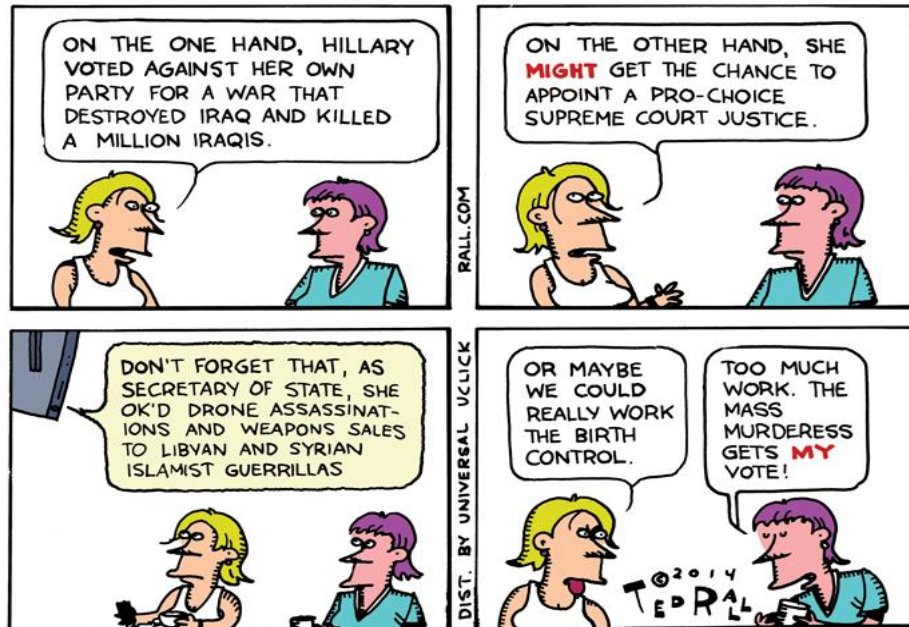


Military Resistance 13C6



Ukrainian Reality:
“The Whole Situation Is A
Result Of The Rivalry Between
Competing Imperialisms”
Obama Regime Supporters Push
“A Clear Ideological Legitimation
Of The Interests Of The European
And American Ruling Classes”

“In The Same Way Russian Imperialism Is Legitimised By The Conservative, Patriarchal Defence Of Russian Dignity, Sovereignty And Their Rightful Place In The World”

“The Left Must Work Out How To Maintain An Independent Position Against This Inter-Imperialist Rivalry; Otherwise You Just Become Left Supporters Of One Rival Or Another”



Comment: T

There is a huge amount of garbage circulating from unprincipled sources that love Obama and side with U.S. Imperialism against the Putin regime, and their mirror image who love Putin and side with Russian Imperialism against the Obama regime.

Neither will like this report. Let them choke on it.

Fortunately, there are increasing numbers of people all over the world who want no part of either set of oligarchs or their lying propagandists, and choose to fight oppression,

tyranny, and Imperialism, whether emanating from the U.S. or the Russian class of capitalists.

March 2015 By Volodymyr Ishchenko, Kiev; Socialist Review [Excerpts]

Volodymyr Ishchenko is deputy director of the Center for Social and Labor Research and a member of the editorial board of Commons: Journal for Social Criticism and LeftEast web-magazine.

On the anniversary of the fall of Ukrainian President Yanukovich, which marked the onset of the current conflict, Rob Ferguson and Tomas Tengely-Evans interview Volodymyr Ishchenko in Kiev.

RF: Volodymyr, there is currently a crisis over the ceasefire in the east and the retreat from Debaltseve. What is your judgement of the crisis in the east of Ukraine?

It depends how the Ukrainian state perceives the takeover of Debaltseve. We don't know exactly what happened in Minsk and whether it was decided that Debaltseve would go to the separatists, or why the Ukrainian government did not agree to take its soldiers out of Debaltseve immediately. It was obvious the troops could not break the encirclement (finished by the date of the negotiations) and that if they were not supported with troops and supplies from Kiev, they would have to retreat.

Were they sacrificed for publicity purposes as in the case of Donetsk airport where Ukrainian forces defended this ruined building for months and this myth was created of so-called "cyborgs" defending the airport against crowds of Russian ogres?.

The cyborgs became the heroes of Ukraine but then it ended very unhappily with big losses for Ukrainian forces. Was this also the idea in Debaltseve? Now Kiev has asked for a peacekeeping force. This is a sign of weakness because it shows they are not able to defend the territory.

It may also be because of US hesitancy in supporting Ukraine with lethal weapons.

However, the larger picture is clearer: the position is one of stalemate in which neither side can win decisively.

The analogy of the First World War is far more relevant than the analogy of the Second World War.

“This Is Not A Fight Between Fascism And Anti-Fascism And This Is Not A Manoeuvre War”

This is not a fight between fascism and anti-fascism and this is not a manoeuvre war.

It is more akin to the battles of the First World War where armies fought each other for months, unable to win decisively either way.

The war will rather end with economic attrition of one side. Despite the separatist victories in Donetsk airport and Debaltseve the situation has not changed seriously. Without serious Russian intervention the separatists cannot defeat the Ukrainian army while the Ukrainian army cannot defeat them.

However, the conflicting parties are also trying to economically undermine their opponents.

So the Russians hope to benefit from the economic collapse of Ukraine.

The Ukrainian government on its part cancelled the social benefit and pension payments to the separatist controlled territories, and imposed an economic boycott by closing the banking system. This was aimed at the Ukrainian citizens who live in the east, probably hoping for some internal revolt in those territories.

Meanwhile the West tries to use sanctions to undermine Russia and perhaps hoping to provoke a mass movement against Putin, tapping the grievances on the part of a population as a result of sanctions.

For their part, the 'patriotic' parties of the right are suspicious of Putin.

First, he annexes Crimea but then steps back. He makes a move in Donetsk but then again steps back, not fully supporting the separatists.

At the same time Russia has its own economic leverage against the West with the supply of natural gas; this combines with the economic crisis within the EU and the internal tensions arising from the election victory of Syriza.

Meanwhile the Isis problem for the United States clearly illustrates they are not able to impose full world hegemony.

The role of the "global gendarme" is not playing well any more. In this situation, the biggest question is at which point precisely the stalemate will be broken. Who will collapse first? Ukraine, the separatists, maybe Russia, or will a serious crisis erupt in the European Union and then things may change completely.

RF: The dominant pro-Western narrative in the West, epitomised by the recent work of Timothy Snyder and Andrew Wilson, is that Ukraine represents the innate drive towards Russian expansionism. What would be your response to this?

We have to analyse the whole situation as a result of the rivalry between competing imperialisms.

Yes there is the fact of military intervention into Ukraine, the supply of weapons and in August (and also recently), sending in Russian troops, albeit in a limited way. But this is not the result of some extreme, evil nature of Russian imperialism but rather the result of the uneven distribution of opportunities and resources for each of the competing imperialisms in Ukraine.

If the Ukrainian government has become completely loyal to Western hegemony and to the requirements of the IMF, what is the point of the US intervening militarily?

This argument by Andrew Wilson and others is a legitimisation of Western imperialism. So Putin is a new Hitler and we all have to unite, the left and the right (Snyder is pretending to be at least liberal left) to fight this absolute enemy. This is what is at stake now, Western European “civilised values”. This can develop into racist overtones. In the end it will become just a clear ideological legitimisation of the interests of the European and American ruling classes.

In the same way Russian imperialism is legitimised by the conservative, patriarchal defence of Russian dignity, sovereignty and their rightful place in the world, which they lost when the USSR collapsed.

The problem now is that values we would uphold as progressive — minority rights, gender equality, formal democracy — have been used as part of this imperialist rivalry.

So to a significant extent they have become discredited and seen as unimportant. The left must work out how to maintain an independent position against this inter-imperialist rivalry; otherwise you just become left supporters of one rival or another.

TTE: What is the perception of the war among ordinary people in Ukraine?

I would say public opinion about the war is quite contradictory. According to the polls the majority want a “peaceful” solution. But many of those people would say they would support the “Anti-Terrorist Operation”. Yes we want peace, but on the basis of our victory.

Many people supported the army. This can be seen in the volunteer movement; people collecting and donating money for equipment for the soldiers, not least because the Ukrainian state cannot equip its own soldiers properly!

“As In All The Imperialist Wars We Have Seen, The Poor Fight For The Interests Of The Rich’

But it does not seem as if the majority of Ukrainians are ready to fight or die in this war.

Government reports have shown that many people have tried to evade the draft, to flee the country — and this was true even in western Ukraine, where nationalist feeling is historically stronger.

There is also a strong perception that if it is an “anti-terrorist operation” (not a war) then it is the military and the police who should be fighting, not me.

The mobilisation has acquired a clear class character because it is easier to locate and draft villagers or workers than for example a freelance, middle class person, who is not so easy for the military commission to locate.

They are more able to defend their rights, they have money to pay bribes, and it is easier for these people to go abroad and escape the draft.

So the burden of this war falls more on the shoulders of the poor than on the middle class and especially the rich.

Then as in all the imperialist wars we have seen, the poor fight for the interests of the rich.

It is not surprising that in the end people are not ready to fight for this war.

There have been a number of protests against the mobilisation, mostly driven by women and mothers who were afraid for their relatives. This is not an anti-war movement based on ideological hostility to the war, but at some point it may move to a higher level.

TTE: Do you think the ineffectiveness of the government in waging the war has an impact on draft evasion?

Yes, of course. The losses, the lack of equipment, the perception that the war is not going to be won, have an impact.

But at the same time the majority in western and central Ukraine blame Russia, not the government. In the east and south they blame the government more.

TTE: The government has just signed an agreement with the IMF insisting on austerity measures. Are people starting to blame the government for this and for the currency collapse? Is there disillusionment with the government over austerity?

Dissatisfaction is growing though so far there is no national mass protest against it. This movement may begin from what is perceived to be an unimportant event, as in the case of Gezi Park in Turkey.

TTE: Do people blame the EU in any way for austerity?

No, definitely not at the moment, at least for economic failures. They do not connect the EU to the collapse of the economy. They would blame the Ukrainian government, of course, and the oligarchs, Russia and the war. There is also quite dangerous pressure to say that we should not protest while the war continues. Such actions would be unpatriotic; we have to wait. Now we need to unite against the foreign enemy.

RF: In the recent parliamentary elections the extreme and fascist right had a relatively low vote. At the same time the political rhetoric of the parties of power around President Poroshenko, and the prime minister, Yatseniuk, were extremely nationalist, divisive in terms of demonising Ukrainians in the east. Political commentators in the West have argued that the relatively low votes for the right in the elections show that the scare about their influence was misplaced; that they have been marginalised and have little influence.

I would say that they now have more opportunities. Parliament is not the only field of political struggle. The right now have armed groups under their control, such as the

Azov battalion, the core of which was formed from the neo-Nazi Social-National Assembly (SNA). These are real neo-Nazis; they are not just right wing populists.

Another dimension is their penetration into law enforcement structures. One of the leaders of the SNA was appointed as chief of police for the Kiev region. Also the Right Sector and Svoboda are the most active political organisations on the streets and in protests. That does not mean they are numerically dominant in the protests, but the penetration of their ideologically committed activists is high; they can challenge the platform and give a lead. This is dangerous.

Another dimension is that the whole political mainstream of the country has moved to the right. Hate speech against Ukrainians who oppose the Kiev government is common, calling them “Colorado Beetles”, for example. This comes from the minister of the interior.

“People Had Entirely Just Reasons To Revolt Against The New Neoliberal, Nationalist Government”

RF: Is that terminology being used against people in the east generally or just the separatist fighters themselves?

Not just the fighters but even against peaceful opponents of the government. There is a discussion in left-liberal circles that Maidan was the point at which a new Ukrainian civic nation emerged, in which it is not now important whether you are Ukrainian or Russian or Jew, Armenian or Pole — if you support the Maidan you are part of a new Ukrainian civic nation. This sounds inclusive but at the same time it excludes all those who did not support Maidan or its outcome.

Now we have the important case of the journalist arrested and charged with state treason for calling to resist the draft, calling the war a fratricidal war.

He could face up to 15 years.

He has now been declared a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty. (On 8 February Ruslan Kotsoba, a TV journalist from western Ukraine, was charged with state treason after he posted a video address to the president opposing conscription and claimed he would rather go to jail for refusing the draft than start killing his “fellow citizens who live in the east”.)

So in this situation you do not need the far-right in power to implement repression. In fact by appearing outside the power structures they can seize the opportunity to criticise the government for its failure to “defend the nation”. They can also use their position to criticise the government for the economic collapse. This creates a very dangerous convergence of nationalist and social grievances. This is precisely what we saw in the 1930s in Europe.

RF: In the West and indeed in Ukraine the opposition to Maidan and the post-Maidan government among ordinary people in east Ukraine is portrayed as due to their readiness to believe Russian propaganda. It is argued that they had patriarchal, regional

loyalties to the oligarchs and the former president's Party of Regions in the east. Is this a satisfactory explanation?

There are quite obvious double standards here. How would you perceive the people who took to the streets to support the European Agreements and saw the EU as some kind of paradise that would solve all the problems of Ukraine? Were they duped by the West and all this talk of "European values"? Or was this a just revolt against a corrupt government? Actually, it was both.

There was an obvious dissatisfaction with Yanukovich (the ousted president) and his government, and with elements of his own neoliberal policies such as pension reform and taxes on small business but leaving big business untouched. Both the Maidan and anti-Maidan movements combined some progressive and reactionary elements. In the end the reactionary elements won in both cases.

But both movements contained an element of genuine revolt by dissatisfied people against a government they did not like and we have to defend this right.

RF: Why do you think so many in the east opposed Maidan?

Here too it was a combination of factors. Of course there was an element of irrationality but they did have quite rational reasons not to support the European Association Agreement. If you live in western Ukraine and your relatives work in the EU, of course you may very well be in favour of integration with the EU. It might be easier to get visas and travel across borders and get work, especially for the middle class and young people.

On the other hand, if you are working in some state enterprise in industry in eastern Ukraine, primarily for the Russian market, wouldn't you be interested in good, stable relations with Russia, fewer tariff barriers and so on?

I am not saying that workers' interests were antagonistic between those in the east and those in the west, but the competing nationalisms and the competing imperialisms made them seem to be mutually exclusive. That was the problem.

But it is really important to understand that people had rational reasons to protest. Yes, there was an irrational fear, an over-estimation of the Right Sector. The Russian media did work a lot on that, creating this "fascist junta" image and so on.

But at the same time people had entirely just reasons to revolt against the new neoliberal, nationalist government.

TTE: A year on from the downfall of Yanukovich, do you think the combination of austerity and the war has the potential to lead to an explosion or some protest movement?

The patriotic hysteria will not last for ever.

The First World War would be the most obvious example of this. In the Russian Empire there was strong support for that war against Germany but soon ordinary Russians

began to understand that they would not be able to beat the German army. They suffered enormous losses of territory. Support for the war is related to the chances of victory.

The longer and more exhaustive it becomes the less people will support it or be ready to sacrifice themselves.

Now the economic situation is deteriorating very quickly. The currency rate is the most obvious thing; many workers' wages are frozen.

The minimum wage remains the same, 1,218 hryvnia, less than a third of its former value in real terms. Now the IMF memorandum places a requirement on Ukraine to raise consumption prices for natural gas and impose cuts of public employees.

This will produce protest but the most important question is, who will lead these protests? Will it be the far-right and the populists who will exploit nationalism and social discontent or will some left wing alternative emerge? At the moment the left is weak.

“What We Lack Is An Independent, Anti-Capitalist Socialist Position In This War And That Is What We Have To Create”

RF: What is your assessment of the impact of the crisis on the left and of the challenges the left face?

That is a big question.

The majority of the left has dissolved into supporters of this or that camp.

In the final instance it is a consequence of the weakness of the working class, and of the left's class analysis as well. Actually one can trace these problems as far back as the 1960s. We have the influence of the postmodern liberal left who support the Maidan on the basis of “European values” and what one might call movementism.

The “anti-imperialist” left will mostly support anti-Maidan and even support Russia as a competitor to the US.

Both these positions represent a move away from independent socialist politics.

What we lack is an independent, anti-capitalist socialist position in this war and that is what we have to create.

There are now some initiatives, for example the one I am participating in, which is trying to create a new left party; this will not take a strong position on the Maidan or anti-Maidan but will try to speak to the common interests of workers in the east and the west of Ukraine. It includes left radical networks in Kiev, Odessa and other cities but also the independent labour unions, such as in Kryvyi Rih, which is a big industrial centre in central Ukraine.

We will see whether we will be able to create some strong left political force which will be able to play an independent role in the coming protests.

TTE: In trying to form an independent left group that bridges the gap between east and west, are there signs that it would start to take up the question of the Kiev government's role in the war or just look to social and economic demands?

That is actually a very good question for us because I think the national question is important and on the Ukrainian left our mistake was to fetishise the so-called social-economic issues and forget about the issues that played a part in driving people to protest.

We did not have a clear position on the national question or the language question, or the question of NATO, the EU or Russia. The majority view was that these were pseudo questions and that we had to concentrate on socio-economic questions. There are probably some who still hold to that view, but I am not sure it is a good thing.

We cannot be silent about these problems. And it is also simply stupid when the whole country is going to hell, to only fight for very local demands.

This was what Lenin called “economism”, the typical economism of the trade union approach.

We have the problem of the war.

This is the most important question in our country and we must have a position on it. And, of course, this position should not be divisive for the workers; it needs to be a position that unites the class.

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.

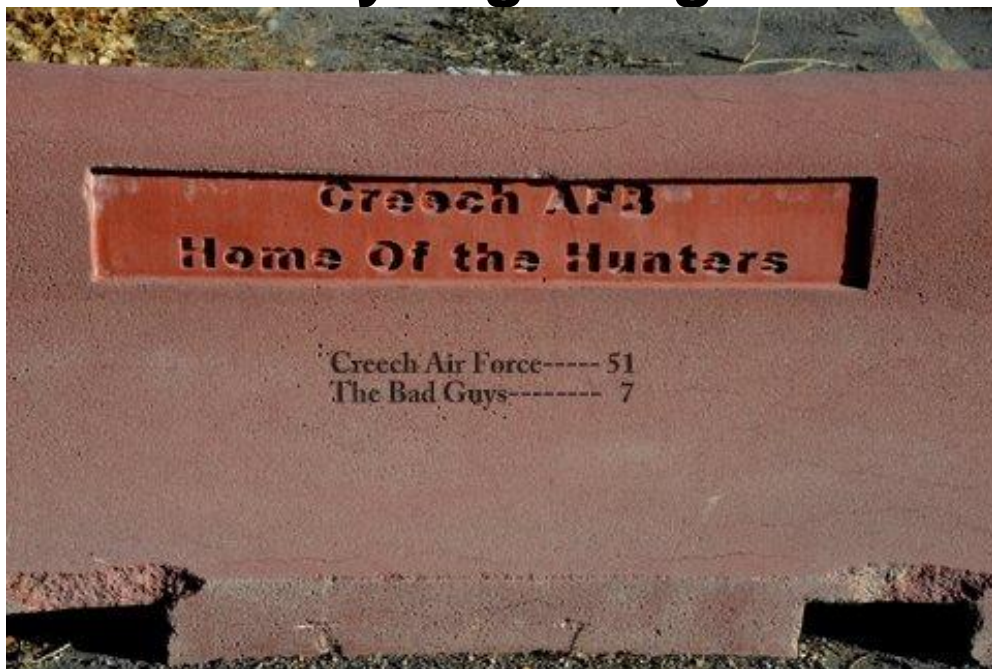
“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

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

Frederick Douglass, 1852

**Therefore, in order for the proletariat’s political strike, once transformed into demonstration by the entire people, to become the starting point for a victorious revolution, a sympathetic attitude must be widespread throughout the army.
-- Leon Trotsky, “Up To The Ninth Of January,” 1905**

Friday Night Lights



Creech Air Force Base concrete barrier. Photo by Mike Hastie

From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: March 13, 2015
Subject: Friday Night Lights

Friday Night Lights

This concrete barrier was one in a long string of barriers that kept the public from entering Creech Air Force Base in Indian Springs, Nev. While I was walking along a road that led to the entrance of the base, I stopped and took this picture on the morning of March 6, 2015. I was startled at first when I read what was engraved in the concrete.

As I walked along the rest of the barriers, my mind drifted back to high school football. In football, when the play is blown dead, the players get back up. In war, they are just dead. Comparing football to war is like comparing a county jail to a concentration camp.

Mike Hastie
Army Medic Vietnam
March 13, 2015

Creech Air Force Base is a huge US Military installation who's business is Drone Warfare. These Drones are in constant search of enemies of Wall Street in many parts of the world.

Home Of The Hunters

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

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Kim Jong-Un Feels Snubbed By Absence Of Letter From Republicans



Kim Jong-un. (Photo: AFP/Getty)

13 March 15 By Andy Borowitz, The Borowitz Report

The North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un said on Tuesday that he feels “snubbed” by the decision of forty-seven Republican senators to write a letter to Iran but not to him, the official North Korean news agency reported.

In an unusually forthcoming interview with the Korean Central News Agency (K.C.N.A.), Kim said it was “hurtful” that the Republicans would send a letter to one of the United States’ most longstanding enemies while “totally snubbing” another.

“Let’s just call it what it is: they’re playing favorites with enemies,” Kim said.

“I try not to take things personally, but it’s hard to see them sending letters to Iran without feeling a little bit hurt.”

Kim said that over the past two days he had his aides checking his mailbox on an hourly basis in hopes of finding a letter from the Republicans, but now he has “pretty much given up hope.”

“Honestly, I thought I’d at least rate a text or something, but ... ,” he said, his voice trailing off.

“I don’t like to beat myself up, but part of me is like, ‘What does Iran have that I don’t have?’ “ he said.

“I don’t know.

“Sometimes I feel like, when you actually get nuclear weapons, people start taking you for granted.”

DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK

**Ukrainian Regime Blockade
Devastating Civilians In**

Separatist Areas:

**“Kiev’s Actions Are Fostering
Only Resentment”**

**“It Was Tough But Manageable
Before. Now We Have No Goods, The
Warehouses Are Empty”**

**“As Prices For Medicine Increase Almost
Daily, Customers Have Been Hoarding
Whatever Is Available”**



In this picture taken on March 3, 2015, Vera Pavliy, 76 year-old, dressed in a worn-out sheepskin coat, cries outside a bank in the town of Kurakhove, Ukraine, just a few miles away from the area controlled by Russia-backed rebels. The 76-year-old was stuck behind the battle lines with no money and no way to get home

March 5, 2015 by Vadim Ghirda, AP [Excerpts]

KURAKHOVE, Ukraine — Tears welled up in Vera Pavliy's eyes as she stood outside the bank, looking as if she had just gotten lost.

The 76-year-old was stuck behind the battle lines in the east Ukraine town of Kurakhove with no money and no way to get home.

The war that brought death and destruction to the region has largely abated, but the misery remains. In fact an effective government blockade on separatist-held areas is only getting worse. The goal is ostensibly to choke the rebel economy and force the separatist front to yield, but for now Kiev's actions are fostering only resentment.

For months, banking services have been suspended by state fiat.

Civilian movement is limited by a cumbersome permits system. Trucks brimming with supplies stand marooned at army checkpoints and in neighboring towns.

The interruption of banking services forces hundreds of thousands in rebel territories to embark on trips across the front lines to draw pensions or cash aid from friends and family.

This week, Pavliy arrived in government-held Kurakhove from the rebel stronghold of Donetsk only to learn the transfer of 4,500 hryvnia (\$167) she hoped to find on her account had not gone through. Now, she says, she has no money for the bus to return home.

"I feel alien here ... because nobody cares about me," Pavliy sobbed, standing outside a branch of state-run Oshchadbank in a well-worn sheepskin coat.

Government suspension of banking services in November compounded economic hardship caused by the shuttering of businesses alarmed by the erratic rule of the Russian-backed separatists.

Cash machines in Donetsk flicker idly with no money to give and shops and restaurants cannot take cards.

Many, like 36-year old Irina Ryzhenko, travel to Kurakhove or nearby towns several times a month just to withdraw cash. She was told Monday that the new bank card she applied for in August is still not ready.

Making the trip has been complicated in recent weeks by a new requirement for people entering government-held territory to obtain a travel permit to cross back into the rebel-held east — effectively turning them into foreigners in their own country.

For those living just west of Donetsk, applying for a permit requires a bumpy, 35-kilometer (20-mile) drive to a police station in the sleepy town of Velyka Novosilka, held by government forces.

One recent afternoon, around 20 people were lined up glumly outside the station in the damp and cold to ask about the status of their applications. Chatter among those waiting was confined to grumbles about the bureaucratic chaos that often compels applicants to stay away from home for more than 10 days.

When approached by reporters, people clam up in fear that criticism of Ukrainian authorities could see them deprived of the pass.

Still, the anger is palpable and talk quickly turns to yelling at the thought of the expenses that are piling up.

“I came here once and spent 200 hryvnias (\$7). I came a second time and spent 200 hryvnias, and it's still not done! Now I have to spend another 200 to get this blasted pass,” said one woman from Donetsk, who gave only her first name, Valentina, for fear of having her application rejected. “I'm not a millionaire's daughter. My pension is 1,000 hryvnias.”

Others in line said they have been waiting to get their passes for a month. Some are lucky enough to have families in nearby towns and villages that can offer hospitality.

Ukrainian officials insist the permits are a necessary safety precaution for areas bordering rebel territory.

“In the current situation we simply haven't got any other option,” said Lt. Colonel Volodymyr Kachanovetsky, an officer with the Border Guards Service in Velyka Novosilka. “We cannot control the situation over there, that's why these additional measures will help to improve the situation there, as well as here.”

Alexander, who is wheelchair-bound, lives with his elderly father in the government zone, while his wife and child remain on the other side. He said he needed the permit to travel back to the rebel town of Shakhtarsk and get medical papers allowing him to receive treatment on the Ukrainian side.

He filed for his permit on Jan. 30. After his documents were lost, he had to file a new application and finally got the permit on Monday.

“I don't know how this is supposed to improve security, but they have made things difficult for people,” said Alexander, who asked for his surname to be withheld for fear of prosecution for criticizing the government. “It's just another headache.”

The shops that did not shut down have until recently been sporadically but adequately stocked.

That began to change in mid-February, according to suppliers and vendors on both sides of the front line. Earlier this week, some 40 goods trucks were parked by a gas station near the government checkpoint outside Kurakhove — the last major hurdle before entering Donetsk.

Ihor Suleiman, a driver from Kharkiv, said he had been waiting for five days to clear that checkpoint. “We drivers have got all the right paperwork, but they still turn us down,” he said, referring to the Ukrainian troops.

“What can you do? They have guns, and I don't.”

While anecdotal evidence of a mounting blockade on the rebel east is abundant, exact figures on the extent to which supplies to the east have dwindled are hard to obtain.

A few large supermarkets in Donetsk appear to be relatively well-stocked, but outdoor markets, smaller grocery stores and pharmacies are struggling.

The second floor of a small grocery store in the city center was closed for business one recent afternoon. There simply weren't enough goods to put on display, shop manager Irina Baranova said.

“The suppliers say the trucks are waiting at checkpoints and are not being allowed through,” she said.

Baranova's store had dairy, bread, alcohol and tinned goods on display, but juice and bottled water were nowhere to be seen.

A pharmacist at a drugstore a few miles away said no supplies had been brought in for a week. As prices for medicine increase almost daily, customers have been hoarding whatever is available, she said.

Kachanovetsky, the Ukrainian border official, made the procedure for getting through checkpoints sound simple. Tax officials inspect the cargo and check drivers' documents and give the green light to all those with the right documentation, he said.

Evidence on the ground suggests things are not that easy.

At Donetsk's sprawling, domed Soviet-era food market, rows of stalls where farmers once sold their produce and cheerfully plied would-be customers stand empty and silent.

One of the remaining vendors, meat farmer Vladimir Vasko, sells his own wares as well as goods delivered from the government side.

“It has never been like this before,” said Vasko, who could only offer the traditional Ukrainian lard called “salo.” “It was tough but manageable before. Now we have no goods, the warehouses are empty.”

MILITARY RESISTANCE BY EMAIL

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OCCUPATION PALESTINE

It's Spring!
Time For Fresh Zionist Settler Attacks On Palestinian Farmers:
“Palestinian Farmers Found 300 Olive Trees Uprooted By Israeli Forces” And “The Road Blocked By Large Stones, Placed By Settlers”
“Many Farmers Have Only 3 Weeks A Year To Access Their Land” “Access Outside Of These Periods Entails High Risk Of Settler Attacks And Military Force”



Hebrew graffiti reads “God is King” on a Burin Palestinian house which has been abandoned due to its proximity to settlements



Settlers blocked the road to Burin's farmland with a stone barrier – Photo by Palestinian farmer in Burin



Roman-era olive trees in Awarta village

12th March 2015 International Solidarity Movement, Nablus Team

Burin, Salim, and Awarta, Occupied Palestine

Early spring marks an important time of the year for farmers around Nablus, where critical work must be done to ensure a quality olive harvest in October.

In high tension regions, where farmers risk settler attacks while accessing their land, District Coordination Offices have negotiated to ensure specific days when Palestinians can access their land under the “supervision” of Israeli forces.

In Burin, farming has been severely restricted by harassment from the surrounding Yizhar and Bracha illegal settlements.

Sunday 8th March was the first of only three days in which farmers of Burin were permitted to access their own land.

On this day, farmers attempting to reach their olive trees found 75 cut down and the road blocked by large stones, placed by settlers from the nearby illegal settlements.

The following day, 3 villagers on tractors were attacked by settlers who threw stones from the hilltops.

Israeli forces declared the area a closed military zone and the Palestinians were forced to leave.

This restriction remained in place for what would have been their final access day.

Settler harassment is common in Burin, with tensions running high during this critical period which also coincides with the 40 days of mourning since the death of 19 year old Ahmad Al-Najar.

The story is similar in nearby Salim, where Palestinian farmers found 300 olive trees uprooted by Israeli forces.

Furthermore, in nearby Azmut it has been reported that farmers' bulldozers have been confiscated and 2 men arrested on the grounds that the area is now classified as an Israeli Nature Reserve.

On Tuesday, ISM volunteers accompanied farmers from Awarta village as they plowed the land around their olive groves. Trees in this valley are reported to be from Roman times, along the ancient route to Jordan.

Local residents explained that turning the soil increases crop quality, removing weeds and thus competition for water and nutrients. Military presence had been limited thus far, with little contact with settlers. In previous years, clashes have broken out with residents of the illegal settlement of Itamar, which has recently constructed an access road through the farming land.

Many farmers have only 3 weeks a year in total to access their land; up to a week for plowing and around two weeks for harvesting their entire crop.

Access outside of these periods entails high risk of settler attacks and military force.

Thus crops are left vulnerable to settlers, with many trees cut down, burnt, poisoned, or used as for grazing livestock, damaging soils and young trees.

Restricted access also significantly diminishes the ability to establish new crops as water and nutrient requirements are far greater in this time.

As a result, many farmers are choosing to leave their land and find other means of income.

Arrests, Gas Injuries Reported As Occupation Forces Attack Palestinians Across West Bank: “Panic Overwhelmed Children And Women After The Soldiers, With Sniffer Dogs, Stormed The Village And Ravaged A Number Of Civilian Houses”

3-11-2015 PIC

WEST BANK -- A number of Palestinian civilians were apprehended at dawn Wednesday in a round of arbitrary assaults launched by the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) across cities of the West Bank.

A drove of IOF patrols stormed Nablus city and scoured a number of civilian family homes, local sources told the PIC.

A Jordanian family living in the area said the IOF broke into their house, located in al-Sha'biya neighborhood, east of Nablus, and nabbed the 24-year-old university student Mos'ab Mohy al-Din.

Meanwhile, al-Khalil-based locals, said the IOF patrols raided the city via a flock of over 10 military jeeps and raked through the neighborhoods of al-Salam, al-Hawouz, al-Jelda, Ras al-Jura, and al-Rama.

A round of arbitrary home break-ins was reportedly carried out by the IOF squads in the process.

The attack culminated in the apprehension of the Palestinian citizen Abudllah Abu Daya from al-Khalil's town of Halhoul.

A spate of violent clashes, meanwhile, rocked the West Bank city of Ramallah and culminated in the abduction of four Palestinian youths from the northern village of Nabi Salah.

Local sources said a state of panic overwhelmed children and women after the IOF soldiers, accompanied with sniffer dogs, stormed the village and ravaged a number of civilian houses.

Heavy volleys of tear gas canisters and stun grenades have randomly been discharged by the IOF soldiers all along the assault. A number of civilians reportedly choked on tear gas in the process.

Earlier, on Tuesday, a bunch of Israeli settler vandals, crammed in a herd of buses, stormed al-Khalil's village of Sourif.

The fanatic settlers were reportedly escorted and shielded by IOF troops all along the assault.

The Israeli occupation troops further raided Tarkoumya town, in al-Khalil, and rummaged through Palestinians' houses. A series of makeshift roadblocks was randomly pitched in the process.

Heroic Zionist Troops Destroy Home For Palestinian Cows: “Soldiers Demolish A Steel Structure Used By Local Farmers As Livestock Barns In Zebda Town”

March 15, 2015 by: Fauziah Al Hakim; Mi'raj Islamic News Agency

The Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) demolished Wednesday morning a Palestinian-owned factory and steel structure in Barta and Zebda towns southeast of Jenin.

The PIC reporter said that IOF soldiers stormed since the early morning hours Barta town, isolated behind the separation wall, and demolished a factory under construction, Palestinian Information Center (PIC) quoted by Mi'raj Islamic News Agency (MINA) as reporting.

Local residents were brutally assaulted during the demolition process, the sources added.



Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) demolishes a Palestinian-owned factory and steel structure in Barta and Zebda towns southeast of Jenin. (Photo: PIC)

The IOF soldiers surrounded the area and were heavily deployed at the town's entrances before demolishing the factory under the pretext of being built without permit in area C (under full Israeli civil and security control).

Several Palestinian facilities were recently demolished in the town as part of the Israeli policy to prevent the horizontal expansion in the town.

On the other hand, IOF soldiers demolished a steel structure used by local farmers as livestock barns in Zebda town to the south of the city.

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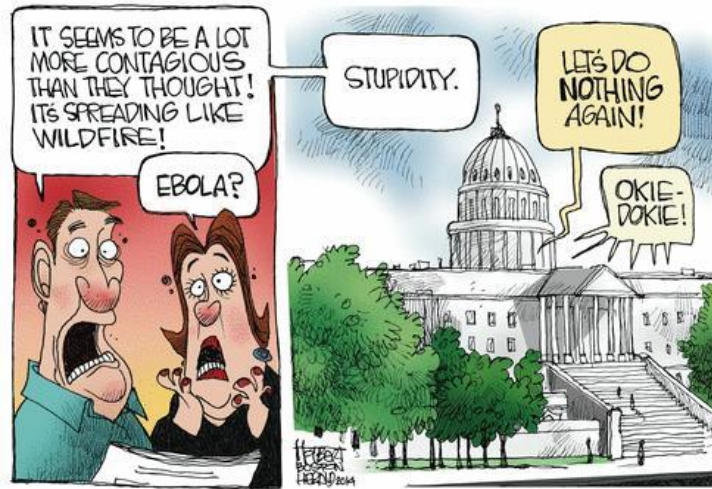
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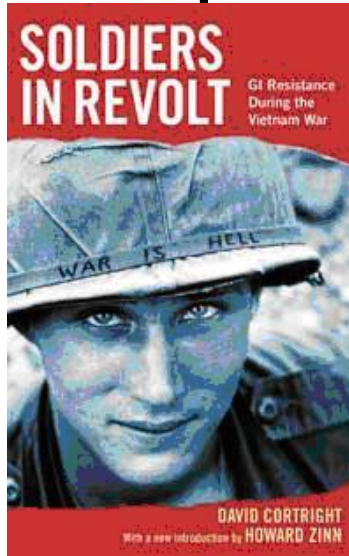
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U.S. soldier in Bejjia village Iraq, Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

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