

Military Resistance 1017



“FORWARD”

Before It's All Over

From: Gregg Shotwell
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: September 06, 2012
Subject: Poem

Before It's All Over, written by Gregg Shotwell

“Gregg Shotwell, a machine operator turned rebel writer, worked thirty years at General Motors.” -- Haymarket Books.

Author of *Autoworkers Under the Gun: A Shop-Floor View of the End of the American Dream*.

For more of his work, also see the Soldiers of Solidarity web site at:

<http://www.soldiersofsolidarity.com/>

BEFORE IT'S ALL OVER

**you can see
in the corners of their eyes**

**the awareness of perimeters
the glance that measures
the stillness that detects
the slightest movement
or a blank stare
that studies air
and weighs light
on a balance scale
tared
with unbearable memories**

**you can sense the tension in their hair
they wear black P.O.W. hats
that declare not what they think
but what they fear**

**that one of theirs is missing
and their loyalty is unnerving
to those of you
who never served**

**or knew a brother
who disappeared**

**the bosses want to fire them
want to provoke them
and poke them and embarrass them
and they should**

**because we are going to frag them
before it's all over
we are going to drag them
from their offices**

**and torch
the traitors' corpses**

MORE:

More By Gregg Shotwell: “The World Is In Their Care”



[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, who sent this in. He writes: “Gregg says, he will Not make any money from this short book, and if he does, he will give it to Workers who are fighting the Good Fight. Dennis”]

**“Bless the laborers
who rise before dawn.**

**Bless the short order cook
who greets them.**

**Bless the carpenter,
the roofer,
the wire man.**

**We are distraught
and homeless without them.”**

— Opening stanzas from *The World is in Their Care*

The power of blessing in a poem is that it weaves a new vision of the world.
The real blessing is awareness.

A blessing calls sanctity down upon a person in a manner both profound and intimate.
A blessing gives reverence to the subject, in this case, workers.

Who cares for our world? CEOs? Politicians?

The World is in their Care calls our awareness down upon those who do the daily work
which provides, improves, repairs, and sustains life.

**“Bless the grace of the waitress
in the face of our hunger
and fear of aloneness
in the hour of our need.**

**Bless the baker
who prepares
our daily bread
while we sleep.**

**Bless the Veteran of Foreign Wars
who marches for peace,
who sleeps in the mission,
who weeps in the shadows
of unknown soldiers
he never forgets.”**

And may I add, bless the reader without whom there is no author.

The World is in Their Care is available at [Partisan Press](#) [Click on “Partisan Press Books” at opening page of web site, and scroll down a bit.]

**This single issue poem is a tribute to workers in times when workers are under
attack more fiercely than at any time in our history.**

**Cheaper than a greeting card!
Send them to your friends for the Holidays!
Buy one for \$3**

For bulk order pricing contact Partisan Press at red-ink@earthlink.net.

Military Resistance In PDF Format?

If you prefer PDF to Word format, email: contact@militaryproject.org

MILITARY NEWS

**“Emad Was Called Up For His
Mandatory Army Service”
“Ordered To Fire On Protesters At
Demonstrations, He Says He Aimed
Away. ‘I Don’t Want To Oppress
Anyone’”
“Emad Is Just One Of Thousands Of
Army Defectors Who Are Switching
Sides”**

Over the past decade, under the rule of Bashar al-Assad, Syria entered into a “mitigated neoliberal experience which weakened the production and agricultural sectors and created a mafia-style new bourgeoisie that is very monopolistic and very rentier and services-based”

August 23, 2012 By Sharif Abdel Kouddous, The Nation [Excerpts]

Zabadani, Syria —

Emad Khareeta says he had no choice but to defect.

The 23-year-old member of the Free Syrian Army stands outside his family home in a deserted section of town. Shards of concrete and glass litter the ground, the result of nearby shelling. The street is dark and quiet, Emad’s face only discernible in the glow of his cigarette.

He tells his story slowly.

In April 2010, Emad was called up for his mandatory army service.

When the revolution broke out in March 2011, he was deployed to various parts of the country — but it was his time in Homs, where he was sent on December 31, 2011, that compelled him to leave his unit.

Sometimes called the 'capital of the revolution,' the restive city in western Syria had been under siege by the regime of Bashar al-Assad since May and was the site of some of its bloodiest crackdowns.

Emad describes indiscriminate killing and widespread looting by fellow soldiers, as well as an incident that deeply affected him, when an unarmed truck driver shot in the arm and legs was left to bleed to death in front of him.

Ordered to fire on protesters at demonstrations, he says he aimed away.

"I was ready to die after what I had seen and been through," he says. "I don't want to oppress anyone." He eventually bribed an officer 20,000 Syrian pounds (approximately \$300) for a three-day vacation leave. On January 26, Emad left and never returned, making his way back home to Zabadani.

Emad is just one of thousands of army defectors who are switching sides in a conflict that began as a nonviolent popular uprising but has since spiraled into an increasingly bitter and polarizing civil war, one that has become a theater for geopolitical interests.

The armed opposition to the Assad regime first began to take form in the late summer of 2011, following months of mass demonstrations that were overwhelmingly nonviolent.

Facing repeated crackdowns and mass detentions by security forces, protesters began to arm themselves, many by purchasing smuggled weapons from border countries like Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan.

The revolt was further militarized by increasing numbers of army soldiers defecting to their local communities and bringing their weapons with them.

"They dragged us into arming ourselves," says Malek al-Tinnawi, a 25-year-old FSA volunteer. He limps badly as he goes to retrieve a newly acquired assault rifle. Two months ago, he was shot through the ankle in clashes with the army. The local doctor inserted a metal rod in his leg to replace the shattered bone.

"It's a good one, isn't it?" he smiles, brandishing the German-made H&K Model G3 rifle. "Not too used, almost like new."

The rifle was brought to him on foot, through a mountainous smuggling route from Lebanon.

Malek received it as a gift, along with two extra magazines and a chain of bullets, compliments of his fellow opposition fighters who gave it to him, he says, in acknowledgment of his role in being one of the first to demonstrate in Zabadani, and one of the first in the town to take up arms against the regime. Still, Malek says, he would have preferred for the revolution to have remained nonviolent. "When we were peaceful, we were stronger than when we had weapons," he says, patting the gun in his lap.

"This revolt started out with very modest demands concerning the state of emergency, and it has been dealt with since then as a war of the security state against its people," says Fawwaz Traboulsi, a Beirut-based historian and columnist.

“What should be understood is that this militarization of the response to a vast popular movement ended up by militarizing the opposition.”

As the revolt plunged deeper into a military confrontation this spring, countries in the Persian Gulf — primarily Saudi Arabia and Qatar — began to channel funds to the FSA on a sustained basis. More sophisticated arms and heavy weaponry has been funneled to the rebels through southern Turkey with assistance from the CIA.

“This doesn’t mean that the role of activist groups and the local coordinating committees diminished,” says Omar Dahi, a Syrian scholar at Hampshire College.

“The military power is so disproportionate, there was no way the revolt could have sustained itself and re-emerged time and again, despite the regime’s brutality, if it wasn’t for a vast network of support inside the country.”

Indeed, foreign assistance has not trickled into towns like Zabadani, where FSA fighters have had to rely primarily on local resources.

Numerous rebels describe selling family jewelry to buy weapons. They remain poorly equipped, armed mostly with assault rifles and some RPGs with limited stocks of ammunition.

“We don’t say enough that the Syrian revolution is a revolution of first, the rural poor,” Traboulsi says.

Over the past decade, under the rule of Bashar al-Assad, Syria entered into a “mitigated neoliberal experience which weakened the production and agricultural sectors and created a mafia-style new bourgeoisie that is very monopolistic and very rentier and services-based,” he says.

Those who have taken up arms against the regime are overwhelmingly Sunni. (An estimated 75 percent of Syrians are Sunnis.) Bashar al-Assad is part of Syria’s Alawite minority, a sect that dominates the higher ranks of government and the regime’s brutal security forces. “This revolution started with two sides: the regime and the people,” Malek says. “The regime made it so we talk about Alawi/Sunni. They made it sectarian.”

“The obvious thing that we know is that it is a revolution of the countryside, which is mainly pious,” Traboulsi says. “But it’s not a revolution where the jihadis command dominant positions.”

While the armed rebels generally started out as local groups scattered in countryside towns, the coordination between different opposition groups across the country is increasing.

Fighters in Zabadani say they are in contact with FSA units across Syria. “We had no coordination in the beginning but now it’s more central, more organized,” says Abu Adnan, an FSA battalion commander in Zabadani. “I am connected with the Free Syrian Army in all of Syria.”

Yet this appears to have had little effect on the ground.

As battles rage in Damascus and Aleppo, the conflict in Zababani has reached a stalemate.

The regime has set up isolated checkpoints in town, though soldiers rarely leave their posts, with the rest of town in the hands of locals and the FSA.

Instead of engaging the rebels, the army shells Zabadani with daily, indiscriminate fire from tanks and artillery stationed in the mountains above.

On a particularly heavy night of shelling, the rebels gather in a makeshift bunker and argue over how to respond. “We can’t just sit here and have shells falling on us and having people die every few days,” says one. Another shouts back:

“If we attack a tank, it will take so many resources to take it out — then what? They just replace the tank and shell us harder and arrest anyone in the area.”

After a rare two-day lull in the shelling, 25-year-old Kenaan al-Tinnawi decides to return to his home in Hara with his parents and younger brother, after having taken refuge at his uncle’s apartment in a safer part of town.

That night, they sit sipping tea in the third-floor family living room after finishing iftar, the sunset meal that marks the breaking of the fast during Ramadan.

Kenaan recalls his imprisonment a year earlier, when he was held for thirty-three days in a suffocating, overcrowded cell after being detained by security forces in a random sweep of the neighborhood.

His story is interrupted in mid-sentence by the deafening blast of a shell landing nearby. The lights go out, leaving the room in utter darkness.

Seconds later, another shell lands, this time on an adjacent rooftop no more than fifteen yards away. The house shakes with the ferocity of the blast. Shrapnel punctures the outer walls and shatters the balcony windows.

The family rushes downstairs in a panic, guided by the dim glow of cellphone screens. They huddle on the ground floor.

The shock of the attack quickly gives away to anger. “May God break their hands,” Kenaan’s mother says, tilting her head back and looking upwards at the ceiling.

Seventeen months after the Syrian revolt began, the violence shows no signs of abating and a political solution appears further out of reach.

“People have this habit of saying that this revolution, if you don’t like it, then it’s not a revolution,” Traboulsi says.

“But it’s important to give the Syrian people their right in starting a vast popular movement for radical change of the existing regime.”

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

**What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.
-- Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787**

**“Then Begins The Epoch Of Social
Revolution”
[Took Long Enough To Get Here]**

“At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or – what is but a legal expression for the same thing – with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto.

“From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters.

“Then begins an epoch of social revolution.”

-- K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I.

MORE:

“Requirements To Become The Liberating Class Par Excellence”

“No class in civil society can play this part unless it calls forth a phase of enthusiasm in its own ranks and those of the masses: a phase when it fraternizes and intermingles with society in general, is identified with society, is felt and recognized to be the universal representative of society, and when its own demands and rights are really the demands and rights of society itself, and it is in truth the social head and the social heart.

“Only in the name of society and its rights in general can a particular class vindicate its general domination. “The position of liberator cannot be taken by storm, simply through revolutionary energy and intellectual self-confidence.

“If the emancipation of a particular class is to be identified with the revolution of a people, if one social class is to be treated as the whole social order, then, on the other hand, all the deficiencies of society must be concentrated in another class; a definite class must be the universal stumbling-block, the embodiment of universal fetters ...

“If one class is to be the liberating class par excellence, then another class must contrariwise be the obvious subjugator.

“The general negative significance of the French aristocracy and clergy determined the general positive significance of the bourgeoisie, the class immediately confronting and opposing them.”

-- Karl Marx; Contribution to the Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right (Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, 1844).

“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

Advice Column: Ask Top, Your Non-Friendly Neighborhood First Sergeant (Ep.1)



June 18, 2012 by Paul, The Duffle Blog [Excerpt]. About The Author: His hobbies include chewing ass, laughing at Second Lieutenants, killing people with his bare hands, and telling soldiers to get their damn hands out of their pockets.

DEAR TOP: I'm in an infantry platoon operating in Afghanistan.

We've had a few engagements thus far, and I've noticed that our Lieutenant is always freaking out. Instead of firing back or calling support on the radio, he's been screaming ADDRAC repeatedly. What the hell does that mean?

— ACRONYMED OUT in Jalalabad, Afghanistan

DEAR ACRONYMED OUT: First off troop, why the hell are you calling out an LT on the internet? You think I'm going to save your sorry ass? I've been in more firefights than your goddamned height in inches.

But to adress your question, I think you should know that cherry LT's are something that you just have to bear. Obviously he's freaking out over the sound of AK-fire because it isn't like Call of Duty, and so his shock is making him revert back to his OCS training and throwing out weird acronyms hoping it'll impress the platoon.

You gotta break in your LT right.

This reminds me of Vicenza, Italy, 1974 – 509th Airborne Battalion Combat Team.

We had an LT by the name of Petra... or I think it was Petraeus or some shit.

Being a West Point grad he was trying to be all prim and proper, which is the exact opposite of what a unit like that needed.

Before long while we would do our jumps the ole LT would yell useful acronyms like, "fuckin LEG" to all the five jump chump POG's.

I truly knew LT would go far.

For future reference, ADDRAC is Alert, Direction, Description, Range, Assignment, & Control.

You should've already known that from FM 12-17-8. You better read the damn thing before the next Army retention board flushes your ass like the rest of the turds.

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.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Beit Ommar:

“The Village Is More Prominently Known For The Staggering Number Of Child Arrests That Have Occurred Over The Past Few Years”

“Recently However, It Is The House Demolition Orders Issued By The Israeli Occupation Army That Mark The Latest Attempt To Destabilize The Village”



Melal and Jawad Awads' house



Photo by Lara Oak

On a daily basis, Palestinians who have full documented rights to their land and property are being internally displaced in a very calculated and orchestrated effort to remove Palestinians from their indigenous lands.

September 5, 2012 By Lara Oak, Palestine Monitor

In the village of Beit Ommar, situated in the Hebron district between the settlement bloc of Gosh Ezion and route 60, the villagers are facing yet another string of challenges.

The village is more prominently known for the staggering number of child arrests that have occurred over the past few years. It is estimated that around 130 detainees are currently being held in Israeli prisons, often without charge or representation. Recently however, it is the house demolition orders issued by the Israeli occupation army that mark the latest attempt to destabilize the village.

Out of the fragile security from the center of the village, the path winds down to the open fields around. For the people living on the fringes of the village, this short ride feels like the separation between two worlds. These fringes often act as the buffer zones between Palestinian villages and the ever-encroaching Israeli illegal settlements that can be seen on all the surrounding hills.

Seven houses and two other structures have received orders that they will be destroyed on an unknown date. The only guaranteed information provided by the army is that the order is non-negotiable and will take place soon, but without a definite date.

The Palestine Monitor visited two of the families who had recently received their demolition notices and discussed how this has affected their lives and what it means to their future endeavors.

On arriving at Melal and Jawad Awads' house, the view of the hills, luscious green fields and the unavoidable gleaming bricks of the settlement of Karmi Tsur loomed up as if in a greeting.

Although it appears as if the settlement is a world away, the Awad house has become the focal point in the land expropriation for the settlement and their building work has not gone unnoticed.

“Why are they allowed to build whatever they want whereas I cannot even add a room to my house, when I own this land and this house?” Melal asks angrily.

She is full of the injustice of her situation as only a few weeks ago they found out the drastic consequences of their decision to add an extension to the house.

They have been living in the house for ten years and in the last two decided to build an extension. This decision will most probably result in them losing their home within the next six months if they are lucky, less than three if they are not.

The Awad story is not uncommon in Beit Ommar. A further six houses have house demolition orders hanging over them and are awaiting the dreaded day that the bulldozer will arrive at their door. The Awads received the letter that they prayed would never come, on August 22 in the middle of the night. Since then Melal has cried everyday.

“I sold all my gold to build these two extra storeys to the house, all of our money. Everything went into it so that one day my children could live upstairs,” Melal says passionately.

But losing their home is not an option for Melal as she affirms: “This is our land, we live here and we will die here, we have nowhere else to go.”

When questioned about their plans, if any, to prevent this demolition going forward, Jawad and Melal are both at loss.

“Tell us, what can we do, what can we do, can you help us, do you know any organisations that can stop the army from pulling down our house?” they desperately ask.

The official support they have been given so far is from the St. Eve Law firm in Bethlehem who have registered the demolition, but they too have extremely little power over the ruling. For now, Melal has draped the unfinished window frames with cloths to give the appearance to the world that they have moved in and are fully installed in the house.

This demolition order is the finale in a string of clashes with the Israeli army that have befallen the Awad family. Only in June did they manage to see the release of their second son from jail. Both of their sons, aged 16 and 17, were in prison and released at a total cost of \$15,000 to the family. Given Jawad has been unemployed for the last four years and the family of eight survive off Melal’s teaching salary that is only sporadically paid at the beginning of every month, this demolition order will see their only investment crumble into the ground.

Contemplating the reality of the house being demolished is impossible for Melal and Jawad as the loss would be too great to quantify.

Losing not only their house but also their bountiful grape, almond and olive trees to neighbours that they have never even seen, let alone met, is a thought that neither can nor dare to imagine.

Further up the road on the outskirts of Beit Ommar, a similar story is unfolding.

The army also paid a visit to Ibrahim Arar on the same night to inform him that his seven meter well that he constructed is illegal and will be demolished. The well lies in Area C, decreed by the Oslo Accords as territory under full Israeli civil and military control.

Ibrahim is also in a similar situation where his livelihood depends on maintaining and using the well.

He took out a loan of \$25,000 to help pay for the well which pumps water to his poly-tunnel of broad-beans. He hoped that over a period of four years, if each year provided a good harvest, he would be able to repay the loan.

Now, however, if the well is destroyed, then Ibrahim’s income disappears with it. “If they destroy the well then they destroy us too,” he remarked. “Maybe we will eat stones instead of the vegetables that we grow.”

Similarly to the Awad family, Ibrahim cannot envisage life after the demolition, as so much is invested in being able to make use of this water supply that without it, all his crops would dry up. This would result in his and his entire family’s way of life being entirely altered.

For now, Ibrahim is busy cultivating his crops and spends his days tending to the harvest; he could only talk briefly as work still had to be done, no matter the trials or difficulties that loom threateningly over his head.

Acts of house demolitions by the Israeli occupying army are not a new phenomena.

Since 1967, Israel has practised a range of policies leading to the internal displacement of about 160,000 Palestinians within the occupied West bank and Gaza.

Human rights groups are lobbying for this to be viewed as a war crime.

On a daily basis, Palestinians who have full documented rights to their land and property are being internally displaced in a very calculated and orchestrated effort to remove Palestinians from their indigenous lands.

The situation for the Awad and Arar families is unfortunately familiar.

The reasons for the demolitions that they are presented with by the army, are illegitimate in the eyes of international law and the international community at large. Nonetheless, these demolitions will go ahead, as once again Israel acts with impunity and another home is turned to rubble.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves “Israeli.”]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**Governments Go To War On
Children:
Truancy Fine Factories Out Of
Control:
“It’s Like A Secret Society. How
Many Parents And Children Can We
Scare?”**

“Elizabeth Diaz Sentenced To Jail For 18 Days Because She Couldn’t Pay \$1,600 In Fines Assessed When She Was 14 Years Old”

Another student, Elizabeth Diaz, was sentenced to jail for 18 days because she couldn’t pay \$1,600 in fines assessed when she was 14 years old.

Diaz’s owed her school absences to chronic illnesses when she was younger--fibromyalgia and bipolar disorder--but she was on track to graduate high school until she was jailed.

By Annette Fuentes, The Atlantic Monthly, September 2012 [Excerpts]

The judge peered down at Ashley Derrick from the bench and scolded her for being late to a 9 a.m. hearing in his Garland, Texas, courtroom.

Derrick, 26, explained that she’d hit traffic coming from one of her two jobs as a phlebotomist.

Her alleged crime: contributing to her child’s non-attendance at school, a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$500 and community service for each unexcused absence.

“Your son has six lates to school and two leaving early,” Judge John Sholden declared. “How do you plead?”

“Not guilty,” answered Derrick. The judge set a pretrial hearing for June 27.

Outside the courtroom, Derrick, who was dressed in brightly printed scrubs, looked weary but resigned.

Her son Marcus, 7, had indeed missed class time but it was for medical appointments. “My son has chronic asthma and also ADHD,” she said, “and he panics a little when he has breathing problems. So we have him seeing a counselor.”

Marcus’ doctor had been tardy herself in providing mandatory excuse notes to his school, prompting the principal to file a truancy case in the Texas court.

“There’s no flexibility,” Derrick said. “But I know I will have the doctor’s notes, so I pled not guilty.”

The harried African American single mom was among the hundreds of parents and students who attended truancy court on that single May day in Dallas County. Unlike

Derrick, most pled guilty or no contest and were given a fine of at least \$195, due in 30 days.

Students risked losing their drivers licenses, too, and those who failed to appear in court for one reason or another risked arrest warrants.

Dallas-area school districts are not uniquely harsh on suspected truants.

Around the country, school administrators, elected officials, and prosecutors are tackling the truancy problem through the criminal justice system, ratcheting up enforcement, slapping students and parents with big-dollar fines, and threatening jail time.

Atlanta, Georgia, and Lynchburg, Virginia sharpened their truancy policies this year with the aim of increasing prosecutions. In Detroit, Los Angeles, and Compton, the police sweep the streets for truants and enforce daytime curfew laws.

Supporters say the truancy crackdown is critical to improving test scores and high school graduation rates, but there's a fiscal motivation, too.

With school budgets cut to the bone, every dollar counts, and each absent child represents lost state funding.

Some districts get a share of fines levied by the courts, providing an additional incentive for issuing tickets.

While a recent study from the non-profit Get Schooled found that truancy cuts across all demographics, those most affected by harsh enforcement are low-income families whose financial struggles can contribute to attendance problems, and students like Marcus Derrick with health problems or learning disabilities, who may require costly educational interventions that school districts want to avoid by punting the problem off to the courts.

The absurdities of harsh truancy policies made headlines in May when a Houston-area judge jailed Diane Tran, 17, for missing too much school and fined her \$100.

News reports revealed that Tran was an 11th grade honor student working two jobs to support siblings after her parents divorced and moved out of state.

Tran's treatment attracted the public's attention, but thousands of students and their parents are regularly churned through similar courts without public scrutiny of the process, its costs, or its effectiveness.

"We're paying more attention because education is more necessary than ever before," said Joanna Heilbrunn, senior research and policy analyst at the National Center for School Engagement. "But there is always a reason a kid is not in school, and just fining the family doesn't do anything. Most families are low income and the barriers stem from income issues."

The Truancy Fine Factories

Tyler M., 16, and his mother stepped up to Judge Sholden's bench in the Garland, Texas truancy court that same May morning. Sholden read the charge: 12 unexcused absences, a first offense. The teen pled guilty and the judge hit him with a \$195 fine. Stung by sticker shock, Tyler asked, "Why do I have to pay a fine?"

"It costs \$450,000 to run this courtroom. Who's going to pay for it?" an annoyed Sholden said. "Do you think the taxpayers of Garland should pay for it?"

The economics of truancy enforcement are boldly on display in Texas' courts.

From 2005 to 2009, truancy cases filed by public schools in the Lone Star state grew annually, from 85,000 to 120,000. Truancy courts are the traffic courts of public education, processing hundreds of parents and students daily in assembly-line fashion--even during summer months.

The Dallas courts alone handle an average of 35,000 cases a year, and their revenue is eye-popping: just over \$2 million in FY 2009 and nearly \$1.8 million in FY 2011.

Truancy court was founded in 2003 because the problem of unexcused absences was overwhelming the juvenile court system; now Dallas has five truancy courts, each with its own judge and staff.

"They've developed a whole system in Dallas that has to feed itself to justify its existence," said Deborah Fowler, deputy director of the legal advocacy group Texas Appleseed.

There's another potential revenue stream flowing from truancy courts.

Under the Texas education code, school districts may enter into a memorandum of understanding with the truancy courts in their county to divide up the booty.

"For some districts, it's standard operating procedure to share fines with the court," said Lisa Graybill, former legal director of the ACLU of Texas. "Too many people are unaware or indifferent to that."

Fines can cost up to \$500 per truancy, due within 30 days unless a judge gives an extension. For many students and families, it's another debt they can't pay.

And if fines aren't paid, they can convert into an arrest warrant when a student turns 17.

In Hidalgo County, in southwest Texas, that's exactly what happened to some 60 teenagers from poverty-level families who racked up thousands of dollars in truancy penalties.

In 2010, the ACLU filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of two 18-year-old plaintiffs who'd been sent to adult detention facilities for failure to pay their fines.

Francisco de Luna owed more than \$11,000 in truancy fines, accumulated over five years; he was sentenced to 132 days in jail.

Another student, Elizabeth Diaz, was sentenced to jail for 18 days because she couldn't pay \$1,600 in fines assessed when she was 14 years old.

"Our clients were indigents. They weren't prepared for the choice of going to jail or paying exorbitant fines," said the ACLU's Graybill.

Diaz's owed her school absences to chronic illnesses when she was younger--fibromyalgia and bipolar disorder--but she was on track to graduate high school until she was jailed.

When her school learned of her arrest, it withdrew her enrollment, and she missed critical state exams, Graybill said.

De Luna also faced serious challenges that contributed to his absenteeism.

His father died when de Luna was 13 and his family's finances, along with the teen's mental health, suffered. "He got into trouble in school for saggy pants, talking back to teachers--not unusual," Graybill said, "and he started accruing these criminal tickets." Eventually, De Luna dropped out. "It's sad because with some intervention he could have stayed in school," Graybill said.

"Dropping the hammer on these kids is not an effective way to keep them in school." The ACLU lawsuit forced a change of policy in Hidalgo. The court must now determine if students are indigent, and if so, judges cannot jail them for failure to pay fines.

Exorbitant fines and jail time also plagued families in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, where the public school district has been using the courts to deal with a very real attendance problem.

Last year, the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia and the NAACP filed suit against the Lebanon School District, charging officials there with imposing fines far in excess of legal limits. The complaint alleges that the district went on a veritable ticketing spree between 2005 and 2010, filing 8,000 truancy violations and collecting \$1.3 million in fines, all of which ended up in the district's coffers.

One plaintiff, a single parent named Omary Rodriguez-Fuentes, received 29 truancy tickets over three years along with fines totaling just under \$7,000. To take care of the debt, Rodriguez-Fuentes was paying \$150 a month from her disability income. State law limits fines to \$300 but Lebanon schools and the truancy court routinely violated those limits, according to the complaint. In July, the court hearing the lawsuit granted it class action status, adding 170 more plaintiffs to the original four.

Lead attorney Michael Churchill says that shifting demographics over the last decade are at the core of Lebanon's truancy woes, with newer Latino residents now forming a majority in the schools and longtime white residents feeling resentment. Truancy is at 14 percent and the dropout rate is 45 percent. "For the most part, the Hispanics don't have lot of interaction with the rest of the community," he said. "Lots of students aren't comfortable or doing well in school, so there's a high dropout rate. The schools' reaction was, instead of offering services, they went after truants."

The lawsuit is far from resolved but it has forced the district to repay about \$400,000 in illegal fines to families; the courts there are now following the letter of the law in imposing new fines.

Churchill is still fighting for \$108,000 more in refunds for plaintiffs, and a trial is scheduled for September. Meanwhile, the district's ticketing blitz has slowed, which school officials attribute to the lawsuit making parents more careful about truancy.

Truancy Court's 'Secret Society'

In Rhode Island, the truancy court program has become infamous, not for sky-high fines and voluminous dockets but for the large proportion of students with learning and other disabilities who have landed in its iron grip.

For Rozanne Thomasian and her daughter Cheyenne, the nightmare began in 2007 when Cheyenne was in seventh grade. Cheyenne, who attended a public school in South Kingston, had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) because of severe ADHD and Tourette Syndrome and the medications she was taking for anxiety.

The meds caused stomach problems, which in turn caused school absences and tardiness.

Thomasian learned that the school had filed a truancy petition for Cheyenne's excessive absences when a truancy officer came to their home. She had no idea she needed doctor's notes to justify her daughter's absences.

"There were no set guidelines," Thomasian said in a phone interview. "Each district had their own definition of truancy--if a child is late once, or five times--there was no consistency from school to school, even in the same district."

Thomasian, a single mom who works as a nurse, and Cheyenne fell into the rabbit's hole of the family court's truancy diversion program. There they remained stuck for three years.

Without understanding the legal process or possible penalties, mother and daughter signed away their right to be heard in either family court or truancy court at their very first hearing.

The magistrate didn't question the merit of the school's petition but instead ruled Cheyenne "wayward," putting her under court supervision that required weekly meetings.

Due process didn't seem to mean much during the hearing; no transcripts were made of the court proceedings, making it impossible for the mother to appeal her case.

"It's like a secret society. How many parents and children can we scare?" said Thomasian, who attended many of the hearings with Cheyenne.

When the judge threatened to send Cheyenne to detention during one meeting, Thomasian contacted the ACLU. Soon after, the magistrate declared that Cheyenne had “graduated” from truancy court.

“What’s going on with Rhode Island is schools are using the truancy program for kids who are difficult to educate,” said the ACLU’s Courtney Bowe. She is the lead attorney on a lawsuit against the courts and school districts that participate in the truancy program. “Rhode Island is not alone, but because of the way they define truancy, they’ve thrown the rule book out of window,” Bowe said.

Cheyenne was not the only student with disabilities ensnared in the truancy program. ACLU attorneys and their allies found that one-third of students under truancy court supervision had Individualized Education Programs. A much higher number had disabilities that had not been diagnosed by their schools.

One plaintiff, Alin N., 13, had sickle cell anemia and missed school during bouts of extreme pain. Truancy court founder Judge Jeremiah Jeremiah issued an arrest order for the boy and threatened his mother with jail if he didn’t go to school one day in February 2010.

His mother sent him to school, but once there, his condition became critical and the school had to call an ambulance.

“Our state law is so clear that kids with disabilities are not supposed to be caught up in truancy proceedings if their absences are related to their disabilities,” said Anne Mulready, supervising attorney at the Rhode Island Disability Law Center, who is involved in the lawsuit.

“But as more cities face budget cuts, we’ve seen schools unwilling to do things that five years ago, before the economy took a turn for the worse, they would have done. Sometimes it appears schools have done an end run around special ed services by using truancy court.”

Fifteen plaintiffs have joined the suit, which is currently bogged down in procedural issues. After it was filed in 2010, five districts dropped out of the truancy program altogether and Judge Jeremiah retired. A new judge issued clearer guidelines for truancy court, including a rule that all hearings must be recorded. Family Court spokesperson Craig Berke declined to comment on the pending lawsuit but he said the court is proud of what he described as a successful program. Some school districts dropped out of the program, Berke said, because they did not want to incur the cost of litigation, but he said that they planned to use the truancy courts once the matter is settled.

“City Police Also Conducted Truancy Sweeps And Were Known To Ticket Tardy Students On Their Way To School, Sometimes Handcuffing Them”

Los Angeles has attacked its truancy problem, which reached about 36 percent last year, with a daytime curfew and aggressive policing and tickets for all those violating it.

The crackdown hasn’t managed to improve attendance, but it has sent thousands of kids and their parents to court and incited a student revolt against the policies.

Cynthia Gonzalez joined the campaign against the truancy sweeps as a sophomore at Roosevelt High, where she was editor of the newspaper and a college-track student.

But good academics didn't shield her from truancy enforcement. "Three cops stopped me one day a block from school," she recalled. "I wasn't even supposed to be in school anyway. I was really mad. It was embarrassing."

She was lucky the police let her go without a fine. "My friends who got tickets were outraged. They had to pay \$250 and their parents would have to miss work to go to court," Gonzalez said.

From 2009 to 2011, L.A. school police issued 33,500 tickets to students on or near school campuses; nearly a third were for violations of the daytime curfew, according to data obtained by the Community Rights, the ACLU of Southern California, and public counsel.

City police also conducted truancy sweeps and were known to ticket tardy students on their way to school, sometimes handcuffing them.

Curfews are a popular prescription for curbing crime, but there is scant proof they work. A widely cited 2003 study by Kenneth Adams, funded by the National Institute of Justice, surveyed the research and found little "to support the argument that curfews reduce crime and criminal victimization." Enforcement generates arrests for curfew-related violations, which Adams suggests "needlessly add to the criminal histories of some juveniles."

The Community Rights Campaign spent five years fighting rampant curfew ticketing of L.A.'s public school students, who are overwhelmingly black, Latino, and low-income. They spoke about unreliable public bus service, neighborhood violence, health issues, and financial hardships at home as hurdles to kids getting to school on time.

Many students told of ditching school rather than risking a fine for being late.

In the spring of 2011, the L.A. police halted ticketing tardy students and stopped running truancy sweeps during the first hour of school. In October, the school police followed suit.

Last February, the L.A. City Council amended the daytime curfew: no tickets for students late to school; no fines or court appearances for the first two curfew violations; and fines for a third offense limited to \$20.

But the campaign's broader agenda is to improve the quality of L.A.'s public schools to entice students to attend, not avoid, class.

The Tyrant Assad Kills More Palestinian Refugees

07/09/2012 Ma'an

Seven Palestinians were killed on Thursday as the Syrian army bombed the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus, sources in the camp said.

Forces loyal to President Bashar Assad bombed Safad and al-Jaouna areas and the al-Baseel Hospital, local Yarmouk media reported, adding that residents of the camp would protest the shelling outside the al-Waseem Mosque after evening prayers.

At least 20 people were killed in Syrian army mortar and artillery bombardment in southern Damascus, residents and local emergency workers said.

Yarmouk camp and the districts surrounding it have seen the most prolonged fighting in the capital since forces loyal to Assad launched a counter-offensive to push rebels out of the city two months ago.

Residents in the camp said that for the last two weeks Yarmouk had been closed off from neighboring districts and that they had heard regular clashes. Since early on Thursday they reported heavy bombardment in the area.

They said the army may have intensified its attack on the district in the belief that rebels, who have been sheltering in the nearby neighborhoods of Tadamon and Hajar al-Aswad, were slipping into Yarmouk, whose Palestinian residents are suspected by authorities of siding with the rebels.

Assad's forces are trying to re-establish full control in Damascus as well as fighting rebels in the northern city of Aleppo. Persistent air strikes and bombardment of rebel-held areas in northern and southern provinces in the country, have prompted waves of refugees to flee to Turkey and Jordan.

In the southern province of Deraa, rebels said 45 army tanks were sent to the border town of Tel Shehab, an anti-Assad stronghold which has served as a transit point for refugees crossing into Jordan.

They said rebels withdrew from the town before the army offensive started. "No shots were fired. There were no clashes," rebel fighter Abu Younis said. Four civilians were killed, a relatively light toll, he said.

"They have burnt homes of several activists but they are only entering homes of known activists and families harboring the rebels. Over forty people have been arrested," he said.

Another rebel fighter, who called himself Abu Omar, said the army offensive had been brief.

"The security forces have retreated from the center of the town but are on its fringe right now and there is a column of tanks on the highway leading to the town," he said.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

S. African Police “Shot Fleeing And Surrendering Men Beyond The Eyes Of The Media”

“Most Of The Deaths At Marikana, 100 Km (60 Miles) Northwest Of Johannesburg, Occurred Away From The Cameras”

Sep 7, 2012 By Peroshni Govender and Tiisetso Motsoeneng, Reuters [Excerpts]

MARIKANA, South Africa (Reuters) - A survivor of last month’s police killing of 34 strikers at a South African mine says officers shot fleeing and surrendering men beyond the eyes of the media, challenging police assertions that they fired only in self-defence.

The testimony of Malusi King Danga, a 27-year-old general worker at Lonmin’s Marikana mine, sheds light on shootings on a rocky outcrop near the platinum mine on August 16.

Reuters Television footage of one incident showed nearly a dozen striking miners being cut down in a barrage of automatic weapon fire as they emerged from behind a police vehicle.

The images, relayed around the world, conjured up memories of South Africa’s racist past.

However, most of the deaths at Marikana, 100 km (60 miles) northwest of Johannesburg, occurred away from the cameras.

Danga was able to tell his story only after being released from three weeks in jail on Thursday.

His testimony to Reuters suggests that at least three victims were shot either hiding or fleeing from police, or surrendering to them.

Police spokesman Dennis Adriaio said he could not comment, pending the outcome of a government inquiry. However, Danga’s allegations are likely to deepen public anger with the security forces and the ruling African National Congress.

Danga, who left his home five years ago in the impoverished Eastern Cape in search of work, said the shooting began after strikers who had gathered on a rocky hill that served as rally point fled police who were trying to hem them in.

“It was my first day on the hill. I was expecting the employer to address us. I was there for about five minutes and police started putting up the razor wire,” he said, speaking before and after a traditional cleansing ceremony close to the scene of the “Marikana massacre”.

“People starting running and police fired a shot. I was running away to the informal settlement in the opposite direction and police chased me and said ‘Go back to where you came from.’ I ran back towards a second hill, a small hill.”

“I was so desperate. I didn’t know where to go. Police circled the boulders. I ran up and down trying to escape, to take another route. We were trapped. I crouched and hid myself under one of the rocks,” he said.

Danga said he belonged to the breakaway militant union AMCU (Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union), which is in a turf war for members with the dominant National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

He gave his testimony in English, which many South African miners - whose languages are mainly Xhosa and Zulu - do not speak well.

Danga recalled: “Then I heard the police. I heard a gun shot. An old man was hiding near me. His foot was exposed. I heard another gunshot and I heard him say ‘I am finished’. I asked him ‘Why do you say you are finished, Madala (grandfather)? Then I saw his boots were full of blood. The old man was shot.”

Danga said he did not know what happened to the man.

He then described another striker running towards his hiding place. “I heard a gun shot. It seemed like he was running away. I heard a gunshot and I saw him fall face down. A third man raised his arms to surrender and police shot his hand and then his foot and he lost his balance.”

It is not known whether either of these two men survived.

Crouched in a crevice between some rocks, Danga was hidden from policemen combing the scene but thinks officers in a helicopter hovering above may have spotted him. Police on the ground then singled him out by his clothes.

“After the third guy was shot, I waited and I heard the policeman say ‘All of those on the ground, come out’. He said: ‘You with the shorts and striped t-shirt - get out.’”

“As I was coming up they kicked me in my teeth and one of the gold fillings fell out,” he said, lifting his lips to reveal a gap between his front teeth.

When the first group of miners was released this week, disturbing claims of beatings and assault emerged. The Independent Police Investigative Directorate said it had received nearly 200 complaints from the arrested miners.

Danga said that four days into his detention in a police station in Bethanie, a town 50 km (30 miles) away, police assaulted the group while searching for a nail they thought was hidden in the cell.

“On Tuesday, they beat us and they beat us. They said they were looking for a nail in the cell. We did not have one,” he said, anger and frustration creeping into his voice.

“While they were searching they found a cell phone on one of the guys. They klapped (slapped) him. They kicked him. They stepped on him. We were all there. They did this in front of us. What about his dignity? While they were hitting him, other police were laughing at him.

“Another guy washed his blood-stained clothes. He wrapped himself in a blanket. The police pulled the blanket off him. He was naked and they laughed at him.”

When his mother died in 2007, Danga became the family’s main breadwinner and headed to the platinum mines near Johannesburg to support his three younger brothers.

After deductions such as tax, a medical levy and pension contributions, Danga said he took home about 3,000 rand a month for toiling away as a general worker in stifling conditions hundreds of metres underground.

“I have to pay for my brother who is at university and for another two young boys. I could not afford to keep them in the Eastern Cape so I brought them to Marikana. After everything is paid, I have about 200 rand left,” he said.

Danga said he was lucky to be alive but was still haunted by the horrors he had witnessed.

“I saw three people being shot and I am disturbed. Every time I close my eyes, I see it again,” he said. “God had his hand over me that day. I was spared.”

The Syrian Town Of Al-Bab: “There Were No Obvious Military Targets In Any Of The Areas Bombarded At The Start Of This Week”

“Thirty Six People Were Thought To Have Died, Although The Figure Was Later Reduced To 32”

“We Know We Are Not Going To Get Any Help From West; We Are Alone, We Don’t Need Their Empty Words”

05 September 2012 By Kim Sengupta, The Independent

Ahmed al-Sa’eed had been queuing for bread when the air strikes and shelling began.

The dozens of people who had been waiting patiently in line for more than two hours dispersed, frantically running home through streets being hit by rocket fire to make sure their families were alright.

The house where Ahmed lived in the Syrian town of al-Bab with his family received direct hits from Bashar al-Assad’s warplanes on Monday, the latest in a series of punitive and lethal assaults from air and ground.

The front half collapsed into the street, flames shot out from the back. He joined neighbours frantically digging with anything at hand through the dust to try and find those buried under the rubble.

It was a futile attempt to save lives: the bodies of Adel and Amal, brothers of Ahmed and Marwa, a sister, were found three hours later along with that of a friend who had come to visit. Another house, three doors along, was also badly damaged, killing two others. Around the corner another building had collapsed leaving three more dead, including a boy aged three and a six-year-old girl.

Thirty six people were thought to have died, although the figure was later reduced to 32.

I knew eight of those who were killed, including Ahmed’s family, having met them during my stay in the town last month.

Of these eight, only one, Yahya Mohammed Nassar, was a rebel fighter. Another, Ibrahim al-Hamdo, an activist, had taken part in protests but had never held a gun.

There were no obvious military targets in any of the areas bombarded at the start of this week.

Al-Bab is paying a hard price for its defiance; fighters from there formed the largest contingent to take part in the defence of Aleppo and the residents had withstood regular attacks from a military base on the outskirts before chasing out the soldiers.

Around 250 people have been killed since the start of the uprising and quarter of its population of 200,000 are refugees, either in outlying villages or across the border in Turkey.

Ahmed, a 36-year-old office worker, has to now look after the children of his sibling as well as his own and his elderly parents. They would be safer, he felt, outside the town. "It will be my responsibility if anything happened to them, so it is better if they go away for the time being," he said.

"We are all very sad about what has happened: my father and mother are in a state of shock. We did not think this would happen, not after the army camp went. We felt we were safe. Do you remember how happy everyone was?"

Last month the regime troops fled in the early hours of the morning after days of attacks by the rebels.

A few were captured; most fled towards Aleppo.

That morning the celebrating residents streamed into the encampment, a former agricultural college, chanting slogans of the revolution. Two tanks which had been "liberated" were driven through the town, careering across the roads.

In the afternoon, I accompanied opposition activists who had gone into the camp to bring out dead and injured soldiers abandoned by regime forces when they left. A jet, a Czech-made L-39 Albatross, repeatedly strafed the base and later fired into a residential neighbourhood. An 11-year-old boy, Abed al-Rahman, lost a leg in a missile strike. It was one of the first indications that the regime was preparing to use air strikes with impunity in civilian areas.

The following weeks saw a slight respite in attacks with the regime trying to cope with rebel assaults in Aleppo. Now, with an impasse in the fighting in the city, outlying areas are once again getting hammered, with al-Bab getting special attention.

On the day that al-Bab was getting bombed and the regime carried out other attacks across the country, the French Foreign Minister, Laurent Fabius, threatened a "massive and lightning-fast" response from the West if the Assad regime used chemical weapons. Similar noises have been made Barack Obama and David Cameron.

To the people of al-Bab such posturing just draws hollow laughter.

Omar Abdullah al-Hani, whose 73-year-old father Abdullah was injured in the attack, said:

"So they will let Bashar kill children, old people, as long as he does not use chemical weapons. What are they afraid of, chemical gasses getting to Europe and America? We know we are not going to get any help from West; we are alone, we don't need their empty words."

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

Military Resistance distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **Military Resistance has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is Military Resistance endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, a copy of this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.