

Military Resistance 14E8



What's Left Of Assad's Syrian Arab Army?

Not Much:

“Hit By Several Waves Of Mass Defections, But Also Extensive Losses Caused By The Incompetence Of Their Commanders”

“It's Unlikely That Al Assad Has More Than 70,000 Troops Left Under His Command”

The general impression is that the Syrian Arab Army remains the largest military force involved in the Syrian Civil War, and that—together with the so-called National Defense Forces—it remains the dominant military service under the control of government of Pres. Bashar Al Assad.

Media that are at least sympathetic to the Al-Assad regime remain insistent in presenting the image of the “SAA fighting on all front lines”—only sometimes supported by the NDF and, less often, by “allies.”

The devil is in the details, as some say. Indeed, a closer examination of facts on the ground reveals an entirely different picture. The SAA and NDF are nearly extinct.

Because of draft-avoidance and defections—and because Al Assad’s regime was skeptical of the loyalty of the majority of its military units—the SAA never managed to fully mobilize.

Not one of around 20 divisions it used to have has ever managed to deploy more than one-third of its nominal strength on the battlefield.

The resulting 20 brigade-size task forces—each between 2,000- and 4,000-strong—were then further hit by several waves of mass defections, but also extensive losses caused by the incompetence of their commanders.

Unsurprisingly, the regime was already critically short of troops by summer of 2012, when advisers from the Qods Force of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps concluded that units organized along religious and political lines had proven more effective in combat than the rest of the Syrian military had.

Thus the regime’s creation, in cooperation with Iran, of the National Defense Forces. Officially, the NDF is a pro-government militia acting as a part-time volunteer reserve component of the military.

Envisioned by its Iranian creators as an equivalent to the IRGC’s Basiji Corps, the NDF became an instrument of formalizing the status of hundreds of “popular committees” created by the Syrian Ba’ath Party in the 1980s.

According to Iranian claims, the NDF’s stand-up resulted in the addition of a 100,000-strong auxiliary to Syria’s force-structure.

Moreover, the NDF functioned as a catalyst for the reorganization of the entire Syrian military into a hodgepodge of sectarian militias.

Namely, the IRGC and various other domestic and foreign actors began sponsoring specific NDF battalions. These actors included the Ba’ath Party, the Syrian Socialist National Party (SSNP), groups of Palestinian refugees living in Syria for decades—such the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—the General Command and the Palestine Liberation Army and even the Gozarto Protection Force, the latter made up of local Christian Assyrian/Syriac and some Armenian communities.

Strongly encouraging this process, the regime then went a step farther and authorized a number of businessmen and shadowy figures from Syria's Alawite minority to create their own, private militias.

of these organizations offered much better salaries to their combatants than either the SAA or the NDF could, and thus proved an attractive alternative for thousands of Syrians.

At least as important is that most of organizations in question proved capable of deploying heavy weapons, too. A majority of the battalions of resulting militias each usually total around 400 combatants, often riding on a miscellany of so-called "technicals"—essentially four-wheel-drive trucks fitted with heavy machine guns or light automatic cannons—plus between three and 15 armored vehicles.

“It's Unlikely That Al Assad Has More Than 70,000 Troops Left Under His Command”

This process of reorganizing the Syrian military into a gaggle of sectarian militias was nearly complete by the time when Russians launched their military intervention in the country in the summer of 2015.

Correspondingly, while planning a counteroffensive against insurgents in northern Latakia, the Russians established what they call the “4th Assault Corps”—a typical formation for what can be considered the modern-day Syrian armed forces.

Leaning upon the command structure of the former 3rd and 4th Divisions of the SAA, this headquarter is exercising control over the 103rd Republican Guards Brigade and six brigades of Alawite militia, all of which are private military companies administrated by the Republican Guards.

The 4th Assault Corps also includes the Nusr Az Zawba'a Brigade of the SSNP and two brigades of the Ba'ath Party Militia, or BPM. Because these units lacked in firepower, they were reinforced by Russian army artillery batteries drawn from the 8th Artillery Regiment, the 120th Artillery Brigade, the 439th Guards Rocket Artillery Brigade and the 20th Rocket Regiment—the latter equipped with the TOS-1A.

To lessen the strain upon this force, four battalion-size task forces—drawn from the Russian 28th, 32nd, and the 34th Motor Rifle Brigades and the 810th Marines Brigade—secured the secondary lines and supply depots.

A similar organization was subsequently introduced in the Damascus area, too. Although the regime can still fall back on at least five brigades of the Republican Guards Division deployed there, these units are incapable of running offensive operations.

Therefore, major assaults on insurgent-held pockets in Damascus and eastern Ghouta are overseen by two brigades from the Lebanese Hezbollah, three brigades of the PLA and various of local IRGC surrogates, including the Syrian branch of Hezbollah.

Units of Iraqi Shi'a militias are not only securing the Sayyida Zaynab District of southern Homs, but have also deployed to fight Syrian insurgents, too. Furthermore, IRGC-

controlled units of Iraq's Hezbollah branch, Hezbollah-Syria, the PFLP-GC and the PLA played a crucial role during the offensive that resulted in the capture of Sheikh Mishkin in January 2016.



This ex-SAA T-72 was photographed while being operated by the Kataib Hezbollah in the Aleppo area in November 2015.

Currently, Homs and Hama appear to be the last two governorates with any kind of significant concentration of the SAA. Actually, merely the HQs of various former SAA units are still wearing their official designations. Their battalions all consist of various sectarian militias—including that of the Ba'ath.

The latter played a prominent role in the creation of several “special forces” units renowned for their offensive operations in eastern Homs and southern Aleppo. These include the “Tiger Force” and the “Leopard Force.”

Essentially, all are private military companies, financed by businessmen close to Al Assad. Their operations in the eastern Homs and Palmyra areas are supported by battalion-size elements of the Russian 61st Marine Brigade and the 74th Guards Motor Rifle Brigade.

Despite the presence of such units as the Ba'ath Commando Brigade, the city and province of Aleppo are largely controlled by Iranians, foremost the IRGC.

The latter is usually said to operate three or four units in Syria. Actually, the Fatimioun Brigade (staffed by Afghan Hazars) and the Zainabioun Brigade (staffed by Pakistani Shi'a) are most often cited, while the Pasdaran have deployed four other such formations in Aleppo province alone—all staffed by their own regulars.

Ironically, the IRGC's fire brigade in this part of Syria is the Al Qods of the PLA Brigade. These units are supported by Russian army troops, too, including those from the 27th Guards Motor Rifle Brigade and the 7th Guards Assault Division and several artillery batteries.

Even larger are different contingents of Iraqi Shi'a, including nine brigade-size formations of Badhr and Sadrist movements, seven brigades of the Assaib Ahl Al Haq movement, five brigades of the Abu Fadhl Al Abbas movement, two brigades of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Units and nine brigades staffed by Iraqi Shi'a but which the author of this report was unable to associate with specific political movements in Iraq.

Finally, even the Islamic Republic of Iran Army is present in Syria, in the form of the 65th Airborne Brigade.

Correspondingly, there is hardly anything to be seen of the actual SAA and very little of the NDF. It's unlikely that Al Assad has more than 70,000 troops left under his command.

On the contrary, while Iranians are said to have about 18,000 troops in Syria, considering the average size of the brigades they and Iraqi Shi'a are deploying there, they more likely to oversee at least 40,000 combatants.

On the top of this all, one should not ignore the Russian military presence, which is also larger than media usually report. In addition to the units listed above, Moscow's forces include elements of no fewer than four Spetsnaz brigades—the 3rd, 16th, 22nd and 24th, primarily responsible for the Hmemmam and Sanobar air bases near Latakia and Shayrat air base in southeastern Homs.

All told, the Russians have at least 10,000—and more likely up to 15,000—troops in Syria.

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MILITARY NEWS

VA Mistakenly Classified 4,200 Veterans As Dead And Had Benefits Cut Off: “It Has Caused Needless Hardships For Thousands Of People Who Had Their Benefits Terminated And Their World Turned Upside Down”

May 25, 2016 Leo Shane III, Military Times [Excerpts]

More than 4,200 veterans were mistakenly declared dead and had benefits cut off by Veterans Affairs officials over a five-year span, according to new department data that shows the problem was much bigger than previously believed.

The issue came to light after a congressional inquiry in 2015 by Rep. David Jolly, R-Fla., who for the last few years has been tracking multiple constituents' complaints about premature death notices.

After initially estimating the total veterans affected as around a dozen each month, VA released new information on the problem this week, pegging the mistakes as harming more than 70 veterans a month.

“These numbers confirm our suspicion, that mistaken deaths by the VA have been a widespread problem impacting thousands of veterans across the country,” Jolly said in a statement.

“It’s a problem that should have been addressed years ago, as it has caused needless hardships for thousands of people who had their benefits terminated and their world turned upside down.”

The issue stems from lingering errors in Social Security Administration’s record sharing with VA. When that department incorrectly listed a veteran as dead, VA policy was to cut off benefits immediately, doubling the frustration of victims looking to correct the record.

In 2015 alone, 1,025 veterans had their benefits terminated due to incorrect death classifications, only to have the department come back weeks or months later to fix the mistake.

Following congressional pressure, VA officials approved policy changes last December to mitigate the problem, giving individuals 30 days after a death notice is received to provide proof of a mistake.

The 4,200 premature death errors represent only about 0.2 percent of the total death benefit cut-offs VA handled from 2011 to 2015, but Jolly said each mistaken case can have long-term traumatic results for the victims.

Command Giving A Pass To Sex Criminals In The Ranks: Enlisted Service Member Who Raped Woman “Found Guilty Of Battery, Given 45 Days Extra Duty And Reduced In Rank”

"Troubling Command Culture Seems To Favor Closing Cases Over Pursuing Justice And Leaves Victims Vulnerable To Retaliation”

“No Examples Among The 329 Cases Of Action Being Taken Against Anyone Who Retaliated Against A Person Who Made A Sexual Assault Claim”

May 23, 2016 by Richard Lardner, The Associated Press [Excerpt]

WASHINGTON — Sexual misconduct remains a destructive force in the armed forces and military communities, a U.S. senator said Monday in a new report that urges Congress to take more aggressive steps to end sex crimes in the ranks.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., examined files from 329 sexual assault cases that occurred in 2014 at bases in the United States. She said she found a "troubling

command culture" that seems to favor closing cases over pursuing justice and leaves victims vulnerable to retaliation.

"The military justice system is still dysfunctional, the problem of sexual assault is still pervasive and survivors still don't believe they will get justice," said Gillibrand, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services personnel subcommittee.

Gillibrand's report could strike nerves on Capitol Hill and at the Pentagon. Many lawmakers and senior U.S. military leaders say strides have been made over the past three years toward curbing sex crimes and punishing offenders. Congress has ordered numerous changes to the military justice system, they say, giving victims the confidence to step forward and report offenses.

The department said earlier this month that the number of reported sexual assaults involving active-duty service members dipped just slightly in 2015 compared to the previous year.

But Gillibrand said significant progress won't be made without more extensive reforms.

She said the records reveal how sexual violence affects not only service members. Nearly a third of the cases involved civilian women, children and military spouses, the report said.

The report is being released ahead of the Senate's consideration of the annual defense policy bill.

Gillibrand is pushing to include in the bill a measure that she said targets "the bias and inherent conflicts of interest" that exist because of the way the military decides whether to prosecute sexual assault cases.

That decision-making power is currently held by a small number of high-ranking officers. Gillibrand's proposal would give that authority instead to seasoned, independent military trial lawyers.

A bipartisan group of senators led by Gillibrand and Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, are scheduled to hold a news conference Tuesday to call on the Senate to pass her proposal. It was first introduced in the spring of 2013 and has won the backing of at least 50 senators. But the legislation has twice failed on the Senate floor to meet a 60-vote filibuster threshold. Grassley is the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Critics of Gillibrand's bill said commanders are essential to maintaining good order and discipline in the ranks. Removing them would mean fewer sex offenders will be caught and convicted, they said.

Yet Gillibrand said there were several 2014 cases that failed to move forward even after military investigators found probable cause to do so.

In one, an investigation determined that an enlisted service member sexually assaulted a woman while he used physical force to subdue her. But the command chose not court-martial him. He was found guilty of battery, given 45 days extra duty and reduced in rank.

"The case files suggest a continued large-scale systemic failure and an ingrained culture that protects the accused and ostracizes the survivor at the expense of the public and our service members' safety," according to Gillibrand's report.

There were no examples among the 329 cases of action being taken against anyone who retaliated against a person who made a sexual assault claim.

Gillibrand said she specifically asked for information about prosecutions for retaliation and the absence of any is concerning.

In December 2014, a RAND survey initially said that more than 60 percent of sexual assault victims believed they had faced a form of retaliation from commanders or peers.

The department reduced the estimate this year to nearly 38 percent after officials concluded that the survey questions may have inadvertently included actions by commanders seeking to protect the victim or other social practices that were not designed to deter a victim from pressing forward with criminal proceedings.

"Nevertheless, we have seen scant to no evidence that retaliation cases are being pursued anywhere in the services," Gillibrand said.

Gillibrand said the Pentagon resisted providing the case files and only relented after the Senate Armed Services chairman, Republican John McCain of Arizona, intervened.

Gillibrand released a similar study a year ago that examined files for 2013 cases from the same four bases: the Army's Fort Hood in Texas, Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia, the Marine Corps' Camp Pendleton in California and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

The case files the Defense Department provided are heavily blacked out and often incomplete, according to Gillibrand.

An AP investigation published in November found a lack of transparency in the military justice system that makes it difficult for the public to know the details of cases that end in convictions.

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.

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

Democracy, true democracy, is never superseded. It is the first thing that a revolution establishes..

..--C.L.R. James; Notes On Dialectics

Agent Orange Children 2016



Photograph by Mike Hastie

From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: May 12, 2016
Subject: Agent Orange Children 2016

Full Disclosure

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

Forfeit Day

From: Dennis Serdel
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: May 25, 2013
Subject: Forfeit Day

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

Forfeit Day

Memories like mouse turds
sweep away
by mega-mall memorial sales
americans camping eating
hotdogs made from dead soldiers guts
all ground up & sent
as plastic american flags
an eyeball here an asshole there
ground up soldiers devoured
by bright pinky cheeky american
kids who may have a future
of war when they grow older so others
can eat their ground up bodies guts
& welcome checks to parents
that only spend the money
on themselves & salute
the rathole war profiteers
dug in the ground of graves to eat
like worms the meat of dead soldiers
leaving only bloody bones
like a scene from a horror movie
where puffed up gargoyles
sinks their teeth into the fresh
stomachs of the dead soldier fools
who suffered & died from the stress
& rapid fire holes in bodies where
only the heartless ignorant
public of war crash beers
against their teeth & drunkenly
fall down near but not in like fireflies
near hell & only black funeral
volunteers fill up the carcasses
of stomachs eaten out
& faces blown & wrapped against a tree
& american flags

with maggots for their brains
they seek & hide within
the shoulders of the war
where only other soldiers
rip the worm filled flags
of deceit from the anchors
of non-retreat like books
with only blank pages &
movies for the blind
who can not ever preach
the swollen names upon
the cheap government headstones
spelling all the names backwards
like a puzzle never to be
found among the tall grass
& sunken skulls of manmade
treacherous guns firing into the air
dismissing all the gods except pagan
where taps flow through the air.

writing by Dennis Serdel for Military Resistance

**“Especially After The 1968 Tet
Offensive, Antiwar Sentiment
Spread Widely Among The
Combat Troops In Vietnam”**

**“The Main Activities Of Antiwar
U.S. Servicepeople In Vietnam
Were Not Peaceful
Demonstrations”**

**“A 1975 Survey Revealed That 75%
Of Vietnam Veterans Were Opposed
To The War”**

“There Is No Contemporaneous Evidence Of Any Antiwar Activists Spitting On Veterans”

Excerpts from *Vietnam And Other American Fantasies*; H. Bruce Franklin; University Of Massachusetts Press; Amherst, 2000

The most serious occurred on April 14 at the base of Dau Tieng (east of Tay Ninh, north of Cu Chi), when a unit of the Third Brigade of the Fourth Infantry Division defied orders to proceed on a search-and-destroy mission near where another unit had been badly cut up.

The commanding officer ordered other soldiers to fire on the rebels, who returned the fire. One report indicated dozens of men killed or wounded and three helicopters destroyed.

As the Vietnam veteran and sociologist Jerry Lembcke has demonstrated in his invaluable 1998 book *The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam*, the vast majority of returning veterans characterized their reception as friendly.

There is no contemporaneous evidence of any antiwar activists spitting on veterans.

The first allegations of such behavior did not appear until the late 1970s. The spat-upon veteran then became a mythic figure used to build support for military fervor and, later on, the Gulf War, but the myth has become so powerful that many veterans have now come to believe, despite all evidence to the contrary, that it actually happened to them personally.

Of course it is possible that isolated instances may have occurred. But if antiwar activists were frequently spitting on veterans or otherwise abusing them, why has nobody ever produced even the tiniest scrap of contemporaneous evidence? According to the myth, spitting on veterans was a regular custom as they arrived from Vietnam at the San Francisco and Los Angeles airports.

We are supposed to believe that these men just back from combat then meekly walked away without attacking or even reporting their persecutors, and that nobody else, including airport security officers, ever noticed what was going on.

For there is not one press report, airport security report, police report, court record, diary entry, video shot, or photograph of a single incident at these airports or anywhere else.

How then to explain the belief now held by many veterans that they were indeed spat upon as they arrived from Vietnam at the San Francisco and Los Angeles airports?

The answer lies in the transformative power of collective national myth over individual memory.

The myth is so strong that it has even determined their memory of where they arrived, for they were flown back not to these civilian airports but to military bases closed to outsiders.

And a 1975 survey revealed that 75 percent of Vietnam veterans were opposed to the war.

Especially after the 1968 Tet offensive, antiwar sentiment spread widely among the combat troops in Vietnam, where peace symbols and antiwar salutes became commonplace.

Some units even organized their own antiwar demonstrations to link up with the movement at home.

For example, to join the November 1969 antiwar Mobilization, a unit stationed at Pleiku fasted against the war and boycotted the Thanksgiving Day dinner.

Of the 141 soldiers classified below the rank of specialist fifth class, only eight showed up for the traditional meal; this “John Turkey Movement” spread to units all over Vietnam.

When Bob Hope introduced General Creighton Abrams, commander of all U.S. forces in Vietnam, to the 30,000 troops assembled for a Christmas show at the sprawling Long Binh base, the entire throng leaped to their feet and held their hands high in the “V” salute of the peace movement.

“The Main Activities Of Antiwar U.S. Servicepeople In Vietnam Were Not Peaceful Demonstrations”.

But the main activities of antiwar U.S. servicepeople in Vietnam were not peaceful demonstrations.

An ongoing dilemma for the antiwar movement back home was the difficulty of finding ways to move beyond verbal protest and symbolic acts to deeds that would actually interfere with the conduct of the war.

The soldiers in Vietnam had no such problem.

Individual acts of rebellion, ranging from desertion and sabotage to injuring and even killing officers who ordered hazardous search-and-destroy missions, merged into mutinies and large-scale resistance.

As early as the spring of 1967, sporadic small-scale mutinies were being reported in the French press but not in the U.S. media — except for the movement’s own press.

The most serious occurred on April 14 at the base of Dau Tieng (east of Tay Ninh, north of Cu Chi), when a unit of the Third Brigade of the Fourth Infantry Division defied orders to proceed on a search-and-destroy mission near where another unit had been badly cut up.

The commanding officer ordered other soldiers to fire on the rebels, who returned the fire.

One report indicated dozens of men killed or wounded and three helicopters destroyed.

The base was sealed off and no outside personnel were admitted for three days.

Combat refusal and outright mutinies spread rapidly after the Tet offensive in 1968.

But news about this form of growing GI resistance was kept rather efficiently from most of the American public until August 1969, when correspondents reported firsthand on the unanimous battlefield refusal of a badly mauled infantry company to go back into combat.

During the next two years, the press published numerous reports of entire units refusing direct combat orders, and the public actually got to see two incidents of rebellion on network television.

**“A Common And Less Conspicuous Method Of Killing Unpopular Officers:
Rifle Fire Often In The Midst Of Combat”**

Resistance took another form so widespread that it brought a new word into the English language: “fragging.”

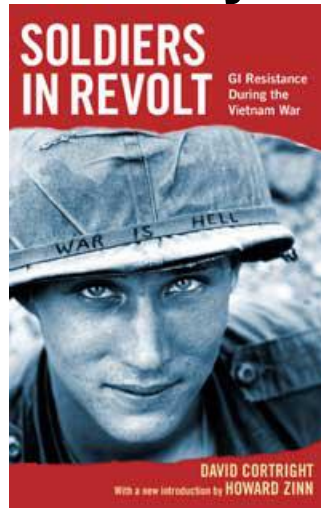
Originally taking its name from fragmentation grenades but soon applied to any means of killing commissioned or noncommissioned officers, fragging developed its own generally understood customs, usages, and ethos.

Officers who aggressively risked or otherwise offended their men were customarily warned once or twice by a nonlethal grenade before being attacked with a booby-trapped or hurled grenade.

By mid-1972, the Pentagon was officially acknowledging 551 incidents of fragging with explosive devices, which had left 86 dead and more than 700 wounded. These figures were no doubt understated, and they did not include a common and less conspicuous method of killing unpopular officers: rifle fire often in the midst of combat.

**“People Need Not Be Helpless
Before The Power Of Illegitimate
Authority”**

“By Getting Together And Acting Upon Their Convictions People Can Change Society And, In Effect, Make Their Own History”



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

In the final analysis the stationing of American forces abroad serves not the national interest but the class interest of the corporate and political elite.

The maintenance of a massive, interventionist-oriented military establishment is based not on the nation's legitimate defense requirements but on the need to protect multinational investment and preserve regimes friendly to American capital.

Imperialism is at the heart of the national-security system and is the force fundamentally responsible for the counterrevolutionary, repressive aims of U.S. policy.

Only if we confront this reality and challenge it throughout society and within the ranks can we restore democratic control of the military.

Of course nothing can be accomplished without citizen involvement and active political struggle.

During the Vietnam era enlisted servicemen created massive pressures for change, despite severe repression, and significantly altered the course of the war and subsequent military policy.

To sustain and strengthen this challenge we must continue to build political opposition to interventionism and support those who defy military service.

To this end the patriots who resisted the Indochina war should be granted universal and unconditional amnesty, as a sign of our agreement with their acts and as the first step toward restructuring the military and legitimatizing resistance to illegal war.

The central lesson of the GI movement — and, I hope, of this book — is that people need not be helpless before the power of illegitimate authority, that by getting together and acting upon their convictions people can change society and, in effect, make their own history.

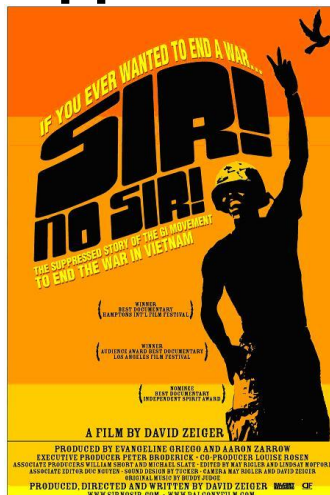
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David Zeiger and Jade Fox
Displaced Films

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I just wanted to say thank you for this film, for raising my awareness, I never even knew some of these things happened.

I think this probably is one of the most important documentaries made about war resistance.

Thank you again,
SGT Spencer Batchelder

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ANNIVERSARIES

**Evil Anniversary:
May 24, 1934: Germany:**

“It Is The Aim Of The State Police To Support Zionism And Its Emigration Policy As Fully As Possible”

From: Human Smoke; The Beginnings of World War II, By Nicholson Baker, Simon & Schuster; New York 2008

Reinhard Heydrich, head of the intelligence branch of the German secret police, read a position paper prepared for him concerning Jewish policy. It was May 24, 1934.

“The aim of Jewish policy must be the emigration of all Jews,” the paper said. Jewish “assimilationists”—those who wanted to live their lives as Germans within Germany—should be discouraged; while Zionists—those who wanted to emigrate to Palestine—should be encouraged, according to the memo.

“It is the aim of the State Police to support Zionism and its emigration policy as fully as possible:

“Every authority concerned should, in particular, concentrate their efforts in recognizing the Zionist organizations and in supporting their training and emigration endeavors; at the same time the activities of German-Jewish groups should be restricted in order to force them to abandon the idea of remaining in Germany.”

In this way, Germany would eventually become a country “without a future for the Jews.”

Heydrich, a blond man with a high forehead and long, spidery fingers, began helping Zionist organizations set up agricultural training centers, so that Jews would know how to farm when they reached Palestine.

May 27, 1963: “Masters Of War Released”



The record album, "The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan," with the song "Masters Of War," was released.

Masters of War
By Bob Dylan

Come you masters of war
You that build all the guns
You that build the death planes
You that build the big bombs
You that hide behind walls
You that hide behind desks
I just want you to know
I can see through your masks

You that never done nothin'
But build to destroy
You play with my world
Like it's your little toy
You put a gun in my hand
And you hide from my eyes
And you turn and run farther
When the fast bullets fly

Like Judas of old
You lie and deceive
A world war can be won
You want me to believe
But I see through your eyes
And I see through your brain
Like I see through the water
That runs down my drain

You fasten the triggers
For the others to fire
Then you set back and watch
When the death count gets higher
You hide in your mansion
As young people's blood
Flows out of their bodies
And is buried in the mud

You've thrown the worst fear
That can ever be hurled
Fear to bring children
Into the world
For threatening my baby
Unborn and unnamed
You ain't worth the blood
That runs in your veins

How much do I know
To talk out of turn
You might say that I'm young
You might say I'm unlearned
But there's one thing I know
Though I'm younger than you
Even Jesus would never
Forgive what you do

Let me ask you one question
Is your money that good
Will it buy you forgiveness
Do you think that it could
I think you will find
When your death takes its toll
All the money you made
Will never buy back your soul

**And I hope that you die
And your death'll come soon
I will follow your casket
In the pale afternoon
And I'll watch while you're lowered
Down to your deathbed
And I'll stand o'er your grave
'Til I'm sure that you're dead**

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Zionist Navy Attacks Unarmed Palestinian Fishermen North Of Gaza, As Usual

13-5-2016 The Palestinian Information Center

GAZA -- The Israeli occupation navy on Friday morning opened machinegun fire at Palestinian fishing boats off the northern coast of the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian sources said that Israeli gunboats showered fishermen and their boats with a volley of bullets during their presence near the shore of Beit Lahiya, north of Gaza.

Luckily, no one was hurt in the gunfire attack, which is part of ongoing violations carried out by the Israeli navy against the fishermen and their boats in Palestinian waters.

Occupation Forces Uses Attack Dogs To Maim Palestinian During Arrest: “Before Being Severely Beaten By Israeli Soldiers”

13-5-2016 The Palestinian Information Center

RAMALLAH -- Using police dogs, Israeli forces brutally attacked the Palestinian prisoner Mohamed al-Azza, from Bethlehem, during his arrest.

The dogs mauled the detainee, bite and cut his right hand artery causing him severe bleeding.

After his visit to Maskoubiya detention center, lawyer of the Palestinian Prisoners Society (PPS) quoted the detainee al-Azza as saying that he was violently pulled by the dogs before being severely beaten by Israeli soldiers, causing him severe injuries all over his body.

He was then taken to Hadassah Ein Karem Hospital for treatment for nearly a week to be then moved to Maskoubiya detention center.

Al-Azza is still unable to move his right hand fingers, the lawyer pointed out. Al-Azza was arrested along with his brother in April 2016 and prevented to meet his lawyer for 21 days.

Unforgettable Palestine: The Nakba Day March Of Return; “A Wave Of Palestinian Flags Washed The Desert” “The Nakba Continues In The Negev”

May 14, 2016 By Samah Salaime, +972

I went down to the Negev to participate in this year's Nakba Day events.

The fact that it's the 68th year and little has changed depressed me; the sense of unity and the bubbly optimism of some of the activists encouraged me.

“I will not come with you to the march!” my adolescent son exclaimed.

“I’ll sit at home and watch it. Wasn’t our home taken away from us during the Nakba? So here. You go, and take your little boy who doesn’t understand anything, and leave me alone.”

“Don’t you support the right of return?” I ran after him to his room. “I want to know the truth. Answer me!” The Jewish mother in me got the better of me.

By the time I got to his room, he was tucked in his bed. “I support it, of course I do. I just don’t think that spending the whole day travelling just to stand in the sun waving a broomstick and a plastic flag will give you back your village, that’s all. And enough with all the emotional blackmail, please.”

My parental authority died that minute, and left me speechless and mournful. I dragged myself out of his room, completely resigned, as if I had just been expelled from my village. He may have a point, that adolescent brat. Another march and another protest – for 68 years, and what for? Why is it important? And in the current climate in Israel, is there hope at all?

Adam, my younger son, got out of the shower and tried his luck at rebelling, albeit to no avail. I told him he could take whatever he wanted from the sweets cabinet as well as a ball, so that he could be social and play with the other kids while important men delivered their speeches.

I took the biggest Palestinian flag I could find – it came in a special delivery from Bil’in – loaded my car with Palestinian lace and dressed in red and white complete with a checkered scarf. Only a hat was missing to be a walking Palestinian flag.

In solidarity with the Palestinians of the Negev, the Association for the Protection of the Rights of Refugees organized this year’s march in the south, to link the protest of both past and present house demolition and land expropriation.

The organizers were genuinely concerned that the northerners will let down the despaired Bedouin and not turn up. A great deal of effort was put into booking buses from virtually every town and village to ensure that the turnout would not resemble the previous protests in Umm al Hiran, Al-Araqib and the Negev villages. Every activity south of the Sharon region is always accompanied by an existential concern: Will the northerners make it or not?

The turnout was surprisingly good: Some say more than 10,000 people came. A wave of Palestinian flags washed the desert. It was hot, dusty, without a single tree to hide under, but there were trimmed wheat fields a few yards away. They probably belonged to Kibbutz Shoval.

I was looking for the remains of the Palestinian village Wadi Zubale (Dumpster Valley) – a rather unattractive name. That’s what it was called in the app iNakba where I was searching for more info.

“I couldn’t find anything,” I said to a Balad activist, laughing. “Sixty-eight years ago there were real Bedouin here.

“They probably lived in tents rather than brick and mortar, that’s why it was so easy to do away with them. Not that the Zionists care where we lived before.” I pretended it to be an expert, which went down well with my interlocutor.

Then the march started. Unlike previous years, it was neither long nor difficult, and even started on time. Thousands arrived at the compound in an orderly manner to the sound of loudspeakers playing folk and protest songs, as well as tunes – modern and traditional alike - about the unforgettable Palestine and about the refugees.

My heart skipped a few beats when they started naming the representatives of all the parties, associations, monitoring committees, municipalities, and so on. If each of them got to speak we’d spend the next 24 hours here!



March of Return, May 2016 (Samah Salaime)

To my amazement, this long line of dignitaries stood up, and were asked to mix their soil with that of the Negev, to symbolize the struggle, old and new, for the land. Except the gender uniformity of the spectacle, nothing really bothered me.

The first speaker was former Hadash leader Mohammed Barakeh, who conveyed his mother’s testimony from her village, Saffuriyya, where she had to keep her baby son quiet in a hideout, without enough milk to nurse him.

Sadly, the story turned out badly – further proof that the Palestinians didn’t choose to flee.

The best speech in my opinion was Prof. Gadi Algazi's. He was straightforward and optimistic. "The Nakba continues in the Negev," he said, "and the residents of the Negev taught us how to fight together. A just popular struggle is possible."

Another scholar spoke interestingly about the people becoming refugees. Although the Syrians' plight may seem a lot more dramatic at present, he said, the Palestinian refugee question has lasted the longest.

It was also an opportunity to socialize with my virtual friends and feel a real sense of unity.

As we headed home, my Facebook feed was flooded with inexplicable pictures of happiness and Palestinian pride.

And I, for my part, was looking for my flag from Bil'in, to no avail. It was gone with the crowd, and its effort to return continue to this day.

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