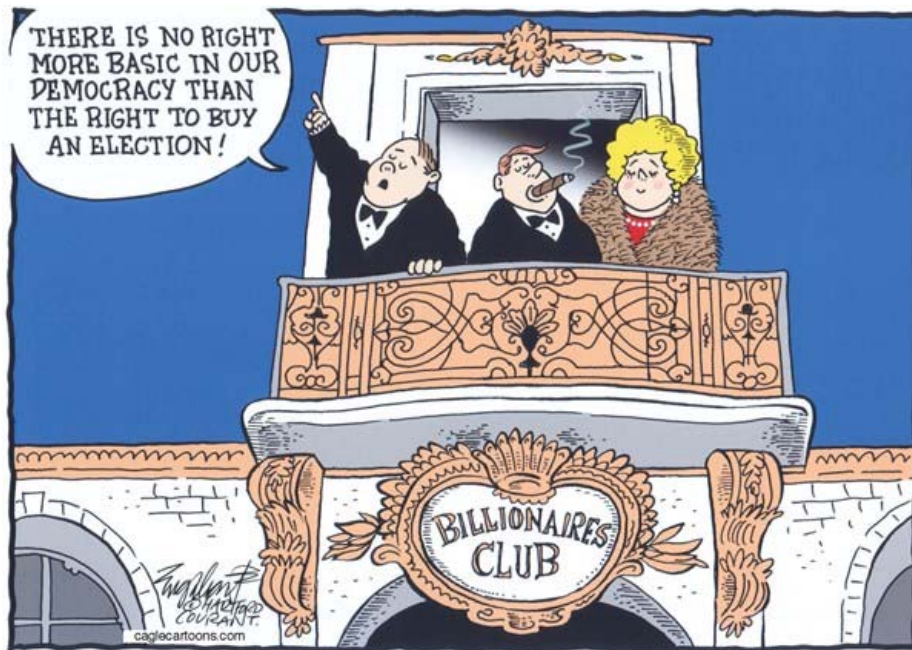
Local reports say, a commander was among those who were pronounced dead, with security sources unveiling that 9 soldiers are being treated at Mogadishu's Madina hospital.

The Somali Federal Government forces commanders confirmed the infighting, noting that Somali government forces clashed with another group of soldiers. The soldiers at the roadblock are said to have forced the attackers out of the areas where the fighting occurred.

Middle Shabelle and Lower Shabelle regions have been a spot for deadly battles between rival groups within Somali National Army (SNA). In July last year, Somali Government troops belonging to Biyamal and Habar Gedir clans fought each other over regional influence near Lower Shabelle regional capital of Marka.

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## CLASS WAR REPORTS



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## Notes From The Ukrainian Revolution:

**“Maidan Has Ripped Politics Out  
Of The Narrow Confines Of  
Government, Parliament And  
Apparatus; It Has Put It In The  
Streets”**

**“This Political Earthquake Will  
Reverberate Not Only Through  
Russia, But Through Europe Too”**

**“There Were Myriad Ways In Which  
Working People Were Involved In  
Maidan”**

**“Battles Over Public Spending And  
Other Social Issues Are Bound To Break  
Out, Sooner Or Later”**

February 26th, 2014 by Gabriel Levy, People And Nature [Excerpts]

I offer the following answers to questions that friends in western Europe frequently ask.

*Q. Where did the impetus for Yanukovich's removal come from? And what else was the Maidan movement demanding, exactly?*

Gabriel Levy: Yanukovich was always a corrupt bully.

Even so, it was remarkable to see how, over the last couple of months, his awful capacity for cruelty helped to tie together the political threads that led to his removal.

Each police attempt to clear Maidan brought thousands of extra people into the square, and intensified the level of resistance, and violence, by demonstrators: on 11 December (when a police attempt to clear the square sparked a counterattack), on 19 January (when Yanukovich's anti-protest laws reignited Maidan), and again on 18 February.

**In Maidan's politics, democracy – the right to demonstrate without fear of brutal police assault, the right to free speech, and so on – was important.**

**Beyond this, the target perhaps most often identified by protesters was “corruption”.**

It's worth thinking about its meaning in post-Soviet states. When their economies began to be merged with world capitalist markets, after the Soviet system collapsed in 1990-91, the transition was far from smooth or comprehensive.

Some of them – Ukraine's neighbour Belarus is the obvious example – have retained many Soviet economic methods (state ownership of most industry; state direction of investment; heavy regulation of markets, prices, cross-border capital transfers, etc). In Ukraine and Russia, most of these methods are no longer used: most but not all industry has been privatised; many but not all prices have been deregulated.

**But there are other Soviet-era survivals, particularly in the relationship between the state and the capitalist class.**

**Who owns what, and how business is regulated, is often decided privately between politicians, capitalist owners and managers.**

Apart from corruption in the strict sense of the word (e.g. bribes collected by state officials from firms, or individuals, in exchange for decisions made) there is also a mass of opaque relationships between state officials and businesses.

Ukrainian rage against “corruption”, as far as I can tell, is not only from working-class and middle-class families who have to bribe traffic cops, doctors, university admission boards, and the rest, but also from small, and even large, businesses who are shut out of this disposition of power and money by state officials and their favoured capitalists.

It's a cry for “normal” capitalism; capitalism that plays by “normal” rules and works “properly”. For upper- and middle-class Ukrainians, Europe is the place where these normal rules apply.

**But Europe means something to working-class Ukrainians too.**

Before the 2008 crisis there were 3 million or more migrant Ukrainians working in the European Union, many illegally. Much of this migration was temporary; it probably dipped post-crisis, but picked up again.

These people are surely not influenced by lying promises from Brussels; they may not even have heard them.

They just know that, even in precarious work, wages in Europe are much higher than at home. For many young Ukrainians, Europe's comparatively tolerant culture and social liberalism surely strikes a welcome contrast to Russia's increasingly stifling conservatism.

**I have heard western leftists argue that Ukrainian workers need to beware of Europe because EU labour regulations compare poorly with the letter of Ukraine's labour law.**

**Maybe true, but surely irrelevant.**

**Ukraine's labour law is rarely enforced to workers' advantage, because workers' organisation is not widespread enough or strong enough to enforce it.**

Whether Ukraine ends up imposing legal frameworks from the Eurasian customs union (Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan), or the EU, or neither, it will be the level of organisation that matters most.

In the meantime, for young Ukrainian workers "Europe" means "higher wages".

**On Monday 24 February in Kyiv, completely by chance, I came across about 2000 medical students from one of Ukraine's most prestigious universities on a spontaneous demo.**

They were demanding the dismissal of their rector, who had threatened to discipline students who joined the Maidan medical corps.

**Chatting to some of them, it seemed to me that they look at the world much as do their counterparts right across Europe (or in Russia for that matter).**

**I was struck by how their transnational outlook contrasts with the nationalist symbols on Maidan – legacies of the process of national self determination that Ukraine didn't complete in the 19th or 20th centuries, and that in the 21st seem like an echo of the past.**

### **"There Were Myriad Ways In Which Working People Were Involved In Maidan"**

*Q. Where does the workers' movement fit into all this?*

G. Ukraine's biggest concentration of industrial workers, mostly Russian speaking, is in the east. That's where most of Ukraine's iron ore, and steel (its no. 1 export), is produced; chemicals and machine-building are also significant. Eastern Ukraine, which sits on gigantic coal reserves, was developed as one of the Soviet Union's biggest centres of heavy industry, and there are strong social, industrial and cultural legacies.

I don't have sufficient information to say how workers in the east are reacting to events in Kyiv. Sections of the local elite are hostile to the new government (see below), but even this is not uniform. The west vs. east dichotomy is an oversimplification. I have seen reports of pro-Maidan actions in the east, including big demonstrations in Kharkiv, and a blockade of the main Dnipropetrovsk-Kyiv railway on Thursday 20 February to stop a trainload of troops being moved to Kyiv.

I have not seen reports of the miners', steel workers' or factory workers' reactions. But that may say more about the low level of collective activity in these industries than about their support or opposition to Maidan.

It would be stupid, though, to equate the Ukrainian working class with factory-based trade union organisation.

For a start, with few exceptions, the workforce in eastern Ukraine is aging; young people don't work in the factories, and, increasingly, don't live in eastern Ukraine at all.

(A recent UN report on the world's cities showed that, in the top ten of fastest-shrinking cities, Dnipropetrovsk is no. 1, Donbass is no. 3 and Zaporizhzhya is no. 4. That's partly low birth rates and high mortality, but also a great deal of migration.

For another thing, other economic sectors – services including IT, food and consumer goods production, and so on – have expanded in post-Soviet times while heavy industry and mining has contracted. At a trade union activists' conference in Kyiv in November, most reports at a session on rank-and-file organising were from these sectors.

There were myriad ways in which working people were involved in Maidan, but far fewer examples of collective participation. If the sort of popular mobilisation we have seen in recent months continues, it will surely be important for activists to find points through which the Maidan and the workers' movement can strengthen each other.

### **“Battles Over Public Spending And Other Social Issues Are Bound To Break Out, Sooner Or Later”**

*Q. What might happen to workers' social and economic conditions under the new government? And in which way is the Ukrainian economy developing?*

G. This is a big “x” factor, to my mind.

Ukrainians' living standards are low, but the state budget – via a comparatively decent pension system, public sector workers' wages and a range of benefits and relatively cheap services – helped it to rise before the 2008-09 economic crisis, and has prevented it from going too much lower since then. So in 2002, according to the World Bank's definition, 47% of Ukrainians were below the poverty line; that number fell to 12.3% in 2007 and has rebounded to about 16% in 2009-10.

All this spending has aggravated the state's serious financial problems.

The political crisis of recent months has made things worse.

Now there is too little foreign currency in the kitty (governments generally regard enough cash to buy three months' worth of imports is the minimum; after spending a couple of billion trying to slow down the fall of the hryvna this month, Ukraine's national bank has \$17.8 billion left).

Politicians have already come up with some eye-watering figures (e.g. \$35 billion) of what they want to borrow; financial analysts are talking about \$20 billion, which is still a



fair bit. Whether Ukraine borrows from the USA and Poland and/or the EU, and/or the IMF, the lenders will demand huge cuts.

Battles over public spending and other social issues are bound to break out, sooner or later.

### **“How Much Pain Are They Prepared To Inflict On Working People? Look At Greece”**

*Q. What about the Ukrainian economy? What is the longer-term background to the crisis?*

G. In the mid 1990s, Ukraine was thrown into a slump even deeper than Russia's. Large swathes of Soviet-era industry closed, unable to compete in world markets.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, parts of the industrial base that could compete were bought up by oligarchs via privatisation, and consolidated into the business empires that dominate today.

Successive governments in Ukraine have been politically weak, both in the face of oligarchical influence, and with respect to potential working-class discontent – even though labour unrest has not been really widespread since the mid 1990s.

So, on one hand, the oligarchs dodge tax.

On the other, the cost of public sector wages, plus pensions and other social benefits, is comparatively high per dollar of tax collected. (A World Bank report complained that “successive governments hiked public sector wages and pensions”, and that in 2009 public spending was 47% of GDP, including pensions (18%) and public sector wages (12%).

So Ukraine's state finances have been kept afloat with a wish and a prayer.

Up to 2008, the international boom in commodity prices meant that exports of steel, ferrous metal alloys and chemical fertilisers – and, in some years, wheat and other agricultural produce – helped a great deal. There has been a good chunk of foreign currency in the bank and that has helped the Ukrainian hryvna to be reasonably stable.

After the 2008-09 crisis, Ukraine qualified for one of the biggest rescue packages.

Both the IMF and the European banks, some of whom had invested heavily in Ukraine from the mid 2000s, were desperate to ensure that both the state finances and the banking system emerged unscathed. An IMF loan programme was arranged for Ukraine, with typical neo-liberal conditions attached: the public sector wage bill had to be cut; the pensions system had to be reformed; and gas, water and electricity tariffs must rise above cost-recovery levels.

Both Timoshenko up to 2010 and Yanukovich since then have artfully avoided keeping the promises the government made to the IMF at that time.

A long-running side show features Russian gas imports.

Ukraine's Soviet-era industry and municipal infrastructure is heavily dependent on these; successive post-Soviet governments have spent far more time haggling with oligarchs over who will skim margins from the resale of gas than worrying about reducing Ukraine's dependence on Russia for energy.

For its part, Russia has sometimes offered price reductions in return for political concessions by Kyiv – although that often cuts across the aims of Gazprom, Russia's big state-owned gas company, which (surprise surprise, there's that "normal" capitalism again) sees selling gas as a way of making profit. In 2009, Gazprom sharply increased its prices (there were high oil and gas prices everywhere then) and Ukraine's gas company has struggled to pay a gas bill that runs at \$7-14 billion a year. It ended last year with a \$3.3 billion back debt, of which it paid \$1.6 billion last week.

The bottom line is that, with the Yanukovich meltdown, Ukraine's state finances will be reorganised under the close attention of the international financial institutions.

How much pain are they prepared to inflict on working people?

Look at Greece.

**“Neither Turkey Nor Ukraine – Both Large Countries With Big Reserves Of Cheap Labour, And Heaps Of Political And Cultural Problems Attached – Will Have Any Chance Of Joining The EU In The Foreseeable Future”**

*Q. What about this tug-of-war between the western powers on one side and Russia on the other? Is the EU competing with Russia for economic hegemony over Ukraine?*

G. In some respects. Competition in the economic sense has been heightened by both sides' broader political and strategic aims. The deal offered by Russian president Vladimir Putin, and accepted by Yanukovich as an alternative to the EU association agreement was incredibly costly to Russia: \$15 billion in loans, lower gas prices and a bundle of measures to boost Ukrainian imports to Russia. (The loans were to have come directly from Russia's "fund for national well-being", and I doubt that struggling Russian families, who could probably use \$15 billion worth of support themselves, were amused.)

As for the EU, after bringing in Bulgaria and Romania in 2007, and Croatia in 2013, politicians from the rich, dominant countries have drawn a line.

Neither Turkey nor Ukraine – both large countries with big reserves of cheap labour, and heaps of political and cultural problems attached – will have any chance of joining the EU in the foreseeable future. (How many Tory MPs, under challenge from UKIP, would ever support that?!)

Ukrainian workers are well aware of this: access to EU labour markets via migration (whether legal or not) is not going to widen.

For them, an EU "integration process" short of membership is pretty meaningless.

For Ukrainian politicians, less so.

**Throughout the post-Soviet period, successive governments in Kyiv have proved adept at maneuvering for concessions from Europe on one side, and Russia on the other, and playing one off against the other.**

**The room for such maneuver was closed down by Putin's "either/or" stance, and the resulting difficulty was one of the secondary causes of Yanukovich's demise.**

**“The Kremlin's Greatest Fear, And Rightly So, Was That Large-Scale Political Discontent In Ukraine Might Help Spark Russian Social Movements”**

*Q. Russian colonialism, to which Ukraine has historically been subjected, plays a real part here, doesn't it?*

G. Of course. Ukraine was Russia's oldest colony, and, just as northern Ireland is full of the descendants of (largely Scottish) protestant immigrants of the 19th century, so eastern Ukraine is full of Russian-speaking descendants of waves of immigrant workers who settled there during the industrialisation of the late 19th and early 20th centuries – in the first place, the industrial workers I mentioned above.

I accept that, under capitalism, politics and ideology sometimes take over, and drive governments to do things that bring no economic advantage and in the short term do great harm. And for that reason, I would not rule out stronger Russian support for separatism in eastern Ukraine, or even, in extremis, civil war. But I don't think these are the most likely prospects right now.

There are huge risks for the Russian state.

Not only would inciting conflict in Ukraine lead to a further deterioration of relations with the western powers, particularly Germany, but, above all, it could rebound in the form of social discontent in Russia.

The many millions of Russians with family and friends in Ukraine would hardly take kindly to conflict that would be perceived as unnecessary. Moreover, however vaguely opposition to dictatorship and corruption has been articulated on Maidan, Putin has no way of knowing whether such demands might catch on in Russia itself.

Look at recent history. In 2004, the Ukrainian “Orange revolution”, triggered by Yanukovich's victory in a falsified election, scared the hell out of Putin and co. They didn't like the infatuation of Viktor Yushchenko, the “Orange” leader, with NATO.

(Nor did the vast majority of Ukrainians, so NATO membership was surely never going to happen).

**But the Kremlin's greatest fear, and rightly so, was that large-scale political discontent in Ukraine might help spark Russian social movements.**

**In January 2005 came the largest wave of working-class protests during Putin's first two terms (2000-08), sparked by attempts to cut and reorganise welfare benefits.**

**Fast forward to 2011, and the falsification of Russian election results sparked the biggest wave of protests Putin ever faced.**

I believe that has made Russian government wary of setting off chains of unpredictable consequences in Ukraine.

Surely nothing is more destructive of working-class solidarity and collective action than all kinds of nationalism, separatism and threats of civil war. But to gauge the real dangers correctly, we need to strip out the distortions and exaggerations by most mainstream media, and sections of the left too, who depict the relationships between Russia, Europe and the USA in geopolitical terms.

This approach downplays the obvious fact that, since the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia has been integrated into the world capitalist economy not as a great power or anything resembling one, but in an economically subordinate role – that of a supplier of oil, gas, metals and other raw materials to manufacturing economies elsewhere.

The share of oil and gas in Russia's export earnings (now about 70%), its GDP (about a quarter), and its budget (about a third) tells a story of economic dependence on stronger nations.

Throughout the Putin era (i.e. from 2000), all Russia's efforts to revive its manufacturing sector, and start up high-tech industries, have met with little or no success.

There just is no basis for Russia to develop as a 21st century great power. Whatever vicious military games Putin plays in the Caucasus, in central Asia Russia has been eclipsed by China as the main economic power, and is increasingly giving up ground politically.

### **“This Political Earthquake Will Reverberate Not Only Through Russia, But Through Europe Too”**

*Q. To conclude, what might all this mean for the left, and for labour and social movements, internationally?*

G. For working people – in the widest sense that I've suggested above, embracing the industrial workers of eastern Ukraine but also the working and middle classes of Kyiv who have been on the square, the students, and Ukrainian migrants working in the EU – this is powerful confirmation of the strength of collective action.

The leaders sought a compromise with the old regime; the crowd said no; and so Yanukovich was destroyed.

Collective action isn't a panacea on its own. It doesn't follow the logic we socialists might think it should.

It has ugly aspects, in particular the participation of extreme nationalists and fascists, and I wouldn't downplay those.

But Maidan has ripped politics out of the narrow confines of government, parliament and apparatus; it has put it in the streets.

Most importantly, though, this political earthquake will reverberate not only through Russia, but through Europe too.

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## **DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK**

**“Instead Of Getting A Job That Day, Shanesha’s Situation Spiraled Into A Nightmare That Will Be Even Harder To Climb Out Of”**

**“She Spent 11 Days In Jail, And Her Children Were Taken From Her Care And Put Into Child Protective Services”**

**“She Faces Two Felony Counts Of Child Abuse”**

**“Her Case Also Highlights The Increasing Criminalization Of Poverty-- Particularly The Criminalization Of Poor, Black Women”**



Shanesha Taylor

**Raquel Nelson is one such woman. In 2011, she was crossing a highway with her three children, from a bus stop to her apartment complex. There was no crosswalk or stop light in the isolated area. When her 4 year old was hit by a drunk driver, she was charged with and convicted of vehicular manslaughter--and faced three years in prison.**

**Millions of children are put in danger every day in this country--not by parents who do their best to protect them from the harshest consequences, but from politicians who cut social programs that could put food on the table, provide shelter and make quality child care affordable for working parents.**

**And when families fall through the cracks, these politicians and the media turn to racist scapegoating to displace the blame onto the victims of their policies.**

April 2, 2014 by Jen Roesch, Socialist Worker

**Shanesha Taylor faced an impossible situation.**

**A homeless single mother living out of her car with two young children, she was offered an interview for an office job that might have been her chance to get back on her feet. Without anyone available to watch her children, she made a desperate decision--to leave them napping in the car, with the doors locked and the windows cracked.**

**Her gamble failed.**

**Instead of getting a job that day, Shanesha's situation spiraled into a nightmare that will be even harder to climb out of.**

**When she returned to her car, she was arrested. She spent 11 days in jail, and her children were taken from her care and put into child protective services.**

**She faces two felony counts of child abuse.**

Shanesha's story--which circulated widely on the Internet, along with a heart-wrenching mug shot showing her with tears streaming down her face--struck a chord with thousands of people. In a country where 80 percent of adults face poverty or near-poverty conditions for at least part of their lives, people can recognize the anguish of a woman trying to do the best for her children in terrible conditions.

So far, more than 2,500 people have donated over \$70,000 to support Shanesha. Most of these are donations of \$5 to \$30--a number of them come with notes about having been in the same position and knowing what it means to be a single mother, to be poor, to be homeless.

This empathy stands in stark contrast to the callous politicians who are cutting social programs like food stamps, child care funding and welfare assistance, while moralizing at poor people about the need to take personal responsibility for their situations.

After several decades of relentless attacks on the social safety net and years of economic crisis, poverty is at the highest levels in half a century.

And women and their children, particularly single-parent families, are the most vulnerable.

Thanks to her story spreading on the Internet and the outpouring of compassion, we now know Shanesha Taylor's story.

**But the reality is that there are thousands of women like her who face agonizing choices every day in this country.**

**In the same week that Shanesha was arrested, a mother in New Jersey was sentenced for living with her children in a storage unit she had rented.**

**She also lost custody of her children to the child welfare system.**

**At the end of January, when a single mother made the decision not to leave her special needs child home alone and called in sick to her job at a Whole Foods store in Chicago, she was fired.**

We don't know why Shanesha lost her previous job or how she became homeless, but we know the factors that push so many women and children into the same position.

The vast majority of single mothers who live in poverty work. But most of them work at low-wage jobs--in fact, women occupy more than two-thirds of minimum-wage jobs.

The income from these positions barely covers the essentials, let alone allows women to save funds to cover a job loss or other emergency. They are also the most likely to have inflexible schedules, no paid time off, irregular hours and no union protections.

A child care or other crisis can easily lead to job loss--and the difference between just skating by and falling off a cliff.

At the same time, women--and especially single mothers--are finding it more and more difficult to make stable child care arrangements. For families living in poverty where the mother works, child care costs absorb almost one-third of the household budget.

Subsidies that once eased the difficulties in affording child care fell to their lowest level since 2002 last year. Arizona, where Shaneshia lives, cut its child care budget by 40 percent over the last four years.

As a consequence, many women rely on fragile, patchwork child care arrangements that can quickly fall through--like leaving slightly older children home alone with younger children, and hoping disaster doesn't strike.

**All it takes is one mistake--or just a stroke of bad luck--for these precarious arrangements to fall apart and for women and their children to find themselves in a situation like Shaneshia's.**

It is estimated that there are 1.6 million homeless children in the United States.

Once homeless, it becomes even more difficult to obtain employment, benefits and assistance. The struggle for basic survival can make it nearly impossible to plan beyond the next day.

**These are the conditions Shaneshia faced when she decided to risk leaving her children alone in the hopes of getting a job.**

**Given everything we know, it's hard to call this a "choice."**

**Yet rather than being offered support and services, Shaneshia has been swept into the criminal injustice and child welfare systems.**

**In this way, her case also highlights the increasing criminalization of poverty--particularly the criminalization of poor, Black women.**

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**Raquel Nelson is one such woman. In 2011, she was crossing a highway with her three children, from a bus stop to her apartment complex. There was no crosswalk or stop light in the isolated area. When her 4 year old was hit by a drunk driver, she was charged with and convicted of vehicular manslaughter--and faced three years in prison.**

Raquel was later able to win a reduction of the charges to jaywalking, but it doesn't change the fact that the drunk driver who killed her son was released in six months--and she spent more than two years in the court system, all the while grieving for a lost child.

**Kim Brathwaite was another single mother facing the choice between job loss and leaving her children alone. When her babysitter didn't show up one night, she left her 9 year old and 1 year old home and left for the night shift at McDonald's,**



**hoping to stay in touch via telephone. Someone set fire to the apartment, and the children died--and Kim was arrested.**

These are the most high-profile and tragic cases, but they highlight the way in which poor women are punished when they are forced to make impossible choices, and something goes wrong.

**More commonly than going to jail, women face the prospect of losing their children to a child welfare system that defines poverty as neglect.**

**The vast majority of child welfare cases in which children are taken from the home aren't the result of abuse--but because there wasn't enough food in the refrigerator or a child didn't get medical care or the parent couldn't provide a home.**

When our society treats poor mothers as criminals or negligent, it punishes both mothers and their children.

**Shanesha Taylor left her children in a dangerous situation for an hour. But the state's response has increased the dangers these children will face over their entire lifetimes.**

**Children in the child welfare system are more likely to become homeless or incarcerated, or drop out of school.**

**And with an arrest on her record, Shanesha will have a harder time finding the employment that could provide a stable home for her children.**

**Millions of children are put in danger every day in this country--not by parents who do their best to protect them from the harshest consequences, but from politicians who cut social programs that could put food on the table, provide shelter and make quality child care affordable for working parents.**

And when families fall through the cracks, these politicians and the media turn to racist scapegoating to displace the blame onto the victims of their policies.

**But Shanesha Taylor's tears tell a different story--one that can be understood by millions of people in this country who are also doing their best to get by, and still find themselves struggling.**

**These are the stories--not fairy tales of hard work and personal responsibility rewarded, but the real attempts to navigate terrible choices--that need to be told.**

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**OCCUPATION PALESTINE**

# **Zionists Vandalize Christian Village In Israel: “Mary Is A Cow” Sprayed In Hebrew On The Walls Of The Roman Catholic Sanctuary; “Only Goyim Should Be Evacuated From Our Land”**



People leave the Deir Rafat Catholic convent whose walls were sprayed with a graffiti near the Israeli city of Beit Shemesh, west of Jerusalem on April 1, 2014. (AFP/Menahem Kahana)

05/04/2014 Ma'an

TEL AVIV, Israel -- Jewish extremists on Thursday slashed the tires of over 40 cars and sprayed racist graffiti in a predominantly Christian town in northern Israel, Israeli media reported.

The perpetrators sprayed “Only goyim should be evacuated from our land” on a wall in the village of Jish, a majority Maronite village of some 3,000 residents.

The attackers also slashed the tires of 40 cars.

Israeli police have opened an investigation into the incident, and labeled the incident a suspected “price tag” attack.

On Tuesday, Jewish extremists sprayed anti-Christian graffiti on the walls of a convent west of Jerusalem and damaged vehicles parked nearby.

Slogans including “Mary is a cow,” “price tag” and “America (is) Nazi Germany” were sprayed in Hebrew on the walls of the Roman Catholic sanctuary.

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**Heroic Israeli Occupiers Attack  
Unarmed Palestinian  
Fishermen, As Usual:  
“Soldiers Opened Fire At Our Boat  
And Engine. We Were About To  
Sink”**

**“They Took Our Boat, Worth \$12,000  
And Gave Us A Tracksuit Worth Less  
Than 20 Shekels”**

**“Thirty-One People From Jihad And  
Shabaan’s Families Depended On The  
Confiscated Fishing Boat. It Was Their  
Only Source Of Livelihood”**



(Photo by Rosa Schiano)



(Photo by Rosa Schiano)

**Thirty-one people from Jihad and Shabaan’s families depended on the confiscated fishing boat. It was their only source of livelihood. Jihad’s family owns another small boat, without a motor and slightly damaged.**

**“Neither of them worked,” Shabaan’s father said. “There is no hope for them.”**

21st March 2014 International Solidarity Movement, Rosa Schiano [Excerpts]

Gaza, Occupied Palestine

**On Tuesday, 11th March, Israeli naval forces arrested two Palestinian fishermen and confiscated their fishing boat off the coast of Gaza City.**

**The two cousins, Shabaan Abu Ryala (33) and Jihad Abu Ryala (24), both from al-Shati (“Beach”) refugee camp, went to fish at 7:00 am.**

**“At about 2:00 pm, Israeli vessels approached our boat and soldiers started shooting,” Jihad said. “We were about four miles offshore. We tried to escape. Soldiers opened fire at our boat and engine. We were about to sink. Our boat was destroyed.”**

**The two fishermen had tried to escape, and were returning to the coast, when they were forced to stop and were detained about two and a half miles off the coast of Gaza City.**

Members of the International Solidarity Movement watched their detention from a building in Gaza City.

A video shows two Israeli gunboats towing the fishing boat after its capture. [See above]

“A soldier ordered me to go to the front of the boat, take off my clothes, dive and climb aboard their ship, which was a few meters away from our boat,” Jihad said. “I was not willing to take off my clothes, but they shouted for me to do so. My cousin Shabaan was trying to convince me to listen to the Israeli soldiers.

**“So I undressed and dived into the sea. I felt cold and swam back to my boat, but the soldiers started shooting and telling me, ‘come on the ship.’**

**“One of the Israeli gunboats was close to our boat, but the soldiers told us to swim to the other gunboat that was distant from us.**

“I decided to swim. When I reached the ship, the soldiers pulled me on board. They made me wear a pair of trousers. I was handcuffed with my hands behind my back, blindfolded and hooded.”

Jihad’s family showed the trousers, fleece and slippers the army gave the two fishermen.

“They took our boat, worth \$12,000 and gave us a tracksuit worth less than 20 shekels,” a member of the family said.

As the Israeli gunboats headed to the Israeli port of Ashdod, the soldiers asked the two fishermen for general information, their name and ID number.

“I don’t remember the number of my identity card,” Jihad said. “I told the soldier, who then used force on me. He was trying to get information from me. Then another soldier said, ‘Leave him.’”

At the port of Ashdod, soldiers removed the bandages from the eyes of the fishermen and freed them from their handcuffs to allow them to leave the ship. The fishermen were given sweatshirts and slippers.

“We were hooded and handcuffed again,” Jihad said. “We were then taken to a small room where soldiers freed us from handcuffs and bandages. A female army doctor checked our health condition and blood pressure. When she finished, we were handcuffed and blindfolded again.

“We were left alone for about twenty minutes. Then a detective came to interrogate me. During the investigation, they took the bandages off my eyes while my cousin was still blindfolded.

The investigator asked me the names of my family members, from the smallest to the eldest. He asked me who my friends are. Then I was blindfolded and handcuffed.

“I was taken to another room, where I stayed for about an hour. Later a detective came and asked me, ‘Can you tell me how the soldiers treated you on board the ship?’ then, he ‘Do you remember the identification number of the ships that fired on your boat?’ I

said yes and I gave him the identification numbers. Then they left me alone for about four hours.

“Then a soldier came, freed me from handcuffs, hit me hard in my back and said I could go home.”

The two fishermen were transported to Erez and crossed into the Gaza Strip around midnight.

In addition to the fishing boat, the two fishermen lost two GPS units and a telephone on the fishing boat.

Jihad had already been arrested by the Israeli navy once in 2008. His cousin Shabaan was arrested for the third time.

**A fisherman said that since 2010, Israel has not returned any of the small fishing boats it has confiscated.**

Jihad has two young children and has been a fisherman since he was ten. His family is a family of fishermen.

**Thirty-one people from Jihad and Shabaan’s families depended on the confiscated fishing boat. It was their only source of livelihood. Jihad’s family owns another small boat, without a motor and slightly damaged.**

**“Neither of them worked,” Shabaan’s father said. “There is no hope for them.”**

Al-Shati refugee camp was dark. For a few days, the Gaza Strip had only six hours of electricity daily due to the lack of fuel. The power went off around 6:30 pm, when the ISM’s meeting with the fishermen ended.

In the camp, a strong smell came from sewage flowing along the asphalt. Some children played on roller skates. One of them fell in the darkness, but he stood up immediately. They smiled when a group greeted them.

Looking at the sea on my right, I watched the lights of the fishing boats and the helplessness that I felt during our meeting mingled with anger.

“The situation here is getting worse and worse,” a Palestinian said.

Here people continue living thanks to donations and meager food parcels. “The refugees,” victims of a double injustice, still dream of returning to their lands and hand down their history and their right of return from generation to generation.

The Israeli army perpetuates its daily violations in the light of day.

**For many years, thousands of reports have denounced these violations with no result. No international power intervenes to stop Israeli forces, no international body sanctions Israel. For this reason, Israeli naval forces continue entering into Gaza seas, in which they impose an illegal blockade, and do what they want.**

Sometimes, fishermen who have been attacked ask what can they get through reports like this.

How can we answer?

Sometimes we tell them that the reports are helpful in order to raise awareness among people. But in practice, if our institutions will not take action against the Israeli government, nothing will change. BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) against Israel is a good response to Israeli violations.

**Although officially the limit imposed by Israel on Gaza waters is six nautical miles off the Palestinian coast, Israeli naval forces impose a limit of one or two miles in the waters to the north of Gaza Strip. The limit is shrinking even in the waters in the south of the Gaza Strip, especially off the coast of Rafah.**

**These continuous attacks against Gaza fishermen undermine their ability to subsistence and constitute a violation of international humanitarian law.**

Israel has progressively imposed restrictions on Palestinian fishermen's access to the sea. The 20 nautical miles established under the Jericho agreements, between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1994, were reduced to 12 miles in the Bertini Agreement of 2002.

In 2006, the area Israel allowed for fishing was reduced to six nautical miles from the coast. After its military offensive "Operation Cast Lead" (December 2008 – January 2009) Israel imposed a limit of three nautical miles from the coast, preventing Palestinians from accessing 85% of the water to which they are entitled under the Jericho agreements of 1994.

**Under the ceasefire agreement reached by Israel and the Palestinian resistance after the Israeli military offensive "Operation Pillar of Defense" (November 2012), Israel agreed that Palestinian fishermen could again sail six nautical miles from the coast.**

**Despite these agreements, the Israeli navy has not stopped its attacks on fishermen, even within this limit.**

**In March 2013, Israel once again imposed a limit of three nautical miles from the coast. On 22 May, Israeli military authorities announced a decision to extend the limit to six nautical miles again.**

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## **Zionist Forces Demolish Bedouin Dwellings In Occupied Jerusalem:**

# **“Structures Belonged To Bedouin Families Who Have Lived In The Area Since 1948”**

## **“Residents Not Given Any Time To Evacuate Their Belongings”**

05/04/2014 Ma'an

JERUSALEM -- Israeli forces stormed the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Jabal al-Baba east of al-Ezariya and demolished several mobile dwellings housing Bedouin families early Thursday, locals told Ma'an.

Large numbers of special Israeli forces gathered near the illegal Maale Adumim settlement before they raided Jabal al-Baba, escorting three bulldozers and officers of the Israeli Civil Administration.

The bulldozers started a wide-scale demolition process targeting structures made of steel, tin sheets and wood. The structures belonged to Bedouin families who have lived in the area since 1948.

East Jerusalem popular committee spokesman Hani Halabiya told Ma'an that the residents were not given any time to evacuate their belongings. Some of the demolished steel structures, he said, have been used as dwellings, while others served as cattle farms belonging to Bedouins from the al-Jahalin tribe.

Halabiyya highlighted that the demolition is part of an Israeli plan to empty the hill of its Palestinian residents, who have been there since they were displaced from their villages in 1948, in order to enlarge Maale Adumim settlement through the so-called E1 area.

The first two structures Israeli forces pulled down belong to Mahmoud Ibrahim Jahalin and Salim Kayid Jahalin. Five people used to live in the first and 14 in the second. Structures serving as poultry and cattle farms were also demolished in an ongoing process.

The local spokesman noted that Civil Administration officers issued demolition and eviction orders to Palestinian families who live in Jabal al-Baba by late February.

The demolition was postponed twice, he said, adding that Israeli forces and bulldozers arrived this morning without prior notice and started demolition immediately.

E1 is an area northeast of Jerusalem and west of the illegal Israeli settlement of Maale Adumim. Israeli plans for settlement construction in the area have been strongly opposed by the international community, including the US.



Critics say Israeli settlement construction in E1 would divide the West Bank in two and make the creation of a contiguous Palestinian state -- as envisaged by the internationally backed two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict -- virtually impossible.

To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to:

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/Default.aspx> and  
<http://www.palestinemonitor.org/list.php?id=ej898ra7yff0ukmf16>

The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."

## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



**Another Attack By The Enemy  
Combatants In Blue:  
Jawhari Smith "Shot In The Face  
And The Shoulder On March 18 By**

# **A 17-Year Veteran Of The Austin Police Department”**

## **“Jawhari Told The Officer The Gun Was A Toy And Threw It Aside”**

### **“He Was Also Beginning To Kneel Down In Compliance With White’s Orders When The Officer Started Shooting”**

March 31, 2014 by Karen Domínguez Burke, Socialist Worker

Jawhari Smith has been released from the hospital after being shot in the face and the shoulder on March 18 by a 17-year veteran of the Austin Police Department.

**Although he has not been charged with any crime, Smith’s family was barred by police from being able to see him at Breckenridge Hospital, because police insisted he was in their custody.**

**He did not have a lawyer present during his stay in intensive care.**

That afternoon, Smith and his girlfriend, Rickia Hunt, were having an argument outside of a relative’s apartment when the police were called. Sgt. Greg White would end up shooting at Jawhari at least three times according to police--five times, according to witnesses. Two shots hit Smith, one in the shoulder and one in the jaw.

White claims that Jawhari had a semiautomatic BB gun and that he instructed Jawhari to drop it. White says that he opened fire when Jawhari refused to drop the weapon and appeared to be raising it.

In defense of White, Austin Police Chief Art Acevedo told reporters:

“The suspect had a semi-automatic pistol in his hand. When the sergeant sees it, he sees him put it behind his back, allegedly, and then put it back forward. The suspect at one point yells it’s a B.B. gun. The sergeant ordered the suspect several times to drop the weapon. The suspect did not comply. The sergeant, in fear for his life, fired several rounds.”

Not surprisingly, Rickia Hunt and other witnesses have a very different story.

**According to Hunt, Jawhari told the officer the gun was a toy and threw it aside.**

**She says that he was also beginning to kneel down in compliance with White’s orders when the officer started shooting.**

**The fact that Jawhari has not yet been charged with any crime would seem to add credibility to Hunt's version of events.**

Jawhari's cousin, Traeshina Williams, pointed out that White didn't even try to use his Taser. She told Austin's Fox News, "The simple fact that someone can be shot in the face...We need our police force to be re-trained. What is the point of having a Taser?"

As Fox News pointed out, Traeshina Williams is also related to Sophia King, a mentally ill woman who was fatally shot by an Austin police officer in 2002. "Federal investigators found the officer did not violate the law and had to use deadly force to save the life of a housing authority employee, who was being threatened by King with a butcher knife," reported Fox.

But as Traeshina Williams pointed out, "One of the witnesses said that (Jawhari) didn't have a weapon, so when they produce this weapon, then...let us know. The same incident happened with Sophia when they claimed she had a weapon and they shot her in the back."

This is the second shooting by Austin police this year, and both have been committed by veterans of the force.

**In addition to the two shootings, there have been other acts of violence committed by Austin's scandal-ridden police force. In February, a video of Austin police arresting a young female jogger made headlines.**

**The young woman was jogging near the University of Texas with headphones on when she was stopped for jaywalking and subsequently dragged and carried to a police car by four officers.**

When video of the distraught woman went viral, Chief Acevedo offered the following "defense": "Whether or not he grabbed her by behind it doesn't...it's not relevant. At some point, she knows it's a cop. The cop asked her a lawful question that she is lawfully required to answer, and she didn't. That's why she went to jail."

Acevedo says the woman was only arrested for failure to identify, not resisting arrest. But he added that if he had been the arresting officer, he would have cited the woman on other charges:

"At the end of the day, that officer has to stop them somehow. He didn't tackle her to the ground. You know, it's kind of interesting what passes for controversy in Austin, Texas. Thank you Lord that there's a controversy in Austin, Texas, that we actually had the audacity to touch somebody by the arm and tell them, 'Oh my goodness, Austin Police, we're trying to get your attention.' Whew! In other cities, cops are actually committing sexual assaults on duty, so I thank God that this is what passes for a controversy in Austin, Texas."

**In effect, Acevedo seems to be suggesting that if you are a woman, be thankful if the police don't rape you.**

**Should Black men be thankful if they aren't shot?**

This is the real face of the Austin Police Department.

Fifty percent of Austin's city budget goes to pay for police salaries, and Austin police can make more than \$90,000 a year.

Their actions seem to suggest that intimidating people with violence is in the job description--and they get compensated for a job well done.

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