

Spanish generals call for mass murder in fascistic leaked WhatsApp chats

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On Wednesday, the news site *Infolibre* published a series of messages on a private WhatsApp chat group of top retired Spanish air force officers discussing the political situation. The report became a trending topic on Twitter. It shows retired generals and colonels proclaiming their loyalty to fascism and their hatred of the left, boasting of links to active-duty officers, and calling for a coup to murder tens of millions of people.

Many of the chats came from the telephone of retired Major General Francisco Beca, the lead signatory of a letter by 39 high-ranking Spanish air force officers to the European Parliament and to King Felipe VI, demanding action against the elected Podemos-Socialist Party (PSOE) government. These messages confirm the warning made by the WSW: this letter was part of discussion of a fascist coup at the highest levels of the officer corps.

Beca refers to *Myths of the Civil War*, Pío Moa's book defending General Francisco Franco's 1936 fascist coup that began the Spanish Civil War and established the 1939-1978 Franco dictatorship: "As a good fascist, I have read it, and if what it says is true (I believe it is) there is no choice but to start shooting 26 million sons of b*tches." Beca repeatedly calls for mass murder to "extirpate the cancer," writing in another chat: "I think what I'm missing is to shoot 26 million people!!!!!!!!!"

Franco's 1936 coup, Beca writes in another message, led to "a few years of progress, though a few people had it rough. Spain is full of uncontrollable people and the only thing to do is to make people cultured, which is impossible with the left. It is sad, but this is the Spanish reality."

Under the dictatorship that Franco established after his victory in the civil war, millions passed through concentration camps, mass censorship was imposed, education and health care were limited to the wealthy, and protests and strikes were savagely suppressed. Torture

and murder were routine in Francoite Spain's police stations. Referring to the Franco regime in one message, Beca said: "All that is left to do (unfortunately) is for history to repeat itself."

Beca's fascist and genocidal leanings were shared by other retired officers on the chat. Speaking of supporters and voters of the PSOE, Podemos and their allies, one retired captain in the chat, José Molina, wrote: "I want all of them and all their descendants to die. That's what I want. Is that a lot to ask for?," to which Beca replied: "But Curro [his nickname for Molina], for them to die they have to be shot and 26 million bullets are required !!!!!!!!!!"

These messages recall Franco's infamous interview with U.S. journalist Jay Allen in 1936, during the Civil War, when he insisted that he would stop at nothing in his war to crush the Republic and repeated revolutionary uprisings of the Spanish working class. Allen said, "You'll have to kill half of Spain." Franco replied: "I said, I will pay any price."

The stench of fascism has spread widely through the officer corps. In one message, retired colonel González Espinar boasted that he has discussed his coup-plotting widely among air force officers: "I already said it in a speech to the JEMAs [Chiefs of the Air Force Staff] Lombo, Gallarza, etc. ... and in more than one hundred dinners at the EA [Air Force] 'GIVE ME AN ORDER!!' [...] And that is what we would say to the King."

Infolibre also published a long, obscenity-laden dialogue between González Espinar and retired colonels Ángel Díaz Rivera, calling for a coup to repress Catalan nationalist parties. When Díaz Rivera said "someone will have to start doing something (legal or illegal) against these sons of b*tches," González Espinar replied: "It's a pity I'm not active to divert a hot flight from Bardenas [military airfield] to the home of these sons of b*tches."

These chats are a warning to the Spanish and international working class. They expose the fraud of official Spanish propaganda on the 1978 Transition from fascist to parliamentary rule. Not only was the 1977 full amnesty for the crimes of fascism, agreed between the Franco regime, the PSOE, and the Stalinist Spanish Communist Party (PCE), supposed to guarantee lasting democracy under Spanish capitalism. Spain's full integration into NATO and the European Union, it was said, would "professionalize" the Spanish army.

In reality, the Spanish officer corps' close ties to the US and other European armed forces encouraged its well-known fascist tendencies. The officers in this WhatsApp group were born and started their careers under Francoism, but they served under the parliamentary regime and worked closely with US and other European armed forces. The *Infolibre* report thus sheds light on the degraded atmosphere prevailing in the military command across North America and Europe.

As these WhatsApp chats were being written, the NATO powers were pursuing both a military build-up against nuclear-armed Russia and China, and a "herd immunity" policy on COVID-19 that has seen over 600,000 deaths in NATO countries. Broad sections of the ruling class have totally lost their heads. Their reckless, murderous policies clearly reflect their view that tens of millions of working people should be exterminated.

The only way forward against the pandemic and the threat of war and fascism is to mobilize the working class independently of the established liberal, social-democratic and middle class "left populist" parties and their trade union allies.

On Wednesday, PSOE Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and Podemos Deputy Prime Minister Pablo Iglesias initially maintained a deafening silence on the leaked WhatsApp messages. Previously, PSOE Defense Minister Margarita Robles had claimed that officers writing in to declare their loyalty to the king was "legitimate." On Wednesday, it was left to PSOE lawmaker Odón Elorza to impotently ask deputies of the far-right Vox party in Congress whether he, his family or other PSOE lawmakers are "among those 26 million people to be shot."

Vox lawmakers responded by defending the fascist officers. Macarena Olona replied that she did not know whether Elorza was on any lists, as the WhatsApp messages are not from Vox. However, she then claimed that the fascist officers are fighting for the "unity" of Spain, and brazenly declared: "Of course they are our

people."

In fact, Vox party leader Santiago Abascal sent the fascist WhatsApp group a voice message. In a friendly tone, Abascal says: "Good afternoon, I am Santi Abascal and they tell me it is mandatory to greet this group. A hug to all and long live Spain!" It is unclear who told Abascal this WhatsApp group was important, or why he wanted to "greet" their coup plotting.

Yesterday, Iglesias finally broke his silence to issue a criminally complacent statement dismissing the threat altogether. He told RTVE that the officers' statements are "scandalous" because they put the king in an "inconvenient position. However, he insisted, "What these retired gentlemen are saying poses no threat. ... If some Francoite gentlemen think giving the head of state a Francoite tinge does him a favor, they do not understand that it makes more Spaniards feel like Republicans."

Podemos and its various political satellites are far more afraid of opposition to "herd immunity," austerity and war developing on their left, in the working class, than they are of a fascist coup. They are deliberately and consciously covering up the danger of a turn to military dictatorship.

Workers and youth must be warned: the ruling class, facing mounting protests and anger at unsustainable levels of social inequality, is preparing a dictatorship. The ICFI has insisted on the necessity of preparing a general strike across Europe and internationally, independent of the trade union bureaucracies, to impose a scientific policy against the pandemic. The pursuit of this struggle also requires the construction of a new revolutionary leadership in the working class, opposed to the middle-class parties, in the fight against the danger of fascism.



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