

## Military Resistance 10B10



## AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

### Foreign Occupation “Servicemember” Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan: Nationality Not Announced

February 13, 2012 AP

A foreign servicemember died following an insurgent attack in southern Afghanistan today.

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# Marine From Mississippi Killed: Slain By Afghan Soldier During Joint Duty



A Marine carry team carries the transfer case containing the remains of Marine Lance Cpl. Edward J. Dycus of Greenville, Miss., upon arrival at Dover Air Force Base, Del. on Thursday, Feb. 2, 2012. The Associated Press

Feb. 2, 2012 by Therese Apel, Clarion Ledger

Mississippi's first casualty this year from the war in Afghanistan died at the hands of an Afghan soldier who was guarding a joint operating base with him in the Helmand province, officials said.

Wednesday's death of Marine Lance Cpl. Edward Dycus, 22, of Greenville is under investigation, military officials say. Details were not released.

"He's not just another dead soldier," said childhood friend Kayla Bevill. "He wasn't killed by 'the enemy.' He was killed by someone that was supposed to be helping him guard, and that's what hurts the most."

Dycus was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force out of Camp Lejeune, N.C.

**Since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom, Mississippi has had 70 military personnel killed in action, according to [www.militarytimes.com](http://www.militarytimes.com).**

In 2011, Marine Staff Sgt. Jason A. Rogers, Army Staff Sgt. David D. Self, Army Sgt. Christopher R. Bell, and Navy Master-at-Arms 1st Class (AW) Stacy O. Johnson were Mississippi's casualties.

Western Line School District Superintendent Larry Green said talks are in the works to have a candlelight service for Dycus, and about making the school grounds available for his funeral when arrangements are made.

Plans for a memorial service also are pending, officials said, but they believe Dycus' body will arrive in Greenville on Saturday.

Lonnie Moorman, a friend, said Dycus entered boot camp in 2010 and hadn't been in Afghanistan more than a few months when he was shot.

"Eddie was born for the military. He thrived in a situation like that," Moorman said.

Dycus' friends said he grew up in a tight-knit family, but switched schools a few times, and sometimes saw himself as a bit of an outsider.

"It was hard on him growing up, but he never let that show. He always had a smile on his face," Bevill said. "No matter how his day or anything in his life was going, he was going to be there to put himself aside and make you smile. He was always more worried about someone else than himself."

Elizabeth Scrivner, Dycus' sophomore biology teacher at Riverside High School, said Dycus had a potential greatness about him even when he was younger.

"He was one of those students that when you see him walk into the room, you see more than he sees yet," she said.

When he came back to visit the school recently, Scrivner said, he was wearing his uniform, and his demeanor was one of pride.

"I couldn't even say anything at first, it took me aback," she said. "I could feel the confidence he had in himself that I saw years before. And the way he held himself in that uniform, the Marines couldn't have been any prouder than I was of him at that moment."

Dycus graduated from Riverside High in 2008. Principal Donald Coleman said he wasn't there while Dycus was in school, but he knows him because a brother and sister are still enrolled there.

Coleman said the death hit hard for more than one reason.

"I went to Afghanistan myself in 2005, and had a lot of young soldiers under me," he said. "I made friends who didn't make it back, and I had to stand at attention as they drove their bodies by to fly them back home. I'm proud that they risked their lives so we can have freedom." Green said it's always a tragedy when a soldier gives his or her life in the fight for freedom. On the whole, he said, people tend to have more sympathy and empathy for soldiers now than they have in the past.

"We never get over it. It always stops you and hits home," he said. "When it's one of our own, it's much closer, so it's been pretty tough on us and the kids and the faculty."

Greenville Mayor Chuck Jordan extended his sympathies to Dycus' family. "His death was not in vain," he said. "It is a reaffirmation of the importance of the effort he and our servicemen and women are working for and fighting for each day."

Moorman said his friend taught him an important lesson about life.

"Just not to waste time, not to second-guess yourself," he said. "One thing he made perfectly clear to me is always go after what you want."

Since high school, Dycus had wanted to be in the military, Bevill said.

"It was one of those things he was born to do," she said. "He was beyond brave."

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT  
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE  
WARS**

## **Resistance Action**

Feb. 9, 2012 AP & 11 February 2012 TOLONews.com & Feb. 12, 2012 The Associated Press

Two Afghan policemen were killed and one more was wounded by a bomb blast in Lashkar Gah, police officials said.

At least five Afghan policemen were killed in a roadside bomb blast in southern Uruzgan province on Saturday morning. The incident took place in Chanartu district of Uruzgan today morning.

Insurgents burst into a family home of a government provincial judge in eastern Afghanistan, killing him and his niece authorities said Sunday. Mohammad Nasir, the head of the appeals court for Kunar province, was visiting in neighbouring Nangarhar province Saturday night when attackers stormed into his sister-in-law's house and opened fire. Insurgents have said in public statements that anyone working for the government or the international military is a collaborator, not a civilian.

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**MILITARY NEWS**

**Scum In Charge Of Army Criminal  
Investigation Command Hunt  
Down And Promise To Punish  
Honest Employees Who Exposed  
Their Incompetent Management:  
Report Of "Falsified And Destroyed  
Documents" Got Them In Deep Shit:**

# **“The Command Was Interested Primarily In Whether Employees Had Provided Information That Resulted In A Story About Lab Problems”**



Army Criminal Investigation Command leadership at work planning to punish whistleblowers.

February 3, 2012 By Marisa Taylor, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

**WASHINGTON — Stung by critical stories about their crime laboratory, officials at Army Criminal Investigation Command recently questioned lab employees for hours and scrutinized personal phone records looking for contacts with reporters.**

**The inquiry was launched after a McClatchy reporter asked questions late last year about the lab losing evidence.**

**A command spokesman characterized the investigation as looking into violations of privacy law, but the investigation report, which McClatchy obtained, shows that the command was interested primarily in whether employees had provided information that resulted in a story about lab problems.**

"This investigation was aimed at rooting out anyone even remotely critical of the lab," charged Peter Lown, an attorney for one of the employees questioned in the probe.

"The lab's management doesn't want any more critical stories."

**McClatchy has written a dozen stories about the lab since last March, including detailing the misconduct of two former analysts who made serious errors during DNA and firearms testing and who later were found to have falsified and destroyed documents when confronted with the problems.**

The Army's investigation of media contacts comes as the Obama administration takes a hard-line stance on leaks.

**President Barack Obama's Justice and Defense departments have criminally prosecuted more former and current government officials on charges of disclosing information than previous administrations have.**

Unlike in the Army investigation, however, all the prosecuted officials were accused of divulging classified intelligence, which can be a felony.

"This is an unprecedented crackdown by the Obama administration," Jesselyn Radack, a lawyer with the Government Accountability Project, a public interest organization that protects whistleblowers.

"It sends a very chilling message to any kind of whistleblower who is considering dissenting or speaking out."

"Initially, I thought it was a way to curry favor with the national security and intelligence community, in which Obama was seen as weak," said Radack, who specializes in national security. But Radack said she now thought that the effort was a "backdoor way" to criminalize the release of government information without seeking the legislation to do so.

**Whistleblower advocates charge that under the Obama administration, agencies have pursued a myriad of methods to discourage whistleblowers from talking, including issuing new gag-order rules or, in the case of a group of Food and Drug Administration scientists and doctors, allegedly monitoring personal emails.**

**In the crime lab probe, command investigators decided that the information that had been disclosed to McClatchy might violate military and federal laws that protect privacy. Violators could be fired and face criminal misdemeanor charges and a fine.**

The Army Criminal Investigation Command oversees the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory, which is the military's most important forensics facility, handling more than 3,000 criminal cases a year.

McClatchy had been gathering information for a story that revealed that a forensic document examiner had misplaced a handwriting sample in an assault case. The examiner waited months to report the missing evidence, delaying an internal investigation into its whereabouts.

In the same story, McClatchy reported on another lab employee who discovered a washcloth that was supposed to be analyzed was missing two weeks after it had been inventoried for a possible suicide case.

A DNA examiner was supposed to test the washcloth for the presence of blood but couldn't because it wasn't located.

"The information was likely derived from personnel who had direct knowledge," investigators concluded in a 15-page report, saying it was "likely improperly released" to McClatchy.

Investigators pored over employees' personal phone records, with their permission, looking for McClatchy's phone number.

Even so, investigators said they couldn't determine how McClatchy had obtained the information.

In seeking a response about the evidence the crime lab had lost, McClatchy had provided case numbers and the names of criminal suspects and victims to the command's public affairs office but hadn't published them. Investigators were given McClatchy's emails as possible evidence of privacy violations.

**The chief of the lab's firearms branch, Donald Mikko, was interrogated for about four hours about his contacts with McClatchy, said Lown, his attorney.**

**Mikko had testified days before in an employee discrimination complaint against lab officials.**

**Previously, Mikko had filed his own complaint alleging retaliation for supporting the examiner, who's black.**

In less than four years, at least six internal investigations have been launched and six complaints filed against managers of the lab.

The accusations and counter-accusations include racism, sexual harassment, assault and fraud.

Mikko acknowledged speaking to a McClatchy reporter about the allegations of retaliation.

**Investigators concluded that he'd violated Army policy by accessing information at the lab for his complaint and by failing to refer the reporter to the command's public affairs office.**

**Lown said an Army command lawyer had told him that Mikko would be punished but hadn't specified what the punishment would be.**

**Lown said his client had asked the crime lab's attorney whether he could speak to the media before he talked to McClatchy. Mikko was told he was permitted to because he was a civilian and as long as he was speaking about his employment complaint, Lown said.**

### **Troops Invited:**

**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](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.**



## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



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

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

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

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

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

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

**“People Scavenging Rubbish  
Bins For Food Is Now A  
Common Sight In Greece”  
“Many Children Faint In Schools  
Because Their Parents Can't  
Afford To Buy Food”  
“There Has Been A Huge Rise In The  
Number Of Children Sent To  
Orphanages”  
“This Nightmare Has To Stop And The  
Capitalists Will Not Stop Unless We Stop  
Them”**

During my break, I was unable to find a National Bank of Greece branch in the village where I work.

I had similar experiences looking for a doner kebab place, a particular petrol station, a particular bank where I used to pay my natural gas bills and a big cosmetics store I used.

All shut down, empty and dusty, with some of the signs still on and the windows serving as billboards.

February 12, 2012 By Afrodity Giannakis, Thessaloniki; Green Left Weekly [Excerpts]

I work as a permanent English teacher in a Greek village, where I drive every day from my home in Thessaloniki.

A few days ago, I was looking for a magazine in my neighbourhood at about 9am before going to work. I found that all the shops in the block had put up the shutters, except for one closer to my home, which did not have the magazine, anyway.

Shops closing down is a common occurrence in neoliberal capitalist Greece, but the situation has rapidly deteriorated since May 2010.

That was the time of the first memorandum, imposed on Greece by the “troika” (the European Union, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund — IMF) and the Greek Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Pisok) government.

**Shop owners are forced to close because of the steep plunge in consumption, combined with higher government fees and other expenses.**

I drove along the national road to go to work, about 45 kilometres from Thessaloniki. Until recently I worked 80km away from home. Last year I worked 70km away and it is highly uncertain where I will be placed next school year.

Far-away placements have been commonplace for Greek teachers for a long time. What is new is the rising casualisation, intensification of work and overall job insecurity.

Now, it is going to be almost impossible for teachers to make ends meet if they have to move away from home. Having a job at all is also highly uncertain.

The reason is that the troika, in close collaboration with the unelected Greek government imposed by the troika, has decided on more public sector sackings.

The plans are part of the second memorandum agreement between the troika and the Greek government.

**This memorandum includes cuts of 14.3 billion euros between 2012 and 2015, starting with 3.3 billion euros this year.**

**With 11 million Greek people, these sums come up to a high amount per head.**

**This is all the more shocking if we consider that a huge proportion of Greek people live in extreme poverty.**

**The number of Greek people living at or below the poverty line is more than 3 million and rising.**

The new agreement includes 150,000 public sector sackings to be carried out by 2015. As a start, 15,000 public servants will lose their jobs this year.

Immediate sackings of 22,500 temporary and casual teachers has also been raised.

**The troika has persistently pushed immediate cuts to military personnel numbers.**

The measures against the Greek people are unprecedented. People are in a constant state of stress, not knowing what is coming next.

The immediate effects of the public sector sackings will be higher unemployment (the official figure is now 20.9%) and deepened recession.

In my job, after the sackings of temporary and casual teachers, face-to-face teaching hours will rise for those remaining. Needless to say, there will not be an accompanying salary rise.

These austerity measures are taking place against a background of deteriorating conditions for students and teachers.

**There is a shocking shortage in school books, about 2000 schools closed down in the last school year, class sizes have risen and funding for education has dropped to 2.75% of the gross national product.**

Schools do not have enough funding for photocopying paper or central heating. In this year's freezing winter, students and teachers have had lessons with their coats on. Schools have been forced to shut down due to inadequate heating.

**The recession will be worsened by the 22% cut in the minimum wage (32% for workers under 25).**

**The minimum wage will fall to 600 euros (A\$741) gross a month (473 euros clear, less for young people) from the 739 euros gross specified in the National General Collective Agreement.**

**The estimated loss is three months wages per year. This comes on top of the huge wage cuts since 2010.**

The unemployment benefit, pensions and bonuses will be also be affected. The dole will go down to 369 euros a month from 461 euros.

The minimum wage cut will trickle down to all wage brackets.

Pensions are also going to be slashed.

Pensions in public enterprises such as the Greek electricity company, as well as salaries and job permanency, are set to be worst affected. The explanation given is to make these enterprises more "competitive" before privatisation.

Driving to work costs me almost 300 euros a month, while my salary has gone down to 800 euros a month clear, from over 1200 before the first memorandum.

**Public service salaries have been cut by about 40% since the first memorandum. The most recent cuts, of up to 50%, were made last October. Another big salary cut is planned for later this year.**

Many people have given up their cars due to financial hardship. Soaring petrol prices, as well as rises in car registration and car insurance fees, have compounded the problem.

About 160,000 number plates were handed in to the taxation department at the end of the 2010 financial year. Last year, the number exceeded 250,000.

Not surprisingly, petrol consumption dropped by 22% last year, causing more than 1500 petrol stations to close in the past two years. Thousands of jobs were lost as a result.

Driving to work, I took a detour to avoid paying the predatory road tolls. On top of the high car registration rates and high petrol consumption tax, Greek people have to pay costly road tolls to private companies.

**I kept looking for the magazine as I drove slowly through three villages. The sense of devastation wasn't as pronounced as in bigger towns or cities, but a lot of shops seemed to have closed down recently, with shop and merchandise signs still on them.**

I finally found a kiosk still in operation, in the last and biggest village. I finally bought my magazine.

**On the same day, during my break, I was unable to find a National Bank of Greece branch in the village where I work. I spotted a branch office in the central square. It seemed to be under renovation, but it turned out the branch had closed down.**

**I had similar experiences looking for a doner kebab place, a particular petrol station, a particular bank where I used to pay my natural gas bills and a big cosmetics store I used.**

**All shut down, empty and dusty, with some of the signs still on and the windows serving as billboards.**

**A huge number of homeless people can be seen living in open-air spaces.**

**There are 25,000 homeless people in Athens alone, driven out of unused public spaces by the Pasok-affiliated mayor.**

**Many homeless people are dying during this year's extremely harsh winter.**

**Public welfare services, as well as schools and hospitals, are all but demolished.**

People are driven to sordid poverty and despair, as working rights are abolished and public enterprises and resources are sold off.

At the same time, rising taxes, along with relentless price rises, are unbearable.

**Tens of thousands of households and small businesses have had their electricity cut off due to unpaid bills.**

**Many children faint in schools after they go hungry for days because their parents can't afford to buy food.**

**There has been a huge rise in the number of children sent to orphanages.**

**In many areas, the church or neighbourhood groups give out mess to paupers.**

**People scavenging rubbish bins for food is now a common sight in Greece.**

The Greek ministry of health reports psychological problems and suicide rates have risen dramaticall

In an attempt to deceive the people, Greek ministers have claimed they negotiated hard with the troika before signing the agreement.

Government officials are also talking about economic growth. On February 4, after a lengthy talk with the troika, the Greek finance minister, Evangelos Venizelos, called on all Greek people to stay united and do their bit "to save the country".

**By implementing more and more austerity measures, the government deepens the recession and devastates the lives of the overwhelming majority of the people.**

Last November, the head of the European Commission Task Force for Greece, Horst Reichenbach, said that Greece was not ready for investment, as it hasn't hit rock bottom yet.

You don't need a major in politics or economics to see what's in store for the Greek people.

The people are angry at the pro-memorandum political forces. Pasok is polling 7-9.5% (coming fifth), the other major party, the conservative New Democracy has about 19% and far right Popular Orthodox Alert (LAOS) has dropped to 4%.

The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and Coalition of the Radical Left (Syriza) are polling about 9% each.

The left must take advantage of this historical opportunity, join forces and help the Greek people reclaim their lives. They have to show the way forward, instead of passively waiting for elections.

We must thwart the capitalists' plans. This nightmare has to stop and the capitalists will not stop unless we stop them.

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**DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

**Attack On Planned Parenthood By  
Reactionary Bigots Defeated:**

# “The Spontaneous And Successful Campaign To Force Komen To Change Course Should Give All Those Who Support Equality The Confidence To Fight For More”



February 8, 2012 By Elizabeth Fawthrop, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

Elizabeth Fawthrop, a socialist and member of Seattle Clinic Defense, explains how Komen for the Cure's anti-abortion policies sparked a furious protest.

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**WHEN THE Susan G. Komen for the Cure foundation announced its plans to no longer approve grants to Planned Parenthood last week, the outpouring of anger was immediate.**

**In less than a week, the breast cancer fundraising organization was forced to apologize, and one of its top officials announced she was stepping down.**

On February 1, Komen for the Cure, which bills itself as "the global leader in the breast cancer movement," said it would cut off funding for Planned Parenthood to screen poor and working women for breast cancer.

**The change in policy was supposedly aimed at organizations that were under "investigation."**

Planned Parenthood is currently the subject of a congressional inquiry, led by right-wing, anti-choice zealots, into whether it is diverting government funds to cover abortions. The Hyde Amendment, first passed in 1976 and renewed annually since, explicitly bars government funding for abortion.

Over the past five years, Planned Parenthood, using funds donated by Komen, has provided over 170,000 clinical breast exams and 6,400 mammograms at clinics across the nation.

Planned Parenthood is one of the few providers that offers screening services at little to no cost in rural and remote areas, and it is often the sole provider of reproductive health services to women without insurance.

Komen itself lauded the access that Planned Parenthood provides in a 2011 statement about the relationship between the two organizations:

“These facilities serve rural women, poor women, Native American women, women of color, and the un- and under-insured. As part of our financial arrangements, we monitor our grantees twice a year to be sure they are spending the money in line with our agreements, and we are assured that Planned Parenthood uses these funds only for breast health education, screening and treatment programs.

“As long as there is a need for health care for these women, Komen Affiliates will continue to fund the facilities that meet that need.”

**The response to Komen's announcement that it would, in fact, stop funding those very facilities was swift and clear.**

**Calls to drop out of Komen races, held to fundraise for the organization, and redirect donations to Planned Parenthood came from everywhere.**

Supporters called into radio talk shows, wrote to their local newspaper, tweeted about their experiences with Planned Parenthood and posted cut-up pink ribbons on Facebook.

In the three days following the announcement, Planned Parenthood raised more than \$3 million. In a country where more than 500 pieces of anti-women legislation were introduced last year in the 50 states, Komen clearly crossed a line with huge numbers of people.

By February 3, Komen had announced an "amendment" to its policy--organizations would only be cut off from funding once an investigation had concluded and criminal charges had been filed.

In a statement announcing the change, Komen apologized "for recent decisions that cast doubt upon our commitment to our mission of saving women's lives."

But it's difficult to read the original policy proposal and its amendment later in the week without coming to the conclusion that Komen was--and is--more than willing to put politics in front of women's lives.



**For example, Mother Jones reported that Komen awarded Penn State University a five-year, \$7.5 million research grant.**

**If the foundation's policy were applied uniformly, Penn State, currently under federal investigation for the role of top officials in the Jerry Sandusky child sex abuse scandal, ought to be cut off, too.**

**Last year, Komen hired Republican Karen Handel as senior vice president for policy. Handel ran a failed gubernatorial campaign in Georgia, during which she promised to defund Planned Parenthood as part of her platform.**

On her campaign website, Handel describes herself as "supporting the noble work of crisis pregnancy centers" and her belief that "every abortion is a tragedy."

Handel, like other leaders in the anti-choice movement, steadfastly denies actual science in favor of promoting a far-right political agenda that hurts women.

On February 6, Handel announced her resignation under continued political pressure.

Take a closer look at who runs Komen, and the reasons for all this become clearer. Komen founder and CEO Nancy Brinker was a major donor to George W. Bush. Brinker and her ex-husband were recognized as "Bush Pioneers," having raised \$100,000 toward his presidential campaign, in addition to the \$125,000 raised for Republican candidates in the same election cycle.

As thanks for her support, Bush appointed Brinker as ambassador to Hungary in 2001. Brinker's ties to the Bush family stretch back to 1986, when then-Vice President George H.W. Bush appointed her to the National Cancer Advisory Board. In 1993, Brinker joined the board of Caremark Rx, one of the five companies involved in a Medicare prescription discount card program promoted by Bush Jr. in 2001--a dodge to avoid trying to stop rapid increases in prescription costs.

The backlash against the Komen announcement was another glimpse at the potential muscle that could be mobilized behind a renewed fight for women's rights. Rebecca Traister and Joan Walsh of Salon.com captured the outpouring of anger at Komen's decision to stop contributing to Planned Parenthood:

"The starkly observable attack against something as crucial and basic as breast exams for poor women, as well as the fact that so many divergent voices were pulled into it, meant that the conversation was not about partisan politics; it was about women.

"For the first time in what feels like forever, passion and fury were being loudly, proudly given in a full-throated voice, on behalf of women--women as moral actors; women as citizens with rights, health, bodies, freedoms; women as people with families and economic concerns."

These are the grounds in which a new movement can grow roots.

We must demand comprehensive, shame-free health care for everyone. And when we stand with Planned Parenthood, we must defend all of its services.

Abortion is not a necessary evil, one to be apologized for by asserting that it is only one service among many that Planned Parenthood provides. We must demand abortion access for all because it is a crucial part of women's health.

Comprehensive health care for all must be part of the debate moving forward. Health care and reproductive rights activists are bringing this message to the streets. In Seattle, activists organized an all-day teach-in around issues of economic justice, reproductive rights and LGBT equality. In Washington D.C., Occupiers "mic checked" the anti-choice March for Life rally.

The spontaneous and successful campaign to force Komen to change course should give all those who support equality the confidence to fight for more.

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## CLASS WAR REPORTS



It's time  
to give  
class  
warfare  
a chance.

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**The Port Said Soccer Massacre:  
“Reaction In Egypt Has Been Rage At  
The Military”**

# **“The Reemergence Of The Ultra Clubs As A United Force Against The Military Regime Should Send Shivers From Cairo To Washington, DC”**

***“Oh you MPs  
You turned out to be more rotten than the Police  
Raise the prison walls higher and higher  
Tomorrow the revolution will lay them to waste  
Oh brother, write on the cell wall  
Junta rule is shameful and treasonous  
Down Down with Junta rule!”  
-- Al-Ahly Ultras***

February 7, 2012 By Dave Zirin, The Nation

There are no words for the horror that took place in Port Said, Egypt last week.

A soccer match became a killing field, with at least seventy-four spectators dead, and as many as 1,000 injured.

The visiting Al-Ahly team lost to Al-Masri, and what followed will stain the sport forever. Al-Masri fans rushed the field, attacking the Al-Ahly cheering section after Al-Masri's 3-1 upset victory. People were stabbed and beaten, but the majority of deaths took place because of asphyxiation, as Al-Ahly fans were crushed against locked stadium doors.

It was so unspeakably traumatic that beloved Al-Ahly star Mohamed Aboutreika, who famously revealed a “Sympathize with Gaza” shirt during the 2008 Israel bombardment, immediately announced his retirement after the match.

A distraught Aboutreika said, “This is not football. This is a war and people are dying in front of us. There is no movement and no security and no ambulances. I call for the league to be canceled. This is a horrible situation, and today can never be forgotten.”

This carnage, however, has produced profoundly unexpected results.

The shock of Port Said hasn't produced a political coma but instead acted as a defibrillator, bringing a revolutionary impatience back to life.

Instead of starting a wave of concern that “lawlessness” was spreading in post-revolutionary Egypt, the anger and sadness seem to be reviving the revolution.

The Western media immediately used the shock of the tragedy to call for a crackdown on the hyper-intense fan clubs, the “ultras”. As the New York Times wrote, “The deadliest soccer riot anywhere in more than 15 years, it also illuminated the potential for savagery among the organized groups of die-hard fans known here as ultras who have added a volatile element to the street protests since Mr. Mubarak’s exit.”

Other Western observers, sympathetic to the revolution, feared with good cause that the riots would strengthen the hand of a military dictatorship slow to transfer power to civilian rule.

But on the ground, a new reality quickly took shape.

**This might be news to the Times, but the reaction in Egypt has been rage at the military, fueled by a widespread belief that, either through benign neglect or malignant intent, the authorities let the killings happen.**

**The witness reports of the Port Said survivors are scandalous.**

**They describe a situation where exits were blocked by military police. The stadium lights were turned off, adding to the sense of panic.**

Hundreds of riot police can be clearly seen in amateur videos, standing around and doing nothing, as if ordered to remain passive.

Every political sector has spoken out against the military police in Port Said.

Abbas Mekhmar, head of the Parliament’s defense committee, said, “This is a complete crime. This is part of the scenario of fueling chaos against Egypt.”

**Diaa Salah of the Egyptian Football Federation was even more pointed, saying, “The government is getting back at the ultras. They are saying: ‘You protest against us, you want democracy and freedom. Here is a taste of your democracy and freedom.’”**

The Muslim Brotherhood, which has set itself in opposition to the ultra clubs for much of the year, stated that “the lack of security in the Port Said stadium confirms that there is invisible planning that is behind this unjustified massacre. The authorities have been negligent.”

The Revolutionary Socialists of Egypt were more blunt, saying, “The clumsily hatched plot, which could not conceal the shameless complicity of the police, who stood watching the slaughter and killing for hours did not even attempt to protect the victims, carries only one message to the revolutionaries: the revolution must continue.... The ultras groups that joined the ranks of the revolution early on... are still proving every day that they are an integral part of our revolution. “

Chris Toensing, the Editor of The Middle East Report, said to me, “Indeed, many Egyptians consider the ultras uncouth. And some may also say that the real revolutionaries are demonstrating peacefully in Tahrir Square, rather than throwing rocks and Molotov Cocktails.

“But lots of Egyptian activists argue that in 2011—and maybe today as well — the ultras have been key protectors of the revolution, both physically and structurally, in the sense that they keep intense pressure on the state to listen to popular demands.”

**The people also know that the presumed target of the soccer riot — the Al-Ahly ultras — after being a leading street fighting force during the revolution, have become a leading target of the military.**

**The Al-Ahly ultras wear that target proudly, chanting at games, (I’m told this rhymes in Arabic):**

**Oh you MPs  
You turned out to be more rotten than the Police  
Raise the prison walls higher and higher  
Tomorrow the revolution will lay them to waste  
Oh brother, write on the cell wall  
Junta rule is shameful and treasonous  
Down Down with Junta rule!**

Now not only are many Egyptians coming to the defense of the ultras but, remarkably, ultra groups from opposing clubs have pledged to join forces, seeing the attack on Al-Ahly as an attack on all of them.

**Their unity was sparked when the Al-Ahly ultras themselves released a statement where they didn’t go after Al-Masry but the military, proclaiming, “They want to punish us and execute us for our participation in the revolution against suppression.”**

**The ultras then vowed a “new war in defense of the revolution.”**

This proved to be more than just words.

On Wednesday, February 1, the military leader Tantawi seemed blasé about the anguish, anger and accusations arising from Port Said, saying, “Egypt is going down the path we planned, We will continue down this path and we will get through this transition.”

**On Thursday, protests against military inactivity in the Port Said stadium deaths exploded in Cairo, Suez and Port Said itself.**

The clashes also marked the one year anniversary of the Battle of the Camels, when Mubarak sent armed thugs riding into Tahrir Square on camels and ultras had their most shining moment, credited with incredible bravery standing in their charging path and forcing them out of the square.

This year, in Cairo, at least 10,000 protesters marched to the Interior Ministry building near Tahrir Square. The battle that followed according to Health Ministry official Adel Adawi, resulted in 388 protesters’ injuries.

The flags unfurled were the ultra flags of traditional rivals, Al-Ahly and Zamalek.

But most significant were the thousands of Al-Masry fans who gathered in Port Said, demanding answers from police for their passivity during the stadium violence and why the doors of the stadium were closed.

**The reemergence of the ultra clubs as a united force against the military regime should send shivers from Cairo to Washington, DC. Last year, as one Egyptian activist said to me, “Getting the ultras to work together in Tahrir might have been the toughest part about deposing Mubarak. They really hate each other. They would spit when saying the other club’s name.”**

He spoke to me about the need at times to physically force the ultras to stop squabbling and focus on the task of challenging Mubarak.

But after Port Said, it took no effort.

An injury to one group of ultras was seen as an injury to all.

As James Dorsey, who writes the indispensable blog *The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer*, wrote that the aftermath of Port Said has sparked “a reconciliation among once implacable foes while at the same time solidifying emerging fault lines in Egyptian society.”

Throughout the past year, as Dorsey writes, the ultras have fought together on numerous occasions, mostly at anti-military protests, in opposition to the Egyptian Football Association, or against the presence of the Israeli embassy.

They bled and even died together even as they became more politically isolated by the military’s promise of an orderly and peaceful transfer of power to an elected parliament.

Now the Port Said carnage has broken the ultras out of their isolation and raised the question openly about what it will really take to see the military finally out of power.

The prospect of united ultras, remarkably, challenges the politics of dead-end gradualism and brings to the forefront the prospect of dramatic change.

Zamalek winger Mahmoud Abdel-Razek also known as Shikabala, Egypt’s top player, said, “Despite the cruelty of what happened in Port Said, this disaster played a role in uniting the fans of all clubs. It might be a turning point in ending intolerance and hatred in Egyptian football. I will go to the Ahly club along with my teammates to offer our condolences to the families of Port Said martyrs. The fans of Ahly are my brothers. I hope Ahly and Zamalek fans can sit together in the stands without barriers.”

Al-Ahly midfielder Mohamed Barakat, has also spoken out, refusing to play ever again until there is true “retribution for those that were killed.”

There have been continuous efforts to marginalize the ultras.

Now they are, unbelievably, on the center stage of history.

The ultras have done nothing less than propel the Egyptian Revolution back into the Egyptian streets.

**MORE:**

**“They Turned The Biggest Fan Base In  
The Country Against Them”**

Feb 02 2012 Sophia Azeb, Sites.duke.edu/

Al Ahly Ultras asserted in a public statement: “(SCAF: the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces) want to punish us and execute us for our participation in the revolution against suppression.

“Given this and the broader public rage directed at the military for protecting and serving only itself, we must expect that SCAF will be cracking down on the very people mourning the loss of life and continued absence of their liberty in Egypt.”

Indeed, the protests throughout the nation that immediately followed the riot turned into all-out battles between military police and ultras.

As one interviewee warned The New York Times, “They turned the biggest fan base in the country against them.”

**MORE:**

**“Ahly Ultras Went To A Train  
Station To Meet The Injured And  
The Bodies Of The Dead As They  
Returned From Port Said--And  
Then Led A March Through The  
Streets To The Interior Ministry”**

**“Marchers Changed The Popular  
Chant ‘The People Demand The Fall  
Of The Regime’ To ‘The People  
Demand The Execution Of The  
Marshal””**

**“They Would Step In Whenever They See  
Police Forces Brutalizing People  
Anywhere, Whether From Their Own Or  
Not”**



February 7, 2012 By Alan Maass and Aaron Petkov, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]



**Ahly ultras are famous for the role they played last February--alongside the White Knights ultras from rival Cairo team Zamalek--in defending Tahrir Square demonstrators against deadly attacks by security forces and out-of-uniform thugs.**

The ultras have been a presence at demonstrations since to protest the regime's increasing repression and demand an end to the military's rule.

According to reports, Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, the head of the SCAF, rushed to the airport to greet Ahly players after they were evacuated from Port Said.

There, he declared before the news cameras that the massacre was the work of violent conspirators who were "planning to destabilize Egypt."

**In fact, the killings in Port Said came days after the regime partially lifted the state of emergency left over from Mubarak's reign--but Tantawi has threatened to re-impose it if it was needed to combat what he called "thuggery."**

**According to Engy Hamdy, a spokesperson for the April 6 Youth Movement: "What happened yesterday does not have an explanation except as part of a plan by the military council and the Interior Ministry to push the country into chaos and force us to embrace military rule."**

Protests Began in Cairo on February 2, the day after the match.

Ahly ultras went to a train station to meet the injured and the bodies of the dead as they returned from Port Said--and then led a march through the streets to the Interior Ministry. The demonstrators were joined the star player Aboutrika.

One account via Twitter said marchers changed the popular chant "The people demand the fall of the regime" to "The people demand the execution of the Marshal."

In the following days, the streets surrounding the Interior Ministry headquarters near Tahrir Square once again became the scenes of street battles between security forces and demonstrators.

**Earlier in the day, the demonstrators included hundreds of Egyptian women who marched on the parliament building, chanting, "Stop killing our children!"**

Ahram Online reported that protesters demanded "an immediate ceasefire, the immediate transfer of power from the ruling military council to a civilian government, a radical overhaul of the Interior Ministry, and 'retribution' for victims of the recent violence."

Though not explicitly political, the ultras have a reputation of opposing the ruling order, especially its police forces.

This is particularly of the ultras for Al Ahly, a club formed in 1907 as a means to help build national resistance to British colonial rule (the team name means "the national").

Star Mohamed Aboutrika carried on this anti-colonialist tradition when he famously took off his jersey during a 2008 game to reveal a t-shirt reading "Sympathize with Gaza"--as a protest against Israel's blockade.

**As the Revolutionary Socialists of Egypt explained in a statement following the Port Said massacre, the soccer ultras emerged as a reaction to the dominance of profit-making over every aspect of the game--and to the brutality of security forces at the matches:**

"Thus, arose the Egyptian ultras groups, like all movements that originated in Egypt, in response to tyranny and exploitation.

"It was not a surprise that the ultras groups found their place in the heart of the Egyptian revolution in search of freedom, justice, and that they have made all the sacrifices incurred by the forces of our militant revolution, rejecting the military council's looting of the revolution and rebuilding of a system of oppression and exploitation."

The ultras' battles with the forces of the state date back to before the fall of Mubarak. Ahmed Gafaar, a founder of the White Knights ultras who support Zamalek, told journalist Sherif Tarek:

**"If you went to a stadium and saw how some policeman riding a horse could lash ultras members with a whip for no apparent reason, you would understand the nature of the relationship between the police and ultras groups.**

"This terrible relationship between both sides is the result of the constant brutality ultras have long been subject to. They do hate the police and would engage with them on every possible occasion, and that's by far justifiable considering the treatment they have been receiving.

**"They would step in whenever they see police forces brutalizing people anywhere, whether from their own or not. They would take advantage of their experience in fighting with the (security forces) to stand up against them, and protect the other side."**

That's exactly what the ultras did during last year's revolution.

Gafaar described their role in the Battle of the Camel to author James Montague months after Mubarak's downfall: "We are fighting (the police) in every match. We know them. We know when they run, when we should make them run. We were teaching how to throw bricks."

The ultras continued to have a presence in the struggles of the post-Mubarak period.

When police attacked a sit-in of around 100 people last November, the ultras returned in force to Tahrir Square as part of the biggest street demonstrations since the revolution.

In December, when the security forces planned an attack on the Occupy the Cabinet sit-in--organized after a Mubarak crony was appointed by the SCAF to head the civilian government--soldiers singled out an ultra who they captured and tortured in order to provoke a confrontation with demonstrators.

Egypt's military rulers have proved that they will stop at nothing to keep their grip on power.

The generals are the ones responsible for instigating disorder and violence--not the courageous demonstrators who are challenging their crimes in Cairo and other cities.

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## “Syrian Soldiers Who Defected To Join The Free Syrian Army”



Syrian soldiers who defected to join the Free Syrian Army and set up the "Arabad bin Sarih battalion" are seen among demonstrators during a protest against Syria's President Bashar al-Assad in the town of Hula, near the city of Homs, February 3, 2012. Picture taken February 3, 2012. REUTERS/Handout



Syrian soldiers who defected to join the Free Syrian Army and set up the "Arabad bin Sarieh battalion" in the town of Hula, near the city of Homs, February 3, 2012. Picture taken February 3, 2012. REUTERS/Handout

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## Comment Unnecessary



A protestor gestures at riot police during clashes outside the Greek Parliament in Athens, Feb. 12, 2012. Tens of thousands of protesters gathered in the square outside Parliament as a parliamentary debate began, with more arriving constantly. (AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis)...





**“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.”**  
**Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

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