

Military Resistance 11110



Dreaming Again

From: Dennis Serdel
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: September 16, 2013
Subject: Dreaming Again

Written by Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade; United Auto Workers GM Retiree

Dreaming Again

Jack is sending home \$300 a month from the \$315 combat pay because out in the boonies & jungle, there is nothing to buy so he still has the 15 dollars when they comes back to the Base or LZ He keeps dreaming about his 1957 Chevy & how

he would fix it up with the money, bought it from a guy
he knew who paid 800 for it, a true little old lady's car
but then the man gets drunk & wipes out the quarter panel
on the passenger side, says it made him sick to look at
what he had done, offered it to Jack for 150
& Jack gave him the money. Jack dreams of having
the quarter panel replaced & hot rodding the car
what paint color will he choose, how he would rebuild
the engine & hop it up, put some bucket seats in it
with a four speed transmission.

While others smoke pot, Jack's dreams take away
the reality of the boonies & jungle
back at the Base Camp or an LZ & he carefully thinks
through about which style of wheels he would put on it,
probably un-cork the headers at the drag strip
to see how fast it will go & then tells nobody else
so he can make money street racing for cash.

Yeah, he worries when he is wounded
in his arm & leg, how could he drive the car,
but it isn't that bad & he heals up quickly
& is back with his company again.

He hates this war & not only killing the Vietnamese
He would like to kill the Leadership at the base camp too.

He is sweating like a dog in 1968 & watching
Soldiers come & go & many never come back.

Everything is ugly & black

& he tires of the blood on both sides, even
questioning why he is there, nothing ever changes,
it just stays the same, day after day, week after week
& month after month. It is like he is in jail or
being a prisoner waiting to be released.

He isn't the only one, others feel
like they are in prison too. A year is like
a life sentence & everyday is slow
as hours go by. If he thinks about it too much,
it will make him crazy, make him go insane.

One day they shoot their Lieutenant
because he is so ignorant
& following him will be a death sentence.

Finally his year in prison is over
& he is flying back to the states
with his prison papers in hands, he is released
with his separation pay. He calls home
& his sister answers & he tells her he
will be arriving at the local airport at
about 2 o'clock this afternoon.

When he lands in his dress green prison uniform,
he looks around inside but nobody is there.

He waits an hour & then calls
& his brother answers & tells him their car
broke down 3 weeks ago. So he takes a cab &

arrives home with his father in a lazy boy chair drinking a beer & watching TV. His father turns around & says he can't stay here.

Jack asks him where his 1957 Chevy is at, his father says he was driving it & another car hit it & totaled it out.

Jack asks for his money that he sent home each month & his father scoffs & says since your mother passed away, he had to take care of his brothers & sisters all by himself & he needed the \$300 dollars each month to care for them & keep them fed. Mumbles he doesn't know what he will do now.

Jack looks around the filthy little house & asks if he could use the telephone. He calls a cab that takes him to a Holiday Inn & Jack still has his \$700 separation pay. Inside his room, at least it is clean & he takes off his prison uniform & then lays on the soft bed. After awhile he orders a big pizza & a large bottle of soda.

After he eats he takes a hot shower & washes his dirty family off of him.

He grabs the phone book & looks up the number of a friend he had in high school.

After glad you made it back & all that, his friend tells Jack the truth, that after his mother died & you were drafted, his father only worked for a little while & then went on welfare & he is a well known drunkard.

Jack tells him about his 1957 Chevy & how it helped him get through Vietnam & this guy ran into it & totaled it out. His friend asks, if that is what your father told you? Yeah.

While the truth is that your father was drunk & rolled it over on it's top & after being checked by the hospital, the police arrested him for drunk driving.

Jack just tells him thank you & goodbye & they will get together & all that & he hangs up.

After 4 days the 6 o'clock news says that a man has been murdered with a hatchet in his back yard, that his children found him when they came home from school. The police say, a person of interest is his son Jack who just came back from Vietnam but then he left & nobody knows where he is.

Jack enjoys the sun, the palm trees, the ocean like Vietnam without the killing as he works on his 1957 Chevrolet, Not in country anymore, but in a Communist one, not far from the USA.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

U.S. Military Convoy Attacked In Kandahar

In Afghanistan, at least three people have been killed and several wounded in an attack targeting a convoy of U.S. and Afghan troops in the southern city of Kandahar.

The Afghan army reports that the bomber detonated a car loaded with explosives near the military vehicles.

A local shopkeeper described a huge explosion as the convoy was passing. "There were women and children around but I don't know what happened to them. With all the smoke and dust, I couldn't see," he said.

Local media reported that the Taliban had taken responsibility for the blast.

Resistance Action

15 September 2013 TOLONews

Officials of eastern Laghman province on Sunday said that two police officers were killed in a roadside bomb blast in Alishing district of the province on Sunday morning.

The officials added that three other police officers were also injured in the blast.

"The incident took place in the Islamabad area of Alishing district, after a police vehicle with five officers inside struck a roadside bomb," the Provincial Governor said in a statement.

"They were traveling to Salab area of the district to respond to an insurgent attack on a police check-post," the statement added.

The incident happened after a female police officer was injured during a gun-battle with two unidentified gunmen in Lashkargah, the capital of Helmand province on Sunday.

"The incident took place at around 8:00am in Lashkargah, the capital of the province, when Negara was on her way to the office, and two unknown gunmen riding a motorbike shot and injured her," said Omar Zwak, the spokesman of the Provincial Governor.

MILITARY RESISTANCE BY EMAIL

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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

I say that when troops cannot be counted on to follow orders because they see the futility and immorality of them THAT is the real key to ending a war.

-- Al Jaccoma, Veterans For Peace

Executing The Past



From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: September 16, 2013
Subject: Executing The Past

Executing The Past

This is a photograph of an M-60 Machine Gun, that I took in Vietnam that was mounted on a Armored Personnel Carrier, otherwise know as an APC.

I decided to include a few of the countries that the U.S. has gone to war with, or intervened by sending in American troops.

The full list of these countries over the entire course of U.S. History, going back to the genocide of the American Indian, would be overwhelmingly extensive. In short, it would be in the hundreds.

Most of this information can be found if one was to Google:

History of U.S. Military Interventions Around the World.

Like bullets coming out of a machine gun, it is country after country after country after country...

Like a machine gun belt, the stats are mind-boggling.

So, how does the U.S. Government keep the American

people from knowing all of this information?

A George Orwell quote might help shine some light on this question.

“ The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their understanding of their history.”

As a Vietnam veteran, I see this happening everyday as this country slowly re-writes the history of the Vietnam War. Most high school history texts are very good at minimizing the truth of a war that threw America into moral turmoil.

Why?

Because whenever the truth threatens one's belief system, there is a strong tendency to deny its reality.

In short, it's called historical censorship.

You don't burn books, you just don't print the truth.

And, it is happening in most high schools and colleges across America.

George Orwell wrote about a concept he called, “Crimestop, or Thoughtstop,” in his book, 1984.

In a definition he wrote:

“The first and simplest stage in the discipline, which can be taught even to young children, is called, in Newspeak, Crimestop. Crimestop means the faculty of stopping short, as though by instinct, at the threshold of any dangerous thought. It includes the power of not grasping analogies, of failing to perceive logical errors, of misunderstanding the simplest arguments, or repelled by any train of thought which is capable of leading in a heretical direction. Crimestop, in short, means protective stupidity... orthodoxy in the full sense demands a control over one's own mental processes.”

When I came back from Vietnam, it took me several years to fully understand that I was the enemy in Vietnam.

This new truth dismantled my belief system.

It was like living in an emotional whiteout.

It was like experiencing a death without the cemetery.

The truth came to me when I found myself in a padded cell of a psychiatric hospital in 1980.

I was screaming at the top of my lungs that I hated everything America stood for.

That rage catapulted me into a new world of awareness.

My government committed mass murder in Vietnam, just like we did against the American Indian.

It is that kind of truth that Orwell talks about.

It was a “Thoughtcrime,” that I actually committed against myself, so I wouldn't see my own government as the war criminal in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

When I felt my own grief and anguish, I would eventually see the crimes of the Fatherland.

What I was truly suffering from was an overwhelming sense of national shame.

Guilt is I have done something bad.

Shame is I am bad.
That is the lethal pathology of shame.
Shame becomes a belief system about self.
Shame kills!
It becomes a kind of self execution.
More Vietnam veterans have committed suicide
than were killed in Vietnam.
22 American veterans commit suicide every day.
One active duty soldier commits suicide every day.
The engine that drove my PTSD was shame.
And, every time the United States Government
bombs yet another country, national shame
is activated in America.
But, in order to cover up that shame, the U.S.
Government blames another country for threatening
American interests.
Like "Gulf of Tonkin," in Vietnam,
or accusing Iraq of having "Weapons of Mass Destruction,"
it is all a staged lie to launch a war against these countries.
So, in order for the American people to approve of these wars,
any history that sounds repetitious has to be obliterated.
You have to destroy the past, so you can repeat the crime.
War is about control and profit.
And he who controls that profit, controls the future.
And he who controls the future controls everything.

Mike Hastie
Army Medic Vietnam
September 16, 2013

Photo and caption from the portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.


Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004

“Not Anymore” “A Story of Revolution 2013”

[People Nobody Ever Heard Of Before Can Amaze The World]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=RA8HsfRioWE#t=96

**DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE
MILITARY?**



CHANGE WE CAN BEREAVE IN

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the email address if you wish and we'll send it regularly with your best wishes. 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 injustices, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657.

**“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 ...

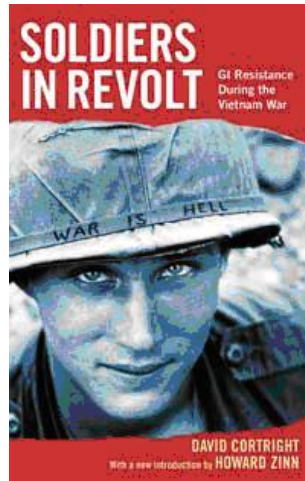
“If one class is to be the liberating class par excellence, then another class must contrariwise be the obvious subjugator.

“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).

WHEN SOLDIERS STOPPED A WAR:

THE QUASI-MUTINY



From: SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975

In July of 1970 at the pre-Vietnam jungle-operations training center in Fort Sherman, Canal Zone, forty combat officers sent a remarkable letter to their Commander-in-Chief.

The soon- to-be combat leaders were not seeking to degrade the service or join the growing peace movement. Their letter did not directly criticize the war, and no copies were sent to the press. Rather, they wished to inform the President of “the extent of disaffection among the American troops” and the grave threat this posed to the military.

The young commanders relayed the perception that “the military, the leadership of this country—are perceived by many soldiers to be almost as much our enemy as the VC and the NVA” and cautioned that if the war continued, “young Americans in the military will simply refuse en masse to cooperate.”

The warning came too late, though, for by the time it was sent, the Army was already in an advanced state of decay, with many grunts in virtually open rebellion.

The currents of unrest and dissension undermining American forces throughout the world surged together and were magnified in the crucible of Vietnam combat, effectively crippling U.S. military operations. Without resorting to outright insurrection, much of the American army in Vietnam refused to fight and staged a “quasi-mutiny.”

Subtly and without heroics, soldiers improvised means of shirking a despised mission and engaged in their own unofficial troop withdrawal.

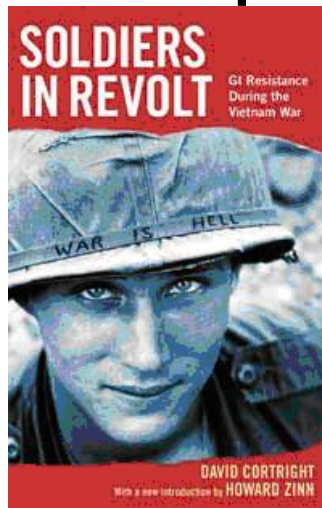
The grunts’ rebellion seldom reached the stage of formal mutiny, assuming instead less-visible forms: “search and avoid” missions, with patrols intentionally

skirting potential enemy clashes or halting a few yards beyond the defense perimeter for a three-day pot party; threats against commanders, often forcing officers and NCOs to worry more about their own men than the Vietnamese; defiance of authority, with GIs blatantly disregarding dress and hair regulations and military custom, and covert obstruction, ranging from intentional inefficiency on the job to major acts of sabotage.

The full story of the breakdown of the infantry has never been told, partly because its diffuse and anonymous nature defies precise definition and partly because reliable documentation is so difficult to obtain. Our examination will portray the world's mightiest military force paralyzed by internal resistance.

MORE:

FREE TO ACTIVE DUTY: A Vietnam Soldier Wrote The Book All About How An Armed Forces Rebellion Stopped An Imperial War



SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT

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PROJECT]**

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**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE
BLOODSHED**

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

STUCK ON STUPID

**Stupid Suicidal Greek Left
Appeals To Government To
Crush Neo-Nazi Party:
[The Same Government Party
Discussing Cutting A Deal With
The Neo-Nazis To Let Them Share
Power]**

**“50 Men Wielding Crowbars And Bats
Set Upon Leftists As They Distributed
Posters In A Working-Class District
Of The Capital”**

**“Recent Opinion Polls Have Shown That
No Other Party Has Managed To**

Capitalise On The Growing Levels Of Desperation And Despair As Effectively As Golden Dawn”



Members of the Golden Dawn party guard a stage during a rally in Athens earlier this year. Photograph: Yorgos Karahalidis/Reuters/Corbis

Comment: T

This suicidal stupidity is breathtaking. The “authorities” in the ruling political party, New Democracy, consider making an alliance with the Neo-Nazis, and these “left” fools expect those same “authorities” to put the Nazis down?

If the Greek left expects the government to save them from the Nazis, they’re literally dead meat in the street.

Furthermore, as happened in Germany when Hitler rose to power, the Neo-Nazis posture as revolutionaries who intend to destroy the present political order that has presided over economic disaster and unparalleled mass unemployment, while the other political parties, including Syriza, offer more of the same disasters, defending the failed status quo by pointing to Parliament and winning elections as the way forward.

No wonder the Neo-Nazis are gaining strength, and openly challenging for support in working class neighborhoods, where misery is beyond description.

“Recent opinion polls have shown that no other party has managed to capitalise on the growing levels of desperation and despair as effectively as Golden Dawn.”

In this time of economic catastrophe, revolutionary rhetoric, however phony, will trump lame-ass reformist status quo Parliamentary bullshit, including Syriza’s.

With prominent clerics also voicing support for the group, commentators have begun to ask whether the ruling conservatives should join forces with Golden Dawn, whose views on issues of public order are strikingly similar.

Leftists rallying near the spot where the attack took place called on authorities on Friday to “finally take action” and “erase” the fascist group.

13 September 2013 Helena Smith in Athens, The Guardian [UK] [Excerpts]

Thousands of Greeks took to the streets of Athens on Friday to protest against a violent attack on Communist party members by black-shirted supporters of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party which left nine people in hospital with serious injuries.

In what was described as a murderous attack – and the most serious violence since the extremist group was elected to the country's parliament last year – about 50 men wielding crowbars and bats set upon leftists as they distributed posters in a working-class district of the capital late on Thursday.

In a statement KKE, the Communist party of Greece, said: “The way in which they acted and the weapons employed ... are evidence of the murderous nature of the attack. Among the Golden Dawners, some of whom had covered their faces or wore helmets or (party) shirts, were their leaders, well-known fascists and thugs.”

Dimitris Psarras, a writer who has chronicled Golden Dawn's rise over almost four decades since the collapse of military rule, said: “Their agenda, clearly, is to create a climate of civil war, a divide where people have to choose between leftists and rightists.”

Psarras argues the attack in the dock-side district of Perama – a Communist stronghold where Golden Dawn has made considerable inroads in recent years on the back of anger over austerity measures – was indicative of that strategy.

Earlier this year, the Muslim Association of Greece received a letter bearing the insignia of the group and an implicit threat that its members would be “slaughtered like chickens” unless they left the country. Marking the anniversary of the September 11 attacks this week, the party posted a vehemently antisemitic diatribe on its website denouncing “world Zionism [as] the architect of global terrorism”.

Greece, whose political faultlines were entrenched by a bloody civil war in the wake of brutal Nazi occupation, is mired in a sixth year of recession that has seen poverty and unemployment soar as it navigates its worst crisis in modern times.

Recent opinion polls have shown that no other party has managed to capitalise on the growing levels of desperation and despair as effectively as Golden Dawn.

Surveys released by the pollsters Public Issue and Pulse in recent days confirmed that the extremists – who recently blasted people attending a “Greeks only” food handout with the official anthem of Nazi Germany – were the nation's fastest growing group and, at 13% and 15% respectively, its third biggest political force.

The main opposition party, the radical left Syriza, topped the ratings with 29% of support, marginally ahead of prime minister Antonis Samaras's centre-right New Democracy party.

Many worry that Golden Dawn, which won 18 seats with almost 7% of the vote last June, will further boost its share of votes when local elections are held next year.

According to analysts, Thursday's attack demonstrates Golden Dawn's growing self-confidence and ability to spread its appeal.

With prominent clerics also voicing support for the group, commentators have begun to ask whether the ruling conservatives should join forces with Golden Dawn, whose views on issues of public order are strikingly similar.

“It is a particularly worrying turn of events that we should now have a debate suggesting that Golden Dawn be brought in from the cold,” Psarras said. “Talk that it should end its isolation and link up with New Democracy is dangerous at a time when Greece is going from bad to worse.”

Leftists rallying near the spot where the attack took place called on authorities on Friday to “finally take action” and “erase” the fascist group.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Zionist Thugs Attack Palestinian Sanitation Workers: “Six Settlers Beat Them With Stones”

**“After The Residents Of Qusra Were
Taken To The Hospital, The Settlers
Of Esh Kodesh Stole The Tractor”**

**“Israeli Officials Stated That If They
Found It, They Would Confiscate The
Tractor For Two Months And Require**

The Village To Pay 10,000 NIS For Its Return”



One of the workers shows his bruises after a settler attack (Photo by ISM)



The tractor was damaged by the settlers (Photo by ISM)

7th September 2013 International Solidarity Movement, Nablus Team

Qusra, Occupied Palestine

Last 29th of August, Israeli soldiers detained two municipal workers from Qusra as they were taking the village's trash to the local dump. The two men were later attacked by Israeli settlers.

Residents of Qusra fear that greater collusion between the army and the settlers will only lead to more attacks.

Early Thursday morning, two army jeeps carrying four soldiers detained the men as they transported trash to the local dump.

Rather than transporting the men to the military base at Huwwarra checkpoint, the soldiers deposited the men and their tractor on the lands close to the illegal Israeli settlement, Esh Kodesh.

At approximately 9:30, the municipal workers were attacked by six settlers, who beat them with stones and also caused major damage to the municipality's tractor.

Following the attack, both men were taken by ambulance to Rafidia Hospital in Nablus, where doctors ordered two to three days bed rest.

After the residents of Qusra were taken to the hospital, the settlers of Esh Kodesh stole the tractor and took it to Shvut Rachel, another nearby settlement.

When members of the municipality appealed to the Israeli DCO (District Coordination Office) to locate the stolen tractor, Israeli officials stated that if they found it, they would confiscate the tractor for two months and require the village to pay 10,000 NIS for its return.

Though the village has used the same area for garbage collection for nearly 30 years, in the last three years, the Israeli army has attempted to prohibit dumping in the area.

The village has no other areas in which to deposit trash, as all of the surrounding lands are considered area C and also prohibited for use.

Employees of the municipality reported that this is the third time that the village's tractor has been confiscated.

The previous times, the municipality was forced to pay a 10,000 NIS fine for its return.

Following the most recent incident, the mayor refused to pay the fine due to the violence inflicted upon the two men and his view that the attack was coordinated between the Israeli army and the illegal settlers.

Eventually, the tractor was returned to the village, though there was extensive damage that will require more than 2,000 NIS for repairs.

In addition to structural damage, the license plate was stolen off the tractor, which will take months to replace due to bureaucratic requirements; moreover, employees of the municipality noted the dangers of a Palestinian plate being in the hands of the settlers, as they can use the green, Palestinian plate to gain access to the surrounding Palestinian villages without garnering suspicion.

The municipality reported the theft to both the PA and Israeli police in hopes of preventing future attacks.

Qusra village is located in the northern West Bank, approximately 28 kilometers southeast of Nablus.

The villages' 6,000 residents face constant, weekly attacks from the nearby illegal Israeli settlement of Esh Kodesh.

Settlers frequently damage and uproot olive trees, burn village land, and attack residents. In 2011, settlers defaced the local mosque and attempted to set it on fire.

Heroic Zionist Occupation Military Forces Make War On Olive Trees And A Monastery Gate



09/08/2013 PIC

BETHLEHEM -- Israeli occupation forces (IOF) burned down a number of olive trees, some of which are one thousand years old, and broke the gate of a monastery south of Bethlehem on Saturday evening.

Ahmed Salah, the coordinator of anti-wall and settlement committees in Al-Khader village, said that IOF soldiers fired teargas and stun grenades at areas belonging to the Mar Jeriess monastery in the Old City of Al-Khader.

The resultant fire burned down ancient olive trees, Salah said, adding that the soldiers attacked the monastery and destroyed its main gate. He said that the soldiers warned against rebuilding the gate.

Regime Demolishing A Playground For Palestinian Kids: Land To Become A Parking Lot For Zionist Settler Occupiers

September 8, 2013 Palestine News & Information Agency (Wafa)

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

The West Jerusalem Municipality Sunday issued an order of demolishing to the Wadi Hilweh playground in the town of Silwan, south of Jerusalem, in order to turn it into a parking lot for settlers' use.

Mahmoud Qara'in of the Wadi Hilweh Information Center told Wafa that the Municipality has notified the residents with the demolishing of the 850-square-meter playground as well as a 20-square-meter room used for storage.

He pointed out that in 2011, the Israeli authorities demolished the same room and razed sections of the playground.

Qarain said that Wadi Hilweh residents filed a lawsuit over the playground case, to which Israeli authorities responded with a decision to take over the playground.

[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."]

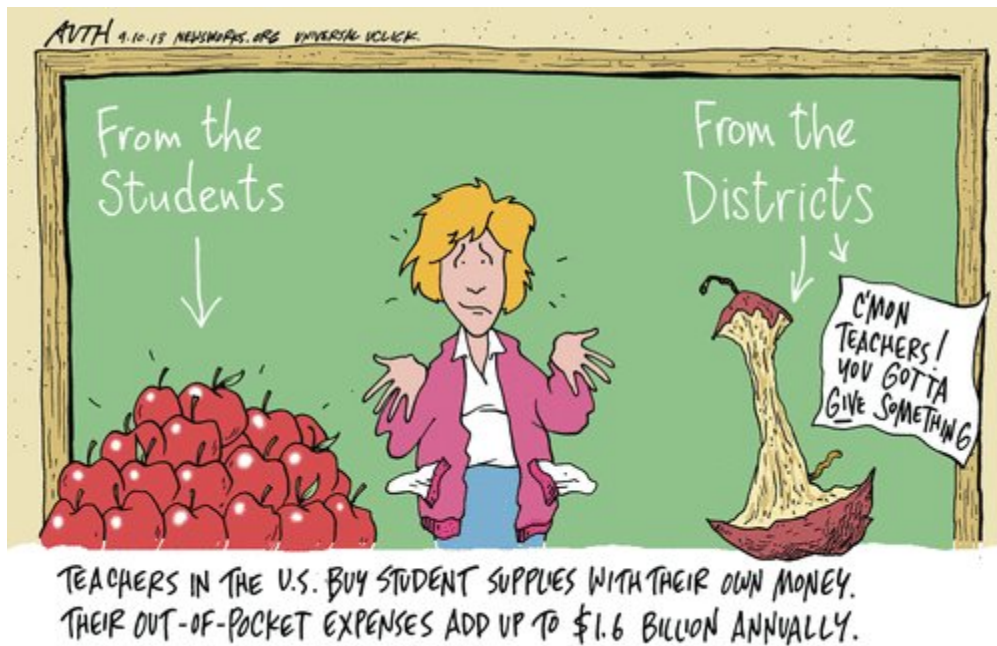
TROOPS INVITED:

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Military Resistance In PDF Format?

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CLASS WAR REPORTS



“Just Under Two-Thirds Of The 140,000 Miners In South Africa's Gold Industry Started A Strike As Of September 3”

“30,000 Workers In Auto Industry And Members Of The National Union Of Metalworkers Went On An Indefinite Strike On August 19”

“90,000 Construction Workers, Members Of The National Union Of Mineworkers

(NUM), Have Been On An Indefinite Strike Since August 26, Joined By 50,000 Members Of The Building, Construction And Allied Workers Union”

September 10, 2013 by Andy Wynne, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

Since 2005, South African workers have had as much experience with strikes as anywhere in the world.

In early May, the South African Democratic Teachers Union called off its work-to-rule protest and withdrew its demand for the resignation of Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga after winning a range of concessions from the government. The teachers had stuck for a day after the African National Congress-led (ANC) government threatened to classify teaching an “essential service,” thus making strikes illegal.

More recently, some 30,000 workers in auto industry and members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) went on an indefinite strike on August 19.

They demanded a 14 percent across-the-board wage increase and increases in their housing subsidy and transportation allowance.

The strike included 80 percent of workers at BMW, Ford, General Motors, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Toyota and Volkswagen.

On September 8, the union autoworkers returned to work after their union negotiated an agreement with wage increases of 11.5 percent, 10 percent and 10 percent in this and the next two years.

Some 90,000 construction workers, members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), have been on an indefinite strike since August 26.

They are joined by 50,000 members of the Building, Construction and Allied Workers Union. Both unions are demanding a 13 percent wage increase for 2013 and 14 percent in 2014.

The NUM, which represents just under two-thirds of the 140,000 miners in South Africa's gold extraction industry, started a strike as of September 3.

The union is demanding a 60 percent hike, while employers are only offering 6 percent. But the NUM general secretary has already indicated that the union would accept a 10 percent wage increase if it was offered.

The rival union, the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU), is demanding that entry-level wages rise to 12,500 rand a month, which is a 150 percent increase. The union has yet to announce strike action. AMCU is now the recognized union at Lonmin, the site of the Marikana massacre last year.

After the announcement of 6,900 job losses at Amplats, the world's largest platinum mine, workers could stop production there. The NUM is saying the job loss announcement is just to intimidate other workers into accepting a lower pay increase.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) fully backs the National Union of Mineworkers in their disputes in the construction and gold mining sectors, and is calling on all workers to act in line with the slogan "An injury to one is an injury to all."

Walter Sisulu University in the Eastern Cape has been closed indefinitely due to a five-week-long strike by staff.

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union and the National Tertiary Education Union have been on strike since July over demands for a salary increase of 8 percent to 10 percent. The university has offered 4.25 percent. There were also disruptive student protests.

Technicians from the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union working at South African Airways went on strike on August 26 and are demanding a double-digit pay increase.

Some 72,000 members of NUMSA working in gas stations and workshops planned to walk out on strike on September 2, but the union settled their dispute.

There are a range of other smaller disputes.

For example, more than 450 employees of dairy producer Parmalat SA are on a protected strike--meaning the walkout complies with labor laws--over wages. The Food and Allied Workers' Union is seeking a 9 percent wage increase, while Parmalat has offered 7 percent, according to the union.

Plus, an indefinite strike by casual workers at the South African Post Office's mail and processing centers in some parts of Gauteng Province started on September 2. These workers want to be given permanent part-time positions.

Pressure was also building for industrial action in the textiles sector, with 86 percent of 50,000 working union members having voted to go on strike.

The Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers Union demanded a 7 percent wage increase for its members working in metro areas and 11 percent in other areas. The employers associations agreed, and SACTWU settled on September 2.

These strikes are due to the failure of most workers to benefit significantly from the end of apartheid in 1995.

South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world.

A recent official survey revealed that median real salaries for formal-sector workers did not increase from 1997 to 2011. In contrast, the real wages of the top 10 percent of earners increased by a third over this period.

Union demands are also being encouraged by the success of earlier strikes and internal friction within COSATU.

The federation's general secretary, Zwelinzima Vavi, was recently suspended. This prompted threats of a breakaway by the National Union of Metalworkers, a Vavi backer. NUMSA has now replaced the NUM as the largest member of COSATU. There are also political developments with the formation of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), led by Julius Malema, the former president of the ANC Youth League, as a radical alternative to the ANC, despite charges of corruption against Malema.

Splits in the trade union movement have led to new unions outside COSATU for miners (AMCU), transportation workers, dockers, teachers and health workers. However, with a membership of over 2 million workers, COSATU remains a critical center, not only for organized workers, but as a base of support for the African National Congress-led government.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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To: Military Resistance Newsletter

Sent: September 12, 2013

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John Spritzler, editor

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