

Military Resistance 12D11



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: "Why does the flower have the shape of a mushroom cloud?"]

**“The Armed Forces Are The Factor
That In Time Of Revolution
Determines The Fate Of State
Power”**

**“Social Democracy Has Nothing In
Common With Those Bought-And-
Paid-For Moralists Who, In Response
To Any Terrorist Act, Make Solemn
Declarations About The ‘Absolute
Value’ Of Human Life”**

“These Are The Same People Who, On Other Occasions, In The Name Of Other Absolute Values Are Ready To Shove Millions Of People Into The Hell Of War”

The mass political strike, the armed insurrection, the conquest of state power—all this is determined by the degree to which production has been developed, the alignment of class forces, the proletariat’s social weight, and finally, by the social composition of the army, since the armed forces are the factor that in time of revolution determines the fate of state power.

By Leon Trotsky, Der Kampf, November 1911. [From Marxists Internet Archive]
[Thanks to Les Evenchick for posting.]

Our class enemies are in the habit of complaining about our terrorism.

What they mean by this is rather unclear.

They would like to label all the activities of the proletariat directed against the class enemy’s interests as terrorism.

The strike, in their eyes, is the principal method of terrorism. The threat of a strike, the organisation of strike pickets, an economic boycott of a slave-driving boss, a moral boycott of a traitor from our own ranks—all this and much more they call terrorism.

If terrorism is understood in this way as any action inspiring fear in, or doing harm to, the enemy, then of course the entire class struggle is nothing but terrorism.

And the only question remaining is whether the bourgeois politicians have the right to pour out their flood of moral indignation about proletarian terrorism when their entire state apparatus with its laws, police and army is nothing but an apparatus for capitalist terror!

However, it must be said that when they reproach us with terrorism, they are trying—although not always consciously—to give the word a narrower, less indirect meaning.

The damaging of machines by workers, for example, is terrorism in this strict sense of the word.

The killing of an employer, a threat to set fire to a factory or a death threat to its owner, an assassination attempt, with revolver in hand, against a government minister—all these are terrorist acts in the full and authentic sense.

However, anyone who has an idea of the true nature of international Social Democracy ought to know that it has always opposed this kind of terrorism and does so in the most irreconcilable way.

Why?

'Terrorizing' with the threat of a strike, or actually conducting a strike is something only industrial workers can do. The social significance of a strike depends directly upon first, the size of the enterprise or the branch of industry that it affects, and second, the degree to which the workers taking part in it are organised, disciplined, and ready for action.

This is just as true of a political strike as it is for an economic one. It continues to be the method of struggle that flows directly from the productive role of the proletariat in modern society.

In order to develop, the capitalist system needs a parliamentary superstructure. But because it cannot confine the modern proletariat to a political ghetto, it must sooner or later allow the workers to participate in parliament.

In elections, the mass character of the proletariat and its level of political development—quantities which, again, are determined by its social role, i.e. above all, its productive role—find their expression.

As in a strike, so in elections the method, aim, and result of the struggle always depend on the social role and strength of the proletariat as a class. Only the workers can conduct a strike.

Artisans ruined by the factory, peasants whose water the factory is poisoning, or lumpen proletarians in search of plunder can smash machines, set fire to a factory, or murder its owner.

Only the conscious and organised working class can send a strong representation into the halls of parliament to look out for proletarian interests.

However, in order to murder a prominent official you need not have the organised masses behind you.

The recipe for explosives is accessible to all, and a Browning can be obtained anywhere.

In the first case, there is a social struggle, whose methods and means flow necessarily from the nature of the prevailing social order; and in the second, a purely mechanical reaction identical anywhere—in China as in France—very striking in its outward form (murder, explosions and so forth) but absolutely harmless as far as the social system goes.

A strike, even of modest size, has social consequences: strengthening of the workers' self-confidence, growth of the trade union, and not infrequently even an improvement in productive technology.

The murder of a factory owner produces effects of a police nature only, or a change of proprietors devoid of any social significance.

Whether a terrorist attempt, even a 'successful' one throws the ruling class into confusion depends on the concrete political circumstances.

In any case the confusion can only be shortlived; the capitalist state does not base itself on government ministers and cannot be eliminated with them.

The classes it serves will always find new people; the mechanism remains intact and continues to function.

But the disarray introduced into the ranks of the working masses themselves by a terrorist attempt is much deeper.

If it is enough to arm oneself with a pistol in order to achieve one's goal, why the efforts of the class struggle?

If a thimbleful of gunpowder and a little chunk of lead is enough to shoot the enemy through the neck, what need is there for a class organisation?

If it makes sense to terrify highly placed personages with the roar of explosions, where is the need for the party?

Why meetings, mass agitation and elections if one can so easily take aim at the ministerial bench from the gallery of parliament?

In our eyes, individual terror is inadmissible precisely because it belittles the role of the masses in their own consciousness, reconciles them to their powerlessness, and turns their eyes and hopes towards a great avenger and liberator who some day will come and accomplish his mission.

The anarchist prophets of the 'propaganda of the deed' can argue all they want about the elevating and stimulating influence of terrorist acts on the masses. Theoretical considerations and political experience prove otherwise.

The more 'effective' the terrorist acts, the greater their impact, the more they reduce the interest of the masses in self-organisation and self-education.

But the smoke from the confusion clears away, the panic disappears, the successor of the murdered minister makes his appearance, life again settles into the old rut, the wheel of capitalist exploitation turns as before; only the police repression grows more savage and brazen.

And as a result, in place of the kindled hopes and artificially aroused excitement comes disillusionment and apathy.

The efforts of reaction to put an end to strikes and to the mass workers' movement in general have always, everywhere, ended in failure. Capitalist society needs an active, mobile and intelligent proletariat; it cannot, therefore, bind the proletariat hand and foot for very long.

On the other hand, the anarchist 'propaganda of the deed' has shown every time that the state is much richer in the means of physical destruction and mechanical repression than are the terrorist groups.

If that is so, where does it leave the revolution?

Is it rendered impossible by this state of affairs? Not at all.

For the revolution is not a simple aggregate of mechanical means.

The revolution can arise only out of the sharpening of the class struggle, and it can find a guarantee of victory only in the social functions of the proletariat.

The mass political strike, the armed insurrection, the conquest of state power—all this is determined by the degree to which production has been developed, the alignment of class forces, the proletariat's social weight, and finally, by the social composition of the army, since the armed forces are the factor that in time of revolution determines the fate of state power.

Social Democracy is realistic enough not to try to avoid the revolution that is developing out of the existing historical conditions; on the contrary, it is moving to meet the revolution with eyes wide open.

But—contrary to the anarchists and in direct struggle against them—Social Democracy rejects all methods and means that have as their goal to artificially force the development of society and to substitute chemical preparations for the insufficient revolutionary strength of the proletariat.

Before it is elevated to the level of a method of political struggle, terrorism makes its appearance in the form of individual acts of revenge.

So it was in Russia, the classic land of terrorism. The flogging of political prisoners impelled Vera Zasulich to give expression to the general feeling of indignation by an assassination attempt on General Trepov.

Her example was imitated in the circles of the revolutionary intelligentsia, who lacked any mass support. What began as an act of unthinking revenge was developed into an entire system in 1879-81. The outbreaks of anarchist assassination in Western Europe and North America always come after some atrocity committed by the government—the shooting of strikers or executions of political opponents.

The most important psychological source of terrorism is always the feeling of revenge in search of an outlet.

There is no need to belabor the point that Social Democracy has nothing in common with those bought-and-paid-for moralists who, in response to any terrorist act, make solemn declarations about the 'absolute value' of human life.

These are the same people who, on other occasions, in the name of other absolute values—for example, the nation's honour or the monarch's prestige—are ready to shove millions of people into the hell of war.

Today their national hero is the minister who gives the sacred right of private property; and tomorrow, when the desperate hand of the unemployed workers is clenched into a fist or picks upon a weapon, they will start in with all sorts of nonsense about the inadmissibility of violence in any form.

Whatever the eunuchs and pharisees of morality may say, the feeling of revenge has its rights.

It does the working class the greatest moral credit that it does not look with vacant indifference upon what is going on in this best of all possible worlds.

Not to extinguish the proletariat's unfulfilled feeling of revenge, but on the contrary to stir it up again and again, to deepen it, and to direct it against the real causes of all injustice and human baseness—that is the task of the Social Democracy.

If we oppose terrorist acts, it is only because individual revenge does not satisfy us.

The account we have to settle with the capitalist system is too great to be presented to some functionary called a minister.

To learn to see all the crimes against humanity, all the indignities to which the human body and spirit are subjected, as the twisted outgrowths and expressions of the existing social system, in order to direct all our energies into a collective struggle against this system—that is the direction in which the burning desire for revenge can find its highest moral satisfaction.

YOUR INVITATION:

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.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Massive Popular Outrage Forces Filth Running UPS To Rehire 250 Fired Drivers:

UPS “Had Previously Vowed Never To Back Down”

“The Company Refused To Negotiate With Local 804 And Told The Press It Would Boot All 250 Drivers As Soon As Replacements Were Trained”

Every UPS truck is equipped with more than 200 sensors that monitor drivers' every move, and drivers are expected to follow 72 pages of “methods,” such as hold the keys in your right hand as you approach your vehicle, start the truck and buckle your seat belt in one motion.

April 10, 2014 by Jane Slaughter, Labor Notes

In the wake of a relentless grassroots labor-community solidarity campaign, UPS waved the white flag and agreed to rehire all 250 New York City drivers the company fired last month.

The campaign united drivers, elected officials, and even UPS customers.

UPS issued termination notices to 250 drivers in March for a 90-minute work stoppage they had carried out on February 26. Jairo Reyes, a 24-year driver, had been fired for starting work too early, and was walked off the job.

This violated the Teamsters’ contract, which called for a 72-hour waiting period and a hearing before a worker could be walked off.

Drivers gathered in the parking lot to show their displeasure.

“Our contract had been violated so many times,” Reyes told Labor Notes. “This was the straw that broke the camel’s back.”

Reyes will also return to work, under the terms of the agreement struck between UPS and Teamsters Local 804 yesterday.

UPS had previously vowed never to back down.

The company refused to negotiate with Local 804 and told the press it would boot all 250 drivers as soon as replacements were trained.

At first management seemed to make good on that threat.

The first 20 workers were fired on March 31, at the end of their last work day of the month so that they and their families would lose their April health care coverage.

Four days later, UPS fired 16 more drivers as their local president prepared to take the stage to speak at the Labor Notes Conference. But just five days after that, UPS executives from company headquarters in Atlanta were at the table and striking an agreement with the union to return all 250 drivers to work.

Immediately after the walkout, Local 804 leaders met with the company to try to settle the dispute. Managers shut down the talks after minutes and said they were issuing termination notices to all 250 drivers.

So Local 804 launched a grassroots campaign to mobilize public support. First, the union mobilized its own ranks. Stewards and union activists passed out bulletins and petitions to show Teamster solidarity.

But the outreach quickly spread to the public in the form of an online petition launched by the Working Families Party (WFP), a grassroots political party of affiliated unions and community groups, including Teamsters Joint Council 16 in New York.

Local 804 members rallied on March 21 in front of the UPS hub in Maspeth, Queens, and delivered more than 105,000 petition signatures to the company.

New York City Public Advocate Letitia James and city council members joined the rally. So did Assembly member Michael Simanowitz. No labor radical, Simanowitz is a moderate Democrat who represents an Orthodox Jewish section of Queens. But he is also a UPS customer.

His UPS driver, Domenick “Dedom” Dedomenico, was one of the 250 fired Teamsters—one with a special back story. Dedom was run over while delivering Christmas packages for UPS. He spent 10 days in a coma and another 13 months recovering from a traumatic brain injury.

When Dedom returned to UPS, he was met with a barrage of warning letters and suspensions for “failing to meet his previous demonstrated performance.”

A supervisor assigned to monitor Dedom for a day reported that customers were slowing him down to welcome him back on the job, and breaking into tears.

Management responded by suspending Dedom and telling him to pick up the pace.

Brown’s ultimatum? Deliver one more package per hour or lose your job.

Then Dedom became one of the 250 who were issued termination notices.

“He spent a week in a coma, and how does this company repay him when he comes back to work? They fire him because he stood up for his brothers,” said Simanowitz.

“This is not over. Dedom is not fired. If he is then I’ll personally lay down in front of that driveway.”

Letitia James grabbed the microphone from Simanowitz and told the rallying Teamsters that UPS had a \$43 million contract up for renewal with New York State and, "if UPS does not do right by the workers in this city, then the city will not do right by UPS."

A hot campaign got a lot hotter.

Elected officials began scrutinizing UPS's financial dealings with the city and state, including a sweetheart deal through the Department of Finance's stipulated-fine program that cuts UPS's parking tickets by \$15 to \$20 million a year.

UPS responded by firing 20 drivers, chosen at random.

Local 804 kicked its campaign up a notch.

The union reached out to the press, and the firing of the 250 workers and Dedom, the driver who survived a coma only to be canned by UPS, became tabloid fodder.

Local 804 also reached out to other unions while the Working Families Party galvanized support from elected officials. On April 3, fired drivers and other Local 804 Teamsters held a press conference on the steps of City Hall with other Teamsters, nurses, bus and train operators from Transport Workers Local 100, members of the Communications Workers and Service Employees 32-BJ, Laborers, and others. Drivers told their story flanked by more than a dozen elected officials, including Letitia James and City Comptroller Scott Stringer.

"I do not understand who at that company put forward a business plan to take away a generation of good will between UPS and the City of New York," Stringer said. "But this is not gonna end this way." UPS axed 16 more drivers the following day.

With political pressure and bad PR on the rise, UPS tried to justify the firings as the only responsible business decision. "We simply cannot allow employee misconduct that jeopardizes our ability to reliably serve our customers," UPS told the press. One executive told the Daily News that UPS was firing 250 drivers because "we believe we owe it to our customers."

The union decided to put the question directly to those customers.

Fired drivers launched a customer outreach campaign. They retraced their routes, passed out leaflets, and talked with customers.

Customers posed for photos with the fired drivers with signs that said, "What Can Brown Do for Me? Not This" and "Rehire This Guy."

Steve Curcio was one of the original 20 firees who reached out to customers on his mixed commercial and residential route. "We were going out to customers on the route and asking their honest opinions and reactions to why we were missing," he said. "Everyone misses their guy, this guy is here every single day. They don't want their business being disrupted."

Supporters nationwide flooded the corporation with phone calls and bombed the UPS Facebook page.

Customer Lois Toscano from Little Neck called the Local 804 hall to see what she could do. She said her UPS driver—whose name she didn't know—had once saved her family's life. As she and her three children drowsily watched TV, Armin Kaeser rang the bell and said, "Mrs. Toscano, I smell gas."

"At Christmas," Toscano told the Daily News, "when presents are being delivered, (Kaeser) rings the doorbell first to make sure the kids aren't around before he hauls everything up to the door."

Local 804 made a video of customers speaking their minds to UPS. The testimonials were unscripted and heartfelt and shredded the company's argument that UPS owed the firings to its customers.

"What can Brown do for me? They can give me my driver back," said Alex Silaco of Tiles Unlimited. "I know what you mean to my company," another customer said, "It would be a shame if UPS makes the mistake of letting the drivers go that are important for their customer base."

Local 804 President Tim Sylvester said the tipping point for the campaign was "customers' involvement.

Management underestimated once again how popular our drivers are with their customers, just like in 1997 [when Teamsters struck for two weeks for full-time jobs]."

Teamsters Secretary-Treasurer Ken Hall, the union's chief negotiator with UPS, had not issued a single public comment or statement of support since February 26—a fact not lost on Local 804 members or union activists at UPS nationwide.

But the day before negotiations with UPS, Hall flew to New York and visited with drivers in Maspeth to offer support to the 250 drivers.

The next day, Local 804 leaders, international union officials, and UPS executives met and hammered out the agreement. All 250 terminations were reduced to 10-day suspensions. Local 804 will also issue a statement to members outlining the proper union procedures for a walkout.

"The buildup of frustration causes people to do things they wouldn't normally do," Sylvester said.

"You can only put a teakettle on a flame for so long before the lid comes off."


New York drivers were fed up with long hours, increasing production standards, and constant technological surveillance, Sylvester said.

Every UPS truck is equipped with more than 200 sensors that monitor drivers' every move, and drivers are expected to follow 72 pages of "methods," such as hold the keys in your right hand as you approach your vehicle, start the truck and buckle your seat belt in one motion.

Labor Notes asked Curcio if he was surprised his union would do so much.

“I expected at least what they did,” he said. “Something of this magnitude, so severe, that touched so many people—something had to be done.”

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.

Vermont Bus Drivers' 18-Day Strike Beats Back Management Offensive:

“Seventy-One Burlington High School Students Walked Shoulder To Shoulder With Their Bus Drivers In A Show Of Solidarity”

“Students Showed How Much They Support Fair Working Conditions And How Much They Support The Work That You Bus Drivers Do Each And Every Day”



Burlington High School Students on the picket line beside their CETA drivers.

Apr 11, 2014 BY Jonathan Leavitt, IN THESE TIMES. The author was part of the strike's solidarity committee and is a member of the Vermont Workers' Center, which supported the strike.

At 6am on March 17, St. Patrick's Day, 40 bus drivers and a dozen community members defied negative-10-degree weather to picket outside the Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) bus garage in Burlington, Vt.

The action marked the beginning of nearly three-week-long transit strike over concessionary contract demands that would capture the imagination of much of Vermont and culminate in victory.

“Management misjudged us,” said CCTA driver Jim Fouts, speaking to In These Times from the impromptu victory rally on April 3.

“We don’t drive together, we don’t have a lunch room to eat together,” said Fouts. But on the picket line, he says, “we turned into icicles together and we started to get to know one another.”

After months of failed negotiations and working without a contract since June 30 of last year, drivers voted 54-0 on March 12th to reject CCTA management’s final contract offer.

Drivers could not stomach monitoring and disciplinary procedures that they saw as “abusive,” such as being tailed by supervisors, reviewed via bus videotapes, and suspension of as long as a month.

The added demand that drivers work eight hours over the course of an exhausting 13.5-hour “split shift,” which could be extended through forced overtime to 15 hours, sparked concerns among bus drivers and community members that CCTA management’s demands risked “community safety.”

“Students Showed How Much They Support Fair Working Conditions And How Much They Support The Work That You Bus Drivers Do Each And Every Day”

St. Patrick’s Day fell on a Monday, a school day, and the temperature was negative 5 degrees, but at 7a.m., a steady stream of parents dropped off their students to march the picket line.

Seventy-one Burlington High School (BHS) students walked the proverbial mile in another’s shoes, shoulder to shoulder with their bus drivers in a show of solidarity that harkens back to a much older, bolder labor movement.

The students accompanied the bus drivers every foot of the circuitous 2.3-mile bus route from the Cherry Street picket line to the front office of the high school, where administrators greeted the students with applause and excused absences.

The handmade signs students carried would paper the lobby for the duration of the strike.

“This is Vermont, and even record cold temperatures cannot keep us away from supporting the workers of our state,” says Sabine Rogers, a senior at BHS.

“Students showed how much they support fair working conditions and how much they support the work that you bus drivers do each and every day.”

“As we started to walk, we went from a fairly quiet group to chanting with a bullhorn and really getting into it,” says BHS senior Henry Prine.

“One quiet student told me he doesn’t like loud noises or large crowd, but it was such an incredible experience. He fell in love with organizing in that moment.”

Prine detailed the prefigurative movement-building BHS students did before the strike.

Through his student delegate position on the school board, Prine convinced the body to pass a resolution stating the school district would not hire scab bus drivers to cross picket lines.

Prine says that as negotiations broke down and a strike appeared imminent, he began talking with other seniors (“and underclassmen too”) about ways BHS students could take an even more powerful public stand.

The students drafted a petition calling on CCTA management to meet the drivers’ demands, and Mayor Weinberger and the Burlington City Council to support the bus drivers.”

According to Prine, the petition drew more than 500 signatures in one day’s time. “That’s more signatures than people get to keep the hockey program,” he says.

This petition would be presented to Democratic Mayor Miro Weinberger in a March 10 City Council meeting by ten BHS student organizers.

Weinberger and his City Council allies had earned a reputation as anti-labor for gutting Burlington’s Livable Wage Ordinance despite popular support for policies to reduce the growing disparity of wealth.

Rogers, motivated by her experience on the strike line, would build out a student carpool in solidarity with drivers, using some dusty ward maps to collectivize students’ overlapping routes to school.

In the strike’s final week, students organized teachers to host bus drivers in their classes. Striking drivers presented labor history and origin story of their job action to 80 students in four classes in the three days leading up to the strike settlement.

Rogers believes the experience transformed a culture of alienation at her school. “The solidarity and community and sense of activism that has been such a big player in this whole past few weeks — I definitely see that continuing as part of the atmosphere at BHS,” she says.

‘This Is The Movement Of The People’

Nine days into the strike, the drivers would face a massively heavy lift. With the backing of Mayor Weinberger, eight of the 14 members of Burlington’s City

Council co-sponsored a resolution calling for the contract negotiations to enter “binding arbitration.”

According to a statement in response to the resolution by the Vermont Federation of Nurses and Healthcare Professionals (a local of AFT Vermont), binding arbitration decreases the likelihood of a favorable outcome for workers and communities by placing “all decision-making in the hands of a third party, someone with no relationship to the workplace or community directly affected by his or her decision” and who is not accountable for the results.

To speak against binding arbitration, 150 drivers and supporters marched upon the City Council's March 26 meeting, chanting “We are the union, the mighty, mighty union!”

After they filed into the chamber, City Council President Joan Shannon informed the crowd that the customary public comment period at the beginning of the meeting would be delayed by a special executive session.

At that point, the entire driver solidarity march assembled outside the chamber door and unleashed perhaps the most boisterous rally City Hall has ever seen.

The hallway and steps leading to City Hall’s second floor and the Mayor’s office were suffused with swelling throng of students, members of United Electric (UE), the Vermont Workers’ Center, the Vermont State Employees Association, Vermont National Education Association (Vermont NEA), the newly formed Vermont Homecare United (a local of AFSCME) and many bus drivers.

Loud applause and chants of “What do we want? Fair Contract! When do we want it? Now!” resounded in hallway’s marble and into the City Council chamber in a scene many would compare to the 2011 occupation of the Wisconsin Capitol by pro-union protesters.

“Where is the freedom? Where is the chance?” bus driver Noor Ibrahim, an immigrant from Somalia, asked the impromptu rally.

“I was told there is a chance here in this country. Where is the right of the poor people? (CCTA management) are misusing the money of the taxpayers. From now on we have this strike as experience, we don’t need to back down.”

Noor detailed how three years ago his wife was pregnant and “the doctor said the baby wasn’t moving.”

He set up an appointment on his day off so he could support his wife, even filling out the vacation paperwork as an extra precaution. Less than 24 hours before the appointment, he said, CCTA’s management told him he would have to work.

“When I asked them, they said ‘We don’t care about you, we don’t care about your family all we care about is the bus moving,’ ” said Noor.

As drivers continued telling personal stories like these and the raucous rally spilled over into public comment, two of the eight resolution sponsors, Karen Paul and Tom Ayres, pulled their names off.



Bus drivers, other unions and community solidarity activists lead a speak-out in Burlington City Hall on March 26.

Councilor Paul was evidently moved by the driver's stories; she introduced a successful amendment to "remove the resolution from the agenda" entirely, adding, "I've learned a great deal tonight. If we go forward with the agenda, I'll remove my name from the resolution."

By the council meeting's denouement, the focus had shifted from binding arbitration to a discussion led by progressive councilors of whether or not to sanction CCTA management.

"This is the movement of the people," Nigerian CCTA driver Ade Fajobi told In These Times. "The voice of everybody changed the votes of City Council."

"They Basically Tossed The Same Pile Of Dung Back In Our Faces"

On Saturday, March 29, the 12th day of the strike, an all-night, 18-hour negotiation session broke down, yet again, over CCTA management's demand to increase drivers' split-shifts 12.5 to 13.5 hours.

"They basically tossed the same pile of dung back in our faces," said Jim Fouts. In response, hundreds of supporters gathered at Burlington City Hall, beneath a 12-foot wide bright blue banner reading "Work With Dignity" and "Fair Contract Now."

A massive University of Vermont (UVM) feeder march and brass band joined, and Vermont residents lent their voices to the drivers' cause.

“By using your right to strike, you're creating a stronger movement of workers,” said Amy Lester, a member of Vermont NEA and the vice-president of the Vermont Workers’ Center. “Your strength is our strength. Your courage is our courage. Your momentum is our momentum. Every step you take on your picket line is our step. We all have your back, keep fighting and don’t give up.”

To loud applause, FaRied Munarsyah, a Workers’ Center member and 20-year CCTA rider, called for “temporary replacement managers.” Michelle Gałeckki of UVM’s Student Climate Culture said, “Livable jobs and public transportation is a green issue, but it’s also a human rights issue.”

“We have been swallowing this pain for the last ten years,” said Noor Ibrahim, from the steps of City Hall, with dozens of CCTA bus drivers behind him. “We cannot live in this hostile environment. We deserve respect.”

Just days later, after threatening picket line-crossing scab drivers, CCTA management would finally capitulate.

CCTA agreed to a contract with language limiting monitoring and discipline, reducing "forced overtime" to 13.5 hours a day instead of 15, and maintaining drivers’ split shifts at the current 12.5 hours. Though drivers conceded an increase from 13 to 15 part-time drivers, the union was able to win language preventing CCTA from using retirement or termination to reduce the entire bargaining unit slowly to part-time status. On April 3, inside the local VFW’s Eddie Laplant ballroom, drivers voted 53-6 to adopt the new contract.

“A Growing Movement For Work With Dignity”



Striking bus drivers lead the March 29th community solidarity march with hundreds of supporters.

According to James Haslam, director of the Vermont Workers Center, "In the current context of the attack on public transit, the public sector and the labor movement nationally, this is a tremendous victory for work with dignity that benefits all working people in the long haul."

The successful 18-day job action “really shows what happens when a few people speak out and continue to speak out towards a common goal of having a strong union,” said driver Jim Fouts in the bus terminal, in the afterglow of the victory celebration.

“When I first came here the union was weak, because it was a business-as-usual union. Then some activists started saying, ‘This is wrong. We can vote on things. This is supposed to be a democracy.’ And really it was a bottom up movement to change our union.”

According to former drivers Chuck Norris-Brown and Scott Ranney, a reform caucus with the local solidified over breakfasts in local restaurants in the spring of 2009, around a petition circulated amongst drivers that helped win stewards elected by drivers, not merely appointed by Teamsters higher-ups.

The caucus, nicknamed the Sunday Breakfast Club, soon began coordinating with Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), a national, independent rank-and-file movement within the Teamsters. In 2011 contract negotiations, Breakfast Club members did the shopfloor organizing and the local outreach to community members and other unions to build public support.

“A seed was sown which kept the Teamster Local to the grindstone, and almost all of the community action that resulted in major support for the recent drivers strike was based on earlier Sunday Breakfast Club contacts and strategies,” says Ranney, who also believes the caucus empowered rank-and-file members and paved the way for the unanimous rejection of the concessionary contract.

Tearing up, Fouts describes how Local 597 followed the advice of a Labor Notes organizer Ellen David Freidman, to build power and beat back concessions: “ ‘Turn enemies into neutrals, you turn neutrals into activists and you turn activists into leaders,’ ” he quotes. “That’s what we did.”

“We won this fair contract because of our unity and the tremendous support from our community,” says Rob Slingerland, CCTA bus driver and spokesperson for the drivers.

Many drivers, even in the midst of the victory party, said they’d already begun reciprocating the solidarity unionism they experienced from other unions during their strikes.

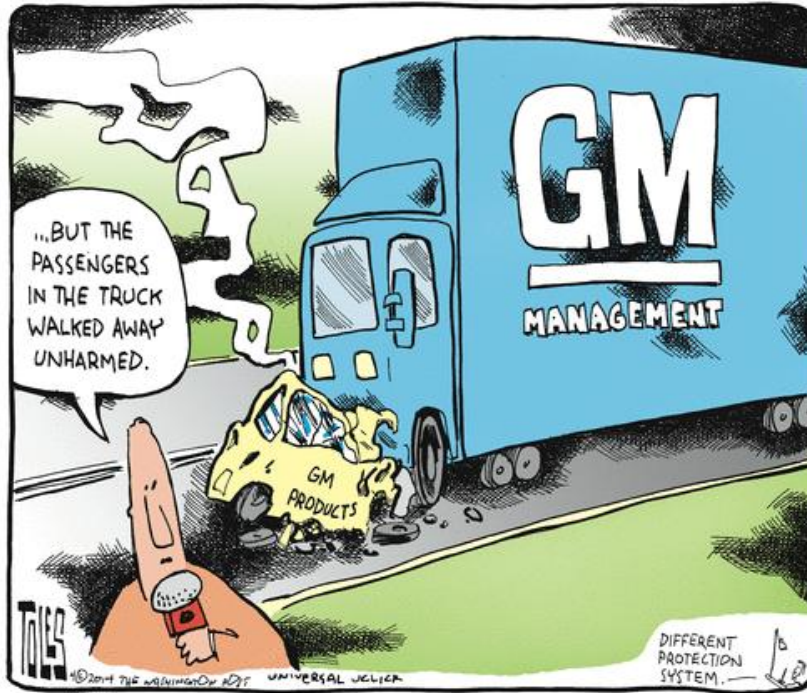
“We were talking about solidarity with other unions before we even went over our contract today,” says Slingerland. He says that drivers have already volunteered to join marches on the boss at Vermont’s Howard Center, a counseling and medical-services center where workers are in the process of unionizing with AFSCME.

“We got the help and now we’ve got to give the help,” he says. “Vermont is so small, but this movement is so big.”

Slingerland described an “umbrella of fear,” his co-workers used to work under and how the victorious strike changed workplace power relations and gave drivers a sense of dignity.

“A lot of drivers have discovered the power that they have within as a person,” said Slingerland, “you put that together as a group and you end where we are today, with a victory.”

DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK



OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Zionists Attack Palestinian Resources, Lands In Hebron And Nablus, As Usual: Palestinian Family “Has Been Victim Of Daily Violence By The Israeli

Settlers From The Illegal Outposts Of Mitzpe Yair And Nof Nesher”

“Settlers From Yitzhar Settlement, Constructed On Palestinian Land In The West Bank City Of Nablus, Uprooted 50 Olive Trees” As Usual

March 29, 2014 by Chris Carlson, International Middle East Media Center Editorial Group

Settlers from Israeli outposts damaged Palestinian solar panels and cultivated lands in southern Hebron hills, according to a press release issued Friday by Operation Dove.

The press release, as follows, went on to relate the Israeli settlers' attacks against Palestinians in the village of Bir Al-Idd near At-Tuwani, in southern Hebron, as witnessed by international activists of Operation Dove, an organization which has maintained an international presence in Al-Tuwani and the southern Hebron hills since 2004, Wafa reports.

In the evening of March 26, Israeli settlers damaged some solar panels, only electricity power sources for the Palestinian village Bir Al Idd.

The same day, during the early afternoon, Israeli settlers grazed their flock on Palestinian-owned wheat fields, damaging the harvest.

At 2:18 pm International volunteers noticed a flock grazing on Palestinian-owned fields in Kharrouba valley, close to the south-west side of the Israeli illegal outpost Havat Ma'on, in the South Hebron hills. The flock was apparently unattended, until when, after ten minutes, an Israeli settler from the outpost got close the herd and walked away with it.

Later, the Palestinian owners reported the facts to the Israeli police. At 3:02 pm the police arrived at the place and questioned Palestinians and International volunteers, taking from them pictures of the Israeli settler while he was grazing the flock. After that, the police officers went inside the outpost.

Around 6 pm, Israeli settlers damaged photo-voltaic system that supplies power to the Palestinian village of Bir Al Idd (South Hebron hills area), hitting it repeatedly.

Near the village are located the Israeli illegal outposts of Mitzpe Yair and Nof Nesher.

The morning after, Comet-Me members, who placed the system during the 2010 (Comet-Me is an Israeli-Palestinian no-profit organization specialized in providing sustainable energy sources and drinking water systems to isolated communities) arrived

on the place in order to verify the damages. At 9:59 am, an Israeli policeman and a soldier reached them in order to carry out surveys and listen the testimony of a Palestinian. Later, the complaint of the Palestinian was formalized.

During the late 90s, the Palestinian families of Bir Al Idd were forced to leave the area because of the continuous violence of Israeli settlers.

After a Rabbis for Human Rights' appeal submitted to the Israeli High Court of Justice, on January 2009, the Bir Al Idd residents' return was allowed.

Now, only one household of the 50 residents lives permanently in the village; the others were forced to leave because of several incidents of violence that took place since April 2013.

In April, August and November 2013, Israeli settlers from Mitzpe Yair attempted to block the only access road to the village.

On January 2014, two Israeli settlers prevented Palestinian residents from reaching the village, threatening them.

Since the Palestinian family remained the only one in the village, it has been victim of daily violence by the Israeli settlers from the illegal outposts of Mitzpe Yair and Nof Nesher.

Settlers from Ma'oun illegal settlement vandalized an agricultural land in Yatta village, south of Hebron, according to a report by the Palestinian News Network (PNN).

Rateb al-Jbour, Coordinator of Popular Committee to Resist Wall and Settlement, told the PNN that settlers, under the protection of Israeli army, vandalized 25 dunums of an agricultural land belonging to the Rab'i and al-Amour families in Yatta.

In a related context, settlers from Yitzhar settlement, constructed on Palestinian land in the West Bank city of Nablus, uprooted 50 olive trees.

Master Racists Take More Action For Lebensraum: “Israeli Authorities To Confiscate Thousands Of Acres Of Agricultural Land”

**“Settlers Guarded By Israeli Army
Who Fired Lighting Bombs Over The
Targeted Land Before The Settlers
Began To Set Fire To The Land”
“The Israeli Army Also Prevented
Palestinian Civil Defence Personnel
From Entering The Area And
Extinguishing The Fire”**



What A Surprise: Russian neo-Nazis parade displaying Hitler salute before their Israeli settler-organized visit to Knesset and Yad VaShem. 31 July 2011 Tony Greenstein's Blog

"Qaryout is witnessing fierce attacks aimed at confiscating its entire land for the sake of settlement expansion. The occupation forces have closed the main street in the southern area of the village and prevent the citizens from crossing it. They confiscated all the agricultural land surrounding it," Qaryouti said.

31 March 2014 The Middle East Monitor

Israeli settlers set fire to agricultural land in the village of Qaryout south of Nablus in the north of the West Bank before dawn today.

An activist with the Popular Resistance, Bashar Qaryouti, told the Anadolu Agency that a number of settlers from the Israeli settlement of Eli, located near the Palestinian village of Qaryout, sneaked on to that territory after midnight and set fire to 11 perennial olive trees.

"We called on the citizens through the mosques' speaker system to rise up to defend their land. Then we headed for the western area of the village which witnessed the attack.

The fire had destroyed 11 trees, while flammable materials were being sprayed at the rest of the trees. Because of our prompt arrival the burning was prevented and the settlers withdrew toward the settlement of Eli," Qaryouti said.

The activist pointed out that the settlers were guarded by the Israeli army who fired lighting bombs over the targeted land before the settlers began to set fire to the land.

The Israeli army also prevented Palestinian Civil Defence personnel from entering the area and extinguishing the fire.

"We tried to extinguish the fire through primitive tools in addition to sand, but we could not, so the burnt trees fell to the ground after the fire had destroyed them completely," he added.

He explained that the village of Qaryout is increasingly experiencing daily attacks against citizens and land, the most recent of which was the decision of the Israeli authorities to confiscate thousands of acres of agricultural land in order to link the two Israeli settlements of Eli and Shiloh to each other and establish tourist resorts for settlers.

"Qaryout is witnessing fierce attacks aimed at confiscating its entire land for the sake of settlement expansion. The occupation forces have closed the main street in the southern area of the village and prevent the citizens from crossing it. They confiscated all the agricultural land surrounding it," Qaryouti said.

It was not possible to get immediate comment from the Israeli army.

Zionist Mob Invades Palestinians' Home "And Began Beating The Brothers As Well As Members Of Their Families"
"Israeli Forces Who Were On The Scene Came To The Aid Of Settlers And Continued The Assault"

Then The Occupation Forces Arrest Him For Defending His Family

4/14/2014 Ma'an

HEBRON -- Israeli forces detained a Palestinian man on Saturday evening after he tried to defend his family from a home invasion by Jewish settlers in the southern West Bank city of Hebron, a local activist group said.

Mofid Sharbati, 46, was detained by Israeli forces after a group of settlers entered his home on Shuhada street in central Hebron, coordinator for Youth against Settlements Issa Amro said.

His brother Zidan Sharbati was wounded during the incident, which began when Jewish settlers entered their homes and began beating the brothers as well as members of their families.

When the two attempted to respond, Israeli forces who were on the scene came to the aid of settlers and continued the assault, Amro said.

Israeli forces detained Mofid during the incident, while Zidan was evacuated from the scene by an ambulance and taken to Hebron Hospital, where doctors said his wounds were "moderate."

An Israeli military spokeswoman did not have any information regarding the incident.

Jewish settlers routinely threaten and harass local Palestinians in Hebron's Old City in an effort to force them to hand over their properties for the expansion of Jewish settlements.

500 Jewish settlers already live in the Old City, many of whom have illegally occupied Palestinian houses and forcibly removed the original inhabitants.

They are protected by thousands of Israeli soldiers.

A 1997 agreement split Hebron into areas of Palestinian and Israeli control. The Israeli military-controlled H2 zone includes the ancient Old City, home of the revered Ibrahimi Mosque -- also split into a synagogue referred to as the Tomb of the Patriarchs -- and the once thriving Shuhada street, now just shuttered shops fronts and closed homes.

To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to:

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/Default.aspx> and

<http://www.palestinemonitor.org/list.php?id=ej898ra7yff0ukmf16>

The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



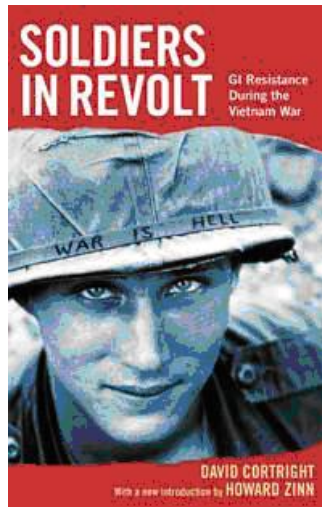
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