

## **Military Resistance 15D3**



**“The Trump Administration’s  
Missile Strike Is Not A  
Reflection Of Any Genuine  
Concern For The Syrian People”**

**“It Will Not Help The Struggle  
Against The Assad Regime, ISIS  
And Al Qaida”**

**“Since Coming To Office, The Trump  
Administration Has Given Every  
Indication That Its Goal Is To Promote  
Undemocratic, Racist, Sexist Middle**

# **Eastern Leaders And Strengthen The Repressive Environment Of The Middle East”**

## **[Alliance of Syrian & Iranian Socialists’ Statement on Assad’s Chemical Bombing & Trump’s Latest Airstrikes]**

April 7, 2017 Joseph Daher and Frieda Afary, Alliance of Syrian and Iranian Socialists

The chemical bombing of innocent civilians in the Syrian town of Khan Sheikhoun (Idlib province) which was perpetrated by the Assad regime and its allies, Russia and Iran on April 4, is yet another step in the murderous campaign to destroy what is left of the popular opposition to the Assad regime.

After putting under siege and destroying Eastern Aleppo, the most important center of the popular and democratic opposition, and forcing the survivors as well as the survivors from other besieged opposition areas to go to Idlib, the regime is now concentrating its forces on bombing the civilian population in Idlib and Aleppo provinces.

The Trump administration’s April 6 targeted missile strike on the Syrian airbase from which the chemical attack was launched, is not a reflection of any genuine concern for the Syrian people. It will not help the struggle against the Assad regime, ISIS and Al Qaida. Instead, this administration’s latest airstrikes are motivated by other aims.

Just two days earlier the Trump administration had announced that its priority was not the ouster of Assad.

Once the Assad regime’s chemical bombing delivered a blow to the credibility of U.S. imperialism however, the decision was made to strike Assad’s air base. In order to calm some dissent within the Republican party’s leadership, Trump had to show that contrary to Obama, he had some “red lines.”

Furthermore, given the daily new revelations about the Trump administrations close ties to Putin’s Russia and the ways in which these revelations have seriously damaged its credibility even among its supporters, the missile strike in Syria was a way for this administration to partially distance itself from Russia. However, at this point, we can say that this strike which was announced in advance to the Russian government, does not indicate any strategic change in U.S. policy concerning the future of Syria or the Assad regime.

The focus of the U.S. government will still be seeking a transition in which the core of the Assad regime is not challenged. Such a policy will be justified by this administration in the name of the “War on Terror.”

In general, since coming to office, the Trump administration has given every indication that its goal is to promote undemocratic, racist, sexist Middle Eastern leaders and strengthen the repressive environment of the Middle East: He or his advisers have met with Israeli president Benjamin Netanyahu, Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan and foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, Egyptian president, General Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, Saudi Arabian Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, King Abdullah of Jordan.

On March 30, U.S. Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson's visit to Turkey gave a nod of approval to Erdogan, who has arrested over 70,000 people in the past year, continually bombed the Kurdish population of Turkey and Syria, and is aiming to vastly expand his repressive powers against all forms of dissent, through a referendum on April 16. Tillerson's visit also led to some unannounced agreements which do not bode well for the Kurds in Turkey and Syria.

Most importantly, recent American airstrikes in Mosul, Aleppo and Raqqa which are supposedly aimed at stopping ISIS, have brought about large civilian death tolls.

They have been some of the deadliest since U.S. airstrikes on Syria started in 2014. They show that greater U.S. military intervention in Syria will only lead to more death and destruction. One resident of Mosul, Iraq who was fleeing ISIS, compared the destruction brought about by the latest U.S. airstrikes in Mosul to the U.S. dropping of a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima. (See Tim Arango, "Civilian Deaths Rising in Iraq and Syria as Battles Intensify in Dense City Areas." New York Times, March 28, 2017). According to Airwars, during the month of March alone, as many as a thousand civilians have been killed by U.S. airstrikes in Iraq and Syria in the name of the "War on Terror." ([https://www.democracynow.org/2017/3/27/more\\_than\\_1\\_000\\_civilians\\_killed](https://www.democracynow.org/2017/3/27/more_than_1_000_civilians_killed))

These realities not only reveal the Trump administration's motives but also compel us to condemn all the states that are carrying out wars against innocent civilians in the Middle East: The Syrian and Iranian regimes, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel, all the other authoritarian regimes in the region, ISIS, Al Qaida, as well as Russian and Western military interventions.

They are all part of an imperialist logic and the maintenance of authoritarian and unjust systems. They all oppose the self-determination of the peoples of the region and their struggles for emancipation. Hence, anti-war activists whether in the Middle East or the West need to address all forms of repression and authoritarianism, and condemn all forms of foreign intervention against the interests of the people of the region, instead of limiting their criticisms only to the West and Israel.

Clearly, no peaceful and just solution in Syria can be reached with Bashar al-Assad and his clique in power. He is the biggest criminal in Syria and must be prosecuted for his crimes instead of being legitimized by international and regional imperialist powers.

Clearly, an effective way to help Syrians and to change the worsening course of events in the region today is for those Iranians and Russians who oppose their rulers' military intervention in Syria to build strong anti-war movements that show the connections between their governments' support for the Assad regime and the worsening domestic repression and impoverishment. Why has this not happened? Is government repression inside Russia and Iran the only reason?

In Russia, last week, tens of thousands demonstrated against the corrupt practices of prime minister Dmitry Medvedev and other Russian oligarchs. Criticism of Putin's imperialist wars however was not highlighted by most who focused on the internal corruption of the rich. Whether these demonstrations expand their horizons remains to be seen.

In Iran, not a day goes by without labor protests in various parts of the country.

These protests have focused on the non-payment of wages, layoffs, temporary contracts without any rights or benefits, "privatization" of government jobs, lack of work and safety regulations, non-payment of pensions and the very low minimum wage (\$240 per month) in a country in which the minimum needed for an urban family of four to survive is \$1000 per month.

It is the responsibility of Iranian socialists to show the connections between the worsening economic and social conditions of the Iranian workers, teachers and service workers, and Iran's capitalist, militarist and imperialist policies in Syria and in the Middle East region as a whole.

The failure to draw these connections partly stems from the strength of the Iranian regime's propaganda which presents the Syrian opposition to the Assad regime as entirely consisting of ISIS and Al Qaida. The nationalism of those Iranian leftists who implicitly or explicitly support the Assad regime and Putin, has also assisted the Iranian government.

As the Alliance of Syrian and Iranian Socialists, we have made efforts to address these issues through our analyses and by airing the views of those Iranians who oppose their government's military intervention in Syria.

We welcome more ideas and comments from those who represent THE OTHER IRAN and who want to create an anti-war movement to stop Iran's support for the Assad regime.

We agree with those Palestinians who protested in Ramallah, Occupied Palestine, against the Syrian regime's chemical bombing of Khan Sheikhoun. They chanted: "Not Leftists, Not Leftists, Those Who Stand with Bashar al-Assad."

**MORE:**

**“The U.S. Empire Has Never Intervened Anywhere In The World For Humanitarian Purposes”**

# **“From Vietnam To Iraq, The U.S. Has Always Used Various Lies To Cover Its Real Goals”**

## **“Trump And His Administration Hope To Use The Missile Strike To Begin Reassert U.S. Imperial Power”**

April 10, 2017 by Ashley Smith, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

Donald Trump is cloaking his order for a U.S. missile strike against the Shayrat Syrian Arab Air Force base in Syria in the mantle of humanitarianism.

He claims the Tomahawk Cruise missile attack is to punish the regime of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, which days before used the base to launch a sarin gas attack on the village of Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib province, killing 80 civilians, almost half of them children.

Trump denounced the regime for choking out "the lives of innocent men, women and children...No child of God should ever suffer such horror."

No one should fall for this cynical charade.

Trump's missile attack had two main aims, neither of which have anything to do with the liberation of the Syrian people from Assad's dictatorship and the regime's counterrevolutionary war that has laid waste to the country.

Trump hopes to use this demonstration of American hard power to whip up domestic support for an administration dragged down by incompetence, internal divisions and growing unpopularity. He also hopes to send a message to America's rivals that his regime is prepared to turn to brute force in pursuit of imperial aims in the Middle East and throughout the world, no matter the consequences.

It's hard to take Trump's humanitarian pretensions seriously. His actual practice proves he views Syrians and their struggle for liberation with contempt.

Up until last week, Trump supported some kind of rapprochement with Assad and Russia--the dictator's most important international supporter--so the U.S. could pursue a single-minded focus on defeating the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS).

A few days prior to the air strike, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, the former CEO of ExxonMobil, stated that the U.S. would no longer seek the removal of Assad from power. The administration thus made explicit what had been implicit under Barack Obama--that the U.S. would tolerate Assad staying on in power as a de facto ally for the sake of the war on ISIS.

The U.S. thus proved itself no ally of the Syrian Revolution. It has turned a blind eye while Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah intervened in support of Assad's counterrevolutionary war to save his dictatorship.

The regime and its international supporters are responsible for the vast majority of the 400,000 deaths during the conflict. They have displaced 11 million people from their homes--5 million of those have left the country as refugees, mainly in the region, but also in Europe and throughout the world.

**Far from caring about the "innocent men, women and children," Trump demonstrated his racist and Islamophobic hatred of these refugees from his first days in office when he tried to ban their entry into the country, insinuating that the refugees were infiltrated by ISIS supporters and were therefore a terrorist threat.**

**Trump's continuation of the so-called "war on terror" also exemplifies his lack of concern for civilian life. His bombing campaigns in Syria, Iraq and Yemen caused the deaths of well over 1,000 people in just March alone.**

Trump's atrocities have been mounting by the day. U.S. warplanes blew up a mosque in the Syrian town of al-Jinnah on March 16, killing 60 people. At around the same time, an attack on the ISIS-occupied city of Mosul in Iraq killed over 200 civilians. The Washington Post called it one of the worst U.S.-led civilian bombings in 25 years.

This is the reality of "humanitarian" intervention by the U.S. war machine--and lies and war crimes are not limited to Trump.

### **“The U.S. Empire Has Never Intervened Anywhere In The World For Humanitarian Purposes”**

The U.S. empire has never intervened anywhere in the world for humanitarian purposes.

From Vietnam to Iraq, the U.S. has always used various lies to cover its real goals of pursuing economic and geopolitical interests--in opposition to imperial rivals, states the disobey Washington's edicts, and revolutionary risings that endanger its dominance.

All of this should show that Trump's attack has nothing to do with humanitarianism.

The U.S. has been perfectly willing to stand by as Assad uses conventional weapons to slaughter large numbers of people. But both the Obama and Trump administrations viewed the use of sarin gas, a weapon of mass destruction, as a "red line." With the gas attack on Bashar al-Assad, Assad was violating an agreement struck between the U.S. and Russia in 2013 after the regime's last major use of chemical weapons in Ghouta.

No one should be surprised by Assad's willingness to violate the agreement and use chemical weapons.

**Any regime that shoots down nonviolent protesters, jails and tortures activists, drops barrel bombs on civilians, blows up hospitals and schools, and imposes**

**medieval-style sieges on towns and villages will be happy to use weapons of mass destruction if it can get away with it.**

**In this case, Assad mistakenly took the words of Tillerson and other administration officials about not seeking his ouster as a green light to use any means to go after the last holdouts of the jihadist-dominated opposition in Idlib.**

Hassan Hassan, writing at the Guardian website, quoted Syrians speculating that the use of sarin gas was calculated to provoke a U.S. response that would force Russia to defend the regime more fervently--which is exactly what happened.

Trump's real concern about Syria is to protect the U.S. and Israeli monopoly on the weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It wants to prevent any other state from acquiring nuclear and chemical weapons, which could the balance of mass terror in the region which they currently preside over.

At the same time, Trump's first strike against Assad was limited. And at least for now, the U.S. is committed to first winning the ongoing war on ISIS. The missile strike was designed to send a message to both Assad and Russia without getting into a protracted conflict with either.

What happens next is as hard to predict as Trump himself, who is prone to wild mood swings in tweets and policy. And Trump's foreign policy team, if you can call it that, is saying completely contradictory things.

Tillerson initially declared that the U.S. was changing its strategy toward Assad as one of "regime change," to be pursued after the defeat of ISIS. He has since retreated from that, stating that no one should "extrapolate that to a change in our policy or posture relative to our military activities in Syria today. There has been no change in that status."

But Trump's UN ambassador Nikki Haley, who is aligned with Republican hawks like Sens. John McCain and Lindsey Graham, announced on Sunday that the U.S. was committed to regime change after the defeat of ISIS. "There's not any sort of option where a political solution is going to happen with Assad at the head of the regime," she said. "Regime change is something that we think is going to happen."

Trump clearly succeeded with his cynical political calculations of the effect of an air strike.

Like so many American presidents before him, he turned to military action to unite the ruling establishment behind him, win over the corporate media and improve his approval ratings.

His administration has been stumbling through one self-inflicted crisis after another, caught in a faction fight between the "alt-right" wing led by senior aide and former Breitbart News chief Steve Bannon and the more establishment wing represented by figures like Tillerson.

Divisions within the Republican Party and even the White House were the main reason Trump was unable to deliver on his signal promise to "repeal and replace" Obamacare. On top of that, Trump has been greeted by mass resistance from his very first day in

office. The combination of all of this drove his approval rating down to 35 percent, one of the lowest of any president in history at this point in their first term.

The air strike is a naked attempt to set the administration on a different course.

Plus, Trump is also using the attack to try to bring an end to Russia-gate. While the resistance has opposed Trump across the board, Democrats, with a few exceptions, have concentrated on charges that the Trump campaign colluded with Russia's strongman President Vladimir Putin to win the presidential election.

The consequence of this narrow focus is that when Trump ordered a missile strike against Russia's ally Assad, risking an open break with Putin, the Democrats were neutralized.

Almost overnight, Democrats, along with dissident Republicans and the corporate media, abandoned their various complaints about Trump and instead sung his praises.

John McCain and Lindsey Graham, Trump's two principal critics from the Republican establishment, applauded his "leadership" in a moment of crisis.

Almost the entire Democratic Party lined up as well, proving once again that American imperialism is a bipartisan project. Just before the attack on the Syrian base, Hillary Clinton anticipated the missile strike, calling for the U.S. to "take out his airfields and prevent him from being able to use them to bomb innocent people."

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said, "Making sure Assad knows that when he commits such despicable atrocities he will pay a price is the right thing to do." John Kerry, Obama's Secretary of State and a former Democratic presidential nominee, declared that he was "absolutely supportive" of Trump's strike and was "gratified to see that it happened quickly."

Even Trump's harshest liberal opponents joined the chorus. Sen. Elizabeth Warren said in a statement: "The Syrian regime must be held accountable for this horrific act." She later made clear that she wants Trump to present a plan to accomplish this goal, but that is in reality a call for war, not opposition to it.

The only criticism some Democrats could manage was procedural--they complained that Trump should have presented his plan to hit Syrian military targets for Congressional approval. Even socialist firebrand Bernie Sanders did not directly oppose the assault, while warning against the U.S. getting drawn into another war in the Middle East.

Trump also got the corporate media to stand and salute him.

On CNN, Fareed Zakaria declared, "I think Donald Trump became president of the United States" last night.

Fairness in Accuracy and Reporting surveyed five major U.S. newspapers--The New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today, Wall Street Journal and New York Daily News--and found they "offered no opinion space to anyone opposed to Donald Trump's Thursday night air strikes. By contrast, the five papers ran a total of 18 op-eds, columns



or 'news analysis' articles (dressed-up opinion pieces) that either praised the strikes or criticized them for not being harsh enough."

But the most obscene celebration of Trump's militarism has to go to MSNBC's Brian Williams. While videos of Cruise missiles being launched showed on the screen, he gushed about "these beautiful pictures at night from the decks of these two U.S. Navy vessels in the eastern Mediterranean. I am tempted to quote the great Leonard Cohen: 'I'm guided by the beauty of our weapons.' And they are beautiful pictures of fearsome armaments making what is for them a brief flight over to this airfield."

### **“Trump And His Administration Hope To Use The Missile Strike To Begin Reassert U.S. Imperial Power”**

With the political and media establishment behind them, at least for the moment, Trump and his administration hope to use the missile strike to begin reassert U.S. imperial power. As one administration official stated, "This is bigger than Syria. It's representative of how he wants to be seen other world leaders. It is important that people understand that this is a different administration."

Trump has already put forward what one of his appointees called "a hard power budget," proposing a \$54 billion increase in military spending to be paid for by massive cuts in other government program.

The attack in Syria shows his intention to deploy that hard power--and to declare that the U.S., not Russia, will be the central broker of the counterrevolutionary settlement to follow with the impending defeat of ISIS. No doubt Tillerson will communicate this message in no uncertain terms when he visits Russia this week.

The Trump administration is also putting China, America's main imperial rival, on notice. To underline the point, the attack took place during Trump's "golf course summit" with Chinese Premier Xi Jinping at Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort.

The two countries are negotiating about conflicts over everything from trade to currency valuation to North Korea. Trump no doubt hoped to use the attack in Syria to pressure China to lean on North Korea and bring an end to its nuclear missile program.

The U.S. got almost uniform support for the missile strike from its NATO allies, whether led by conservatives like Germany's Angela Merkel or liberals like Canada's Justin Trudeau. So did all the regimes that the U.S. backs in the Middle East, from Saudi Arabia to Israel.

By contrast, the missile strike provoked condemnation from regional opponents of the U.S. and international rivals Russia, China and North Korea, showing how the air strike could easily intensify geopolitical conflicts and trigger more war in the Middle East and Asia.

In response, Russia shut down the so-called "de-confliction hot line" that the U.S. and Russia established to inform one another about air strikes and bombing runs in Syria. This could lead to unintended skirmishes between Russian and U.S. jets even if they are going after targets in the war on ISIS.

Putin also promised to help Syria construct an air defense network against future U.S. attacks. This would bring both Russia and Assad into more direct conflict against U.S. air power.

What will Assad do, now perhaps emboldened by the staunch backing from Russia. The regime could intensify its scorched-earth campaign to vanquish all opposition and impose its rule across Syria. What would the U.S. do in response? Would it react to more massacres if carried out with conventional weapons, as they mainly have been for six years?

The U.S. air strike in Syria thus threatens even greater and more destructive war in several theaters around the world. It is therefore essential that the mass opposition to Trump, which has so far mainly involved resistance against his domestic policies, adopt a clear antiwar position.

At the same time, we should oppose other imperial powers like Russia and all the regional powers from Iran to Saudi Arabia. All have played a counterrevolutionary role in the country, either supporting the regime's war on its people or backing reactionary Islamic fundamentalists who waged war on both the government and rival secular sections of the anti-Assad rebellion.

Opposing the interventions of the U.S. and other powers should not be confused with support for Assad's regime. We must stand in solidarity with the Syrian people's right to self-determination and their struggle for liberation and democracy.

Perhaps most importantly, we should demand that the U.S. open its borders, welcome the Syrian refugees who Trump tried to ban, and provide them the services they need to rebuild their lives.

To do these things, our side must overcome two significant obstacles.

First, the Democratic Party can't be relied on to oppose war.

The party's establishment has uniformly lined up behind Trump's attack on Syria, and it carried out the "war on terror" under the Obama administration. Both parties of capital, Republicans and the Democrats, however much they disagree on this or that tactical question, are united in the effort to assert U.S. imperial power in the world.

**Second, the resistance must reject the arguments of those on the left who express support for Assad, Russia and Iran as some kind of anti-imperialist states. They are not.**

**Russia is an imperialist power in its own right, however lesser compared to the U.S. So is China.**

**Any support for the Syrian state and its Russian sponsor would line up the resistance with their counterrevolutionary war on Syria. Such a position stance is neither antiwar nor anti-imperialist.**

Instead, we must build international solidarity in support of struggles for national liberation, like that of Palestine, as well as political and social revolution like the Arab Spring. Such solidarity across borders is the only solution to the spiraling conflicts between imperial and regional powers in our world today.

**MORE:**

## **The Hospitals Were Slaughterhouses: “Skeletal Bodies Of Children As Young As 11 Bore Signs Of Torture, With Eyes Gouged Out And Limbs Drilled Through And Burned”**

April 2 By Louisa Loveluck and Zakaria Zakaria, Washington Post [Excerpts]

**BEIRUT — One evening in the early days of Syria’s uprising, Mohsen al-Masri’s band of activists slipped through the Damascus streets and waited for the coast to clear. Then they crouched, opened their bags and let out a stream of color.**

**Thousands of ping-pong balls, painted green, pink, blue and yellow, bounced past policemen, who scrambled to stop them. Residents would find balls tucked in nooks and crannies for months. Each was marked with a single word: “Freedom.”**

**The punishment for Masri’s acts of peaceful protest would begin a journey into hell, unusual not because of what he saw, but because he survived.**

In a series of interviews, he described how he was tortured and interrogated over a two-year period in four detention facilities before arriving in a hospital at the heart of a nationwide system of brutality.

The hospital, known as 601, is not the only site of torture in Syria. But after it was seen in a cache of photographs showing thousands of skeletal corpses, it became one of the most notorious.

Inside the facility, about a half-mile from Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s palace, sick prisoners are tortured as they lie shackled to beds crammed with dying men, according to Masri and former detainees and military personnel who worked there.

Corpses have been piled in bathrooms, outhouses and anywhere else they will fit, then meticulously documented and trucked away for mass burial.

**In interviews across Lebanon, Turkey and Europe, more than a dozen survivors and army defectors described horrors in Syrian military hospitals across the**

**country for which war crimes lawyers say they have struggled to find a modern parallel.**

The former detainees come from all walks of life. Elite, -working-class, leftist and Islamist, their only connection to one another was involvement in Syria's 2011 uprising. Some were its instigators. Others said they had simply commented on the Facebook statuses of friends who supported protests.

"We were swept into a system that was ready for us. Even the hospitals were slaughterhouses," Masri said in an interview last month.

Medicine has been used as a weapon of war since the earliest days of the uprising, when pro-government doctors performed amputations on protesters for minor injuries.

Military hospitals across Syria have long set aside wards for prisoners. But since 2011, these have been packed with men left starving and broken by the conditions they have already endured.

More than 100,000 people have been arrested or forcibly disappeared in Syria since the country's revolt began, according to a list compiled by the Syrian Network for Human Rights, a monitoring group. During that time, international aid groups have gotten access to only a handful of prisons with the government's permission, none of which the detainees interviewed by The Washington Post spent time in.

Masri's ordeal began in the spring of 2012 when he was arrested on his way to a conference in Turkey. Repeatedly tortured as he was transferred from jail to jail, he arrived at Sednaya, one of the most feared.

In a report published in February, Amnesty International said torture and forced starvation are systematic at the prison. But Masri said that prisoners learned to stay silent when guards asked who needed to go to the hospital.

"It didn't matter what they did to us; we had to pretend we were fine. People rarely came back from those trips," he said.

After months of starvation, Masri's name was added to the weekly transfer list. As darkness fell on an evening in May 2012, he was chained to another man and taken to trucks outside. Attaching a number to Masri's body, a guard told him to forget his name. Then he was blindfolded.

Everyone gets the "welcome" party, Masri said — a savage beating involving guards and medical staffers wearing white coats over military uniforms. In Hospital 601, the weakest man was pushed to the floor and brutalized first. In the nearby Tishreen Military Hospital, a former technician at the facility, Mohammed al-Hammoud, said he had seen prisoners dragged down steps by the hair.

"Everything was about control," said Somar Mustafa, a physics student from Damascus who was sent to Hospital 601 at the end of 2012. Inside, he saw detainees chained to their beds and packed so tightly that they sat with their knees jutting into their rib cages.

Bathroom breaks were so rare that prisoners would defecate where they sat, remaining in the same spot for days. “We were blindfolded with that smell all around us. You can’t shake the memory of it, even when you leave,” Mustafa said.

At least five branches of the Syrian security forces have operated wards inside Hospital 601 since 2011, according to the U.N. Commission of Inquiry, a body set up to monitor the conflict. “Detainees, including children, have been beaten, burned with cigarettes, and subjected to torture that exploits preexisting injuries,” it said in a 2013 report. The commission concluded that many patients had been tortured to death inside the facility.

The Harasta Military Hospital, also in Damascus, moved its ward from the first floor to the seventh to prevent detainees from escaping, a defector said. “It was the only floor without an elevator, and we knew they couldn’t jump out the window.”

In 601, Masri and Mustafa said, they saw high-ranking officers from the security branches accompanying doctors on their rounds. Sometimes the teams would pause by a prisoner to discuss his treatment. Other times the men would beat him.

The doctors were helped by service staffers in blue uniforms, many of them former supporters of the revolt who had been co-opted by their jailers. “Our best men had been broken by torture. If they didn’t beat us, they risked a worse fate themselves,” Masri said.

The guards went by nicknames to avoid identification. Four survivors said the most famous was known as Azrael, or the Angel of Death. They described him as a thickset man from Assad’s coastal stronghold of Latakia who carried a stick laced with razor blades. They said he selected prisoners, most of them deathly ill, for a fate he called “justice.” The detainees called it execution.

### **“Skeletal Bodies Of Children As Young As 11 Bore Signs Of Torture, With Eyes Gouged Out And Limbs Drilled Through And Burned”**

Masri recalled Azrael taking a lighter to a plastic bag and melting it drop by drop onto a prisoner’s face until he died, apparently of a heart attack. Other prisoners said he used an iron rod to smash their bedmates’ skulls.

Many died where they lay, slumped against their bedmates until morning came. For Mustafa in the winter of 2012, that meant sharing a bed until sunrise the next day with three corpses.

As the uprising outside morphed into a war, former prisoners say, their interrogators became obsessed with the notion of accomplices, torturing prisoners to extract the names of new suspects to arrest.

Documents signed by senior government and security officials acknowledged the upsurge in deaths, at times complaining that the bodies were building up.

“It’s impossible to interrogate, torture and kill tens of thousands of detainees without a system in place,” said Scott Gilmore, a staff attorney at the Center for Justice and Accountability. “Before the revolution, the regime was not generating thousands of dead bodies. Then all of a sudden it was. So what did you do with them?”

A December 2012 order signed by the head of Syria's military intelligence department instructed every security branch to send their dead to a military hospital's morgue. The document, obtained by the Commission for International Justice and Accountability, a Europe-based investigative unit, said that each body should be examined and logged.

A trove of these photographs was published around the world in 2014, after being smuggled out of Syria by a military police defector known only by his code-name, Caesar. Most were taken inside Hospital 601.

Skeletal bodies of children as young as 11 bore signs of torture, with eyes gouged out and limbs drilled through and burned. Following Syrian government protocol, Caesar had methodically documented the deaths of some 11,000 people.

"You have to realize that these were just the photographs taken by a single man during a single period, and even then, they were only a fraction of what he'd actually recorded," said Nadim Houry, who examined the photographs for Human Rights Watch.

Assad recently described the images as "fake news," suggesting they had been doctored to suit the aims of human rights groups.

But defectors describe hauling numbered bodies into transparent bags in Hospital 601 and nearby military hospitals in Tishreen and Harasta. Investigators from the United Nations and private law firms have collected similar testimony from the cities of Homs, Aleppo and Daraa.

By late 2012, the system had buckled, and the December order berated individual military departments for failing to register their dead on time.

Those who survive are funneled back to nearby jails, Masri said. Others, like Mustafa, are released to a Damascus court packed with prisoners and dismissed from custody on the spot, after a judge acknowledges that they had been forced to make false confessions under torture. The young man said he remembers falling into the arms of his sobbing parents.

Masri's discharge from 601 sent him back to Sednaya. Another year of torture followed, with nights spent packed next to other men in the darkness. He felt forgotten.

In the winter of 2014, he dreamed he was taking a hot shower, its stream stripping back two years of dirt and leaving him clean. He woke to find a guard in his cell. "He told me it was time to go," Masri said. "I cannot describe that feeling. It was too much, too big. Indescribable."

Back home in Damascus, he said, he remembers closing the bathroom door to stand alone for a moment, shutting his eyes to finally feel at peace. When he opened them, he saw a sheet-white, rawboned man staring back from the mirror.

"I started screaming," Masri said. He did not recognize himself.

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# **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

## **American Soldier Killed In Nangarhar Province**

April 8 (Reuters)

WASHINGTON: A U.S. soldier was killed while conducting operations against Islamic State in Afghanistan late on Saturday, a U.S. military spokesman said in a message posted on Twitter.

"The soldier was mortally wounded late Saturday during an operation in Nangarhar Province" in eastern Afghanistan, U.S. Navy Captain Bill Salvin said in a message on the official Twitter account of the NATO-led Resolute Support mission. The soldier was a Special Forces operator, Salvin told Reuters separately.

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE  
BLOODSHED**

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

## **MILITARY NEWS**

### **1,500 Soldiers From 25th I D Off To Trump's Imperial Slaughterhouse**

April 7, 2017 By: Meghann Myers, Army Times [Excerpt]

In the space of a couple years, the paratroopers of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division have gone from making plans to inactivate the brigade to preparing for a deployment to Afghanistan.

About 1,500 soldiers from the unit based at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, will deploy in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel later this year, according to a Friday release from the Army.

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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**



# Apocalypse Now (Redux)

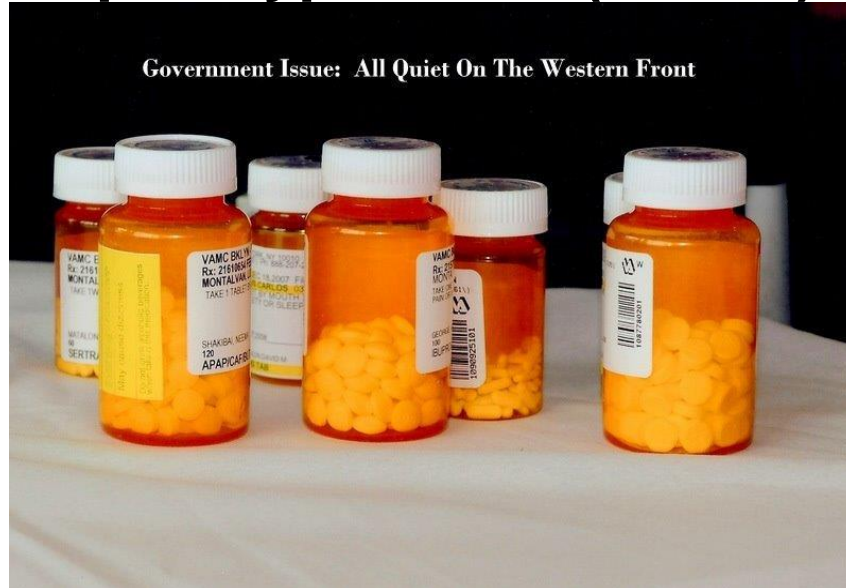


Photo by Mike Hastie

March 27, 2017 by Mike Hastie, Army Medic Vietnam

It is almost 3 AM in Portland, Oregon.

I just finished watching the film, "Apocalypse Now, Redux." The original film was made in 1979, and was directed by Francis Ford Coppola. The film won five Academy Awards in 1980, but did not win Best Picture.

In 2001, the definitive version was released. It was re-edited and re-mastered. Hence, the word, "Redux" was added, which means brought back, or revived.

I probably saw the original film sometime shortly after it was released. I had never seen the 2001 version, which has 49 minutes of additional footage. This version is approximately 202 minutes long.

In my opinion, it is not just a film, it is a high-powered experience, especially for those who were raised in that era.

I remember being a senior in high school, when I heard this announcement on the radio: "John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 35th president of the United States is dead." Several months later, The Beatles appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show for the first time.

On August 2, 1964, the Gulf of Tonkin incident occurred, which was based on a total lie, and the United States was launched into the barbarity of the Vietnam War.

If you have not seen the new version of "Apocalypse Now," I would highly recommend it. Some people might say it is a Hollywood liberal bullshit version of war. Those who would say this have no idea of the total insanity of the war in Southeast Asia, nor the disturbing twisted mentality of the United States Government under Johnson and Nixon.

In short, it is like hearing classical music being played while prisoners were being herded into the gas chambers at Auschwitz. That was the war in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

At Auschwitz, 1.1 million people were murdered. In Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, those killed were four times higher than that concentration camp. That reality cannot be processed by anyone who thinks the United States is the greatest country in the world. Their core belief system could not handle this head on collision. The film, "Apocalypse Now," was way ahead of its time. The longer I watched it, the more seductively intoxicating it became.

Francis Ford Coppola's hallucinatory film pushed the insanity of the characters to the extreme, where many people would see the film as strictly entertainment, and no where close to any kind of reality. After all, this is Hollywood, and exaggeration is what it is all about, because directors want to inject adrenaline into the audience.

This film, though based on fiction, was insanely true, but the Vietnam War itself, was far worse. The magnitude of the human suffering was so mortifying, that the truth would have to be concealed from the American people.

When I was in Vietnam, I went on R-an-R to Hawaii to meet my wife and three-month-old daughter for the first time.

A few days before I left, I was called out in the middle of the night because an American soldier committed suicide with his M-16. When I got there, I did everything possible to save his life as a medic. Several days later, I am in Hawaii enjoying the beautiful weather, staying at an expensive hotel, swimming in the pool, and drinking Primo Beer. Six days later I am back in Vietnam, and the first day back to my unit, mortar rounds come down on top of me, and one U.S. soldier is injured.

Fast forward a couple of months, and I am taking an in-country R-and-R in Da Nang at China Beach. While I was there, a buddy and I were eating our meal in the mess hall at the Rec center. Who walked in, but Miss America and her entourage of four other contestants who were in the Miss America Pageant. A few days later, I was back in my unit, and I am helping take an American soldier off of a medevac helicopter with half of his head gone.

When I hear what is happening in the Middle East, where it has been war after war after war for the Pentagon, I am reminded of what Martin Luther King, Jr. said in his speech on Vietnam on April 4, 1967: "The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is my own government."

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The war is not meant to be won, it is meant to be continuous.  
George Orwell

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

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

**“The Pathway Of Tyrants Lies  
Over Volcanoes”**

**“Oppression, Organized As Ours Is,  
Will Appear Invincible Up To The  
Very Hour Of Its Fall”**

**“Those Who Enslave, Rob, And Torment  
Their Cooks, May Well Expect To Find  
Death In Their Dinner-Pots”**



Your fathers have said that man’s right to liberty is self-evident. There is no need of argument to make it clear. The voices of nature, of conscience, of reason, and of revelation, proclaim it as the right of all rights, the foundation of all trust, and of

**all responsibility. The sun in the sky is not more palpable to the sight than man's right to liberty is to the moral vision.**

**Not all the skill of politicians, North and South, not all the sophistries of Judges, not all the fulminations of a corrupt press, not all the hypocritical prayers, or the hypocritical refusals to pray of a hollow-hearted priesthood, not all the devices of sin and Satan, can save the vile thing from extermination.**

**May 1857 By Frederick Douglass, Speech on the Dred Scott Decision [Excerpt]**

**[Dred Scott v. Sandford was a decision by the United States Supreme Court, 1857, written by Chief Justice Taney, ruling that people of African descent imported into the United States and held as slaves (or their descendants, whether or not they were slaves) were not protected by the Constitution, and that "The negro has no rights which the white man is bound to respect."]**

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While four millions of our fellow countrymen are in chains--while men, women, and children are bought and sold on the auction-block with horses, sheep, and swine--while the remorseless slave--whip draws the warm blood of our common humanity--it is meet that we assemble as we have done to-day, and lift up our hearts and voices in earnest denunciation of the vile and shocking abomination.

It is not for us to be governed by our hopes or our fears in this great work; yet it is natural on occasions like this, to survey the position of the great struggle which is going on between slavery and freedom, and to dwell upon such signs of encouragement as may have been lately developed, and the state of feeling these signs or events have occasioned in us and among the people generally.

It is a fitting time to take an observation to ascertain where we are, and what our prospects are.

To many, the prospects of the struggle against slavery seem far from cheering.

Eminent men, North and South, in Church and State, tell us that the omens are all against us.

Emancipation, they tell us, is a wild, delusive idea; the price of human flesh was never higher than now; slavery was never more closely entwined about the hearts and affections of the southern people than now; that whatever of conscientious scruple, religious conviction, or public policy, which opposed the system of slavery forty or fifty years ago, has subsided; and that slavery never reposed upon a firmer basis than now.

Completing this picture of the happy and prosperous condition of this system of wickedness, they tell us that this state of things is to be set to our account. Abolition agitation has done it all.

How deep is the misfortune of my poor, bleeding people, if this be so! How lost their condition, if even the efforts of their friends but sink them deeper in ruin!

Without assenting to this strong representation of the increasing strength and stability of slavery, without denouncing what of untruth pervades it, I own myself not insensible to the many difficulties and discouragement that beset us on every hand. They fling their broad and gloomy shadows across the pathway of every thoughtful colored man in this country.

For one, I see them clearly, and feel them sadly. With an earnest, aching heart, I have long looked for the realization of the hope of my people. Standing, as it were, barefoot, and treading upon the sharp and flinty rocks of the present, and looking out upon the boundless sea of the future, I have sought, in my humble way, to penetrate the intervening mists and clouds, and, perchance, to descry, in the dim and shadowy distance, the white flag of freedom, the precise speck of time at which the cruel bondage of my people should end, and the long entombed millions rise from the foul grave of slavery and death.

But of that time I can know nothing, and you can know nothing. All is uncertain at that point.

One thing, however, is certain; slaveholders are in earnest, and mean to cling to their slaves as long as they can, and to the bitter end.

They show no sign of a wish to quit their iron grasp upon the sable throats of their victims.

Their motto is, "a firmer hold and a tighter grip" for every new effort that is made to break their cruel power.

The case is one of life or death with them, and they will give up only when they must do that or do worse.

In one view the slaveholders have a decided advantage over all opposition.

It is well to notice this advantage--the advantage of complete organization.

They are organized; and yet were not at the pains of creating their organizations.

The State governments, where the system of slavery exists, are complete slavery organizations.

The church organizations in those States are equally at the service of slavery; while the Federal Government, with its army and navy, from the chief magistracy in Washington, to the Supreme Court, and thence to the chief marshalship at New York, is pledged to support, defend, and propagate the crying curse of human bondage.

**The pen, the purse, and the sword, are united against the simple truth, preached by humble men in obscure places.**

This is one view.

It is, thank God, only one view; there is another, and a brighter view.

David, you know, looked small and insignificant when going to meet Goliath, but looked larger when he had slain his foe.

The Malakoff [a fortress in Russia stormed by French soldiers] was, to the eye of the world, impregnable, till the hour it fell before the shot and shell of the allied army.

**Thus hath it ever been.**

**Oppression, organized as ours is, will appear invincible up to the very hour of its fall.**

Sir, let us look at the other side, and see if there are not some things to cheer our heart and nerve us up anew in the good work of emancipation.

**Take this fact--for it is a fact--the anti-slavery movement has, from first to last, suffered no abatement.**

**It has gone forth in all directions, and is now felt in the remotest extremities of the Republic.**

**It started small, and was without capital either in men or money. The odds were all against it.**

**It literally had nothing to lose, and everything to gain.**

There was ignorance to be enlightened, error to be combatted, conscience to be awakened, prejudice to be overcome, apathy to be aroused, the right of speech to be secured, mob violence to be subdued, and a deep, radical change to be wrought in the mind and heart of the whole nation.

This great work, under God, has gone on, and gone on gloriously.

Amid all changes, fluctuations, assaults, and adverses of every kind, it has remained firm in its purpose, steady in its aim, onward and upward, defying all opposition, and never losing a single battle.

Our strength is in the growth of anti-slavery conviction, and this has never halted.

There is a significant vitality about this abolition movement. It has taken a deeper, broader, and more lasting hold upon the national heart than ordinary reform movements. Other subjects of much interest come and go, expand and contract, blaze and vanish, but the huge question of American Slavery, comprehending, as it does, not merely the weal or the woe of four millions, and their countless posterity, but the weal or the woe of this entire nation, must increase in magnitude and in majesty with every hour of its history.

From a cloud not bigger than a man's hand, it has overspread the heavens.

It has risen from a grain not bigger than a mustard seed. Yet see the fowls of the air, how they crowd its branches.

Politicians who cursed it, now defend it; ministers, once dumb, now speak in its praise; and presses, which once flamed with hot denunciations against it, now surround the sacred cause as by a wall of living fire.

Politicians go with it as a pillar of cloud by day, and the press as a pillar of fire by night. With these ancient tokens of success, I, for one, will not despair of our cause.

Those who have undertaken to suppress and crush out this agitation for Liberty and humanity, have been most woefully disappointed.

Many who have engaged to put it down, have found themselves put down.

The agitation has pursued them in all their meanderings, broken in upon their seclusion, and, at the very moment of fancied security, it has settled down upon them like a mantle of unquenchable fire.

Clay, Calhoun, and Webster each tried his hand at suppressing the agitation; and they went to their graves disappointed and defeated.

Loud and exultingly have we been told that the slavery question is settled, and settled forever.

You remember it was settled thirty-seven years ago, when Missouri was admitted into the Union with a slaveholding constitution, and slavery prohibited in all territory north of thirty-six degrees of north latitude.

Just fifteen years afterwards, it was settled again by voting down the right of petition, and gagging down free discussion in Congress.

Ten years after this it was settled again by the annexation of Texas, and with it the war with Mexico.

In 1850 it was again settled. This was called a final settlement. By it slavery was virtually declared to be the equal of Liberty, and should come into the Union on the same terms. By it the right and the power to hunt down men, women, and children, in every part of this country, was conceded to our southern brethren, in order to keep them in the Union.

Four years after this settlement, the whole question was once more settled, and settled by a settlement which unsettled all the former settlements.

**The fact is, the more the question has been settled, the more it has needed settling.**

The space between the different settlements has been strikingly on the decrease.

The first stood longer than any of its successors.

This last settlement must be called the Taney settlement. We are now --the second, ten years--the third, five years--the fourth stood four years --and the fifth has stood the brief space of two years.

This last settlement must be called the Taney settlement.

We are now told, in tones of lofty exultation, that the day is lost all lost and that we might as well give up the struggle. The highest authority has spoken. The voice of the Supreme Court has gone out over the troubled waves of the National Conscience, saying peace, be still.

This infamous decision of the Slaveholding wing of the Supreme Court maintains that slaves are within the contemplation of the Constitution of the United States, property; that slaves are property in the same sense that horses, sheep, and swine are property; that the old doctrine that slavery is a creature of local law is false; that the right of the slaveholder to his slave does not depend upon the local law, but is secured wherever the Constitution of the United States extends; that Congress has no right to prohibit slavery anywhere; that slavery may go in safety anywhere under the star-spangled banner; that colored persons of African descent have no rights that white men are bound to respect; that colored men of African descent are not and cannot be citizens of the United States.

You will readily ask me how I am affected by this devilish decision--this judicial incarnation of wolfishness?

My answer is, and no thanks to the slaveholding wing of the Supreme Court, my hopes were never brighter than now.

I have no fear that the National Conscience will be put to sleep by such an open, glaring, and scandalous tissue of lies as that decision is, and has been, over and over, shown to be.

The Supreme Court of the United States is not the only power in this world. It is very great, but the Supreme Court of the Almighty is greater.

Judge Taney can do many things, but he cannot perform impossibilities. He cannot bail out the ocean, annihilate the firm old earth, or pluck the silvery star of liberty from our Northern sky. He may decide, and decide again; but he cannot reverse the decision of the Most High. He cannot change the essential nature of things--making evil good, and good evil.

Happily for the whole human family, their rights have been defined, declared, and decided in a court higher than the Supreme Court. "There is a law," says Brougham, "above all the enactments of human codes, and by that law, unchangeable and eternal, man cannot hold property in man."

**Your fathers have said that man's right to liberty is self-evident. There is no need of argument to make it clear. The voices of nature, of conscience, of reason, and of revelation, proclaim it as the right of all rights, the foundation of all trust, and of all responsibility.**

**Man was born with it. It was his before he comprehended it. The deed conveying it to him is written in the center of his soul, and is recorded in Heaven.**



**The sun in the sky is not more palpable to the sight than man's right to liberty is to the moral vision.**

To decide against this right in the person of Dred Scott, or the humblest and most whip-scarred bondman in the land, is to decide against God. It is an open rebellion against God's government. It is an attempt to undo what God has done, to blot out the broad distinction instituted by the Allwise between men and things, and to change the image and superscription of the everliving God into a speechless piece of merchandise.

Such a decision cannot stand. God will be true though every man be a liar. We can appeal from this hell-black judgment of the Supreme Court, to the court of common sense and common humanity. We can appeal from man to God. If there is no justice on earth, there is yet justice in heaven. You may close your Supreme Court against the black man's cry for justice, but you cannot, thank God, close against him the ear of a sympathizing world, nor shut up the Court of Heaven.

All that is merciful and just, on earth and in Heaven, will execrate and despise this edict of Taney.

If it were at all likely that the people of these free States would tamely submit to this demoniacal judgment, I might feel gloomy and sad over it, and possibly it might be necessary for my people to look for a home in some other country.

But as the case stands, we have nothing to fear.

In one point of view, we, the abolitionists and colored people, should meet this decision, unlooked for and monstrous as it appears, in a cheerful spirit.

This very attempt to blot out forever the hopes of an enslaved people may be one necessary link in the chain of events preparatory to the downfall and complete overthrow of the whole slave system.

The whole history of the anti-slavery movement is studded with proof that all measures devised and executed with a view to ally and diminish the anti-slavery agitation, have only served to increase, intensify, and embolden that agitation.

This wisdom of the crafty has been confounded, and the counsels of the ungodly brought to nought.

It was so with the Fugitive Slave Bill. It was so with the Kansas-Nebraska Bill; and it will be so with this last and most shocking of all pro-slavery devices, this Taney decision.

When great transactions are involved, where the fate of millions is concerned, where a long enslaved and suffering people are to be delivered, I am superstitious enough to believe that the finger of the Almighty may be seen bringing good out of evil, and making the wrath of man redound to his honor, hastening the triumph of righteousness.

The American people have been called upon, in a most striking manner, to abolish and put away forever the system of slavery. The subject has been pressed upon their attention in all earnestness and sincerity.

The cries of the slave have gone forth to the world, and up to the throne of God.

This decision, in my view, is a means of keeping the nation awake on the subject. It is another proof that God does not mean that we shall go to sleep, and forget that we are a slaveholding nation.

Step by step we have seen the slave power advancing; poisoning, corrupting, and perverting the institutions of the country; growing more and more haughty, imperious, and exacting. The white man's liberty has been marked out for the same grave with the black man's.

The ballot box is desecrated, God's law set at nought, armed legislators stalk the halls of Congress, freedom of speech is beaten down in the Senate. The rivers and highways are infested by border ruffians, and white men are made to feel the iron heel of slavery.

This ought to arouse us to kill off the hateful thing. They are solemn warnings to which the white people, as well as the black people, should take heed.

If these shall fail, judgment, more fierce or terrible, may come.

**The lightning, whirlwind, and earthquake may come.**

**Jefferson said that he trembled for his country when he reflected that God is just, and his justice cannot sleep forever.**

**The time may come when even the crushed worm may turn under the tyrant's feet. Goaded by cruelty, stung by a burning sense of wrong, in an awful moment of depression and desperation, the bondman and bondwoman at the south may rush to one wild and deadly struggle for freedom.**

**Already slaveholders go to bed with bowie knives, and apprehend death at their dinners.**

**Those who enslave, rob, and torment their cooks, may well expect to find death in their dinner-pots.**

The world is full of violence and fraud, and it would be strange if the slave, the constant victim of both fraud and violence, should escape the contagion.

He, too, may learn to fight the devil with fire, and for one, I am in no frame of mind to pray that this may be long deferred.

Two remarkable occurrences have followed the presidential election; one was the unaccountable sickness traced to the National Hotel at Washington, and the other was the discovery of a plan among the slaves, in different localities, to slay their oppressors.

Twenty or thirty of the suspected were put to death. Some were shot, some hanged, some burned, and some died under the lash.

One brave man owned himself well acquainted with the conspiracy, but said he would rather die than disclose the facts.

He received seven hundred and fifty lashes, and his noble spirit went away to the God who gave it.

The name of this hero has been by the meanness of tyrants suppressed. Such a man redeems his race. He is worthy to be mentioned with the Hoffers and Tells, the noblest heroes of history.

**These insurrectionary movements have been put down, but they may break out at any time, under the guidance of higher intelligence, and with a more invincible spirit.**

The fire thus kindled, may be revived again; the flames are extinguished, but the embers remain; one terrible blast may produce an ignition, which shall wrap the whole South in wild conflagration.

The pathway of tyrants lies over volcanoes; the very air they breathe is heavy with sorrows; agonizing heart-throbs convulse them while sleeping, and the wind whispers death as over them sweeping.

By all the laws of nature, civilization, and of progress, slavery is a doomed system.

Not all the skill of politicians, North and South, not all the sophistries of Judges, not all the fulminations of a corrupt press, not all the hypocritical prayers, or the hypocritical refusals to pray of a hollow-hearted priesthood, not all the devices of sin and Satan, can save the vile thing from extermination.

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**“The Struggle Against The Fall In  
Relative Wages Means Also A  
Struggle Against The Commodity  
Character Of Labor-Power, I.E.  
Against Capitalist Production As A  
Whole”**

**“The Struggle Against A Decline In  
Relative Wages Is A Revolutionary,  
Subversive Initiative Against The**

# **Existence Of This Economy, It Is The Socialist Movement Of The Proletariat”**

**“This Explains The Sympathies Of The Capitalist Class For Trade Unions At Least In So Far As Trade Unions Allow Themselves Be Opposed To Socialism”**

From: Rosa Luxemburg; Introduction To Political Economy; Ms. 1909-1910 [Excerpt]

In the wage system there are no legal or customary determinations of the share of the worker in his product, not even arbitrary and forcible ones.

**This share is determined by the degree of productivity of labor at the time, by the level of technology; it is not the caprice of the exploiter but the progress of technology that steadily and relentlessly reduces the share of the worker.**

**It is then a completely invisible power, a simple mechanical effect of competition and commodity production, that seizes from the worker an ever greater portion of his product and leaves him an ever smaller one, a power that has its effects silently and unnoticeably behind the back of the workers, and against which no struggle is therefore possible.**

**The personal role of the exploiter is still visible, whenever it is a question of the absolute wage, i.e. the actual standard of living.**

**A reduction in wages that brings about a suppression of the actual living standard of the workers is a visible attack by the capitalists on the workers, and it is generally countered by immediate struggle when trade unions exist, in favorable cases even successfully.**

**The fall in relative wages, in contrast to this, seemingly occurs without the least personal participation of the capitalist, and within the wage system, i.e. on the basis of commodity production, the workers have no possibility of struggle and defence against it.**

**Workers cannot struggle against technical advances in production, against inventions, the introduction of machinery, against steam and electricity, against improvements in means of communication.**

**The effect of all these advances on the relative wage of the workers thus follows quite mechanically from commodity production and the commodity character of labor-power.**

This is why even the most powerful trade unions are quite impotent against this tendency to a rapid fall in relative wages.

The struggle against the fall in relative wages accordingly means also a struggle against the commodity character of labor-power, i.e. against capitalist production as a whole.

The struggle against a decline in relative wages is thus no longer a struggle on the basis of the commodity economy, but rather a revolutionary, subversive initiative against the existence of this economy, it is the socialist movement of the proletariat:

**This explains the sympathies of the capitalist class for trade unions, which they originally fought furiously against, once the socialist struggle has begun ---- at least in so far as trade unions allow themselves be opposed to socialism.**

In France, all struggles of the workers to obtain the right of combination were in vain until the 1870s, and trade unions were pursued with draconian penalties.

**Soon after, however, once the Commune uprising had put the whole bourgeoisie into a mad fear of the red specter, a sudden sharp transformation in public opinion began.**

**The personal organ of President (Leon) Gambetta, *La Republique francaise*, and the whole ruling party of "satisfied republicans," began to praise the trade-union movement, even to propagate it eagerly.**

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## **ANNIVERSARIES**

# **April 1712: Honorable Anniversary: Courageous Slaves Rise Up Against Their Masters; "Death Was Preferable To Life In Bondage"**

Carl Bunin Peace History April 6-12

Slavenorth.com & Pbs.org [Excerpts]

In 1712, some slaves in New York City rose up in a crude rebellion that could have been much more deadly, had it been better planned.

As it was, it was among the most serious slave resistances in American history, and sparked a vicious backlash by the authorities.

The stage was set for an uprising.

First, the city had a large population of black slaves -- the result of many years of trade with the West Indies. Secondly, communication and meeting among enslaved persons was relatively easy, since the New York City's inhabitants lived in a small area on the southern tip of Manhattan.

Thirdly, living in such a densely populated area also meant that slaves worked in close proximity to free men, a far cry from the situation on the plantations to the south.

The revolt was led by African-born slaves, who decided death was preferable to life in bondage.

They managed to collect a cache of muskets and other weapons and hide it in an orchard on the edge of town.

On the night of April 6, twenty-four of the conspirators gathered, armed themselves, and set fire to a nearby building. They then hid among trees, and when white citizens rushed up to put out the blaze, the slaves opened fire on them, killing five and wounding six.

The surviving citizens sounded the alarm. Every able-bodied man was pressed into service, and appeals were made to governors of surrounding colonies. The militia pinned down the rebels in the woods of northern Manhattan. The leaders of the uprising committed suicide, and the rest, starving, surrendered.

**The death toll in the 1712 uprising doesn't seem high, but in a New York county that, at that time probably numbered some 4,800 whites, it was shocking.**

**In considering the psychological impact on the survivors, imagine some sort of attack on modern New York, with its 8 million people, that would leave casualties of 10,000 dead.**

A special court convened by the governor made short work of the rebels. Of the twenty-seven slaves brought to trial for complicity in the plot, twenty-one were convicted and put to death.

Since the law authorized any degree of punishment in such cases, some unlucky slaves were executed with all the refinements of calculated barbarity.

New Yorkers were treated to a round of grisly spectacles as Negroes were burned alive, racked and broken on the wheel, and gibbeted alive in chains.

In his report of the affair to England, Governor Hunter praised the judges for inventing 'the most exemplary punishments that could be possibly thought of.' “[

White New Yorkers had been apprehensive before the revolt of April 6; now they were spurred into action.

Strict laws were soon enacted, and more would come, over the next thirty years. No longer could more than three black slaves meet. A master could punish his slaves as he saw fit (even for no reason at all), as long as the slave did not lose his or her life or limb. Any slave handling a firearm would receive twenty lashes. Anyone caught gambling would be whipped in public.

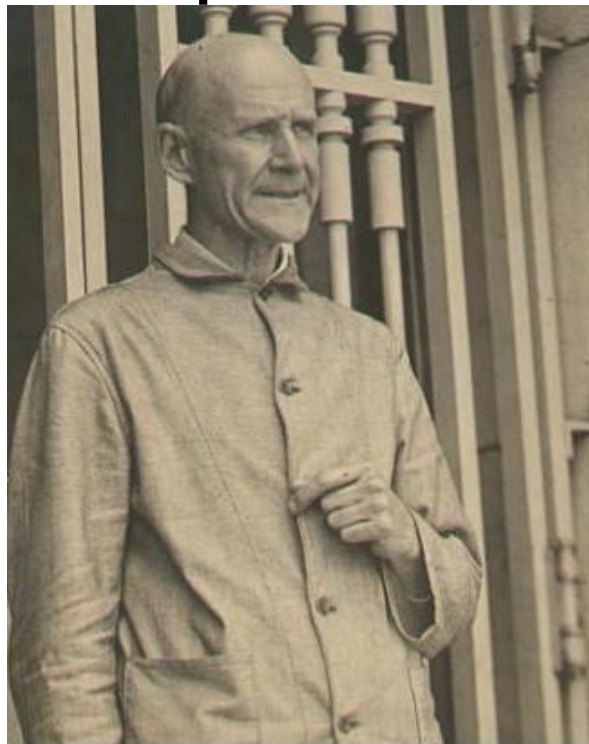
Involvement in a conspiracy to kill would result in execution, as would a rape. There was even a law that discouraged masters from freeing a slave:

The master could free a slave, but only after posting a bond of 200 (pounds). This money would be paid to the freed slave if that slave couldn't support himself or herself.

**These laws would, in the end, prove to be futile. In 1741, New York would see another uprising.**

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## **April 13, 1919: A Hero Imprisoned For Opposing Imperial War**



Eugene V. Debs when he was a prisoner at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary, sentenced for opposing U.S. entry into World War I.

U.S. Department of Labor, "Labor Hall of Fame Honoree"  
<<http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/laborhall/evd.htm>>

Socialist and labor leader Eugene V. Debs was imprisoned for opposing U.S. entry into World War I.

While in prison, he received nearly one million votes for President in the 1920 election (as he had in 1912).



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***April 14, 1988:***  
***Very Happy Anniversary***  
**Next To Last Government To Invade**  
**Afghanistan Withdraws In Defeat**



**Happy Russian soldiers going home.**

Carl Bunin Peace History April 9-15

April 14, 1988:

The Soviet Union signed an agreement to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan after ten years of humiliating defeats at the hands of Afghan resistance forces.

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

# **Poll Finds More Than Half Of Americans Think Trump Should Resign: “Only 39 Percent Thought He Should Continue To Serve As President”**

April 3, 2017 By Kasia Kovacs, International Business Times [Excerpts]

By the end of March — after President Donald Trump saw the collapse in Congress of a Republican-sponsored health care bill meant to overhaul the Affordable Care Act, and after former national security advisor Michael Flynn asked for immunity in order to testify on alleged connections between the president’s campaign with Russia — over half of Americans, or 53 percent, believed the commander in chief should resign.

The same poll, released last Thursday by Public Policy Polling, found that his approval rating dropped to 40 percent. Fifty-three percent disapproved of how Trump was handling his job, and only 39 percent thought he should continue to serve as president.

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