

Military Resistance 10J12



**“I Am Once Again Appalled By The
Actions Of The Officer Corps”**

**“I Am Ashamed Of The Officer
Corps”**

**“How About Busting A Few Of These
Irresponsible Senior Leaders To E-1 And
Granting Them A Less-Than-Honorable
Discharge To Match Their Dishonorable
Actions?”**

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
10.22.12

Another Army Times issue, another revelation about an officer charged with misconduct. I am once again appalled by the actions of the officer corps.

Having served in grades E-1 to E-7 and O-1 to O-5, I have trouble grasping the total lack of judgment and accountability recently displayed by some of our senior leaders.

A while ago, we had a colonel guilty of fraud and adultery, and yet, in a ruling by his "peers," he keeps his rank and serves no time.

Then it was a toxic three-star general and a four-star general with travel fraud and now a one-star general with a sodomy case.

In almost every instance, the accused makes "not-my-fault" statements. The colonel blamed his wife; a general blamed his staff.

I am ashamed of the officer corps.

The unaccountability afforded to these senior leaders is a slap in the face to the many officers and noncommissioned officers who serve honorably and lead by positive example.

Where is the accountability and equity inherently promised by the Uniform Code of Military Justice?

We already had the officers on the court-martial board cheapen the rank and tarnish the image of the officer corps by their failure to hold one officer accountable for his actions and punish him accordingly.

How about busting a few of these irresponsible senior leaders to E-1 and granting them a less-than-honorable discharge to match their dishonorable actions?

I can only hope that the top leadership finally "gets it" and takes definitive, strong action to reinstate the concept that an officer is responsible for his own actions and behavior, as well as everything his/her unit does or fails to do, and hence is accountable for the results.

Lt. Col. Richard S. McDermott (ret.)
West Columbia, S.C.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Foreign Occupation "Servicemember" Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan: Nationality Not Announced

October 21, 2012 AP

A foreign servicemember died following an improvised explosive device attack in southern Afghanistan today.

Daughter of St. Petersburg (FL) Assistant Police Chief Dies In Afghanistan



Army Spc. Brittany B. Gordon was the daughter of St. Petersburg Assistant Police Chief Cedric Gordon and his former wife, Brenda Gordon. [Courtesy of Gordon family]

October 15, 2012 By Keyonna Summers and Kameel Stanley, Times Staff Writers,
Tampa Bay Times

ST. PETERSBURG — Days after her 24th birthday and just months before she was to return home this year, an Army soldier from St. Petersburg has died in Afghanistan.

Spc. Brittany B. Gordon, a 2006 St. Petersburg High School graduate, was the daughter of St. Petersburg Assistant Police Chief Cedric Gordon and his former wife, Brenda Gordon. On Saturday, the Army informed the family of her death.

"She made a major impact on everyone in her short life," said her aunt, the Rev. Debbie Thompson. "We just thank God for the memories of her we have in our hearts."

Gordon appears to be the first military woman from this area — Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco, Hernando and Citrus counties — to die in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It's devastating," said St. Petersburg police Chief Chuck Harmon, who spoke briefly Sunday to Cedric Gordon. "I don't think there can be anything more painful to go through. ... Our thoughts and prayers are with him."

Relatives said the military personnel who visited her mother's St. Petersburg home Saturday night did not provide details of Gordon's death. Gordon's mother spent the morning accepting visitors before leaving Sunday afternoon for Dover, Del., to be on hand for the arrival her only child's remains, scheduled for 11:45 p.m.

Family members who gathered at Gordon's grandmother's home Sunday in St. Petersburg smiled through tears as they recalled the young woman's focused determination, infectious smile and "spirit of gold." Gordon, they said, was an accomplished pianist, basketball player and recreational dancer.

But her real passion was helping others.

After high school, Gordon, who had expressed an interest in political science and law, spent a year at the University of Florida before setting her sights on a military career.

Neighbor Wendell Norton said she tried to talk Gordon out of it, but Gordon wouldn't hear of it.

"Her dream was to serve," said Brittany Gordon's cousin, the Rev. Evelyn Thompson. "If I would describe her, she had no fear. She wanted to make a difference. Because that's what military people do: make a difference in the lives of others."

And Gordon put in the work to make it happen.

She immediately embarked on a fitness regimen to ensure she made the military weight limit, relatives said. She graduated from basic training in 2010, and spent a year in Seattle before being sent to Afghanistan.

Some 20,000 of the 205,000 service members currently serving in Afghanistan are women, according to the Department of Defense. Pentagon statistics show that, as of February, 144 military women have been killed and 865 wounded in combat and noncombat incidents in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The Defense Department says there have been more than 2,000 total military deaths in Afghanistan.

Gordon worked in military communications, relatives said, doing computer technology. A photo of Gordon, beaming while aboard her first helicopter ride, hints at her adventurous side.

Loved ones had hoped to hear all about it when Gordon, who had celebrated her birthday Oct. 2, returned home in December.

"But God had a better home for her," Evelyn Thompson said.

News of Gordon's death spread quickly through the community.

Watson Haynes, president of the Pinellas County Urban League, said he learned the news Sunday afternoon at church.

Cedric Gordon has been a member of the organization's crime committee for years. The two men also are friends.

"It just totally threw me," Haynes said. "For him to experience this, it just feels personal."

Haynes said he remembers Brittany Gordon as a smart woman who looked up to her dad. He was just as proud of her.

"He loved her so much," Haynes said. "He bragged about it, her going into the military. She was one of those people who was very focused. He just saw so much potential in her."

Haynes said he'll remember her smile and positive attitude.

Haynes said Cedric Gordon was one of the first people to comfort him when his sister died about four years ago. He said he hoped to do the same for his friend later Sunday.

"He's done so much for the people in the community," Haynes said. "Now it's time for the community to give back to him and hold him up as much as they can."

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE
BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WAR**

**The Great Afghan Police Farce
Rolls On:
"Riddled With Corruption,
Incompetence And Factional
Rivalries"**

“There Are Police Who Don’t Even Know The Meaning Of The Word ‘Police’”

“Police Have More Vehicles Than Weapons”

Oct 19, 2012 By Kathy Gannon - The Associated Press [Excerpts]

The readiness of Afghanistan’s security forces is central to U.S. and NATO plans to withdraw all forces from the country by the end of 2014, and the academy’s new commander wants to help turn around a 146,000-strong national police force long riddled with corruption, incompetence and factional rivalries.

On Thursday, President Hamid Karzai said that his military and police are prepared to take full responsibility for security if the American-led international coalition decides to speed up the handover.

But the National Police Academy’s director, Mullah Dad Pazoish, presents a different viewpoint.

“There are police who don’t even know the meaning of the word ‘police,’ ” Pazoish said in a recent interview. “We have generals who have no training. They are the jihadi commanders.”

A report released this month by the Brussels-based International Crisis Group concluded that Afghan security forces are not even close to being ready to take over security nationwide.

“Only 7 percent of the army and 9 percent of the national police units are considered capable of independent action even with advisers,” the report stated.

Gen. Nawroz Khaliq, who took command of the academy eight months ago, wants to restore higher standards to the institution.

Standards for the eight-week police training program are low, according to Khaliq.

There is no educational requirement, and new recruits don’t even have to be able to sign their name, just provide their fingerprints.

They do, however, need to be recommended by a government official, who vouches they are neither Taliban nor a criminal.

In one Taliban attack on a police station this month, only two of the four officers had weapons, according to Khaliq.

He said police have more vehicles than weapons and that barely 60 percent of the police out on the streets and in the rural outback have communications equipment.

MILITARY NEWS

Seven-Hundred From Delaware National Guard Off To Obama's Imperial Slaughterhouse

Oct 19, 2012 By Mike Chalmers - The (Wilmington, Del.) News Journal [Excerpts]

Two Delaware National Guard units are training this week for deployments to Afghanistan in 2013, which is shaping up to be one of the most active years for the state's soldiers.

About 150 to 175 members of the 153rd Military Police Company leave in January for a 10-month tour of Kandahar province, and about 300 to 350 members of the 198th Expeditionary Signal Battalion will deploy in April, said Lt. Col. Len Gratteri, spokesman for the Guard. Both have been training at Fort Indiantown Gap near Harrisburg, Pa.

In August, about 50 members of the 150th Engineer Detachment will be deployed to Afghanistan, Gratteri said. And eight Black Hawk helicopters and about 125 soldiers from the 238th Aviation Company will leave in the fall or winter. Those four units are part of the Army National Guard.

A unit from the Delaware Air National Guard is scheduled for deployment at the end of 2013, though Gratteri would not disclose details about that mission.

"Next year is going to be very busy, probably the busiest we've ever had," Gratteri said. "That's going to be easily the most people we've had deployed at one time."

No Delaware Guard unit is currently deployed, he said.

The Delaware unit will spend 10 months assisting and training their Afghan counterparts on setting up roadside checkpoints and walking patrols in Kandahar, Brian Malloy said.

It is a dangerous mission.

About 500 coalition troops have died in Kandahar since the war began 11 years ago, making it the second-deadliest region in the country behind Helmand, according to iCasualties.org.

About half of the current members of the 153rd were deployed to Iraq in 2007-08, Brian Malloy said.

Capitalists At Work:

“Financial Institutions Often Give Service Members Bad Or Incomplete Information Or Are Improperly Denying Them The Reduced Interest And Other Benefits That They Are Entitled To Receive”

“One Service Member Found That His \$61,000 In Student Loans Shot Up To \$85,000 When He Deferred Payment For Five Months”

Oct 18, 2012 By Lolita C. Baldor - The Associated Press & Reuters [Excerpts]

The military voiced concern on Thursday over mounting student loan debt owed by American troops, saying loan companies appeared to be taking advantage of U.S. forces - guiding them away from special protections they earned through service.

Members of the military are having trouble grappling with the confusing patchwork of student loan benefits they can receive and often end up taking on tens of thousands more dollars in debt than they needed to, says a new government report.

The report released Thursday finds financial institutions often give service members bad or incomplete information or are improperly denying them the reduced interest and other benefits that they are entitled to receive.

Some 41 percent of America's armed forces are holding student debt, according to one recent survey, and Pentagon officials say financial troubles are among the top sources of anxiety among troops -- sometimes even topping war itself.

The findings are based on complaints and requests for help from service members across the country, including many who saw their loans balloon when they left active duty.

And many complained that financial institutions did not properly explain how their loan deferrals worked, or tell them how much interest would automatically accrue once the deferral ended.

One service member found that his \$61,000 in student loans shot up to \$85,000 when he deferred payment for five months, the report said.

And while each situation may be different, it said that if the variety of benefits are used and applied properly someone who enters the military with \$80,000 in loans could save almost \$50,000 over the life of the debt.

Holly Petraeus, assistant director for the servicemember affairs office, told reporters Thursday she believes issues with student loans may be even greater than the problems military members faced with mortgage debt and foreclosures.

She said the military plans to do more training and education to ensure service members know it's not too late to do something to rectify their student loan debt.

Among the benefits that military members can receive are:

Reductions in monthly payments based on income and family size

Loan forgiveness after a certain number of payments for some loans

A reduction in the amount of principal for each year of military service

A reduction in the interest rate to 6 percent during active duty service on loans taken on prior to joining

Payment deferrals during active duty service

The growing student loan burden in the military appears to partly reflect a trend in America generally.

But troops, unlike the general population, should benefit from laws meant to help them manage their student debt, including the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA), which cuts interest rates to 6 percent during active duty service on debt incurred prior to service.

Instead, the report warned that troops confused by the complexities of their benefits through acts like SCRA were being guided into unfavorable debt repayment plans or refused their legal benefits.

"I'm concerned that the report that is being issued today warns of student loan companies that not only may confuse service members, but even violate the law in the approach that they take," Panetta [Defense Secretary Leon Panetta] said.

**“Soldiers Are Tired Of These
Pointless Uniform Changes”
“It Is Not The Soldiers Driving These
Changes, It Is Someone Whose
Pocketbook Stands To Gain”
“The Only Way It Could Have Gotten
Approved Is If Someone Was Bribed”**

Forums
Army Times
10.22.12

Nice to see the budget cuts haven't kept the Army from throwing away a few million dollars on yet another uniform change ("The best and brightest from this week's Army Times," Facebook, Oct. 9).

I'm sure this one will be just as bad as the last one.

— James Cayton

Forums
Army Times
10.22.12

Soldiers are tired of these pointless uniform changes.

It has become obvious that it is not the soldiers driving these changes, it is someone whose pocketbook stands to gain.

The Army Service Uniform, for example, (is so) deficient in what it should be intended to do that the only way it could have gotten approved is if someone was bribed.

— James Cowley

MORE:

**“Once Again, Washington Seems
Hellbent On Stupidity”**

“The ACU Is The Worst Uniform I’ve Ever Seen Any Army Wear And Only Works If You’re In A Parking Lot Or A Rock Quarry”

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
10.22.12

Once again, Washington seems hellbent on stupidity.

Getting rid of the Battle Dress Uniform/ Desert Camouflage Uniform was a questionable decision at best and, as any soldier will gladly tell you, what we got in return was hot garbage.

The ACU is the worst uniform I’ve ever seen any army wear and only works if you’re in a parking lot or a rock quarry.

They almost got it right by adopting MultiCam for Afghanistan, except that the pattern was renamed the Operation Enduring Freedom Camouflage Pattern, all while wasting something like \$3 million on “research and development” in the process.

As for the pending changes for the Army Service Uniform, is this even a concern?

It’s a uniform that’s rarely worn to begin with unless you’re in a ceremonial unit; if you have that much of a problem with it, suck it up. You’re a soldier.

It also seems to me that the main complaints are the fit of the coat; some want it tighter around the waist to give “shape”; and changing the Combat Service Identification Badge back to unit and Shoulder Sleeve Insignia-Former Wartime Service patches. When you initially get fitted, tell the salesperson you’d like it to fit tighter.

As for the patches, what’s the point? Your beret has a distinctive unit insignia on it, and you’re probably wearing a regimental affiliation, too. Most people on post will be able to recognize one or both and they’ll know which unit you belong to, not to mention two patches usually cost more than one badge.

Who will pay for these changes if implemented?

Will soldiers issued ASUs have to go out of pocket for the new uniform like I did when I bought my ASU?

Will my clothing allowance get raised to offset the cost?

Sgt. Scott Henderson

ANNIVERSARIES

**Hungary October 1956:
“One Soldier, Then Two, Had
Offered Their Guns To The
People”**

**“By Dawn Some Of The Soviet
Soldiers Were Leaving Their Vehicles
And Joining The Mass
Demonstrations”**

**“Some Of The Tank Crews Decorated
Their Tanks With The Flag Of The
Revolution”**





Hungarian National Museum

Marxist.com/ [Excerpts]

This month is the thirtieth anniversary of the Hungarian revolution of 1956.

Even though its outcome was a tragic defeat, in which at least 20,000 Hungarian workers were killed and countless others injured, imprisoned and forced into hiding or exile, it nevertheless was undoubtedly the most significant pointer to future developments in the Stalinist states since the consolidation of the bureaucracy around Stalin in the 1920s.

The tremendously inspiring events of the Hungarian October are full of lessons for the workers of Eastern Europe and the whole world.

Stalinist commentators have tried to paint a picture of these events as the work of CIA agitators and counter-revolutionaries.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The revolutionary traditions of the Hungarian working class in themselves make such a claim incredible.

Even prior to world war one there were big strikes and wage demands. In 1905 there was a big movement of landless labourers against wage cuts. In the Hungarian revolution of 1919 the workers moved to overthrow the fragile regime of the bourgeois liberal Karolyi because it could not satisfy their revolutionary demands.

Shortages began in the shops, especially of meat. People had to queue all night to get the things they wanted.

At the same time the bureaucrats carried on with their opulent existence.

The revolution of 1956 was a revolution to rid society of this gang of parasites, torturers and murderers, who claimed to rule in the name of the working class, and to reassert the traditions of 1919 of the involvement of the working class in the revolution and the subsequent running of society.

One worker from the giant Csepel plant told a western correspondent: "The West should not believe that the workers fought to bring back Horthy or the landowners and counts. We shall not give back the land, the factories or the mines."

The causes of the 1956 events also lie in the political developments within the bureaucracy.

Mirroring the economic crisis there were tremendous political upheavals.

In 1953 with the death of Stalin there were some signs of a "thaw" in the monolithic rule of Moscow and its puppets in Budapest. Rakosi, a hard line Stalinist, retired. Nagy, who had a reputation as a "liberaliser" and was initially favoured in the Kremlin by Khrushchev, took over.

In several Eastern Bloc countries during the fifties a similar switch was made. Bureaucrats who were denounced later as "Titoists" came to the fore. This layer of the bureaucracy had no objection to a one-party totalitarian system in which the leading layer had enormous privileges, but they did oppose the Russian bureaucracy plundering all the spoils of the nations' economic progress for themselves.

Gomulka in Poland played a similar role.

It was the fact that these bureaucrats had been persecuted by the USSR earlier, for taking an anti-Russian stand, that gave them a certain credibility with the masses.

Some sections of the masses believed that Nagy's "new course" would give the regime a "human face".

But behind the scenes there was a desperate struggle going on within the bureaucracy, and much trepidation within the Kremlin, as to the dangers inherent in even a microscopic dose of reform.

A real measure of just how little "return to legality" took place under Nagy was subsequently revealed during the 1956 revolution itself.

Within the first week 5,500 prisoners of war were released. These were men who had been sent back from Russia eight years before but had been imprisoned again by the hated AVO secret police.

They had not been charged and had no prospect of release.

These people remained illegally in prison, many assumed by relatives to be dead, during the Nagy period of 1953-55.

In fact the prison camps, allegedly intended for the enemies of the revolution, were at this time full of common people, workers, poor peasants, small stall holders, etc.

Sandor Kopacsi, the Chief of Police in Budapest in 1956, who subsequently resigned and got political asylum in the west, gives an account of his tour of inspection of these camps which reads like Dante's journey through hell.

The camps were packed full of dejected demoralised prisoners, who had never been tried, who came up to him and told him of the petty crimes, such as chicken stealing, they had been incarcerated for.

Yet even the minuscule moves in the direction of reform under Nagy proved eventually too much for the nerves of Moscow. Khrushchev changed his attitude towards "the new course".

In April 1955 Nagy was removed from the premiership and expelled from the party as a "right-wing deviationist". Rakosi was wheeled back in with a clampdown on all the new policies.

Yet the zig-zags of the Kremlin bureaucrats only whipped up a mood of discontent amongst the Hungarian masses. When, in February 1956, Khrushchev's speech at the 20th congress denouncing Stalin's crimes came to light, the whole of Hungary began to seethe with discussion. A group of intellectuals, naming themselves the Petofi circle (after the famous poet of the bourgeois revolution who was executed in the defeat of the 1848 revolution and became a national hero), began to meet regularly and semi-openly.

“The Whole Of The Eastern Bloc Was Awash With Discontent”

In his book, Kopacsi makes a very interesting revelation about the morale of the state forces at this time.

In the spring of 1956 a squad of secret police were sent into the Petofi circle and the active element of the Young Communist movement, which was also bubbling with debate.

As the dissidents' arguments became more fully explained the police spies became more and more open to the ideas about reforming the system which were being put forward at these meetings. "Suddenly a majority of these 'spies' declared that they were in agreement with the points made in the Petofi circle!" Kopacsi recounts, "together they issued a statement, which they signed, declaring themselves in solidarity with the ideas put forward by the young reformists of the party."

The whole of the Eastern Bloc was awash with discontent.

The floodgates had begun to burst even as early as 1953 with a massive strike wave and street fighting in East Germany.

In Plzen and Prague, Czechoslovakia there had been riots. In the Hungarian industrial towns of Csepel, Ozd and Diosgyor the masses had come onto the streets in protest against the conditions. Even within the Soviet Union there had been strikes and protests amongst the prisoners within the labour camps.

In May 1956 vast numbers of Russian troops and armoured vehicles were sent into Tbilisi, capital of Georgia, to crush an uprising sparked off by austerity measures.

In June 1956 the workers of Poznan, in Poland rose.

Inevitably this also had an effect on the young people inside the state forces. The Petofi circle even held one famous all-night meeting of 6,000 with people spilling out into the streets around demanding democratisation of the system and intellectual liberty.

This movement of intellectuals was a reflection of the deep underlying discontent amongst the workers. In conditions such as this where all political freedom is barred, it is often the intellectuals who give the first overt expression of the movement swelling up beneath the surface of society.

“The Revolution Was Already In Motion”

Pravda angrily denounced this ferment.

Yet even Szabad Nep, the Hungarian CP paper, under the pressure of the masses was grudgingly forced into agreement, in words, with the more secondary demands.

The bureaucracy in Budapest went into crisis over the question of whether to bring in more reforms in an attempt to restore the ailing credibility of the party, or to bring in more hard-liners and clamp down on all the ferment.

Many bureaucrats dithered between the two positions lacking any confidence in either.

In every subsequent political crisis in the Stalinist states the bureaucracy has divided to differing degrees along these lines.

A further symptom of this indecision was the removal again of Rakosi in July 1956, because he was obviously arousing the hatred of the masses. This time, however, he was not replaced by a reformer but another hard-liner, Kadar. Kadar had been imprisoned and appallingly tortured by the Stalinists. This gave him a certain credibility in the eyes of the masses, but it also made him a compliant tool of Moscow.

Nagy was further demoted, confirming the impression that the leading circles within the bureaucracy were absolutely determined not to tolerate any quarter for reforms.

The so-called Communist Party was by this time a Communist Party in name only.

It had been purged, terrorised, bribed and corrupted into nothing more than a freemasonry of cynical careerists, and an appendage of the totalitarian state.

In the elections of 1945 the CP had got 17 percent of the vote. Dora Scarlett reported an estimate made in 1956 which is only a very rough guide but nevertheless significant, that if an election was held with a guarantee of no interference, the CP would have been lucky to get 10 per cent.

During the revolution itself the CP of 900,000 vanished overnight.

Over the summer of 1956 discussion and opposition became widespread in the colleges and in the factories.

The revolution was already in motion.

Hostility amongst the masses towards the regime reached such a pitch that any spark could set off an explosion.

In October that spark came.

Students in Budapest called a demonstration for the 23rd. It was unprecedented for a demonstration to be organised outside of CP control. The authorities banned it but the organisers announced they were going ahead anyway.

Initially it was over the conditions of students but an atmosphere of excitement spread amongst all the youth and workers of the town.

A series of wider political demands soon were included and eventually the youth were being called to demonstrate in support of the workers of Poland.

What a marvellous testimony to the internationalism of the movement, that the spark which ignited the revolution was actually a demonstration of international solidarity!

Tens of thousands flooded onto the streets.

The secret police (AVO) understood that any reforms whatsoever would inevitably include a calling of them to account for their ten years of crime and organised terror.

In panic they fired on the crowd. When police arrived to try and restore order, the crowd explained to the police how the AVO had fired on defenseless men, women and children.

The young policemen, who knew the cruelty of the AVO, scarcely hesitated before handing over their guns to the crowd.

Anyone who says that the forces of the political revolution are powerless against the arms of the state apparatus should look at the reports of Police Chief Kopaszi as he describes his conversations over the radio with the different police units in the capital.

For example, he describes a conversation over the radio with one of his lieutenants during the October 23 demonstration, a Lieutenant Kiss (someone who "was prepared to sacrifice his life for the party. But for the Stalin statue?"):

"KISS: People are pulling down the Stalin Statue. Please send us orders immediately.

"KOPASCI: Okay Comrade Lieutenant, tell me about this pulling down.

"KISS: There are about a hundred thousand people around the Stalin Statue.

"KOPASCI: Are you sure there are as many as that?

"KISS: Comrade Colonel, there are more than a hundred thousand, if not two hundred thousand. All of Heroes Square, all the edge of the woods is black with people. What shall I do?

"KOPASCI: Okay, how many men have you got?

"KISS: Well, er...twenty-five Comrade Colonel!

"KOPASCI: Useless! Look at what the people are doing and you will know straight away...You see Comrade Kiss these are specialists. They are workers from one or other of the big Pest factories. Only the workers possess the equipment to do what you report."

This is how Kopasci describes the first news over the police radio that the masses were armed:

“One Soldier, Then Two, Had Offered Their Guns To The People”

"The tone of the junior officer at the other end was one of catastrophe: 'Comrade Kopasci the participants have guns.'

“I asked for complete silence in the room. I thought the man I was talking to had gone mad. ‘I don’t quite understand. Repeat Comrade Lieutenant.’ In a measured tone the lieutenant repeated the account of how young recruits has been surrounded by the crowd, told they needed weapons to defend themselves against the security police and then how one soldier, then two, had offered their guns to the people.

"In my office silence reigned. My colleagues looked at me motionless. From the gravity of my voice and the look on my face they understood that the news I was getting was no joke. ‘My boy how many arms have you distributed and what type?’...I awaited the reply, the blood frozen in my veins. ‘Twenty-five or thirty rifles and about as many small machine guns. Some rounds of ammunition as well. What are your orders?’ I could only give one: ‘Barricade yourselves in and turn out your lights.’"

These conversations clearly illustrate how powerless and terrified the bureaucracy were in the face of an armed movement of the masses.

They show that once the workers are on the move all the seeming strength of the state forces comes to nothing.

Parallel with the rapid conquest of the streets went a very rapid development of political consciousness of the masses.

One meeting held in the town centre began with a demand from the crowd that the government send a minister to address them about what reforms it proposed to make. The bureaucracy hesitated and vacillated for an hour and then decided to send the minister of agriculture.

By the time he arrived the mood of the crowd had changed to hostility towards anything the government may have offered and they booed him off the platform. One of the features of all revolutions is this very quick development of the political consciousness of the masses.

“By Dawn Some Of The Soviet Soldiers Were Leaving Their Vehicles And Joining The Mass Demonstrations”

The Russian bureaucracy responded to these events with panic measures.

On the night of October 23-24 they sent in the tanks.

Everyone fought them in the streets.

People brought small arms out of their homes with which to attack them.

Children as young as thirteen or fourteen set to them with Molotov cocktails.

Such ferocious resistance on the part of the Hungarian workers and youth inevitably made a big impression on the Russian soldiers.

They began to question why they had been sent. Some had been told by their officers that it was a fascist rebellion that needed crushing.

This did not square with such widespread and popular resistance.

By dawn some of the Soviet soldiers were leaving their vehicles and joining the mass demonstrations. Some of the tank crews decorated their tanks with the flag of the revolution (the Hungarian flag with the coat of arms removed).

Russian troops asked for political asylum. They saw in the determination of the Hungarian workers the capacity to set up a new type of regime that would not hand them back to the Russian commanders.

A vast crowd assembled in front of the parliament building.

The AVO fired on the crowd. Russian troops moved in and defended the crowd from the AVO.

All public buildings were taken over by the workers.

The radio was requisitioned for the revolution and the demands of the workers broadcast to the rest of the nation and beyond.

Russian troops used their tanks to give backing to the assault of the workers on the police headquarters.

The prisons were open. Whole labyrinths of underground passages, cells and torture chambers were unlocked. Prisoners walked out like ghosts, men and women who had been assumed dead for years.

In fact the network of secret police passageways under Budapest was so vast that throughout the weeks of the revolution relatives and friends searched for prisoners. Tappings could be heard in the further recesses. Some were so hidden that the revolution never reached them, before they could be found the counter-revolution had struck.

Newspapers sprung up everywhere.

One CP eyewitness said "people hungered and thirsted for the printed word as though they had crossed a desert." From six dreary official papers twenty-five lively dailies with circulations going into millions sprang up within a few days. The revolutionary youth, the different sections of workers, peasants, police and army all had their papers. All rejected anti-semitism and fascism.

Arising out of the spontaneous political interests of the masses a number of new political parties sprang into life, including a Social Democratic Party and a Peasants Party.

The right for a multiplicity of political parties to exist was enshrined in the programme of the political revolution.

Without a doubt the experience of the Hungarian revolution shows that the workers had the capacity to take over and run society.

Open suitcases taking collections for the families of those killed in the fighting were left unguarded on the street corners. Peasants showed their support for the revolution by bringing cartloads of food into Budapest and distributing it free. This in a country where people were still living in poverty!

In desperation at their troops defecting to the revolution the Soviet authorities withdrew them from Budapest. In his memoirs Khrushchev recalls the vacillations within the top circles between "crushing the mutiny" or pulling "out of Hungary": "I don't know how many times we changed our minds back and forth."

Desperately seeking a means to contain the situation, in consultation with Moscow through Andropov, then the ambassador in Hungary, the leaders switched once again to concessions. On October 25 the premier, Gero, who had provoked the masses further by a ranting speech on the radio about fascist agents, was removed at Moscow's

bidding. Several of the worst Stalinist die-hards were removed from the Politburo and Nagy was suddenly rehabilitated and made premier.

“The Program Of The Revolution”

But despite his reputation as a "reformer", on the crucial questions confronting the Hungarian workers Nagy was no different from the hard-line Stalinists.

Moscow persuaded him to declare martial law. He dumbly acquiesced with the Soviet decision to send troops to crush the movement. On the first day of his new premiership 300 workers were killed outside the parliament building by the state forces. His hands were drenched in blood from the outset. But given the tremendous power and sweep of the revolution he was a last line of defence for the bureaucracy because of his reputation.

Nagy offered an amnesty for all those who handed in their weapons. The Soviet authorities started a display of "negotiations" with his new administration, offering the masses the hope of a peaceful withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country.

In reality this was a smokescreen behind which they were preparing for more effective military action.

The truth was that the irresistible sweep of the mass movement rendered the Nagy government completely impotent. Without army, police or mass backing, it was a government in name only, an administration suspended in mid-air.

Rumours flew around as to the actions of the Russian columns. There was much confusion.

Some sections of the masses did not want to believe that a new invasion was in the offing. If they were coming why were they going? Yet to anyone prepared to think things through carefully, it was clear their job had not finished. They were not far outside Budapest and their ranks were being swelled by reinforcements. Soviet troops took over all the airports.

The program of the revolution had gone through different stages as the workers' consciousness leaped forward.

The workers demanded:

Workers' councils in all factories to establish workers' management and a radical transformation of the system of state central planning and directing.

Wage rises of 15 percent for the lowest paid, 10 percent for other workers and an upper limit of £106 on salaries, which in the money of those days would have done away with the privileged position of the bureaucracy.

Abolition of production norms except in factories where the workers' council decided to keep them.

Increases in the lowest pensions.

Increase in family allowances.

A fairer system of taxation.

A more rapid programme of house building by the state.

This was a programme with a wide appeal to the masses.

The revolution had transformed Budapest over the short space of a week.

Kopaszi paints a vivid picture of the parliament building in these days of workers' power.

"This immense 'Westminster on the Danube' was more like the Smolny Palace in Petrograd, Bolshevik headquarters in 1917...than the old parliament chamber in London. The corridors and rooms were packed with delegations of workers, peasants, soldiers, artists, writers and politicians of different parties which had not been seen at all since 1947."

Effectively the workers had taken power. In the provinces the workers had joined the movement and come out on strike. In the mining towns there was a very solid strike. All the workers were on the streets. There was an atmosphere of insurrection.

Amongst the peasantry too there was a big movement. The old Stalinist collective farm managers were driven off with knives and pitchforks.

The peasants elected revolutionary committees. It is true that in some areas they broke up the land from the collectives into private plots. But this was linked with a warning that if any of the landlords tried to come back the peasants would organise a second revolution.

This is how Peter Fryer, a reporter for the British Communist Party paper, the Daily Worker described the workers' councils:

"In their spontaneous origin, in their composition, in their sense of responsibility, in their efficient organisation of food supplies and of civil order, in the restraint they exercised over the wilder elements of the youth, in the wisdom with which so many of them handled the problem of Soviet troops and, not least, in their striking resemblance to the soviets or councils of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies which sprang up in Russia in 1905 and again in February 1917, these committees, a network of which now extended over the whole of Hungary were remarkably uniform.

"They were at once organs of insurrection - the coming together of delegates elected by factories and universities, mines and army units, and organs of popular self-government which the armed people trusted.

"As such they enjoyed tremendous authority, and it is no exaggeration to say that until the Soviet attack of November 4 the real power in the country lay in their hands."

Russian Imperial Invasion Destroys The Revolution

The Nagy government, the last fig leaf of the authorities, effectively had no control. Power was in the hands of the revolutionary committees. The advanced sections of the workers, big sections of the youth and the industrial workers sensed that things could rapidly come to a head.

They prepared to once more defend the revolution. A new wave of strikes began which rapidly reached the proportions of another general strike.

At this juncture the Russian bureaucracy began their second assault on the revolution.

At 4 in the morning of Sunday November 4, Russian tanks, having encircled Budapest, began to bombard it with shells from the hills outside. By dawn they had entered the city and occupied key buildings including the parliament. The attack came across the nation all at once. Every city was pounded by artillery and then occupied.

Yet far from being crushed in one simple and massive assault as the Russian bureaucrats had hoped, the second invasion in fact spurred on the workers to even greater struggle making them more determined than ever to fight for the revolution to the finish.

The consciousness of even the widest sections of the masses exploded into new life.

Those who had not participated previously in the street fighting came pouring out to join the "veterans" of the previous week. The workers fought, along with children, students, the old and the soldiers and police who had come over. They built or rebuilt barricades. They occupied positions before the Russian columns entered the towns.

The fighting was ferocious. The tanks were attacked by the masses from all sides. Russian soldiers later reported that they had never seen such determined resistance.

But this second wave of Soviet troops had very little understanding of what they were crushing. Many of them had been hastily transported from the far-eastern provinces of the Soviet Union and could speak no European languages.

Peter Fryer, in a final dispatch to the Daily Worker, which the editor hid from his staff, said: "Some of the rank and file Soviet troops have been telling people that they had no idea they had come to Hungary. They thought at first they were in Berlin, fighting German fascists."

Some had even been told they were on the Suez Canal. The Hungarian workers attempted to hand them leaflets, but there was very little infantry action because the top officers feared the fraternisation that had occurred before. The Russian tanks came in and pumped shells into the buildings where they thought the resistance was.

The top Soviet officers desperately manoeuvred to "maintain the morale" of their troops by shooting those of their men who displayed any sympathy for the Hungarian workers!

For example, one Soviet tank officer was executed because his column had found its road blocked by a line of women and children sitting in their path. Instead of christening the street with their blood he drove his contingent round another way.

Several of the soldiers who complied with this were also executed.

In the prison yards of Budapest such executions continued all day and all night. This grisly fact illustrates that despite all the measures taken by the Russian bureaucracy the Hungarian workers made an impact on the minds of quite wide layers of even this second wave of troops.

Despite this show of strength the bureaucracy almost failed to regain control.

It took fifteen divisions, with six thousand tanks, backed up by MiG fighter planes to quell the movement.

Buildings were pumped with phosphorus to set them on fire. One commentator, Andy Anderson, described it thus: "Smoke from burning buildings, exploding shells and Molotov cocktails mixed with the dust from crashing masonry to create a choking fog. The sight of the mounting wounded created a fog to choke the mind."

Yet even with such brutality on the part of the Russian bureaucracy it took weeks to finish the job.

On November 4 the still-born Nagy government, which represented nobody and no-one, was replaced by one under the hard-liner Kadar.

He appealed for the workers to go back to work but the strike intensified. On November 5 he "warned", he "hoped for" and he "requested" a return to work. On the 6th and 7th he "threatened". On the 8th his henchman Marosan declared "it is the duty of every decent worker to go back to work."

But throughout the workers remained on strike and more and more Russian tanks fell victim to the heroic armed resistance of the masses.

The most forceful and long-lasting resistance to the invasion came precisely from the big working-class areas of Budapest.

Hospital figures show that the injured consisted of 70-80 percent young workers.

"Red" Csepel, so called because it had been in pre-war days a bastion of the CP, was one of the last districts to hold out.

Open resistance continued in isolated pockets well into 1957 and even in 1958 and 1959 there were strikes and demonstrations as the workers attempted to resist the remorselessly tightening grip of bureaucratic control.

The victory of the bureaucracy did not come easily.

1956 opened up a new period of economic development for the Hungarian economy. The Russian bureaucracy deliberately decided to pump resources into the country. They had been so frightened by the revolution that they wanted to ensure the masses were kept more content to avoid a repetition.

Living standards rose significantly for the Hungarian masses for the rest of the 1950s and the 1960s. To put it in the words of Khrushchev: "We shall shut their mouths with goulash." Even in the seventies there was still substantial progress. This was the basis for the relative stability of the Kadar regime.

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was a glorious page in working-class history. It added to the heritage of mankind a priceless experience. It showed, not just in books but in living historical experience, that there was an alternative to the brutality of Stalinism that did not consist of a return to capitalism.

It was in this sense a pointer to the future of mankind. Victory was possible.

In reality victory was won, but it was snatched away again by the second Soviet invasion.

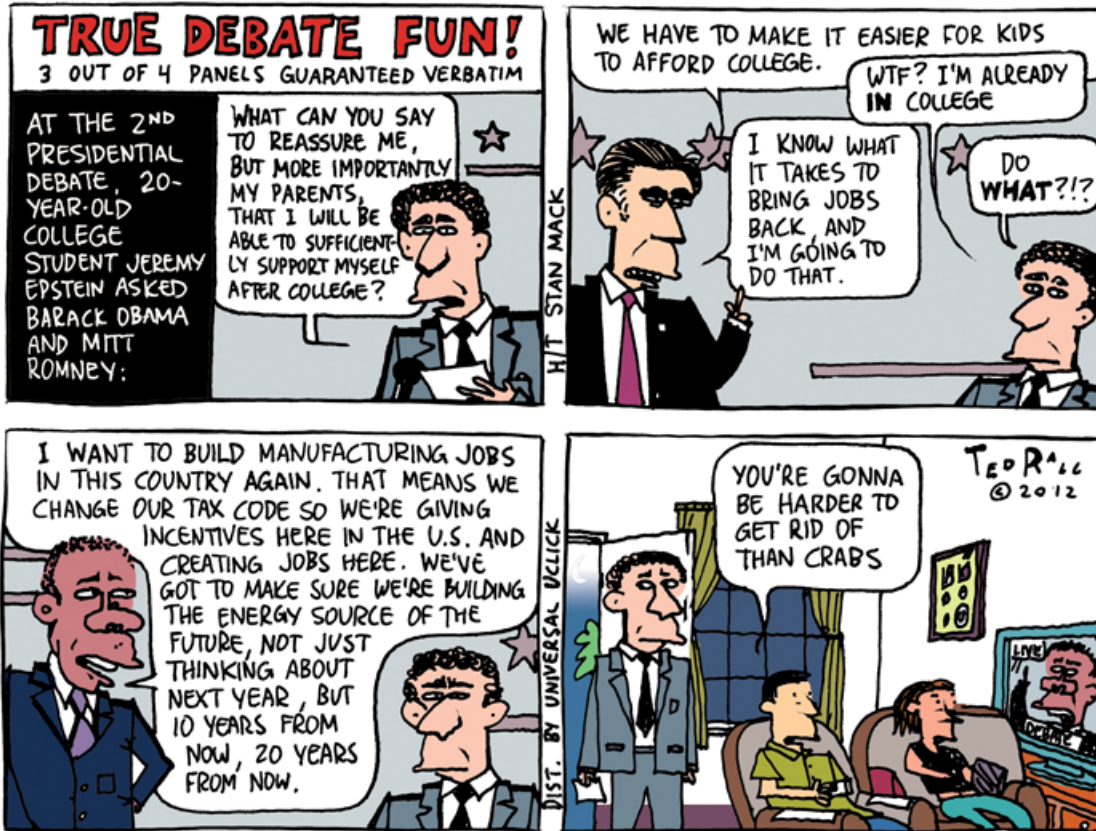
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U.S. soldier in Bejjia village Iraq, Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

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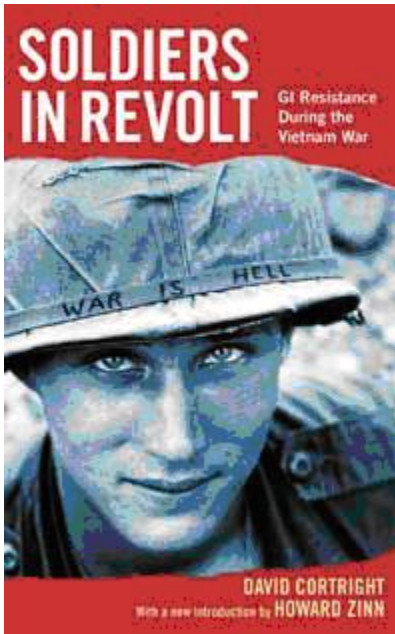


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