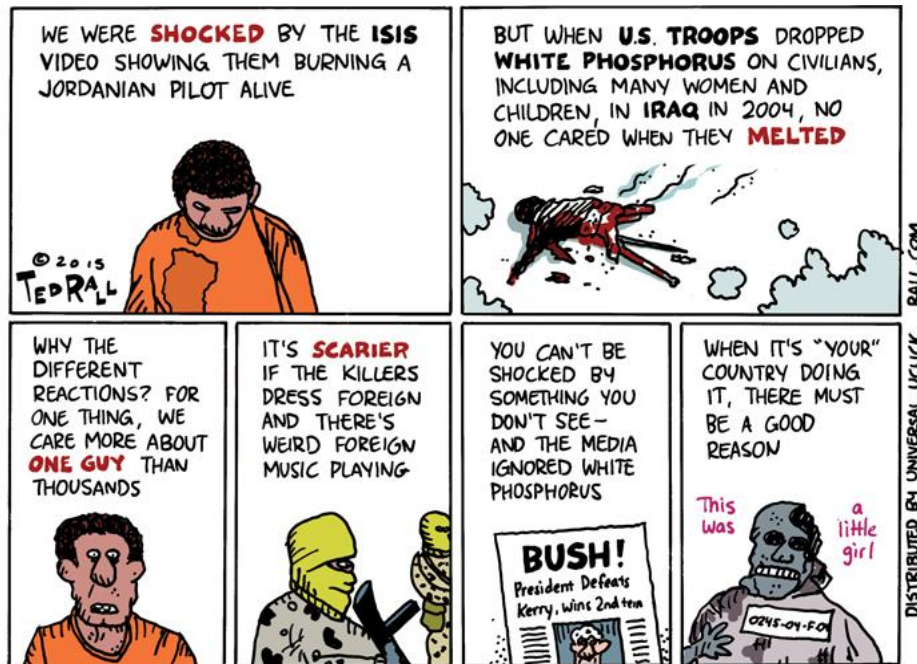


Military Resistance 13B4



“Russian Conscripts Like Alexander Have Been Strong-Armed Or Duped Into Signing Contracts With The Military To Become Professional Soldiers”

“They Were Sent To Participate In Drills In The Southern Rostov Region”

“Those Who Have Been There Before Know That In Actual Fact It Means Ukraine”

“Rising Concerns Among Families With Young Sons Could Pose A Risk For President Putin”

Feb. 21, 2015 By LAURA MILLS, AP [Excerpts]

MOSCOW — When Alexander was due to finish his year of mandatory military service in October, his commander told him he had no choice:

He had to sign a contract to extend his stay in the army and head to southern Russia for troop exercises.

The 20-year-old knew that meant he might end up fighting alongside pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. Other soldiers he talked to had been sent there.

His commanders “didn't talk about it, but other soldiers told us about it, primarily paratroopers who had been there,” Alexander said in an interview with The Associated Press, which is not using his surname for his safety.

The former private first class ended his military service earlier this month. He avoided being sent to Ukraine — although not without first being threatened with prison for desertion.

Human rights groups have received dozens of complaints in the past month alone from Russian conscripts like Alexander who say they have been strong-armed or duped into signing contracts with the military to become professional soldiers, after which they were sent to participate in drills in the southern Rostov region.

“We receive messages from all over in which (soldiers) say that they're being sent again to Rostov for military exercises,” said Valentina Melnikova, head of the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers, a group with a three-decade history of working to protect soldiers' rights.

“Those who have been there (to the Rostov region) before know that in actual fact it means Ukraine.”

Because only contract soldiers can legally be dispatched abroad, worries are spreading among families that inexperienced young conscripts could be sent to fight in eastern Ukraine.

While Russia has denied it is sending arms and troops to support the separatists, since the summer dozens of soldiers have been reported killed by explosions during drills in the Rostov region — deaths that rights groups actually attribute to the conflict over the border in Ukraine.

Weapons appear to flow freely across the frontier, and one group of Russian paratroopers was even captured in August, 50 kilometers (30 miles) inside the war zone.

So far, the Russian government has been able to keep a tight lid on information about any soldiers in eastern Ukraine through a shroud of official denials, harassment of independent reporters who cover the deaths, and carrot-and-stick pressure on the families of those killed.

But rising concerns among families with young sons could pose a risk for President Vladimir Putin.

Russia's secrecy about the soldiers' deaths has an important precedent: During the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in the 1980s, the government released little information about those killed in the conflict.

When the true numbers of casualties became known, the intervention turned unpopular.

More than 5,600 people have been killed since April in the fighting between Ukrainian troops and the rebels. It is unclear how many Russian soldiers have died in the conflict, as the Defense Ministry has rejected rights groups' requests on the number of soldiers killed on duty in 2014.

But the rising casualty count among Russian soldiers specifically could prove decisive in Putin's thinking as he comes under pressure to prevent an expansion of the conflict that might put more Russians in the line of fire.

"This is a conflict that reaches pretty deep into the psyche of the Russian people. It's not a foreign conflict. ... It's something very close to home," said Dmitri Trenin, an analyst at the Carnegie Endowment in Moscow.

"This is something that's at the back of a lot of people's minds, and in particular, people with sons of draft age are worried.

"Military conquest, in my view, would not be supported by the Russian people, and I think everyone knows it," he added.

In October, Alexander was preparing to return to his hometown of Inta, a city of 30,000 people that skirts the Arctic Circle, when he and a dozen other recruits were told to report immediately to their base outside of Moscow.

"They told us: You have to go on a trip," he said as he wolfed down a full tray of food at the local McDonald's. "At first there wasn't any talk about a contract, but later they said that in order to go on the trip we would have to sign a contract, because we can't go as conscripts."

Russia requires almost all young men to serve in the army for one year at age 18, although many find ways to defer or avoid it. Those who want to have careers in the army can become professional soldiers by signing contracts for two or three years.

Alexander and his best friend in the unit both have pregnant girlfriends and had no intention of extending their army service. But they were told that they had already agreed to the trip, and that they couldn't back out.

“We wanted to refuse,” he said. “But they refused our refusal, and we had to go.”

The commander assured them the contract was a formality and they could quit within a month, when the trip was over. But Alexander had different commanders in Rostov, who told him that he was obliged to carry out his three-year contract. He heard tales of fighting from more experienced soldiers who had already been to Ukraine.

Alexander would not repeat those stories, noting that he “did not want to go to jail” for revealing state secrets.

The Russian Defense Ministry did not respond to a written request for comment sent Feb. 9 or to follow-up phone calls.

Adelya Kamelatdinova's 19-year-old son was serving as a recruit in the army in July when he sent her a text message saying he was being sent to military exercises in Rostov.

Then in August, he disappeared for weeks — only to resurface in September and tell her had been stationed in the Ukrainian region of Luhansk, in a village about 80 kilometers (50 miles) from the Russian border.

When she went to the local recruitment office to complain with another mother whose son had been hospitalized with a concussion, nobody listened: “They told us that our sons were participating in exercises and there aren't any soldiers in Ukraine; that it was a fantasy we thought up.”

Kamelatdinova, who asked that her son's name not be used for fear of retribution, said he had not signed a contract but that he had been forced to sign a statement in which he agreed to cross the Ukrainian border.

The document did not have a specific date on it listing the span of the assignment.

Melnikova, from the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers, believes the drive to recruit more professional soldiers could be a way to make Russia's involvement in the conflict look retroactively legal, were it ever to become public. Rebel leaders have also said that any Russian soldiers in eastern Ukraine are volunteers fighting during their vacation time — a privilege enjoyed by contract soldiers alone.

“Here they got some smart-aleck lawyers who said, 'OK, we'll observe at least this (law), we won't send conscripts,’” she said. “It's absurd and nonetheless illegal.”

The recruits are sometimes tempted by the promise of relative fortunes — a minimum of 20,000 rubles (\$300) per month, compared with the 2,000 rubles (\$30) that conscripts usually receive.

But often they say they are tricked, told that the contract will only last for one or two months, or threatened.

“My son said they held them all in an auditorium, threatened that they would ruin their reputations, send them crawling through the trenches ... and told them they were traitors of their country,” said the mother of one soldier who serves at a military base in Kamenka, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) northwest of St. Petersburg.

She asked that neither her name nor that of her son be used for fear of reprisals.

“A lot of them gave in, whoever's nerves didn't hold out,” said the woman. She added that her son had managed to turn down the contract, but that many of his fellow conscripts hadn't, and were supposed to leave for Rostov this week.

Many conscripts who then try to break the contracts are threatened by commanders with being considered absent without leave, a charge punishable by up to five years in prison.

Alexander and his friend ultimately fled Rostov on Dec. 31.

They said they were threatened with desertion by their commander in Naro-Fominsk, and it was only after reaching out to NGOs for legal help that they were able to return to Naro-Fominsk to legally quit.

But most conscripts are 18 or 19 and have little awareness of their rights to do so: Alexander says that the 10 other conscripts from his division sent to Rostov with him in October are still there, and that he has heard from other soldiers that 500 new recruits signed contracts in January, and were also headed there.

“The phrase 'I'll put you in military prison if you don't sign the contract' explains everything,” said Alexander, when asked why he and so many other conscripts collapsed under the pressure.

Irina, the mother of a 19-year-old recruit serving in the Nizhny Novgorod region who asked that her last name not be used for fear of reprisal, said her son had recently called to say he had signed a contract and was on his way to Rostov. She didn't know whether he had been coerced or not, but said she had never heard him previously mention plans to sign a contract.

“I deceive myself and tell myself that it's just the army, that everything has to be this way, that everything is OK,” she told the AP.

“But they've sent them for three months to the border with Ukraine. ... Of course I'm scared.”

MORE:

Ukraine:
**“A Firestorm Of Mass Opposition
And Refusal To Fight”**
**“Almost No One Is Coming
Voluntarily To The Military
Recruitment Offices In This Fourth,
Latest Round Of Conscription”**
**“It’s Only In Make-Believe Worlds
That The Children Of High-Ranking
Officials, Parliamentary Deputies,
Politicians And Businessmen Are
Serving In The Military”**

O1.ua news outlet in Odessa city reports, “In the village of Limansky (Reni district), a representative of the military recruitment office arrived with call-up papers accompanied by two armed gunmen. It nearly cost them their lives. The peasant villagers almost lynched the three.”

February 6-8, 2015 by DMITRY KOLESNIK, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

The current war situation in eastern Ukraine and the decision of the government in Kyiv to begin a new, fourth wave of military conscription and mobilization is unleashing a firestorm of mass opposition and refusal to fight. Protest is rising in all the regions of the country. For sure, there are still nationalist fanatics and far-right militarists exercising violence and intimidation against antiwar protests, but their capacity to stamp out protest is diminishing.

Ukraine is historically a peaceful nation. For some time now, it has avoided military conflicts like those that have flared elsewhere in eastern Europe — Yugoslavia, Georgia, etc. That came to a crashing end last year when the Kyiv government launched its ‘anti-terrorist operation’ against the people in the east of the country.

But from the beginning of the conflict, Ukraine has seen refusals by soldiers to fire on their fellow citizens, desertions from the army and refusals to show up for conscription.

Women—the mothers, wives, sisters and daughters of military conscripts—have held protests and even riots against the war or against force military service.

The protests have been sparked, first of all, by the fact that many Ukrainians do not accept the interpretation of the war as offered by the government.

Secondly, many people don't want to die for the current government which they view as composed of extreme nationalists and neoliberals. They are unwilling to be cannon fodder dying for the interests of Ukrainian

Last but not least, many ordinary workers and farmers, (contrary to middle-class, urban dwellers), preserve entrenched, regional identities.

They consider their homeland to be a region such as Donbas, Bukovyna, Transcarpathia or Volhynia as much as, or perhaps even more importantly, it is the entity called 'Ukraine'. It is harder to sell to such people the war's patriotic, pro-Ukraine and anti-Russia message.

The astonishing fact that almost no one is coming voluntarily to the military recruitment offices in this fourth, latest round of conscription is causing panic in the government and top army command of Ukraine.

They are appealing, as always, to patriotic and nationalist sentiments, but this is falling increasingly on deaf ears.

Men of conscription age are fleeing in the thousands, crossing Ukraine's borders in all directions, or taking cover internally, to escape the clutches of the military recruiters.

President Poroshenko has been obliged to order that, henceforth, only those men of military age with papers confirming they are duly registered with their military registration office will be permitted to leave the country.

"Each day, new facts about mass, draft evasion are emerging" reports the Ukrainian daily Korrespondent. It writes, "In the first wave of military mobilization in 2014, 20 per cent of those who showed up for the conscription call did so voluntarily. In the second wave the same year, it was ten per cent.

"This year, only six per cent of those conscripts showing up for the call to service have done so voluntarily".

In the Transcarpathia region in western Ukraine, entire villages have scattered across various borders to escape conscription of their menfolk.

In the village of Colchino, authorities could find only three of the 105 eligible males to whom to serve papers.

Many people are selecting east European countries as temporary refuges. Yuri Biryukov, an adviser to the Ukrainian president, has admitted, "In the last 30 days, 17 per cent of the total number of reservists of the entire region of Chernivtsy (western Ukraine) have crossed borders into other countries".

“According to unofficial sources, the hostels and motels in the border area of neighboring Romania are overcrowded with Ukrainian draft evaders.”

In the Volhynya region of western Ukraine, villagers have blocked the attempts by authorities to distribute call-up papers.

A news report by 112.ua explained, “On January 24, the residents of the villages of Melniki, Zatishye and Pishcha in Shatsky district of Volhynya region blocked cars of the district administration as they arrived. Inside the vehicles were representatives of the local administration and the military recruitment office, arriving to deliver call-up papers for the military mobilization.

“Protesters forced the authorities to tear up the papers. They were then allowed to leave and the people went at home.”

Authorities in that case struck back. “Three criminal proceedings have been opened under Article 336 of the Criminal Code (evasion of conscription)”, reported a local police official.

The Odessa publication Timer reports that on January 23 in the village of Kulevchi in Saratsky district of Odessa region, the local population revolted against the military mobilization and kicked representatives out of the local recruitment office.

The population learned that 240 call-up papers were en route to be served in their village. Within minutes, Timer explained, some 500 people gathered on the village square. Six officers of the recruitment office arrived with the papers but they found a less than welcome reception among the local people.

When officials declared that refusal of conscription is punishable by criminal prosecution, the people began to shout “No war” and “We want peace”.

They reminded the officers that Ukraine has not declared martial law and that the Minsk ceasefire agreement of last September has not been formally renounced by the Ukraine government.

They called the new wave of military mobilization illegal and the recruiting officers were forced to leave the village.

O1.ua news outlet in Odessa city reports, “In the village of Limansky (Reni district), a representative of the military recruitment office arrived with call-up papers accompanied by two armed gunmen. It nearly cost them their lives. The peasant villagers almost lynched the three.”

Before the trip to the village, the military commissar of the district, Igor Skrypnik, was aware of the hostile attitude of the civilian population toward the mobilisation process. So he asked for protection while distributing mobilization papers.

Two policemen armed with weapons were assigned. But it produced the opposite result.

“When two gunmen in camouflage appeared in the village, it immediately attracted people’s attention and caused a spontaneous riot,” said the acting chairman of the local state administration, Sergey Barinov. “About 200 residents of Limansky village surrounded the representative of the military and the armed police officers and threatened to punish them.”

“Deputy Chairman Ivan Stadnikov of the Reni district state administration and Military Commissar Igor Skrypnik immediately went to the village. After difficult negotiations, a compromise was reached.

“But then the local residents seized the call-up papers, defiantly poured gasoline on them and set them alight – right before the eyes of the officials who had brought the papers to the village.”

In some villages in Ternopil region, the heads of local councils did not even participate in the distribution of call-up papers. Even more, when representatives of military recruitment offices were due to arrive, some local authorities in the region tipped off residents in order to give them the opportunity to avoid conscription.

Anti-war protests are continuing in the areas of the Donbas region that are controlled by Ukrainian troops. In the city of Kramatorsk in Donetsk region, women staged a spontaneous rally in late January chanting “No war!” In a video of the protest, at the 1’45” mark, we get a glimpse at how desperate the recruitment tactics of the authorities have become. A woman asks the military officer present, “Why are they beating on our doors at night and taking our men away to the army?”

A protest of mothers and wives of conscripts was recently held in the village of Belovodsk in a government-controlled part of Luhansk region.

The authorities arrived under the protection of machine guns to explain the conscription policy. The villagers answered that they did not vote for President Petro Poroshenko and they had no interest in sacrificing themselves for the interests of the oligarch Igor Kolomoisky (a well-known Ukrainian billionaire and advocate of war).

Social networks are responding to the mobilization by creating memes with titles such as the “Elusive Battalion”.

The message is that it’s only in make-believe worlds that the children of high-ranking officials, parliamentary deputies, politicians and businessmen are serving in the military.

Writing in the Ukrainian web journal Liva, journalist Roman Lyubar explains, “Due to conscription, Ukrainian authorities have managed to unite the citizens of the country who are everywhere joining to boycott the military draft and increasingly protest against it. This despite the threat of criminal prosecution and militarist propaganda...”

“Now Ukrainians see more clearly than ever that the poorest citizens face being cannon fodder and dying in a war while government officials and rich capitalists escape such a fate.”

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?



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.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Resistance Action: “The Police Force Suffered Heavy Casualties”

Feb 17, 2015 By Pajhwok Report & By Khaama Press 2.21.15

PUL-I-ALAM: At least 20 policemen were killed and nine others wounded after a group of insurgents stormed the police headquarters in central Logar province on Tuesday, an official said.

Provincial governor spokesman Din Mohammad Darwish said the attack was carried out by a group of four militants who had disguised themselves in police uniforms.

Din Mohammad Darwish, the governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News one of the attackers detonated his explosives at the entrance gate at around 1:00 pm, while three others forced their way inside the facility.

Two of the attackers detonated their explosives inside the headquarters while the last one blew himself up inside the canteen, he said.

Logar Police Chief Abdul Hakim Ishaqzai told the police force suffered "heavy casualties" amid reports that dozens of police personnel were gathered for lunch in the canteen.

Wishing not to be named, a doctor at Logar hospital, said 20 wounded policemen had been referred to Kabul for treatment.

In the wake of stringent security measures, it could not be ascertained how militants managed to enter the facility. As usual, police said the investigation was underway.

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Militants Attack Hotel in Somali Capital, Blowing Up Top Government Officials



Front of the Central Hotel in Mogadishu, Somalia, after a car bomb explosion outside the hotel. Photo: European Pressphoto Agency

Feb. 20, 2015 By Heidi Vogt, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

NAIROBI, Kenya—Militants assaulted a hotel popular with government officials in Somalia's capital of Mogadishu on Friday, blasting their way into the compound with car bombs and killing at least 10 people, including top politicians.

Somalia's al-Shabaab militants claimed responsibility for the attack, the latest reminder that al-Shabaab is able to move freely in the highly fortified city and target even high-level officials. As the government seizes more territory from al-Shabaab in the countryside, it has struggled to translate those gains into improved security and stability.

Security officer Naser Mohamud said at least 10 people were killed and 15 injured in an attack that targeted the Central Hotel, which is close to the presidential compound. Shrapnel from the explosions also hit the nearby Naasa Hablood hotel, Mr. Mohamud said. Some of those injured in the attack were in the Naasa Hablood, he said, but it wasn't clear if any of the dead were there.

Earlier, Mr. Mohamud said that both hotels had been attacked. He later clarified that statement to say Central Hotel was the main site of the assault.

Among the dead were two parliamentarians, the deputy mayor of Mogadishu, and two officials from the prime minister's office, according to a statement issued by the prime minister's office.

Among the wounded were Deputy Prime Minister Mohamed Omar Arte, the minister of ports, the minister of civil aviation, and another parliamentarian, the statement said.

Parliamentarian Mohamed Abdullahi, who was inside Central Hotel when the attack started, said he heard heavy gunfire followed by explosions.

Mr. Abdullahi said dozens of lawmakers live in the two hotels. He later went to the hospital where he saw the bodies of fellow lawmakers.

"This is a massacre," Mr. Abdullahi said.

One man who was staying at Central Hotel said the first explosion sounded at about 12:40 p.m., just as he and other guests finished their prayers at a small mosque inside the hotel.

"I heard a big bang behind us. That was the first explosion. It was very huge and soon it was followed by gunfire—like skirmishes. The walls of the mosque and the compound wall of the hotel broke away," said Abdirahman Nur. He said he ran and then heard another blast and saw the head of a woman—the bomber—and body parts.

Information Minister Mohamed Hayir Mareye told reporters in Mogadishu that the assailants attacked with two car bombs and a female bomber on foot.

The operation fits a pattern of earlier attacks by al-Shabaab, which has staged similar assaults in Somalia as well as Kenya.

Al-Shabaab has continued to launch regular attacks in Somali's capital as a sign of its strength in the tumultuous country, even as African Union troops have pushed the group back from some of its rural strongholds. The group has kept up the pace of attacks, despite the death of its longtime leader in a U.S. strike last September.

Al-Shabaab spokesman Ali Mohamud Rage said in a statement that the group had targeted the senior government officials.

"After two well-planned attacks, members of the Mujahideen today managed to attack and kill senior apostates of the government. This attack isn't the end and not the beginning. We are in a war against the apostates and crusaders and we will continue to hit them everywhere they are," Mr. Rage said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



"At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

"For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

"We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake."

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

Frederick Douglass, 1852

**A revolution is always distinguished by impoliteness, probably because the ruling classes did not take the trouble in good season to teach the people fine manners.
-- Leon Trotsky, History Of The Russian Revolution**

Flushing Historical Truth



An American Standard toilet. Photography by Mike Hastie

From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: February 11, 2015
Subject: Flushing Historical Truth

Flushing Historical Truth

In a speech that Martin Luther King Jr. gave on April 4, 1967,

at Riverside Church in New York City, he stated:

“The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is my own government.”

As a member of the Vietnam generation, I am convinced that so many of us carry deep wounds inside of ourselves. Now, more than ever, that history is being rewritten to make it more digestible to fit the norms of American society. The truth is forbidden in a land of make believe. Future generations must pry those wounds open, if they are to understand their own march to submission, or they will be doomed to repeat the haunting history of the Vietnam War.

**Mike Hastie
Army Medic Vietnam
February 11, 2015**

Photo and caption from the portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004**

**“Is It Enough To Trust Those
Who Have Climbed To Power
Promising All Kinds Of Good
Things?”**

**“Definitely Not! Syriza Pulls The
Working Class Into
Powerlessness”**

“The Only Arms Greek And French Workers Have Are Those Of The Class Struggle, Mobilizations And Strikes”

“It Is There, And Not With Syriza, That Their Future Well-Being Will Come”

January 30th, Editorial, Lutte Ouvrière via Spark

The International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Union wanted to discourage Greek voters from voting for Syriza, claiming, “If Syriza wins, Greece will leave the euro, financial aid will stop and chaos will break out.”

The blackmail failed. The Greek people weren't impressed. By voting massively for the radical left, they rejected austerity and sacrifices.

They can be proud of that.

Since 2009, the Greeks have seen their living conditions collapse. Unemployment has tripled; wages and pensions have been cut by 10, 20 and 30 percent. Thousands of small businesses have failed. The health system has basically been demolished. Thousands of public workers were laid off.

Except for some hundreds of families tied to the owners of big shipping companies and large capital in retail and construction, the entire population was hit.

Engineers, management, workers and those in public employment have suffered layoffs, pay cuts and the withholding of the pay they earned. Their lives have been shattered since they couldn't meet daily expenses.

Families have become used to living without electricity. Some get medical care at charities. Others eat in soup kitchens. Bailout plans gave the bankers the guarantees they wanted, but Greece was turned into a Third World country.

After five years of a descent into a living hell, the population isn't resigned to sacrifice. This is a lesson for all of us and a good omen for the future.

Today, hopes are turned toward Syriza and its leader Alexis Tsipras.

But is it enough to trust those who have climbed to power promising all kinds of good things?

Definitely not!

We are well placed, here in France, to know that workers have paid a high price for such illusions. In the past,

French workers had hopes in Socialist Party leaders Mitterrand, Jospin and Hollande.

This gave rise to demoralization, depoliticization and the current success of far right-wing demagogues among working people.

In Greece, workers also have had bitter experience of this.

In 2009, Papandreou, the leader of the Socialist Party, promised to “break with the dictatorship of financial markets.” Once in power, he saw to it that the bankers were paid on time, whatever it cost the workers.

History doesn't repeat itself identically, but we have to guard ourselves from repeating past errors. Workers don't need hope, but consciousness.

Tsipras promised to make the richest pay more, including the shipping company owners and the Orthodox church. He also promised to renegotiate the terms of debt with the Troika (the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Union).

When everyone admits that this debt can no longer be paid and that austerity treatments do more harm than good, maybe the creditors will loosen their grip. And with some ten billion euros, maybe Tsipras can ease the situation of the most helpless.

But this won't let Greeks escape misery and unemployment.

Neither in Greece nor elsewhere can jobs be created and wages and pensions increased – without questioning the capitalists' profits.

In order to guarantee the public services of decent health care and education, the richest have to be forced to pay.

There can't be a miracle.

People can't end austerity without pulling up its roots: exploitation, profit and the capitalists' power.

By setting as the only objective the fight against the abuses of certain rogue and criminal capitalists, Syriza pulls the working class into powerlessness.

In order to recover living conditions worthy of the 21st century, a merciless struggle will have to be led against the power of the bourgeoisie and the financiers.

To be victorious, this struggle must engage the collective force of the workers and their conscious action: for only they have the power to reorganize society in accord with the interests of the greatest number.

This isn't Syriza's objective, but it must be that of the Greek workers.

They don't have to wait for elections to put forward their demands.

Several times they have shown their combativeness and their determination to fight for their living conditions. ALL that we can hope for them is that they continue.

If the elections allow an opinion to be expressed, they don't permit a change in the relation of forces with the capitalists.

For that, the only arms Greek and French workers have are those of the class struggle, mobilizations and strikes.

It is there, and not with Syriza, that their future well-being will come.

Portugal 1975 -- A Revolution Destroyed:

“The Far Left Had A Major Fault”

**“The Revolutionary Left Had Neither
The Will Nor The Influence To Move
Rank-And-File Soldiers”**

**“This Is A Tragedy From Which We Must
All Learn”**

[And What About Greece 2015?]

December 1985 By Chris Harman, Socialist Worker [UK] reprinted in February 11, 2011
Socialist Worker

Portugal was ruled by a full-fledged fascist regime for half a century, longer than anywhere else in Europe.

Opposition parties were banned. The only unions permitted were small, state-run craft associations. Armed police were used to break any strike. Working-class leaders were consigned to the jails of the PIDE secret police for 10 or 20 years.

The fascist state ruled not only over Portugal, but also over an immense empire in Africa. The colonies of Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique provided abundant profits for Portugal's giant monopolies and jobs for its middle class.

On the morning of April 25, 1974, the citizens of Lisbon arose from their beds to find tanks patrolling the streets and normal radio broadcasts replaced by military music. Was the coup from the left or the right? The answer came when the radio broadcast a popular anti-fascist song.

People rushed out into the streets to fraternize with the soldiers, handing them red carnations.

Together, they tore down the emblems of the fascist regime, opened the prisons to free political prisoners and arrested known police informers.

The new government was headed by Gen. António de Spínola, an old reactionary who had fought as a volunteer in Hitler's armies during the Second World War. But his government members were made up from all the underground anti-fascist parties, including the Communists.

And it soon became clear that power in the armed forces lay not with him, but with 400 junior officers who had actually organized the coup--known as the Armed Forces Movement, or MFA.

The army had turned against fascism for one simple reason--it was losing the colonial war in Africa. But there were big differences on how to react to this.

Spinola put forward the line of the big Portuguese monopolies. Their aim was to replace direct Portuguese rule by indirect rule based upon "moderate," CIA-financed movements in the colonies, even if this meant continuing the war for the time being.

The junior officers wanted to end the war at all costs, and knew only one way to do so--to hand over power to the real liberation movements, like the MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) in Angola and Frelimo in Mozambique.

The divisions were soon increased by something else. Portugal had undergone considerable industrialization in the last decade of fascism. It was because big business wanted to prevent action by workers that Spinola took the Communists, by far the largest underground party, into his government.

They told workers to trust Spinola, and the Communist minister of labor framed a new anti-strike law.

But the workers were not to be held back in this way.

"There Was A Growing Tendency For Rank-And-File Soldiers To Organize Politically For Themselves, Joining Left-Wing Demonstrations And Siding With Workers To Industrial Disputes"

THE GIANT Lisnave shipyard began a wave of strikes that swept the country in the early summer of 1974. These workers faced opposition from all the government parties. Yet

the workers succeeded in forcing massive improvements in pay and conditions and a general “cleaning out” of reactionary managers in industry and the media.

All this was too much for Spínola, big business and the Portuguese right. He tried to stop the revolution in its tracks in September with a fascist-style rally. But a mass mobilization of workers stopped it from taking place, and he was forced to resign.

In March 1975, he tried again, this time with a military coup.

But workers argued with soldiers who had been sent to seize the approaches to Lisbon and persuaded them to turn against their reactionary officers.

Instead of stopping the revolution, the actions of the right spurred it forward.

The banking unions closed down the banks until the government agreed to nationalize them--and with them some 60 percent of Portuguese industry. Workers occupied more than 300 factories.

The old generals lost their control over the armed forces to the junior officers of the MFA.

And there was a growing tendency for rank-and-file soldiers to organize politically for themselves, joining left-wing demonstrations and siding with workers to industrial disputes.

Foreign socialists who visited Lisbon in the summer of 1975 underwent an experience that they would not forget. Here was a city where the majority of the working class wanted socialism and where the old obstacles, in terms of the police, the army and even a well-organized capitalist class, seemed in complete disarray.

Yet other obstacles, just as dangerous, continued to exist.

Within the working-class movement, the two main parties were the recently reformed Socialist Party of Mário Soares and the Communist Party.

“Within The Armed Forces, They Began To Plot With The Old Right-Wing General To Oust The Junior Officers Who Had Overthrown Fascism”

The Socialist Party had gone along with the first popular mobilizations against the right. But its leaders took fright at the further development of the revolution. They were soon trying to whip up a lynch-mob atmosphere against the left.

In northern Portugal, they encouraged right-wing rioters who burned down the offices of unions and left-wing parties.

Within the armed forces, they began to plot with the old right-wing general to oust the junior officers who had overthrown fascism.

But the Socialist Party alone could not have saved Portuguese capitalism. It only had support from a minority of workers in the key Lisbon industrial belt, and in the unions.

The majority party of the workers at the time of the overthrow of fascism was the Communist Party.

If it had fought for socialist revolution by leading the wave of strikes and occupations that began in the early summer of 1974, it would have been unstoppable.

But it followed a different tack.

It denounced the strike wave, while attempting to get control of the existing state by secret plots with opportunist politicians and army officers. Its leaders believed this would enable them to establish an Eastern European-type society.

The high point of their success was the summer of 1975, when an officer thought too sympathetic to the party, Vasco Goncalves, formed a government. But this soon proved incapable of effectively ruling the country. It refused to unleash the revolutionary energy of the workers and it could not deal with a wave of sabotage and unrest in the rural areas of the north. Goncalves soon quietly abandoned power to those to the right of him.

A quite considerable minority of workers turned to genuinely revolutionary ideas. The small revolutionary parties mushroomed in size until they exercised considerable influence.

“The Army Officers Became More And More Impotent”

Yet the far left had a major fault.

Although they talked about the working class, they all acted as if some other social force could substitute itself for the class.

They devoted as much attention to courting left-wing army officers as to trying to win factory workers away from the Communist Party.

Time was running out for the left-wing officers.

They could dominate Portuguese politics while the old ruling class was demoralized and divided.

But once it began to get its act together--with a lot of help from Western governments and from the Socialist Party--the army officers became more and more impotent.

By November 1975, there were only two choices: either the working class took things into its own hands, or the old ruling class would stage a comeback.

The right struck on November 25.

The pretext was the occupation of TV stations by a group of left-wing soldiers.

Right-wing officers moved their troops quickly to disarm all the left-wing soldiers in the Lisbon area and to restore the power of the old generals.

They met very little resistance. It required only a couple thousand troops to disarm the much larger left-influenced forces in Lisbon.

The reason lay in the way the left had put its faith in maneuvering by army officers, rather than in mass workers' action.

The Communist Party, which only the day before had organized a successful two-hour general strike, refused to take action against the advance of the right. It seemed to think it would be able to plot its way to power regardless.

The left-wing officers were not ready to wage what might well be an armed confrontation against their fellow officers, and made no move.

The revolutionary left had neither the will nor the influence to move rank-and-file workers in the face of the Communist Party's opposition, or rank-and-file soldiers in the face of opposition from the left-wing officers.

The right wing was careful not to use its newfound control of the army and police to attack workers' conditions immediately. It knew that to do so might rekindle the fire of the revolution.

But the more the revolutionary years of 1974 and 1975 receded into the past, the more such gains were taken back by the employing classes. The fact that most of the time the Socialist Party was in the government did not make any difference,

A decade later, average wages were 10 percent lower than they were in 1973, the last year of fascism. Hundreds of thousands of workers have to wait six months or more for wages owing to them. Lisbon is once again a city noted for the large number of people begging in the streets.

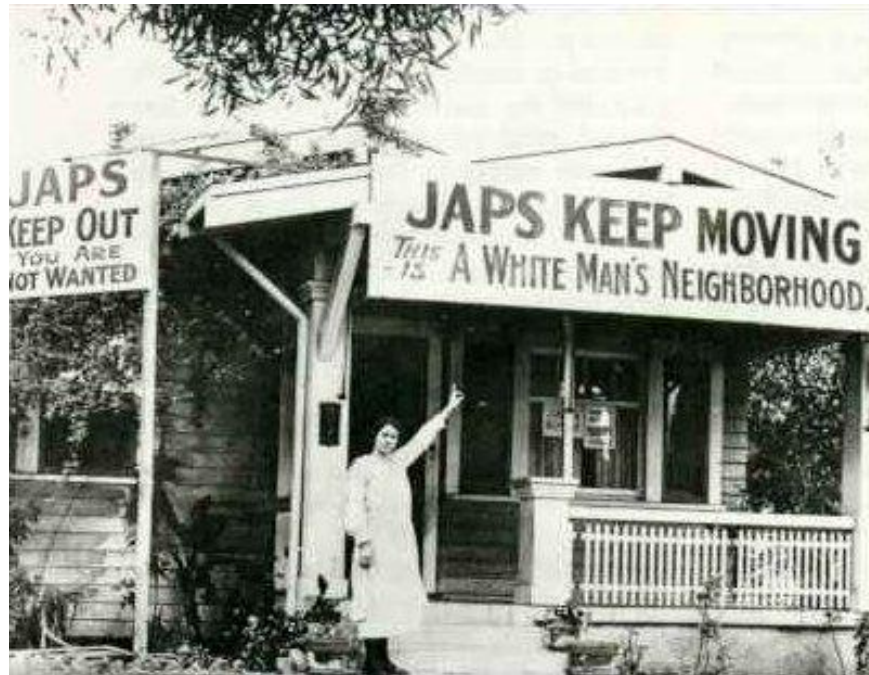
Portugal showed the promise of a very different sort of future in 1974 and 1975. That did not materialize because there was not a powerful revolutionary socialist party to challenge the hold of the Communist and Socialist Parties.

This is a tragedy from which we must all learn.

ANNIVERSARIES

February 21, 1942: A Day That Will Live In Infamy:

“112,000 Citizens Of Japanese Ancestry Were Relocated, Losing Their Businesses, Homes, And Belongings To Whites”



Bookmice.net

Carl Bunin Peace History Peace History February 18-24

Executive Order 9066 was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt 10 weeks after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, ordering all Japanese Americans (Nisei) evacuated from the West Coast of the U.S. and forcing them to live in concentration camps.

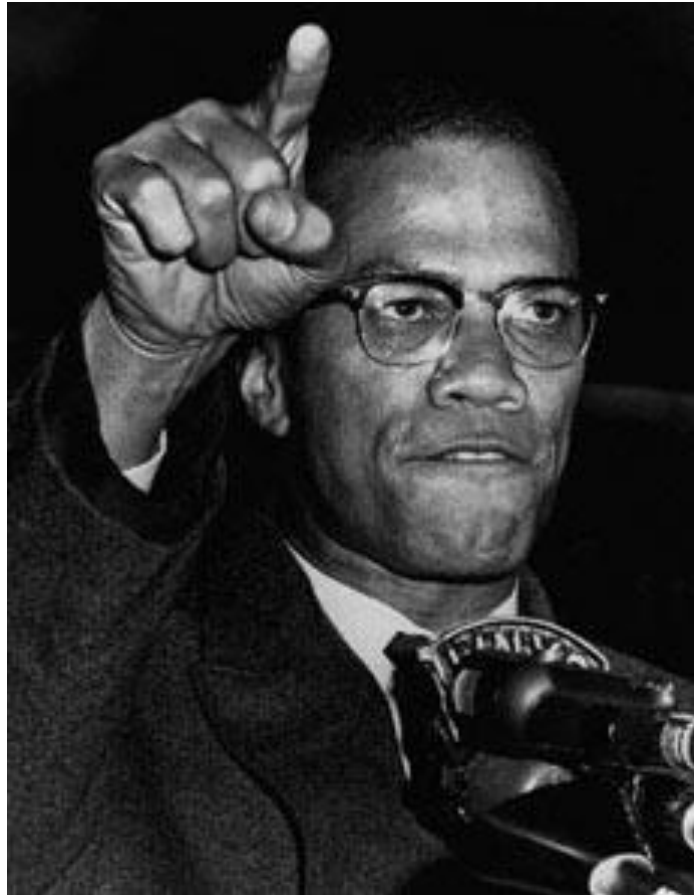
The document authorized the Secretary of War and military commanders “to prescribe military areas...from which any or all persons may be excluded.”

There was strong support from California Attorney General Earl Warren (later U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice), liberal journalist Walter Lippmann and Time magazine—which referred to California as “Japan’s Sudetenland”

112,000 citizens of Japanese ancestry were relocated, losing their businesses, homes, and belongings to whites.

In the entire course of the war, 10 people were convicted of spying for Japan, all of whom were Caucasian.

February 21, 1965: A Brilliant And Courageous Soldier For The Cause Killed In Action



Carl Bunin Peace History Peace History February 18-24

Malcolm X was shot and killed by rival Black Muslims in New York City, as he was about to address his Organization of Afro-American Unity at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City's Washington Heights. He was 39. **[He was killed not long after announcing his new politics: that working class whites and African-Americans can join together to fight those who own and control the society for their own wealth and privilege. T]**

MORE:

The House Negro And The Field Negro:

**“The Slavemaster Took Tom And
Dressed Him Well, And Fed Him
Well -- Gave Him A Long Coat And
A Top Hat And Made All The Other
Slaves Look Up To Him”**

**“Then He Used Tom To Control
Them”**

**“The Same Strategy That Was Used In
Those Days Is Used Today, By The Same
White Man”**

Malcolm X, Message To The Grassroots, 10 Nov, 1963 in Detroit, MI:
<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/malcolmxgrassroots.htm>

[Excerpts]

First, what is a revolution?

Sometimes I'm inclined to believe that many of our people are using this word "revolution" loosely, without taking careful consideration what this word actually means, and what its historic characteristics are.

When you study the historic nature of revolutions, the motive of a revolution, the objective of a revolution, and the result of a revolution, and the methods used in a revolution, you may change words. You may devise another program. You may change your goal and you may change your mind.

A revolution is bloody. Revolution is hostile. Revolution knows no compromise. Revolution overturns and destroys everything that gets in its way. And you, sitting around here like a knot on the wall, saying, "I'm going to love these folks no matter how much they hate me."

No, you need a revolution.

Whoever heard of a revolution where they lock arms, as Reverend Cleage was pointing out beautifully, singing "We Shall Overcome"?

Just tell me.

You don't do that in a revolution.

You don't do any singing; you're too busy swinging.

To understand this, you have to go back to what young brother here referred to as the house Negro and the field Negro -- back during slavery.

There was two kinds of slaves.

There was the house Negro and the field Negro.

The house Negroes - they lived in the house with master, they dressed pretty good, they ate good 'cause they ate his food -- what he left.

They lived in the attic or the basement, but still they lived near the master; and they loved their master more than the master loved himself.

They would give their life to save the master's house quicker than the master would.

The house Negro, if the master said, "We got a good house here," the house Negro would say, "Yeah, we got a good house here."

Whenever the master said "we," he said "we."

That's how you can tell a house Negro.

If the master's house caught on fire, the house Negro would fight harder to put the blaze out than the master would.

If the master got sick, the house Negro would say, "What's the matter, boss, we sick?" We sick! He identified himself with his master more than his master identified with himself.

And if you came to the house Negro and said, "Let's run away, let's escape, let's separate," the house Negro would look at you and say, "Man, you crazy. What you mean, separate? Where is there a better house than this? Where can I wear better clothes than this? Where can I eat better food than this?"

That was that house Negro. In those days he was called a "house nigger."

And that's what we call him today, because we've still got some house niggers running around here.

This modern house Negro loves his master.

On that same plantation, there was the field Negro.

The field Negro -- those were the masses. There were always more Negroes in the field than there was Negroes in the house. The Negro in the field caught hell.

He ate leftovers.

In the house they ate high up on the hog. The Negro in the field didn't get nothing but what was left of the insides of the hog. They call 'em "chitt'lin'" nowadays. In those days they called them what they were: guts. That's what you were -- a gut-eater. And some of you all still gut-eaters.

The field Negro was beaten from morning to night. He lived in a shack, in a hut; He wore old, castoff clothes.

He hated his master. I say he hated his master. He was intelligent.

That house Negro loved his master. But that field Negro -- remember, they were in the majority, and they hated the master.

When the house caught on fire, he didn't try and put it out; that field Negro prayed for a wind, for a breeze.

When the master got sick, the field Negro prayed that he'd die. If someone come to the field Negro and said, "Let's separate, let's run," he didn't say "Where we going?" He'd say, "Any place is better than here."

You've got field Negroes in America today. I'm a field Negro. The masses are the field Negroes.

When they see this man's house on fire, you don't hear these little Negroes talking about "our government is in trouble."

They say, "The government is in trouble." Imagine a Negro: "Our government"!

Just as the slavemaster of that day used Tom, the house Negro, to keep the field Negroes in check, the same old slavemaster today has Negroes who are nothing but modern Uncle Toms, 20th century Uncle Toms, to keep you and me in check, keep us under control, keep us passive and peaceful and nonviolent.

That's Tom making you nonviolent.

It's like when you go to the dentist, and the man's going to take your tooth. You're going to fight him when he starts pulling.

So he squirts some stuff in your jaw called novocaine, to make you think they're not doing anything to you. So you sit there and 'cause you've got all of that novocaine in your jaw, you suffer peacefully. Blood running all down your jaw, and you don't know what's happening.

'Cause someone has taught you to suffer -- peacefully.

There's nothing in our book, the Quran -- you call it "Ko-ran" -- that teaches us to suffer peacefully.

Our religion teaches us to be intelligent.

Be peaceful, be courteous, obey the law, respect everyone; but if someone puts his hand on you, send him to the cemetery.

That's a good religion. In fact, that's that old-time religion.

That's the one that Ma and Pa used to talk about: an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, and a head for a head, and a life for a life: That's a good religion.

And doesn't nobody resent that kind of religion being taught but a wolf, who intends to make you his meal.

The slavemaster took Tom and dressed him well, and fed him well, and even gave him a little education -- a little education; gave him a long coat and a top hat and made all the other slaves look up to him.

Then he used Tom to control them.

The same strategy that was used in those days is used today, by the same white man.

He takes a Negro, a so-called Negro, and make him prominent, build him up, publicize him, make him a celebrity.

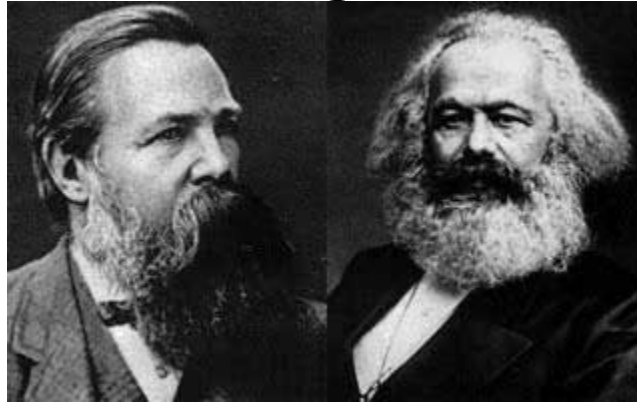


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February 21, 1848: World-Shaking Anniversary

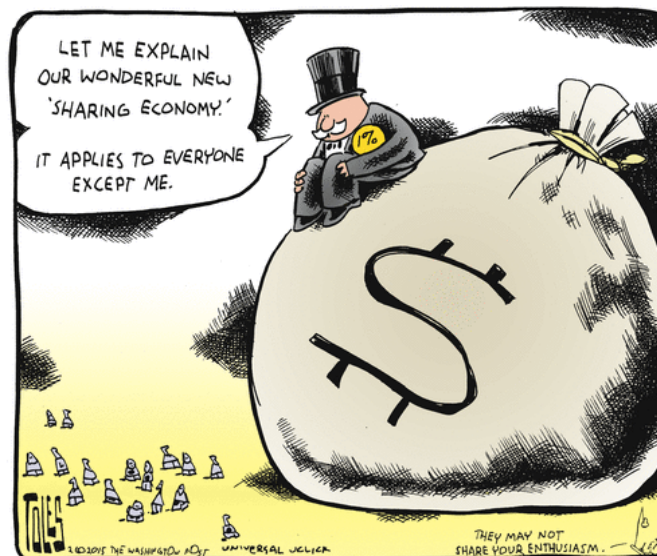


Carl Bunin Peace history February 18-24

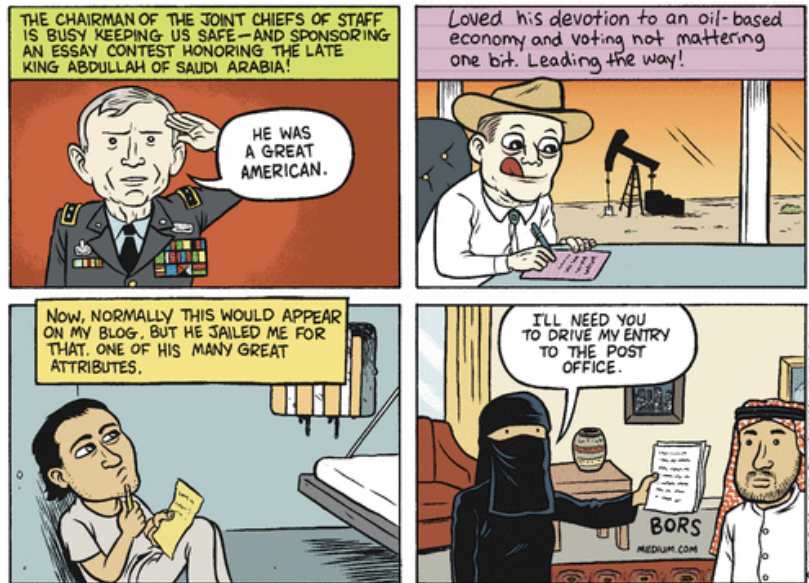
“The Communist Manifesto,” written by 29-year-old Karl Marx with the assistance of Friedrich Engels, was published in London (in German) by a group of German-born revolutionary socialists known as the Communist League.

The political pamphlet — arguably one of the most influential in history — proclaimed that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles,” and that the inevitable victory of the proletariat, or working class, would put an end to class society forever.

DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK



DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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