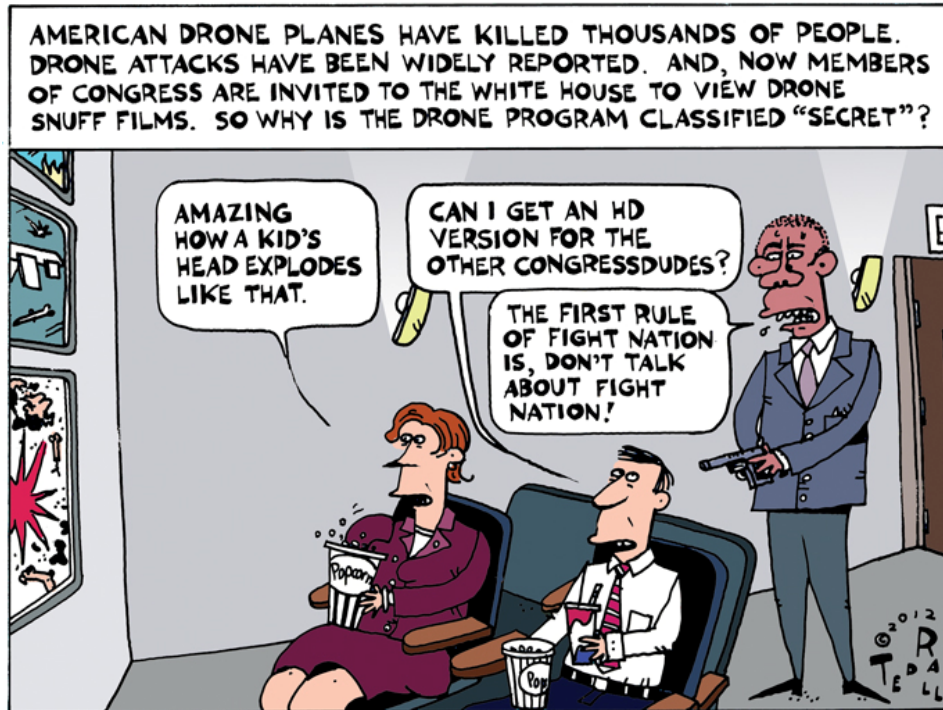


Military Resistance 10G1



“As Troops Head Into Another Summer Of Fighting, The Hard Truth At Walter Reed Is That Afghanistan Changed Them More Than They Changed Afghanistan”

“It’s Still Just As Intense As It Was”

“They’re Still Fighting. Just Seems Like The More We Push, The More They Bring In More And Keep On Fighting”

“Over There, On The Ground, It’s Not Winding Down”

June 28, 2012 By David Martin, CBS Interactive Inc.

BETHESDA, Md. - After the Supreme Court rulings Thursday, President Obama met for three hours with 52 wounded service members being treated at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Maryland.

Amputations -- many of them multiple -- have gone up to more than 20 a month.

Staff Sgt. Eric Meyers was on his third tour in Afghanistan when he stepped on a booby trap -- a so-called improvised explosive device made from fertilizer smuggled in from Pakistan. He lost both legs.

Far from being over, the fighting in Afghanistan “is starting to pick up,” Meyers said. “All the fighters from Pakistan are starting to show back up ... so it’s starting to pick up. Pretty intense.”

And while people in the U.S. may think the war is winding down, “Over there, on the ground, it’s not winding down,” he said. “It’s still just as intense as it was.”

Lance Cpl. Chad Ohmer was also hit by an IED.

“They’re bad. They’re bad. There’s a lot of them out there and that’s what’s getting most of the people out there,” Ohmer said.

Ohmer, whose wife is expecting, was on his second tour in Afghanistan. He said it wasn’t any less intense on his second tour.

“No, not really. They’re still fighting. Just seems like the more we push, the more they bring in more and keep on fighting,” he said.

Ohmer did not lose any limbs, but the physical therapy room is filled with soldiers and Marines who have.

Lance Cpl. Timothy Donley lost both his legs and very nearly his right arm as well -- where he now has an enormous scar.

"I lost this whole piece of my arm -- so my arm was just holding on to this little piece here," Donley said, indicating point near his elbow. "I thought I was going to lose it but the doctors managed to save it."

Afghanistan has left an indelible mark on these young men. One of them, Lance Cpl. Garret Carnes has made it even more indelible with a tattoo.

"This is supposed to represent me and my two buddies who wound up getting hurt," he says, showing the tattoo. He will be keeping a reminder of that moment -- in more ways than one -- for the rest of his life.

"The moment changed my life so might as well embrace it," he said. "Don't resent it, just embrace it."

As troops head into another summer of fighting, the hard truth at Walter Reed is that Afghanistan changed them more than they changed Afghanistan.

MORE:

**“During A Recent Visit By Secretary
Of Defense Leon Panetta To
Afghanistan, No American Soldiers
Were Allowed To Get Near Him With
Loaded Weapons”**

**“Might The Pentagon Be Worried That
Our Own Troops Could Learn From
The Taliban?”**

[Thanks to Sandy Kelson, Veteran & Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

June 27, 2012 By William S. Lind, American Conservative [Excerpts]

The greatest intellectual challenge in Fourth Generation war — war against opponents that are not states — is how to fight it at the operational level.

NATO in Afghanistan, like the Soviets three decades ago, has been unable to solve that riddle.

But the Taliban appears to have done so.

The operational level of war lies between strategy and tactics.

While great commanders have always thought and fought at the operational level, the concept was not formally recognized until the 19th century. As usual, it was the Prussian army that led the way.

Some historians think the operational level may have been formalized by Field Marshal von Moltke himself in the Franco-Prussian war as a way to keep Bismarck out of his business. ("Yes, my dear Bismarck, you are in charge of strategy, but you simply must not interfere in operational matters.")

The Soviet army focused its best talent on operational art. But in Afghanistan, it failed, just as we have failed.

Like the Soviets, we can take and hold any piece of Afghan ground.

And doing so brings us, like the Soviets, not one step closer to strategic victory.

The Taliban, by contrast, have found an elegant way to connect strategy and tactics in decentralized modern warfare.

What passes for NATO's strategy is to train sufficient Afghan forces to hold off the Taliban once we pull out.

The Taliban's response has been to have men in Afghan uniform — many of whom actually are Afghan government soldiers or police — turn their guns on their NATO advisers.

That is a fatal blow against our strategy because it makes the training mission impossible.

Behold operational art in Fourth Generation war.

According to a May 16 article by Matthew Rosenberg in the New York Times, 22 NATO soldiers have been killed so far this year by men in Afghan uniforms, compared to 35 in all of last year.

The report went on to describe one incident in detail — detail NATO is anxious to suppress.

There were three Afghan attackers, two of whom were Afghan army soldiers. Two Americans were killed. The battle—and it was a battle, not just a drive-by shooting—lasted almost an hour.

What is operationally meaningful was less the incident than its aftermath.

The trust that existed between American soldiers and the Afghans they were supposed to train was shattered.

Immediately after the episode, the Times reported, the Americans instituted new security procedures that alienated their native allies, and while some of these measure were later withdrawn,

Afghan soldiers still complain of being kept at a distance by the Americans, figuratively and literally.

The Americans, for instance, have put up towering concrete barriers to separate their small, plywood command center from the outpost's Afghan encampment.

Also still in place is a rule imposed by the Afghan Army after the attack requiring most of its soldiers to lock up their weapons when on base. The Afghan commanding officer keeps the keys.

One American soldier nonetheless advised a visitor to take an armed escort to the Afghan side of the base, which was about 100 feet away, 'just in case.'

Multiply the aftermath of this incident 22 times since the beginning of the year and it becomes operationally important.

Each incident quickly becomes known to all NATO troops in Afghanistan, which spreads the impact.

Just a few hundred more such "green on blue" attacks will effectively end our training mission.

The Taliban know this technique is operational, not just tactical. They can be expected to put all their effort into it.

What counter do we have? Just order our troops to pretend it is not happening — to keep trusting their Afghan counterparts. That order, if enforced, will put our soldiers in such an untenable position that morale will collapse.

So powerful is this taste of Taliban operational art that Washington may fear the example it sets.

During a recent visit by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to Afghanistan, no American soldiers were allowed to get near him with loaded weapons.

Might the Pentagon be worried that our own troops could learn from the Taliban?

Were I an American soldier who had been told to hand over or unload his weapon before approaching Secretary Panetta, I would certainly have read it that way.

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: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**“Militants Have The Advantage
Of Relative Anonymity”**

**“It’s Easy For Them To Hide
Among The Locals”**

**“They (Residents) Don’t Really Like
Us Being In The Area”**

**“Attacks On U.S. And Afghan Forces Are
Commonplace In This Mountainous
Region Of Northern Khost Province”**

6.26.12 By Carmen Gentile, Special for USA TODAY

MUCHAI KALAY, Khost Province, Afghanistan

The U.S. patrol had just passed through a small, hilltop village where curious children gathered to watch when the mortars began to fall.

Large clouds of dust rose up and rocks and dirt rattled the reinforced steel of their armored vehicles, stopped by a dry riverbed. Frenzied chatter on the radio asked whether any men were hit or anyone could pinpoint militants on the ridge.

“When one landed behind us, then in front of us, I said, ‘Oh shit, they’re zeroing in on us,’” Pfc. Melvin Coates said.

“I think it’s problematic,” said Jeffrey Dressler, an analyst at the Institute for the Study of War.

Dressler said the coalition lacks enough forces to launch a major sustained offensive in the east, where the Haqqani network has launched major attacks into Kabul and enjoys sanctuary in nearby Pakistan.

“Unless you are going to get after this threat in the east, the overall objectives of the mission is seriously in doubt,” he said.

Attacks on U.S. and Afghan forces are commonplace in this mountainous region of northern Khost province, coveted territory for Afghanistan's militant groups including the Taliban, Hezb-e-Islami and Haqqani network, said Mohammed Rasham, commander of the local unit of the Afghan Uniformed Police.

"The bad guys look for opportunities like that one," Rasham said, noting that his men and their U.S counterparts come under fire about twice a week while patrolling villages.

Typically the soldiers are attacked from far away, making it difficult to pinpoint the assailants' position.

Militants have the advantage of relative anonymity. "It's easy for them to hide among the locals," commander Rasham said.

Even behind the fortified walls of their combat outposts, troops aren't safe from attack.

Nearby Combat Outpost Sabari, home to troops from the 4th Brigade Combat Team of the 25th Infantry Division, has been hit by mortars more than 70 times this year. In the past few days, a series of mortars landed within the walls, hitting a guard tower — though no one was injured in the attack.

U.S. forces here are working with Afghan security forces to prepare them to take over security and improve relations with Afghan locals in hope of winning their trust and dissuading them from supporting the Taliban and other militant groups.

"They (residents) don't really like us being in the area," said Sgt. 1st Class Sergio Silva, while leading a group of U.S. and Afghan soldiers through the village of Qasim Kalay. "They talk to us, but they're not as friendly as they could be."

"The Taliban come here at night and visit the mosque, but they always leave before morning," farmer Saleh Den said.

In villages near Sabari, few men were around when coalition forces arrived. U.S. troops came to add the names of adult males into a national registry through the use of mobile devices that scan and record distinct characteristics of the eyes.

Though there were more than a hundred children and women in the village, there were only around a dozen adult men.

"There is the perception that every time U.S. forces show up we're there to take somebody," Capt. David Stroud said. "We need to change that."

Adding to the challenge are fewer forces than the troops here would like. Stroud says his company did not get all the men he wanted until late December.

"We're stretched pretty thin," he said. "It's manageable, but it's a medium to high stress level every day."

Have A Metric

Jun 27, 2012 By Tom Vanden Brook - USA Today [Excerpt]

From June 1, 2011, to May 31, 2012, there were 16,321 incidents, in which bombs exploded or were found before they detonated.

The record for a calendar year was in 2011 when insurgents planted 16,554 bombs.

No Shit Kidding? JBLM Lt. Gen. Says “‘We Don’t Have A Hold Yet’ On The Kandahar Districts Of Maiwand And Panjwai Where The Lewis- Mcchord Brigades Are Mostly Stationed”

06/27/12 ADAM ASHTON; Staff writer; The News Tribune [Excerpts]

Two Joint Base Lewis-McChord Stryker brigades are fighting in the main battleground of southern Afghanistan this summer, the war’s outgoing deputy commander said in an interview Tuesday.

About 7,500 Lewis-McChord soldiers are centered on hostile territory between Kandahar and Helmand provinces. It’s considered the birthplace of the Taliban, and insurgents are throwing all they can at that territory to tip the balance against Afghan government and NATO forces.

“We don’t have a hold yet” on the Kandahar districts of Maiwand and Panjwai where the Lewis-McChord brigades are mostly stationed, Lt. Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti said.

He spoke to reporters before a ceremony marking the end of his deployment to Afghanistan with Lewis-McChord’s I Corps. He led the war’s day-to-day operations as the No. 2 NATO commander in Afghanistan.

Resistance Action

June 30, Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan officials say a bomb has killed two policemen outside a bank in an eastern city.

Paktia provincial government spokesman Rohullah Samon says an explosive strapped to a bicycle went off Saturday near a Kabul Bank branch in Gardez, the provincial capital.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

**“Some New Afghan Guards Show Up
With Inadequate Uniforms And
Equipment, Submit Invoices For
Projected Hours Instead Of Actual Work,
And Demand Additional Benefits Beyond
Those Outlined In Their Contracts”**

June 29, 2012 By NATHAN HODGE, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

KABUL—The Afghan government’s plan to phase out private security firms has “increased the uncertainty over security” for U.S.-funded aid projects and increased the cost of guarding them, an audit released Friday by a U.S. government watchdog agency said.

The audit describes an uneasy transition, as some new Afghan guards show up with inadequate uniforms and equipment, submit invoices for projected hours instead of actual work, and demand additional benefits beyond those outlined in their contracts.

The audit, for instance, quotes a U.S. Agency for International Development contractor as saying officers in the Afghan force demanded trips to the Afghan capital to visit family, plus a car and fuel, items not agreed to in their contract.

U.S. contractors in Afghanistan rely on private security for a range of services, from night watchmen and armed guards at housing compounds to more high-end escorts who protect convoys or provide bodyguard services to VIPs.

MILITARY NEWS

Veteran Health Care So Bad “People Die Before They Get That Final Adjudication, Or They May Commit Suicide”

“The Average Wait For A Disability Claim To Be Approved Is 313 Days”

Jun 26, 2012 By Jordan Michael Smith, MSNBC TV

The way the Department of Veterans Affairs awards disability claims needs to completely change, Representative Bob Filner (D-Calif.) said Tuesday night.

According to a recent report from the Bay Citizen, the average wait for a disability claim to be approved is 313 days, while the department tries to verify that the claim is justified.

“People die before they get that final adjudication, or they may commit suicide,” he said, speaking on The Rachel Maddow Show. “It is so bad that these things occur.” Filner, who is running for mayor of San Francisco, has a novel plan to overhaul veterans’ health care: he wants to make it more like the IRS.

Just as with the IRS, he argued, veterans’ health care forms should be accepted subject to audit instead of needing to be approved. “Then they could get their check and get their life together, and move on right away.”

VA groups largely oppose Filner’s plan, which he said is because they are “tied in” to the current system and just want to tinker around the edges.

“We want to talk about the glory of the war, how patriotic it is, but we don’t want to focus on the costs of war, what happens when these men and women come back,” he said. “We don’t want to pay too much attention to it, because it undercuts what every government wants, and that’s support for the war it carries out.”

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: 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

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”

From World War I: **“On The Defeat Of One’s Own Government In The Imperialist War”** **“A Revolutionary Class In A Reactionary War Cannot But Wish For The Defeat Of Its Government”**

July 26, 1915: On The Defeat of One’s Own Government in the Imperialist War, By Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov: Sotsial-Demokrat No. 43 [Excerpts]

A revolutionary class in a reactionary war cannot but “wish for the defeat of its government.”

This is an axiom. It is disputed only by the conscious partisans or the helpless satellites of the social-chauvinists.

[T]o the latter belong Trotsky and Bukvoyed; in Germany, Kautsky. To wish Russia’s defeat, Trotsky says, is “an uncalled-for and unjustifiable political concession to the methodology of social-patriotism which substitutes for the revolutionary struggle against the war and the conditions that cause war, an orientation along the lines of the lesser evil, an orientation which, under given conditions, is perfectly arbitrary” (Nashe Slovo, No. 105.) This is an example of the inflated phraseology with which Trotsky always justifies opportunism.

“A revolutionary struggle against the war” is an empty and meaningless exclamation, the like of which the heroes of the Second International are past masters in making, unless it means revolutionary actions against one’s own government in times of war.

A little reasoning suffices to make this clear.

When we say revolutionary actions in war time against one’s own government, we indisputably mean not only the wish for its defeat, but practical actions leading towards such defeat.

In using phrases to avoid the issue, Trotsky has lost his way amidst very simple surroundings. It seems to him that to wish Russia’s defeat means to wish Germany’s victory. (Bukvoyed and Semkovsky express more directly this “thought,” or rather, thoughtlessness, which they have in common with Trotsky.) In this Trotsky also repeats the “methodology of social-patriotism”!

To help people that do not know how to think, the Berne resolution (Sotsial-Demokrat, No. 40) made it clear that in all imperialist countries the proletariat must now wish the defeat of its government.

Revolution in war time is civil war.

Transformation of war between governments into civil war is, on the one hand, facilitated by military reverses (“defeats”) of the governments; on the other hand, it is impossible to strive in practice towards such a transformation without at the same time working towards military defeat.

The “slogan” of defeat is so vehemently repudiated by the chauvinists for the very reason that this slogan alone means a consistent appeal to revolutionary action against one’s own government in war time.

Without such action, millions of the most revolutionary phrases concerning “war against war and conditions, etc.” are not worth a penny.

The tsarist government was perfectly right when it asserted that the propaganda of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Fraction was the only example in the International of not only parliamentary opposition but of real revolutionary propaganda in the masses against their government, that this propaganda weakened the military power of Russia and aided its defeat.

This is a fact. It is not clever to hide from it.

The opponents of the defeat slogan are simply afraid of themselves when they do not wish to realize the most obvious fact of the inseparable connection between revolutionary propaganda against the government and actions leading to its defeat.

An understanding concerning revolutionary actions within even one single country, not to speak of a number of countries, can be realized only by the force of the example of earnest revolutionary actions, by their being launched, by their development.

It is impossible, however, to launch them without wishing the government defeat, and without contributing to such a defeat.

The change from imperialist war to civil war cannot be “made,” as it is impossible to “make” a revolution - it grows out of the multiplicity of diverse phenomena, phases, traits, characteristics, consequences of the imperialist war.

Such growth is impossible without a series of military reverses and defeats of those governments which receive blows from their own oppressed classes.

The only policy of a real, not verbal, breaking of “civil peace,” of accepting the class struggle, is for the proletariat to take advantage of the difficulties of the government and its bourgeoisie with the aim of overthrowing them.

This, however, cannot be achieved, it cannot be striven at, without wishing the defeat of one’s own government, without contributing to such a defeat.

When, before the war, the Italian Social-Democrats raised the question of a mass strike, the bourgeoisie replied, undoubtedly correctly from its standpoint, that this would be high treason, and that they would be dealt with as traitors.

This is true, and it is also true that fraternization in the trenches is high treason.

A proletarian cannot help deal his government a class blow; he cannot reach out (in practice) a hand to his brother, the proletarian of the “foreign” country which is at war with us, without committing “high treason,” without contributing to the defeat, the dismemberment of “his” imperialist “great” power.

Let us look at the question from one more angle.

The war cannot but call forth among the masses the most stormy feelings which destroy the usual sluggishness of mass psychology. Without adjustment to these new stormy feelings, revolutionary tactics are impossible.

What are the main currents of these stormy feelings?

(1) Horror and despair. Hence the growth of religious feelings. Once more the churches are full, the reactionaries rejoice. “Wherever there are sufferings, there is religion,” says the arch-reactionary, Barres.

He is right, too.

(2) Hatred for the “enemy,” a feeling carefully fanned by the bourgeoisie (more than by the priests) and of economic and political value only to the bourgeoisie.

(3) Hatred for one’s own government and one’s bourgeoisie - a feeling of all class-conscious workers who understand, on the one hand, that war is “a continuation of politics” on the part of imperialism, which they meet by “continuing” their hatred for their class enemy; on the other hand, that “war against war” is a silly phrase if it does not mean revolution against their own government.

It is impossible to arouse hatred against one’s own government and one’s bourgeoisie without wishing their defeat, and it is impossible to be non-hypocritical opponent of “civil” (class) “peace” without arousing hatred towards one’s own government and bourgeoisie!!!

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN MILITARY SERVICE?

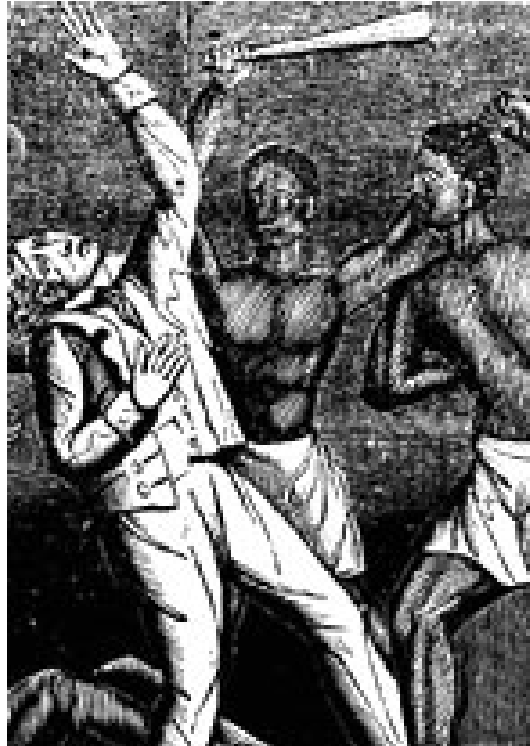
Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the address if you wish and we’ll send it regularly.

Whether in Afghanistan or at a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars and economic injustice, inside the armed services and at home.

Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550

ANNIVERSARIES

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY! **Mutiny On The Amistad:** **July 2, 1839** **“53 Slaves Recently Abducted** **From Africa, Revolted”**



Peace History June 26-July 2 By Carl Bunin [Excerpt] Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.

(July 2, 1839)

Amistad Mutiny: slave rebellion that took place on the slave ship Amistad near the coast of Cuba and had important political and legal repercussions in the American Abolitionist movement.

The mutineers were captured and tried in the United States, and a surprising victory for the country's antislavery forces resulted in 1841 when the U.S. Supreme Court freed the rebels. A committee formed to defend the slaves later developed into the American Missionary Association (incorporated 1846).

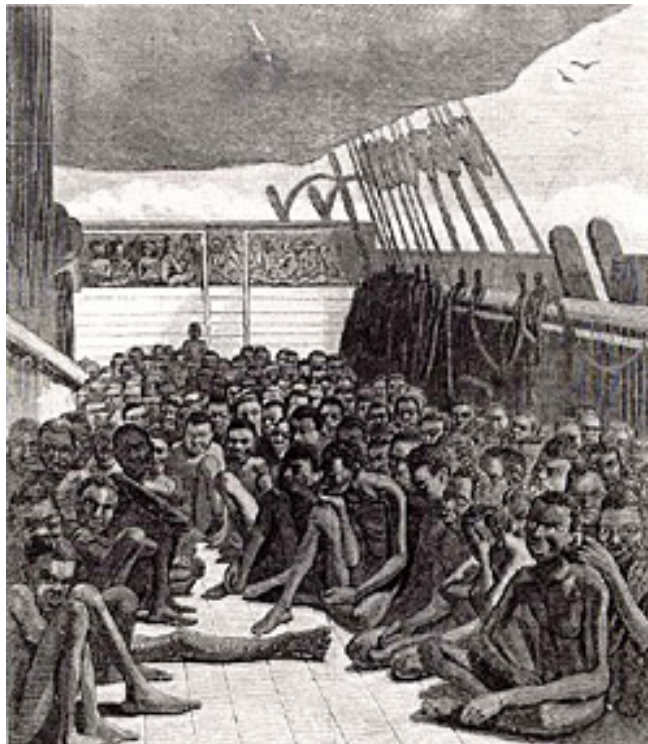
On July 2, 1839, the Spanish schooner Amistad was sailing from Havana to Puerto Príncipe, Cuba, when the ship's unwilling passengers, 53 slaves recently abducted from Africa, revolted.

Led by Joseph Cinqué, they killed the captain and the cook but spared the life of a Spanish navigator, so that he could sail them home to Sierra Leone.

The navigator managed instead to sail the Amistad generally northward. Two months later the U.S. Navy seized the ship off Long Island, N.Y., and towed it into New London, Conn. The mutineers were held in a jail in New Haven, Conn., a state in which slavery was legal.

The Spanish embassy's demand for the return of the Africans to Cuba led to an 1840 trial in a Hartford, Conn., federal court. New England Abolitionist Lewis Tappan stirred public sympathy for the African captives, while the U.S. government took the proslavery side. U.S.

President Martin Van Buren ordered a Navy ship sent to Connecticut to return the Africans to Cuba immediately after the trial. A candidate for reelection that year, he anticipated a ruling against the defendants and hoped to gain proslavery votes by removing the Africans before Abolitionists could appeal to a higher court.



Prosecutors argued that, as slaves, the mutineers were subject to the laws governing conduct between slaves and their masters. But trial testimony determined that while slavery was legal in Cuba, importation of slaves from Africa was not.

Therefore, the judge ruled, rather than being merchandise, the Africans were victims of kidnapping and had the right to escape their captors in any way they could.

When the U.S. government appealed the case before the U.S. Supreme Court the next year, congressman and former president John Quincy Adams argued eloquently for the Amistad rebels.

The Supreme Court upheld the lower court, and private and missionary society donations helped the 35 surviving Africans secure passage home. They arrived in Sierra Leone in January 1842, along with five missionaries and teachers who intended to found a Christian mission.

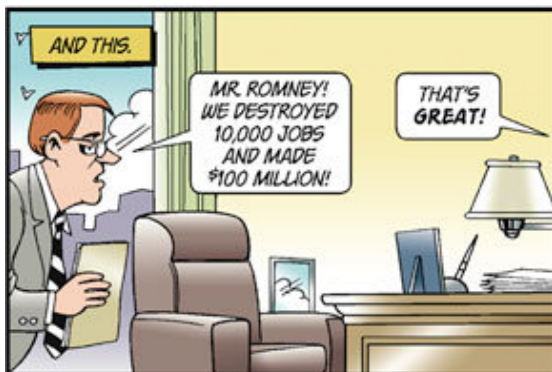
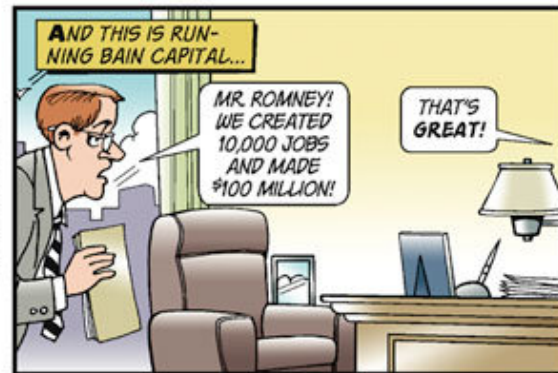
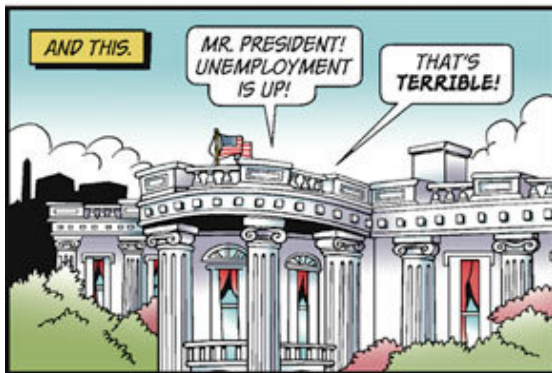
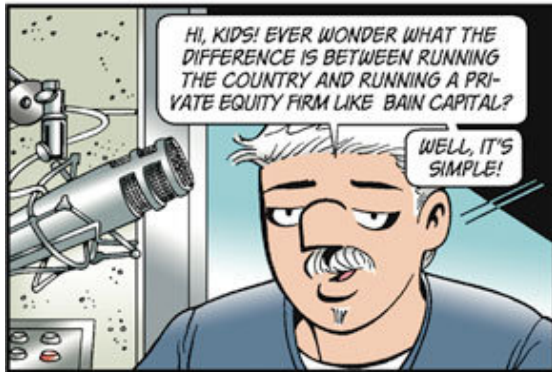
Spain continued to insist that the United States pay indemnification for the Cuban vessel. The U.S. Congress intermittently debated the Amistad case, without resolution, for more than two decades, until the American Civil War began in 1861.



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CLASS WAR REPORTS



“At A Chrysler Assembly Plant Near Detroit, Management Issued An Edict Forbidding Napping On Break Time” “To Make Their Point, They Picked Out A Popular Worker, Claimed She Was Napping, Wrote Her Up And Gave Her Five Days Off”

Jun 18, 2012 The Spark

At a Chrysler assembly plant near Detroit, management issued an edict forbidding napping on break time.

To make their point, they picked out a popular worker, claimed she was napping, wrote her up and gave her five days off.

It shows how far the onslaught on workers has gone.

When the boss of one of the biggest companies in the country – an auto company – can dictate to you what you can do on your own break time, it might as well be slavery.

Over the past decade, auto bosses have led the corporate drive to stretch out the working day while paying less for labor.

It's not enough that new hires are two-tier, paid at half of the customary wage, and denied customary benefits like full health care and pensions.

It's not enough that regiments of temporary and contract workers replace full-time, permanent employees.

Nearly half of all vehicles are now produced in assembly plants where workers put in ten-hour days at straight time. In a few more years, all of them will be. The eight-hour day is gone.

With the 10-hour day, the bosses also impose shift work in its most inhuman form. Three crews, two shifts, ten hour days, is the new ideal for the profiteers. GM has more assembly plants running around the clock than did the entire auto industry from 2000 through 2009.

“It’s never been that high,” says an analyst; “they are absolutely going to maximize their brick-and-mortar as much as possible.”

In this screwed up capitalist society, the needs of brick and mortar – in reality the desire for more profit – come before workers’ rights to a normal life and decent health.

In fact, the bosses have always put profit first. But today, after years with few struggles, their grasping after profit is practically unfettered.

They will continue to impose more and more outrageous demands until workers refuse to go along with the bosses’ every whim.

Things cannot get better until the workers themselves make them better.

“One Inmate Told A Reporter, ‘They Always Beat Us And Hit Us. We Just Pay Them Back’”

The U.S. had six million people under “correctional supervision” in 2010 and 2.3 million actually in prison. That’s 25% of the prisoners in the entire world.

This is especially true for the black population, which experiences incarceration at a rate seven times that of the white population.

Jun 18, 2012 The Spark

Inmates at a prison in Natchez, Mississippi run by a private prison operator, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), revolted on May 20.

One inmate told a reporter, “They always beat us and hit us. We just pay them back. We’re trying to get better food, medical care, programs, clothes, and we’re trying to get some respect from the officers and lieutenants.”

“CCA has frequently been criticized for housing prisoners in inhuman conditions,” according to a January report by Corazón de Tucson, an organization that supports prisoners’ rights.

CCA is part of the lucrative 70-billion-dollar private prison industry. It is the largest private, for-profit prison corporation in the country.

State politicians around the country are increasingly privatizing their prisons. It’s a good way for them to satisfy their corporate benefactors.

The companies managing the prisons contract out cheap prison labor to other industries, reaping big profits while in turn making bigger profits possible for those using the labor.

Corporations currently use prison labor to manufacture things like office furniture, body armor, textiles, shoes and clothing and to provide services like staffing call centers and taking hotel reservations – for wages running from 93 cents to \$4.73 a day and under sweatshop conditions.

That's cheaper for the corporations than slave labor, since taxpayers foot the bill for the prisoners' upkeep.

Under the constant threat of harsh punishment, prisoners are usually, though not always, reluctant to complain about their wages and working conditions.

The huge conglomerates running many private prisons are so confident they can find politicians to be willing partners that they are placing conditions on the states that they maintain a constant supply of prisoners.

CCA has offered to run prisons in 48 states under the stipulation that the prisons hold at least one thousand prisoners and that they be at least 90% full for 20 years into the future!

Arrangements like these then put pressure on politicians to support long mandatory prison sentences.

It also creates the nightmare scenario of judges being bribed to use their discretionary power to impose long sentences. In Pennsylvania, two judges were found guilty of receiving millions of dollars in kickbacks from the owner of two private prisons in exchange for imposing harsh sentences on thousands of youths.

Private prison companies are only able to make such grotesque demands as a consequence of a society that has nothing better to offer than incarceration to a large fragment of its population.

The U.S. had six million people under “correctional supervision” in 2010 and 2.3 million actually in prison. That's 25% of the prisoners in the entire world.

This is especially true for the black population, which experiences incarceration at a rate seven times that of the white population.

Today's horrendous exploitation of prison labor harkens back to the practices of the 19th century. But workers' movements beginning in the 1890s took up the fight against the use of prison labor, and by World War II, private leasing of prison labor had been virtually outlawed. Government use of prison labor continued, however, in forms like the chain-gangs employed in the South.

Since the early 1980s, private exploitation of convict labor has returned in abundance. It is used to drive down wages outside prison walls.

It's in every worker's interest to oppose its use, as the workers' movement in this country has in the past.

Surprise Assault By Syrian Insurgents On A Republican Guard Base In Damascus “Less Than Three Miles Northwest Of President Bashar Al-Assad’s Official Residence”

“It Was Just A Test For When The Battle Does Move To Damascus”
“The Shelling Early Tuesday Was Intense Enough To Be Heard Throughout The Capital”



June 26, 2012 By ROD NORDLAND and HWAIDA SAAD, New York Times [Excerpts]

BEIRUT, Lebanon — A surprise assault by Syrian insurgents on a Republican Guard base in Damascus, just a few miles from the presidential palace, elicited a furious

military response on Tuesday, with government forces shelling surrounding neighborhoods in an escalation that brought combat in the Syrian conflict close to the heart of the capital.

Antigovernment activists estimated that at least 33 people were killed in the artillery barrages on the Damascus suburb of Qudssaya aimed at the Free Syrian Army insurgents, less than three miles northwest of President Bashar al-Assad's official residence, and on Barzeh in northern Damascus, about three miles northeast.

In an apparently unrelated development, a Syrian Air Force lieutenant general was kidnapped by armed men from his home in Damascus, according to Syrian State Television, who identified him as Lt. Gen. Farage Shihada al-Maqat.

He was abducted in the Adawi neighborhood of Damascus, an exclusive area where dignitaries and Russian advisers live.

If the report is true, General Maqat would be the highest-ranking officer to be kidnapped or killed since the uprising began. More than 13 generals are among a wave of high-ranking officers who have defected to the opposition recently.

The assault in Damascus on the Republican Guard base began on Monday night and was intended as only a probing attack, according to a lieutenant of the Free Syrian Army whose unit carried it out and who was interviewed by Skype.

"It was not a big confrontation, it was just to test the Guards' capacity, for future attacks," said the lieutenant, who for security reasons asked to be identified only by his rank. "Our fighters were really surprised by the huge forces that immediately came and encircled the area."

As he put it, the incident proved that "one bullet in Damascus has more impact than a tank barrage in Idlib or Homs, because the regime doesn't hear the bombings but for sure they hear the bullet in Damascus."

Only 20 fighters with light weapons were involved, he said.

"It was just a test for when the battle does move to Damascus."

The elite Republican Guard has about 8,000 soldiers and is devoted to the protection of Mr. Assad and his subordinates. The guard has also taken the lead in suppressing dissent in the capital area.

Other opposition sources reported an escalation of the fighting in Damascus, mainly from government shelling focused on the neighborhoods or suburbs of Qudssaya, Dummar and Al Hameh, all to the northeast of the Republican Guard base, which in turn adjoins the presidential palace.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an anti-Assad group in Britain with a contact network in Syria, reported that 10 people were killed in Qudssaya. The Local Coordination Committees, an anti-Assad group in Syria that has been documenting casualties in the conflict, reported 33 killed in Qudssaya, Al Hameh and Dummar, as well

as 2 killed in the capital. The group also released a list of people it said were among 21 massacred by Syrian forces in Al Hameh.

The shelling early Tuesday was intense enough to be heard throughout the capital, according to Noor Bitar, who identified himself as the media coordinator for the Damascus branch of the Revolutionary Council Leadership, another anti-Assad group.

The fighting was confirmed in part by the official SANA news agency, which reported that “authorities clashed on Tuesday with armed terrorist groups in Al Hameh town in the Damascus countryside.”

The SANA report said the armed groups had blocked the old Beirut highway and officials had killed “tens of terrorists.” Syria’s official media refer to all anti-Assad activists as terrorists.

A woman who identified herself as Serene and who lives in the Mezze market area of Damascus, about three miles from the area of the heaviest shelling, said residents were awakened at 4 a.m. by the bombardment.

“Everyone was up sending text messages wondering what was happening,” she said, speaking by Skype.

“We’re used to car bombs, but this was shelling explosions. The circle is getting tighter.”

Abu Rami, who lives in Qudssaya with his wife and two children, said people had been unable to go to work because of heavy shooting and bombardment.

“The Free Syrian Army wants to move the battle to Damascus,” he said. “We feel we live under a real war now, not just skirmishes here and there.”

“Proud, Angry And Determined, Students Poured Into The Streets In Mass Demonstrations In Québec’s Two Principal Cities On June 22”

**“In Québec City The Provincial
Capital’s Newspaper Le Soleil
Reported That Student Mobilization**

Was The Largest Since The Struggle Began.

“Its Clear That Students, Whether They Are On Campuses Or Not, Are Pissed Off, And The General Public Is Pissed Off”

June 25, 2012 By Ashley Smith, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

Proud, angry and determined, students poured into the streets in mass demonstrations in Québec's two principal cities on June 22.

Massive marches have taken place on the 22nd of each of the past four months--the day has become symbolic for “The Maple Spring” uprising against Québec Premier Jean Charest's threat to raise tuition at the Canadian province's public universities by 75 percent.

In Montreal, the main student union organizing the strikes, CLASSE--which stands for Coalition large de l'association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante, or Coalition of the Association for Student Union Solidarity--mobilized 100,000 protesters to march through the city.

While smaller than last month's action of 400,000, the numbers were surprisingly large for the summer, when classes are not in session, and many students cannot get time off from work for a weekday protest.

In Québec City, the site of the other main demonstration, the provincial capital's newspaper Le Soleil reported that student mobilization was the largest since the struggle began. On top of these two mass actions, as many as 150 solidarity actions happened across Canada, the U.S. and the world, according to CLASSE co-spokesperson Camille Robert.

Protesters in Montreal braved scorching temperatures and assembled in the Place du Canada. After a festival-like rally that culminated with passionate speeches from student leaders and allies, they marched through city to stage another mass rally at Parc Jeanne-Mance next to McGill University.

Students made up the overwhelming majority of marchers. All wore what has become the hallmark of the movement: the carré rouge, a square made of red felt and attached to everything from shirts to backpacks with a safety pin. The idea for the red squares comes from the French phrase “carrément dans le rouge,” which translates into English as squarely in the red--that is, students would be squarely in debt because of Charest's threatened tuition increase.

Students wore their red squares, marched behind a banner that declared “Education is a Right” and chanted “Nous ne réculerons” (“We shall not retreat”) and “Ceci n’est que le début! Continuous le combat!” (“This is just the beginning! Continue the fight!”)

The premier had hoped to break the surging momentum of the student strike through two acts. He signed Bill 78 into law to restrict the right to demonstrate and subject organizations that violate it to heavy fines and even jail sentences. He also summarily terminated the spring semester, postponing it to August. In doing so, he intended to demobilize the movement, dispersing students for the summer.

But Charest’s plan has backfired. His Bill 78 actually spurred the movement to new heights.

The enormous May 22 march of 400,000 violated Bill 78 when it took an unpermitted route. Plus, students and their supporters took to the streets every evening for a few weeks in nightly casseroles, where they banged pots and pans in defiance of the law. These actions have even spread to the rest of Canada.

The students’ determination so far remains strong. One of CLASSE’s leaders, Jérémie Bédard-Wien, said in an interview: “We have been on strike for over four months. The government has said that we would get tired, that we would eventually stop. But this demonstration proves very eloquently that this is not the case.”

“People are still angry,” he continued, “about the government’s neoliberal program. People are still angry about Bill 78 restricting our right to demonstrate, restricting our democratic rights. We are ready for a long hot summer.”

All the speakers at the rally reinforced that spirit of defiance and determination. CLASSE’s Arnaud Thierry-Cloutier gave a fiery speech that sent the crowd into wild applause at every attack on Charest, corporate greed and neoliberalism.

In response to media denunciations of “student selfishness” and their narrow “corporatist interests,” he declared, “The ones who always act in their self-interest are the big businesses. They are the biggest corporatists in Québec. This is not a strike for students’ interests. It is for the redistribution of wealth now and for revitalizing democracy.”

While students and their organizations made up the bulk of the protesters, small contingents from unions, including the Confederation of National Trade Unions, were also represented.

The students will nevertheless face several major challenges over the summer and into the fall.

The first is how to sustain the movement without classes in session.

To address this, CLASSE and other organizations of activists plan to continue the marches on the 22nd of July and August. They will also be leafleting the numerous summer festivals in Montreal and elsewhere in Québec.

The second challenge is the struggle’s relation to the electoral process.

Charest's Liberal Party has done poorly in recent elections and may be forced to call a new one in September. That could tempt the smaller and more moderate student federations--FEUQ (Québec University Students' Federation) and FECQ (Québec College Students' Federation)--to mobilize support for the nationalist party, Parti Québécois (PQ).

The problem with this strategy is that the last time the PQ was in power, it launched a wave of neoliberal attacks that its Liberal successor government has pushed even further.

In contrast, CLASSE maintains its independence from the political parties and refuses to participate in the electoral process. It has a different strategy of pushing for the continuation of the strike and trying to escalate it into a broader social strike that would include the province's labor movement.

The mass actions on June 22 gave a tremendous boost of confidence to CLASSE's leading activists, who were surprised by the big turnout.

"Its clear," said Bédard-Wien, "that students, whether they are on campuses or not, are pissed off, and the general public is pissed off. In August, when classes begin again, I guarantee that the strike will start again also, and the picket lines will be as strong as ever. We will defeat the tuition hike."

The CLASSE activists see their struggle not just in isolation, but as part of the global movement. As Reynolds said:

"We are part of a world resistance against the problem of economic crisis and austerity from Greece to Québec.

"Many people from around the world have emailed us saying how excited they are by our movement in Québec. Those gestures of solidarity are wonderful. But we hope students in the United States and elsewhere will be inspired to take action like we have.

"We students and workers are in a global struggle.

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