

Military Resistance 14A1

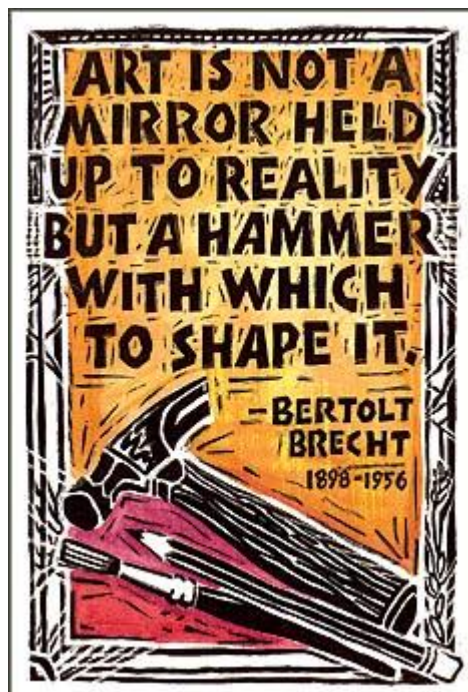
**WHEN IT COMES TO MARCHING
MANY DO NOT
KNOW**

**That their enemy is marching at their
head.**

**The voice which gives them their
orders**

**Is their enemy's voice and
The man who speaks of the enemy
Is the enemy himself.**

[Bertolt Brecht]



From: A German War Primer
By Bertolt Brecht

THOSE WHO TAKE THE MEAT FROM THE TABLE

Teach contentment.

Those for whom the contribution is destined

Demand sacrifice.

Those who eat their fill speak to the hungry

Of wonderful times to come.

Those who lead the country into the abyss

Call ruling too difficult

For ordinary men.

WHEN THE LEADERS SPEAK OF PEACE

The common folk know

That war is coming.

When the leaders curse war

The mobilization order is already written out.

**THOSE AT THE TOP SAY: PEACE
AND WAR**

Are of different substance.

But their peace and their war

Are like wind and storm.

War grows from their peace

Like son from his mother

He bears

Her frightful features.

Their war kills

Whatever their peace

Has left over.

ON THE WALL WAS CHALKED:

They want war.

The man who wrote it

Has already fallen.

THOSE AT THE TOP SAY:

This way to glory.

Those down below say:

This way to the grave.

THE WAR WHICH IS COMING

Is not the first one. There were

Other wars before it.
When the last one came to an end
There were conquerors and conquered.
Among the conquered the common people
Starved. Among the conquerors
The common people starved too.

THOSE AT THE TOP SAY COMRADESHIP
Reigns in the army.
The truth of this is seen
In the cookhouse.
In their hearts should be
The selfsame courage. But
On their plates
Are two kinds of rations.

**WHEN IT COMES TO MARCHING MANY DO NOT
KNOW**
That their enemy is marching at their head.
The voice which gives them their orders
Is their enemy's voice and
The man who speaks of the enemy
Is the enemy himself.

IT IS NIGHT
The married couples
Lie in their beds. The young women
Will bear orphans.

GENERAL, YOUR TANK IS A POWERFUL VEHICLE
It smashes down forests and crushes a hundred men.
But it has one defect:
It needs a driver.

General, your bomber is powerful.
It flies faster than a storm and carries more than an elephant.
But it has one defect:
It needs a mechanic.

General, man is very useful.
He can fly and he can kill.
But he has one defect:
He can think.

MORE:

**The Assad Regime In Damascus
Has Depended On Lebanon's
Army Of God To Shore Up Its
Weakened Troops:
Now Many Lebanese Fighters Are
Refusing To Serve;
“They Are No Longer Willing To Die
In Syria's Unending, Bloody Civil
War”
“It's A Big Game In Syria And It's A
Misery”**

12.30.15 by Jesse Rosenfeld, The Daily Beast

BEKAA VALLEY, Lebanon —

They joined to fight Israel in Lebanon, but after multiple combat tours in the Syrian cities of Aleppo, Idlib, Latakia, and around Damascus, Hezbollah reservists tell The Daily Beast that they are no longer willing to die in Syria's unending, bloody civil war.

As a result of their refusal to continue volunteering to prop up the embattled government of Bashar al-Assad, they say that the Shia Party of God has cut off the money they were accustomed to receiving: reservist paychecks and permanent family benefits packages. What other consequences there may be remain to be seen.

Imad, as we'll call him, crouched over a heating stove in a small Bekaa Valley farmhouse surrounded by the barren fields where his recently harvested crop of marijuana grew. He declined to give his real name because of his illegal trade and fear of reprisal for speaking out, but he said he decided to stop fighting after losing faith in the Syrian war six months ago.

When we talked to Imad in April, he was committed to supporting Assad's forces and fueled by a desire to exact revenge on jihadists who beheaded a relative in Lebanon's army after the soldier was captured in the Lebanese town of Aarsal.

Now, although he still wants revenge, he has grown weary of the war and frustrated with Syrian government forces.

“I refuse to go back because when we take over a village and hand it to the Syrian army, it gets retaken (by rebel forces),” he says while fiddling with the stove that heats the small room.

His decision, made in June, has cost him dearly and since then the school funding for his kids has been cut, his family medical benefits have been taken away, and heating subsidies evaporated.

The last of his six deployments to Syria was in Aleppo, and while he is still willing to fight Israel or serve on the border with Syria, he says, his reservist salary has also stopped.

He says Hezbollah is under increasing pressure since the summer, when casualties increased alongside the needs of the Syrian regime.

The organization, whose militia is in fact a powerful parallel army in Lebanon, doesn't make casualty statistics public, but funerals in its support base in Beirut's southern suburbs are increasingly common, as is discontent from the families of its fighters in Syria.

The three reservists that The Daily Beast spoke to painted a scene of bloody back and forth combat where casualties mount but little is achieved.

Imad's loss of benefits, especially for his kids' schooling, has hit his family hard, but he says at least he is able to rely on the stability of the hashish trade. He thanks God for a good harvest, and while he says sales to Syria were slightly down this fall, ISIS and the Nusra Front are still loyal customers, using smugglers in Arsal so they can get baked on Lebanese blonde.

Imad says he knows of at least 60 other reservists who have decided not to go back to Syria and also had their family benefits cut. “I also know of people who have gone back to fight (in Syria) because of the financial pressure. Only the guys with an alternative say ‘Enough!’”

In a small village in the Lebanon mountains overlooking the Bekaa Valley, Jaffar hobbled to the door of a modest second-floor apartment in his extended family's triplex.

He suffered a severe hip injury when a wall fell on him after a rebel's rocket struck the Damascus-area house he was holed up in during his final tour in July. Three of the seven fighters he was with were killed and the other four wounded.

Jaffar, who also declines to use his real name because of fear of reprisal, notified his commanders of his desire to no longer serve in Syria, but was required to do a last tour while replacements were organized.

“If I refused to continue before my replacement had arrived I would have been investigated and it would have created a hostile relationship,” he says ominously. He sits awkwardly on a chair as the leg connected to his injured hip juts out into the center of the cluttered kitchen.

A Sunni Muslim in his mid-thirties, Jaffar is not the typical member of a movement that champions Shia rights. In 2000 he joined Hezbollah's Resistance Brigades—the movement's non-Shia volunteer fighting force—to confront Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon. Since those days he continued to serve, including 15 deployments to Syria, but he doesn't want to fight a war that he sees no way out of.

"I joined to fight Israel, why should I die in Syria? It's a lost battle, we have lost thousands," he says.

Jaffar also blames the Syrian army for losing territory taken by Hezbollah, but sees the Russian intervention to prop up Assad as a definitive sign of the inability to militarily win a war that has ballooned into an international proxy conflict. "If the Americans, Russians, and Syrian (government) want a solution, they will find one," he adds.

"It's a big game in Syria and it's a misery."

As he hobbles around his musty and cramped apartment in search of his AK-47 converted into a grenade launcher, it is clear that Jaffar is not in any condition to fight, even if he wanted to. However, because he announced his intention to stop going to Syria, he has lost all his benefits for his family. Since returning from the July deployment, he only gets specific medical support for the injury that brought him home.

"It makes me feel like we are mercenaries," he says dejectedly about Hezbollah's treatment of him and others reservists exhausted by the war. "Now there is a problem to get people to go to Syria because they thought it would be a short war, but as it drags on people don't want to continue," he explains.

A Hezbollah Special Forces commander in charge of five units fighting across Syria claims there are no orders to cancel benefits to reservists who opt out of fighting in Syria. "Hezbollah is bigger than that," he says, declining to give his name because he's not authorized to speak to the media. He denies the organization is under pressure to provide more boots on the ground and refuses to discuss casualty numbers or comment on whether they are increasing.

In Beirut's largely Shia southern suburbs, Hezbollah's flags wave and defiant pictures of its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, hang on walls next to posters of martyrs who fell in Syria.

The working-class community here is the party's base, but while residents embrace Hezbollah as their guardians and protectors, there is also a sense of frustration.

Abu Ahmed, who fears retribution if named, brings his young son with him to a meeting with The Daily Beast in the bustling neighborhood of Dahiya. The child is shy and stoic and his father says that the boy cried every night during his multiple tours in Syria.

Under pressure from his family to stop fighting and a growing resentment of the war, he stopped going to Syria last year.

“In my case, I love my wife and kids more than I love Syria and Palestine,” says the veteran of campaigns against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon and the 2006 war with Israel. He joined Hezbollah in the mid-1990s and, now in his forties, he has lost his job and all his family benefits since he refused to return to Syria.

“They used to give me work and now they don’t, I feel like I’ve lost everything,” says Abu Ahmed, trying to control the anger in his voice.

He is not only disillusioned with the war, which he calls “a contest of superpowers,” but has also resigned himself to a cynical sectarian outlook on the region. “Let the Sunnis liberate Palestine,” he says, rejecting the pan-Arab solidarity that inspired him to take up arms in the first place.

Instead, he says he helped his nephews flee Lebanon for Germany after they deserted their units in Syria. Soon, he says, he will also take his family to Germany.

One of Hezbollah’s central arguments for propping up Assad’s brutal regime is that its troops are protecting Lebanon from Sunni jihadists bringing the war home. When The Daily Beast put that position to Abu Ahmed, just a few kilometers from where two ISIS suicide bombers killed 43 people in November, his answer is blunt.

“Let them come over here, I’m leaving.”

YOUR INVITATION:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

“Afghan Police Refuse To Return To Streets Of A Volatile Southern District Under Taliban Attack”

“Promised Government Help Has Not Yet Arrived”

“Army And Police Hunkered Down Inside The Base In Sangin”

“That’s The Only Way They Can Claim That The District Has Not Fallen To The Taliban”

Dec 29 BY MIRWAIS KHAN, ASSOCIATED PRESS [Excerpt]

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan -- Afghan police are refusing to return to the streets of a volatile southern district under Taliban attack, claiming that promised government help has not yet arrived, an Afghan official said Tuesday.

According to Karim Atal, the director of the Helmand provincial council, security forces are for now staying inside their base in Sangin district, where government forces have been fighting a Taliban takeover attempt for weeks.

Sangin is a major poppy-growing district in Helmand - the heartland of the Taliban - that produces most of the world’s opium, the cash crop that funds the insurgency.

In comments to The Associated Press, Atal also dismissed reports that a military clearing operation had begun in the district.

Taliban attempts to overrun Sangin peaked last week when fighters besieged the base, cutting off supply lines for troops, ammunition and food.

Days later, acting Defense Minister Masoom Stanekzai said reinforcements of special forces and commandoes had been deployed.

A series of U.S. airstrikes followed and a small contingent of British troops were deployed as advisers for the over-stretched Afghan forces, which eventually helped break the siege.

In a sharp rebuke of the central authorities in Kabul, Atal said with army and police hunkered down inside the base in Sangin, “that’s the only way they can claim that the district has not fallen” to the Taliban.

The Afghan police have been fighting the insurgency on the front lines and have sustained high casualties as they lack the arms, equipment and facilities of the army, despite doing the same job.

In the past three months, Atal also said, the fighting in four districts of Helmand had killed about 700 policemen and wounded 500. In addition, precise casualty figures were often difficult to obtain as the police lacked a “proper management system,” he added.

Total casualty figures for Afghan security forces have not been made public by the defense or interior ministries, but are said by U.S. military sources to be 28 percent higher than in 2014, when the total toll was around 5,000.

The Pentagon’s Own Quarterly Assessment Of Security In Afghanistan This Month Noted “The Overall Security Situation In Afghanistan Deteriorated”

December 29, 2015 Tom Vanden Brook, USA TODAY [Excerpt]

News from Afghanistan in 2015 has been grim. Taliban insurgents stormed the northern provincial capital of Kunduz in October and were pushed out after fierce fighting that included an inadvertent attack by a U.S. warplane on hospital that killed 42 civilians.

In the south, Taliban insurgents have battered Afghan troops in Helmand province; an al-Qaeda training camp was also discovered there and destroyed. Islamic State fighters have set up outposts in the east. Last week, six U.S. airmen were killed by a bomber outside Bagram Air Base.

The Pentagon’s own quarterly assessment of security in Afghanistan this month noted that in “the second half of 2015, the overall security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated with an increase in effective insurgent attacks and higher (Afghan security force) and Taliban casualties.”

POLICE WAR REPORTS

**[The New York Times Pushes
The Panic Button]
“Cleveland, Where The Police
Have Historically Behaved As An**

Occupying Force That Shoots First And Asks Questions Later” “Dangerous And Profoundly Out Of Control” “An Utter Disregard For The Lives Of The City’s Black Residents”

Comment: T

Have the Times editorial board suddenly become class traitors, shifting hard left, complete with rhetoric about the police as an “occupying force?”

Well, not quite.

Their concern, above all, is for social stability, threatened by movements from below. The growing national anger at police, which is an occupying force for capital, and not just in poor Black neighborhoods, could develop into a massive challenge to the orderly maintenance of ruling class power.

They are sounding the alarm, but with no solutions offered. That also fits the times: the material reality is that capital has run out of solutions and is running out of time.

So much the better for us.

DEC. 29, 2015 THE EDITORIAL BOARD, The New York Times

Tamir Rice of Cleveland would be alive today had he been a white 12-year-old playing with a toy gun in just about any middle-class neighborhood in the country on the afternoon of Nov. 22, 2014.

But Tamir, who was shot to death by a white police officer that day, had the misfortune of being black in a poor area of Cleveland, where the police have historically behaved as an occupying force that shoots first and asks questions later.

To grow up black and male in such a place is to live a highly circumscribed life, hemmed in by forces that deny your humanity and conspire to kill you.

Those forces hovered over the proceedings on Monday when a grand jury declined to indict Officer Timothy Loehmann in the killing and Timothy McGinty, the Cuyahoga County prosecutor, explained why he had asked the grand jurors to not bring charges.

Mr. McGinty described the events leading up to Tamir's death as tragic series of errors and "miscommunications" that began when a 911 caller said a male who was "probably a juvenile" was waving a "probably fake" gun at people in a park.

The fact that those caveats never reached Officer Loehmann — who shot the child within seconds of arriving on the scene — was more than just an administrative misstep. It reflects an utter disregard for the lives of the city's black residents.

That disregard pervades every aspect of this case and begins with the fact that the department failed to even review Officer Loehmann's work history before giving him the power of life and death over the citizens of Cleveland. Had the department done so, it would have found that Officer Loehmann had quit a suburban police department where he had showed a "dangerous loss of composure" during firearms training and was found to be emotionally unfit for the stress of the job.

Officer Loehmann joined a police department that itself had acquired a well-documented reputation for wanton violence and for shooting at people who posed no threat to the police or others.

In a particularly striking event, documented by the Justice Department last year, officers mistook the sound of a car backfiring for a gunshot. They chased down and fired at the vehicle 137 times, killing two occupants who turned out to be unarmed.

The lengthy Justice Department report shows clearly why the black community viewed the Cleveland police as dangerous and profoundly out of control.

In May, the Police Department entered an agreement with the Justice Department, enforceable by the courts, under which it is to adopt sweeping reforms.

The Police Department's disregard for life was fully evident in the way the officers behaved after shooting Tamir.

A surveillance video shows them standing by the child for four minutes without giving medical assistance, which was finally provided by an F.B.I. agent who happened to be in the neighborhood. Officer Frank Garback, Officer Loehmann's partner, nonetheless tackled the wounded boy's 14-year-old sister as she tried to rush to his side.

One can only imagine her suffering as she watched in handcuffs from the back seat of the squad car while her brother lay bleeding on the ground.

In addition to portraying the killing as a result of a tragic misunderstanding, prosecutors have also suggested the officer's decision to kill Tamir was shaped by the fact that the surrounding neighborhood had a history of violence and that the boy appeared to be older than 12 because he was big for his age.

These arguments sidestep the history of violent, discriminatory police actions that led up to this boy's death. They also have the reprehensible effect of shifting the responsibility for this death onto the shoulders of this very young victim.

“How Exercise Can Help You”
[<https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/how-exercise-can-help-you>]



Demonstrators atop a police car during protests over the death of Freddie Gray, in Baltimore, April 27, 2015.

MILITARY NEWS

**Iraqi Government’s Popular
Mobilization Force Threatened To
Persecute Christians Celebrating
Christmas In Baghdad:
“The US Military And State
Department Have Praised The PMF”**

“The Organization Is Operating Under The Command Of A Specially Designated Global Terrorist”



Photograph of the Popular Mobilization Force’s poster suggesting Iraqi women in Baghdad wear the hijab. Image from Qenshrin. [Long War Journal]

December 30, 2015 By Bill Roggio & David Daoud, Long War Journal

The Popular Mobilization Force (PMF), the command assigned by the Iraqi government with organizing militias to fight the Islamic State, has exceeded the scope of its mission by attempting to impart changes in society and culture through threats and force.

This month, the PMF began harassing Christians in Baghdad by suggesting women wear the hijab, or veil, and instructing the religious minority not to celebrate Christmas.

The PMF erected posters in several Baghdad neighborhoods with large numbers of Christians in mid-December, calling for women there to wear the hijab, multiple witnesses said according to Qenshrin.

The posters were plastered on “churches and monasteries” in the neighborhoods of “Al Karada, Karadat Maryam, Al Kathmiyeh, Al Sayyideh, Zeinouneh, and Al Ghadir,” the news service reported.

A Christian woman told Al Arabi al Jadid that she saw a similar poster at an official government building with “a slogan” written on it “which made clear that these instructions had to be carried out willingly or by force,” Qenshrin reported.

Additionally, some Christians in Baghdad said they “they had received threats from militias who had taken over the city” that warned them not to celebrate Christmas or the New Year “in order to honor the martyrs of the Hashid Shaabi (Populate Mobilization Force) who defended ‘the nation and the religion,’” against the Islamic State, Al Qods Al Arabi reported.

One poster, displayed above, is titled “Why was the Virgin Mary, Peace Be Upon Her, veiled,” according to a translation by The Long War Journal.

“Stop and Look!,” the poster continues. “To our respected Christian sister: The Virgin Mary (peace be upon her) was veiled because it was the tradition of the prophets. And because it comes from one source and from One God who is God Almighty, but the devil is not pleased with this. So it is incumbent upon you to follow the Virgin Mary as a role model, so why do you not wear the hijab!?”

The existence of the posters suggesting Christian women wear the hijab was confirmed by Luis Rofael Sako, the Patriarch of the Iraqi and International Chaldean Church, Al Qosh reported. Sako said that the “circumstances of Christians celebrating (Christmas) this year are the worst” in Iraq in decades.

The PMF’s actions in Baghdad are in line with the Iranian government’s imposition of Islamic law.

The PMF, also called Popular Mobilization Unit or Committee, was created in June 2014 after the Islamic State overran large areas in northern, central, and western Iraq after Iraqi forces collapsed. The unit was established with the approval of the Iraqi government, and is comprised of various militias.

The paramilitary organization is dominated by Iranian-backed Shiite militias such as Hezbollah Brigades, Asaib al Haq (the League of the Righteous), Saraya al Salam (Muqtada al Sadr’s Peace Brigades), Harakat Nujaba, Saraya Khorasani (Khorasan Brigades), the Imam Ali Brigades, and the Badr Organization.

Hezbollah Brigades is listed by the US as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, while top leaders of Asaib al Haq, the Imam Ali Brigade, and Harakat Nujaba are listed as specially designated global terrorists. All of these groups remain hostile towards the US. Two of them, Harakat Nujaba and Saraya al Salam, have threatened to attack US interests as recently as this spring. One of the militia leaders even said he would overthrow Iraq’s government if ordered to do so by Iran’s “supreme leader.”

The deputy commander and operational leader of the PMF is Abu Mahdi al Muhandis, a former commander in the Badr Organization who was listed by the US government as a specially designated global terrorist in July 2009 and was described as “an advisor to” Qods Force commander Qassem Soleimani. Qods Force is Iran’s external special operations branch that is, among other things, responsible for establishing, training, funding, advising, and at times, commanding Shiite militias in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

The PMF has been instrumental in liberating the Iraqi cities of Tikrit and Baiji as well as other towns from the Islamic State. Soleimani, the Qods Force commander, was directly involved in those operations and has been spotted on multiple battlefields in Iraq.

Despite the fact the organization is operating under the command of a specially designated global terrorist, the US military and State Department have praised the PMF – also overlooking that its largest and most powerful militias are Iranian proxies which have reportedly committed war crimes.

The PMF's harassment of Christians in Baghdad is a clear indication that the militia continues to stray from its mission of combatting the Islamic State and seeks to enforce its own version of sharia, or Islamic law.

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

The past year – every single day of it – has had its consequences. In the obscure depths of society, an imperceptible molecular process has been occurring irreversibly, like the flow of time, a process of accumulating discontent, bitterness, and revolutionary energy.

-- Leon Trotsky, “Up To The Ninth Of January”

Our Lives Are Richer For Having Known Him: Tribute To A Friend And Comrade Who Was Taken From Us Too Young



Aaron Hess

January 1, 2016 by Jen Roesch, Socialist Worker

This week, we lost a brilliant and beautiful comrade. Aaron Hess died on December 27, months before his 40th birthday, and all too soon.

Aaron was a committed revolutionary socialist and member of the International Socialist Organization for his entire adult life. He joined the ISO during his first months as a student at Columbia University and never looked back.

Over more than 20 years of political activity, Aaron contributed to an enormous range of struggles. It didn't matter whether the struggle was a small one or a much larger one. Aaron always seized every possibility to be with people protesting against injustice.

When the right-wing racist Dinesh D'Souza came to Columbia in the mid-1990s, Aaron helped organize a protest of hundreds of students that dwarfed D'Souza's supporters. It was so successful that D'Souza was forced to retreat to a pigeon-infested turret in the park. Aaron was jubilant, but not content. I remember sitting in a comrade's apartment later that night to discuss how to build on the victory. Aaron, of course, was full of ideas about how to translate a symbolic success into real anti-racist reforms on campus.

This is one example of the many struggles Aaron was a part of during more than a decade of activism at Columbia. He organized student solidarity with campus workers during multiple contract disputes, participated in the Campaign to End the Death Penalty, protested sanctions on Iraq in the mid-1990s, took part in the global justice movement, and was part of founding the Campus Antiwar Network when George W. Bush launched the “war on terror.” He played an essential role in maintaining continuity between successive waves of struggles.

In 1998, when Matthew Shepard, a 20-year old gay man in Wyoming, was brutally murdered, the LGBT movement was in a lull--between the anti-AIDS activism of the 1980s and early '90s and the later movement for marriage equality. Aaron was part of pulling together a quickly organized protest that brought more than 5,000 people into the streets of midtown Manhattan. It's hard to imagine today's victories for marriage equality and the increasingly visible fight for trans liberation without a whole series of smaller struggles like these that came before.

More recently, Aaron was lucky enough to be in Madison, Wisconsin, in 2011 when workers and students occupied the state Capitol building in protest of Gov. Scott Walker's attack on unions. Always one to throw himself in and try to move things forward, Aaron was part of a coalition to try to “kill the whole bill” and deepen the struggle.

There were many other struggles as well, often remembered only by the people involved in them--their stories and lessons are conveyed from one activist to another. Aaron was one of these people. He would talk to new activists for hours, always eager to share experiences of the past and lessons learned.

By talking about his life today, we can also help keep these stories alive. Aaron's whole political life is proof that individuals matter. Today's struggles are stronger because of him.

Aaron was also committed to the belief that theory and history are immensely important to the struggles of today. So it's not surprising that he found a natural home as an editor at Haymarket Books for some time. I think this was some of the work he was most excited about and naturally suited to. He himself was an avid reader and leaves behind an immense collection of books.

He joined Haymarket at a time when the staff was still small, and he brought the same enthusiasm and care to each book he worked on that he had for the people and struggles around him. He could work tirelessly toward immediate deadlines, but also look thoughtfully at the bigger picture to help shape the kind of press Haymarket has become.

But Aaron's contribution can't be measured solely by the wide number of struggles in which he participated, his activity in the ISO or his work at Haymarket Books. He was an incredibly special person who touched everyone who knew him. There are literally dozens of people who would consider him an intimate friend. Marx's declaration that “nothing human is alien to me” describes Aaron perfectly.

He wasn't one for small talk, preferring to move directly and intimately to matters of politics, philosophy, literature, music or art. He was a close listener who had an amazing ability to make people feel understood. His generosity was expansive, never confined to a small circle of people. He would speak to someone he had just met for hours, and with the same level of empathy and concern that he had for his closest friends. I think it is this quality that made him loved everywhere he went.

Aaron could sustain a political discussion or argument for hours, often late into the night, without it ever lapsing into tedium or hostility. Having read so avidly, he had a vast store of knowledge and insight he could bring to bear on any discussion, but he never wielded these like a bludgeon. Instead, he listened attentively, raised questions, shared information and made you see things through a new lens. Plus, he always knew the perfect way to make a joke to lighten the mood at the right moment. And he was also always willing to change his mind, and was frank and open when he decided he had been wrong.

I would be hard-pressed to guess the number of people he won to revolutionary socialism through hundreds of hours of such discussions. I know for a fact that he helped to re-inspire and renew the commitment of many of us over the years.

Though not a child of the working class, Aaron committed himself to its struggles with passion. He was won to revolutionary organization at one of the most elite institutions in the country, but one of his earliest experiences as an organized socialist was selling Socialist Worker at the UPS hub through a bitterly cold winter and then joining the picket lines and building solidarity when UPS Teamsters went on strike that summer.

Unlike some radicals who come from similar backgrounds, Aaron never felt the need to pretend he was anything other than who he was. Because of the opportunities afforded to him, as well as his particular talents, Aaron was deeply interested not only in politics, but music, art, poetry and literature. But he was neither embarrassed nor superior about his interests or knowledge. He was just eager to share them.

It didn't matter how much formal education or reading you had done; Aaron had a way of awakening you to new areas of discovery. His warmth and ability to explain things simply put you at ease, and his enthusiasm was infectious. All this made it easy for him to build relationships with a wide range of people who will feel his loss.

Because of personal struggles, Aaron was not always able to remain as politically active as he would have liked in recent years. But he never let go of his commitment to the fight for a different world. Despite many obstacles and some tragic defeats in recent years, he was without cynicism and retained a deep and thorough confidence in the capacity of ordinary people to transform the world.

Last year, he posted an image of graffiti that read: "There is but one God. His name is death. We only say one thing to death: Not today motherfucker." I imagine him thinking about Egypt or Syria or Greece or Madison when he posted that. Politically, he never succumbed to the idea that defeats for our side were anything but temporary--even if painfully prolonged.

It is a terrible blow, though, that death was able to claim him so early in life. I know that he had so much more that he had not yet contributed to the world. Yet in a life that was too short, he gave so much.

For those who knew him, he left a memory and example of kindness, warmth and political commitment--and we are better people for having known him. For those who were not lucky enough to know him, he was part of creating a legacy of struggle and ideas that are part of the political fight we are left to wage. Our lives and struggle are so much richer for having had him.

Marijuana Legalization Is Making Mexican Drug Cartels Poorer: “Marijuana Used To Be A Big Source Of Drug Cartels’ Revenue, And That’s Slowly But Surely Going Away”

31 December 15 By German Lopez, Vox

We’re still not sure of the full impact of marijuana legalization, in terms of pot use and abuse, in the states that have legalized.

But a report from Deborah Bonello for the Los Angeles Times shows one way that legalization for recreational and medical purposes is working:

“The loosening of marijuana laws across much of the United States has increased competition from growers north of the border, apparently enough to drive down prices paid to Mexican farmers. Small-scale growers here in the state of Sinaloa, one of the country’s biggest production areas, said that over the last four years the amount they receive per kilogram has fallen from \$100 to \$30.

“The price decline appears to have led to reduced marijuana production in Mexico and a drop in trafficking to the U.S., according to officials on both sides of the border and available data.”

As Bonello reports, the drop in price — and competition from higher-quality US-made marijuana — is hitting drug cartels, too.

So now they have to look to other opportunities, or look for ways to deal in high-quality cannabis, to make up for lost profits, or just accept the hit in their finances.

This was a predictable outcome of legalization, but still a big deal and welcome news.

One of the major arguments for legal pot is that it will weaken drug cartels, cutting off a major source of revenue and inhibiting their ability to carry out violent acts — from mass murders to beheadings to extortion — around the world.

And cannabis used to make up a significant chunk of cartels' drug export revenue: as much as 20 to 30 percent, according to previous estimates from the Mexican Institute of Competitiveness (2012) and the RAND Corporation (2010).

Will this be enough to completely eliminate drug cartels? Certainly not. These groups deal in far more than pot, including extortion and other drugs like cocaine and heroin.

Still, it will hurt. As the numbers above suggest, marijuana used to be a big source of drug cartels' revenue, and that's slowly but surely going away. It's still possible that legalization in America could produce downsides in the US, such as more cannabis abuse. But it's a potentially huge win for Mexico and other Latin American countries.

The big argument for drug legalization is reducing drug cartels' power around the world

What if I told you that the US could sacrifice tens of thousands of American lives to potentially save a few thousand lives in Canada and other developed nations? Would it seem like a good trade-off to you?

Most Americans, I'd guess, would not accept this trade-off. But that's what developed countries, including the US, essentially expect from Mexico and other developing countries embroiled in drug violence as a result of the war on drugs.

In a 2014 paper, economists Daniel Mejia and Pascual Restrepo explained:

“Suppose for a moment that all cocaine consumption in the US disappears and goes to Canada.

“Would the US authorities be willing to confront drug trafficking networks at the cost of seeing the homicide rate in cities such as Seattle go up from its current level of about five homicides per 100,000 individuals to a level close to 150 in order to prevent cocaine shipments from reaching Vancouver?

“If your answer to this question is ‘perhaps not,’ well... this is exactly what Colombia, Mexico and other Latin American countries have been doing over the last 20 years: implementing supply-reduction policies so that drugs don't reach consumer countries at the cost of very pronounced cycles of violence and political corruption, with the consequent losses of legitimacy of state institutions.”

The way the drug war works is that developing nations, such as Colombia and Mexico, act as manufacturing and transshipment countries for drugs, while the US and other wealthy countries make up the great majority of demand for these illicit substances.

So criminal groups will produce cocaine in Colombia and ship it to Mexico, and the drug is smuggled into the US from there.

It's not that Colombians or Mexicans don't use drugs, but demand in the US — where people are wealthier and can thus better afford an expensive drug habit — is much higher.

This is obvious in national drug surveys: They show that about 1.5 percent of Mexicans ages 12 to 65 in 2011 used illicit drugs in the previous year, while about 8.7 percent of all Americans 12 and older in the previous month did in 2011.

(The age and timespan differences are due to differing methodologies in national surveys, but they nonetheless show that way more Americans than Mexicans use drugs.)

In theory, the Mexican government and those in other developing nations should be able to stop drug violence within their borders, and crack down on drug trafficking groups to suppress crime just as well as the US and other developed nations have.

The problem is Mexico and other developing countries don't have the incredibly powerful political, economic, and criminal justice institutions that developed nations have.

So drug trafficking organizations can exploit these weaknesses, build up huge operations, and effectively wage war within developing countries.

What's worse, the drug war makes it harder for developing countries to build up these institutions.

For one, the threat of violence is generally destructive and makes it tough for any of these countries to see the kind of meaningful economic growth that is necessary to build up any institutions.

But the drug war also gives drug trafficking groups enormous profits — through the black market of prohibited drugs — allowing them to bribe, extort, blackmail, and finance a war against any government entity that poses a threat.

Developed countries have tried to alleviate all of these issues by helping developing countries finance their own war on drugs, such as the US-funded Merida Initiative for Mexico.

But these measures either fail to suppress violence — as shown by Mexico's war on drugs, in which as many as 80,000 people have died — or shift violence to other countries that aren't getting as much support, as happened when drug trafficking operations moved from Colombia to Central America after the US government helped Colombia crack down on drugs in the 1990s and 2000s.

The final result: a never-ending cycle of a violent trade-off that most Americans would consider unacceptable within our own borders. Legalizing pot — and perhaps other drugs — might help cut into that cycle, as the Los Angeles Times report shows.

**Hidden History In Photographs:
The Wounded Knee Massacre South
Dakota
1890;
The American Indian Movement Armed
Rebellion At Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge,
South Dakota
1973**

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/captured/2014/01/02/wounded-knee-1890-1973-photos/6496/#.UsZJ5eqVOPM.facebook>

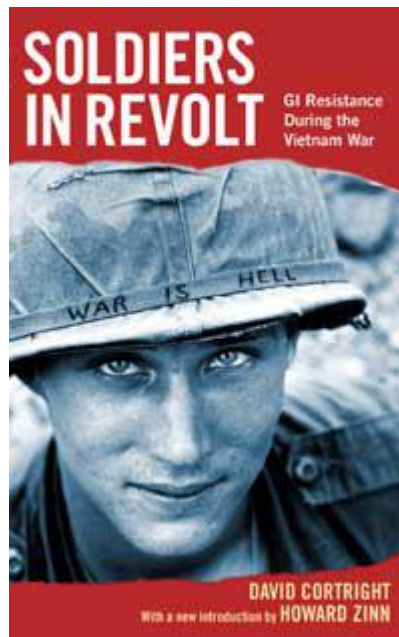
[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in with caption. She writes: "Thought these photos might be useful. Look familiar?"]

**“To Avoid An Embarrassing Public
Confrontation, The General Was
Forced To Sneak In The Back
Entrance Of His Hotel”**

**“Nearly One Hundred GIs Boldly
Gathered Across From The Reviewing
Stand Behind A Huge Banner Reading
‘GIs For Peace’”**

**“The Response From Soldiers Forced To
March In The Parade Proved Embarrassing
To The Assembled Commanders: Hundreds**

Raised Clenched Fists In Solidarity With The Demonstrators”



[A quantity of stupid drivel has appeared in the past few years asserting that it was the civilian opposition to the Vietnam war that led the movement in the armed forces. As you will see below, the sweeping upsurge against the war revealed by troops in 1969-1970 gave heart and leadership to the anti-war movement among civilians, whose public demonstrations were growing every smaller. T]

Perhaps just as importantly, the May 16 actions had great impact on the civilian community. The spectacle of simultaneous soldier demonstrations at twelve separate bases finally convinced people that sweeping changes were occurring within the Army and aroused renewed appreciation of the potential of GI resistance.

From: SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975. Now available in paperback from Haymarket Books. [Excerpts]

On October 11 [1969] nearly one hundred Fort Bragg soldiers, mostly Vietnam veterans, marched in a Moratorium demonstration in Fayetteville. On October 15, protests occurred in San Antonio and Colorado Springs.

At Fort Sam Houston, approximately 150 soldiers signed a petition sponsored by the new paper Your Military Left, requesting facilities for a meeting on post. Their plea was rejected, though, and the Moratorium gathering was held instead in downtown San Antonio.

At Fort Carson, Vietnam veterans Tom Roberts and Curtis Stocker, editors of Aboveground, encountered a series of command restrictions aimed at preventing them from attending an evening demonstration in Colorado Springs. Despite the obstruction, later documented in an official Fort Carson memorandum leaked to the New York Times, the two managed to elude their would-be captors and joined seventy-five fellow soldiers for the anti-war observance in Acacia Park.

A few days later, on October 20, the ASU [American Servicemen's Union] chapter at Fort Lewis called a meeting at an on-post service club to discuss the war and the need for GI organizing; the gathering was broken up by MPs, however, resulting in the arrest of thirty-five GIs and three civilians.

As the country prepared for the second wave of Moratorium actions, in November, an extraordinary full-page ad appeared in the New York Times Sunday edition of November 9.

A statement calling for an end to the war and support for the planned November 15 mobilization in Washington, D.C., was signed by 1,366 active-duty servicemen. Included among the signees were 189 soldiers in Vietnam, 141 GIs at Fort Bliss, and people on over eighty additional bases and ships throughout the world.

The statement had a dramatic impact within the peace movement and was at least partly responsible for the success of the events on the following weekend.

The huge November 15 peace rally in Washington (attended by some 250,000 people) was led by a contingent of over two hundred GIs, many of them associated with the local GI paper, Open Sights.

The next day, fifty of the servicemen joined in a picket line at the Court of Military Appeals Building to protest the injustices of military law.

A simultaneous rally in Los Angeles on the fifteenth also was headed by active-duty servicemen, including fifty Marines from Camp Pendleton.

The November Moratorium also witnessed a series of important actions by one of the most dynamic new groups of the GI movement, Fort Bliss "GIs for Peace."

The organization was formally launched on August 17, 1969, when several hundred soldiers, many of them assigned to the Defense Language Institute (DLI), gathered in El Paso's McKelligan Canyon to proclaim the following purposes: to promote peace, secure constitutional rights for servicemen, combat racism, improve enlisted living conditions, and provide aid to the local chicano community.

Through Gigline, an unusually well-written and articulate GI paper, the activists quickly attracted widespread local support -- and as a result, encountered serious repression. Paul Nevins, a drafted Ph.D. student and the group's first chairman, was shipped out to Germany; Gigline's first editor received abrupt orders to Vietnam; and three other leading organizers were suddenly transferred to different bases, just hours before a scheduled Moratorium protest. In all, ten soldiers received transfer orders in the organization's first five months of existence.

New members always rose to fill the vacuum, though, and the group's activities proved remarkably successful.

One of their first actions involved an anti-war protest at the traditional Veterans Day parade in El Paso.

As weapons and marching units filed by in the November 11 pageant, nearly one hundred GIs boldly gathered across from the reviewing stand behind a huge banner reading "GIs for Peace."

The response from soldiers forced to march in the parade proved embarrassing to the assembled commanders: hundreds flashed the "V" for peace sign or raised clenched fists in solidarity with the demonstrators.

On Moratorium day, the group urged students at DLI to boycott the noon meal and gather for a period meditation at a nearby chapel. Nearly a dozen plain-clothes men and officers showed up at the church to intimidate the protesters, but sixty soldiers braved the threats and carried out the prayer meeting as planned.

The neighboring enlisted mess hall, meanwhile, was three fourths empty - despite the rare attendance of a huge contingent of officers.

The anti-war upsurge culminated the following Saturday, when several hundred Fort Bliss soldiers marched at the head of a peace rally in downtown El Paso.

The third series of Moratorium protests, scheduled for December, produced two additional GI demonstrations, including one of the largest and most militant gatherings in the history of the GI movement.

At Fort Bragg, a growing GIs United Against the War sponsored another rally in Fayetteville, this time attended by two hundred soldiers and two hundred civilians.

The more significant action, however, came on December 14 in Oceanside, California.

In the largest Moratorium demonstration in the country on that day, an estimated one thousand servicepeople joined a crowd of four thousand in a march and rally near Camp Pendleton.

The event united black, white, and chicano GIs behind a strongly anti- imperialist and anti-racist program and marked the founding of an important new GI organization, Movement for a Democratic Military (MDM).

Operating out of the "Green Machine" coffeehouse in Vista, Camp Pendleton Marines launched the paper Attitude Check and established MDM as an openly revolutionary organization.

Their program called for the right to collective bargaining, constitutional rights for all servicepeople, abolition of the court-martial system and its replacement with a jury and court of peers, the end of officer privileges, the elimination of racism, freedom for all political prisoners, and an immediate pullout from Vietnam.

During a visit to the area in February 1970, Marine Commandant General Leonard Chapman labeled MDM “a serious threat to the defense of this country.”

Because of internal disputes, however, Pendleton MDM faltered, and by the summer of 1970 split into factions, with a new paper, All Ready on the Left, replacing Attitude Check.

Despite these difficulties at Camp Pendleton, the idea of MDM proved attractive to other radical servicemen. During the first half of 1970, the group’s program and name were adopted at six other locations: San Diego, Long Beach Naval Station, El Taro MCAS, Fort Ord, Fort Carson, and Great Lakes Naval Training Center.

As GI organizing flourished, the factionalism that hindered MDM became evident at other bases, with several separate organizations often existing on one post at the same time.

No such divisiveness hindered soldier ‘organizing at Fort Bliss.

By adopting a broad, non-partisan approach, GIs for Peace successfully united a large number of servicemen and, despite a lack of civilian aid, carried on an extensive program of anti-war activity.

One particularly effective demonstration occurred during a January 1970 visit to El Paso by Army Chief of Staff William Westmoreland. When the former Vietnam commander arrived in the city on the fifteenth to deliver an address, he was greeted by a picket line of eighty local soldiers.

To avoid an embarrassing public confrontation, the general was forced to sneak in the back entrance of his hotel.

The largest GIs for Peace gathering, indeed one of the largest in the history of the GI movement, was a March 15 rally in El Paso’s McKelligan Canyon. Approximately two thousand people, including more than eight hundred servicemen, came together for a festival of political speeches and rock music, in a massive display of local anti-war sentiment.

At Fort Devens, about twenty GIs join several hundred civilians for the first rally ever attempted at this base. The paper Morning Report appears for the first time.

Seventy-five soldiers and five hundred civilians gather for an anti-war march and rally outside Fort Meade.

The first anti-war demonstration in the history of Anniston, Alabama, draws fifty Fort McClellan service people and two hundred civilians.

At Fort Benning, one hundred GIs and some three hundred civilians attend a “people’s tribunal” on American war crimes.”

In Fayetteville, North Carolina, Rennie Davis, Jane Fonda, and Mark Lane address a crowd of 750 Fort Bragg soldiers and three thousand civilians in the largest Armed Forces Day rally in the country.

At Fort Hood, over seven hundred soldiers march through the streets of Killeen and rally in a nearby park.

At Fort Bliss, GIs' for Peace and local students, demonstrate against the war at the local University of Texas campus.

The first anti-Vietnam protest in Manhattan, Kansas, attracts over one thousand people, including four hundred soldiers from Fort Riley.

An MDM-sponsored rally in Colorado Springs draws thirty Fort Carson GIs and several hundred civilians.

Tom Hayden raps to approximately two hundred Marines and several thousand civilians in a rally near Camp Pendleton.

Fort Ord MDM sponsors a march and rally of more than three thousand people. Extra work assignments and riot duty mobilizations limit the GI contingent to only one hundred.

A festival and series of workshops near Fort Lewis draw sixty soldiers and two hundred civilians.

The events of Armed Forces Day not only demonstrated widespread anti-war sentiment within the ranks but sparked continuing political activity at many bases.

Several groups made their initial appearance during the time, and a number of others experienced an increase in active-duty involvement.

Perhaps just as importantly, the May 16 actions had great impact on the civilian community.

The spectacle of simultaneous soldier demonstrations at twelve separate bases finally convinced people that sweeping changes were occurring within the Army and aroused renewed appreciation of the potential of GI resistance.

As Abbie Hoffman quipped to the crowd at Fort Meade: "Behind every GI haircut lies a Samson."

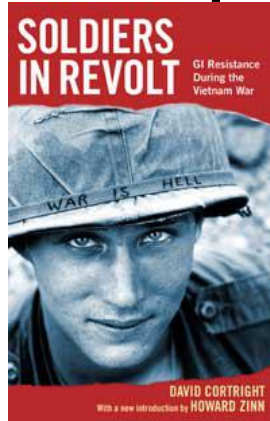
GIs United [military band] members participated in various peace demonstrations in the New York area. One of the group's most unusual and daring activities occurred at a civilian-sponsored demonstration on October 31.

Led by Sp/4 Verne Windham, ten Fort Hamilton GIs marched up the streets of New York at the head of thousands of demonstrators -- undoubtedly the movement's first anti-war Army band.

MORE:

FREE TO ACTIVE DUTY:

A Vietnam Soldier Wrote The History Of How An Armed Forces Rebellion Stopped An Imperial War



SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT

**[CIVILIANS: \$16 INCLUDING POSTAGE:
BUY ONE FOR A FRIEND/RELATIVE IN THE SERVICE.
CHECKS, MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO: THE MILITARY
PROJECT]**

**Requests from active duty or
orders from civilians to:**

**Military Resistance
Box 126
2576 Broadway
New York, N.Y.
10025-5657**

CLASS WAR REPORTS

**Sabotaging The Water Tax In Ireland:
“A Right-Wing Politician Argued Against
The Protestors. ‘You’d Almost Think
That Water Falls From The Sky’”**

From: Philip Ferguson via Marxism
Subject: Sabotaging the water tax in Ireland
Date: Dec 30, 2015

One of the advantages of a country having a revolutionary tradition, as Ireland does, is that people have a lot less worry about challenging the state, including the cops.

In Ireland, people have boycotted the water tax (non-registration/non-payment), marched in their hundreds of thousands, and also engaged in physically attempting to stop water meters being put in and, where Irish Water has been able to install meters, sabotaging the meters.

Eirigi has helpfully produced a video encouraging sabotage of these meters and showing people how to do it.

<https://rdln.wordpress.com/2015/01/28/eirigi-video-on-water-meter-sabotage/>

MORE:

From: Einde O'Callaghan via Marxism
Subject: Re: Sabotaging the water tax in Ireland
Date: Jan 1, 2016

Water is already being paid for through various other taxes and surcharges.

What people are objecting to is an attempt to make them pay for water yet again using a vehicle (Irish Water) destined to be privatised in the not too distant future as part of the neoliberal economic policies imposed by the EU after the politicians bankrupted the country by bailing out private banks.

In one attack a right-wing politician argued against the protestors. "You'd almost think that water falls from the sky ..."

He missed the fact that in Ireland that's exactly where the water comes from.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Musab Al-Ghazali Killed In Cold Blood:

“Musab Had Been Sitting On A Bench When The Police Officers Arrived”

“They Asked Him To Stand And Opened Fire When He Raised His Hands In The Air”

“He Suffers From A Mental Disorder And Doesn’t Care About Politics”



Palestinian Musab Mahmoud al-Ghazali, 26

DEC. 30, 2015 Ma'an

JERUSALEM -- The family of 26-year-old Musab Mahmoud al-Ghazali on Tuesday accused Israeli forces of “executing him in cold blood.”

Musab, who suffered a mental disorder, was shot dead on Dec. 26 after Israeli police say he pulled a knife on an officer in Allenby Square in Jerusalem. However, a witness said at the time that he had not seen a knife in the young man’s hand, and his family denied that he would have carried out an attack.

Musab’s parents and brothers were detained from their home and interrogated by Israeli intelligence at the Russian Compound police station in Jerusalem following his death.

“We told the interrogators that Musab was a student at the al-Nur School for people with special needs, and had never been affiliated to any political party,” Musab’s brother, Mutaz, told Ma’an.

“He didn’t even know what the word attack means,” Mutaz said. “He suffers from a mental disorder and doesn’t care about politics or about what has been going on. All he cares about is watching TV soap operas.” Mutaz said that Musab left his home on Saturday morning in order to collect scrap metal, a routine task carried out by the 26-year-old in order to make a living.

His family was shocked when they later heard that Musab had been killed, Mutaz said, adding that when his brother left for work that morning, he had no idea “the bullets of the occupation were awaiting him.”

According to an Israeli police report following his death, Musab was sitting in a park by the New Gate in the Old City when he followed a Jewish couple towards Allenby Square. His movement “aroused suspicion” from Israeli police officers mounted on horses who then approached him, police said.

After one of the officers asked to see his identification, a “hand fight” broke out, before police say Musab pulled out a knife.

Police opened fire on him, killing him after he tried to lift himself from the ground a second time.

However, a witness later told Ma’an that Musab had been sitting on a bench when the police officers arrived. He said that they asked him to stand and opened fire when he raised his hands in the air.

Musab is among more than 140 Palestinians to be killed since the beginning of October, the majority shot dead during alleged attacks on Israeli military and civilians. Attacks on Israelis have been carried out largely without the organization of political groups, and often by individuals without any strong political affiliation.

However, the circumstances of a number of deaths have been disputed by witnesses as well as rights groups, who have said that many Palestinians did not pose any threat at the time of their death.

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

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

The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves “Israeli.”

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