

**GI SPECIAL 6B4:**

# ORDINARY GAZANS COULD BECOME THE ARBITRATORS OF THEIR, EGYPT'S, AND PALESTINE'S FUTURE



Rafah, Gaza Strip: Palestinians stand on the Egypt-Gaza border during a demonstration demanding the continuous opening of the border. Photograph: Letteris Pitarakis/AP  
[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

# **“Whether Eventual Confrontations In Gaza Will Spark Such Resistance Movements In The Egyptian Military Remains An Unknown Of Enormous Significance”**

## **A Continued Mass Movement, A Massive Maintained Breakout May Change Much Of Future History.**

[It would appear many do not grasp the significance huge numbers of people deciding to act for their own liberation. Max Watts gets it.

[It is an event of immense significance, seen too rarely in human history, but it gives hope to everyone everywhere, except, of course, for tyrants, oppressors and exploiters, who fear it more than anything else on earth. ]

[This is freshly written by Max Watts co-author of “Left Face – Soldier Unions and Resistance Movements in Modern Armies” – Cortright, David & Watts, Max; Greenwood Press, 1991. Words of prophecy too; see the next report. T]

From: Max Watts  
To: GI Special  
Sent: February 01, 2008  
Subject: GAZA EGYPT Resistance In The Armed Forces

**And once such officer resistance gains a foot-hold, rank and file soldiers can quickly begin their own movements. (Examples: Portugal: 1974-75; Papua New Guinea: 1997).**

1 February 2008 By Max Watts, Annandale, Australia,

The establishment media in Australia, the USA, Western Europe, have excelled themselves in their mis- or not-at-all reporting on events in Gaza, events which may yet introduce a major change into world politics.

Not that this could be understood from these media. Faute de mieux, as there seem to be few others willing to do this, I'll try and unravel some of the bullshit or silences of the past days.

Some background information is necessary.

**First the “establishment media line” [in italics], then .... my comments.**

*1/ The Israeli Blockade of Gaza is a response to Hamas rockets fired at Siderot. If only there were no such rocketeering, there would be no blockade.*

**This is Utter and Total Bullshit. The enclosure of Gaza, and in fact of all “Palestine” (including the West Bank) has been and is a fundamental policy of the Israeli and American governments. These governments have always insisted that any movement into and out of Palestine be and remain under the total control of the Israeli government.**

This policy has been enforced till now at all times.

Gazans, and other Palestinians, are not supposed to leave or enter without passing thru Israeli controls, whether towards Egypt at Rafa, Jordan at the Allenby Jordan bridge, into Israel proper or through Israel’s international airport at Lydda.

These controls can be tightened and/or relaxed at the Israeli government choice. For “security reasons,” such as Israeli holidays. Or “just so.” The Israeli government does consult with Washington. The Palestinian “governments” have no say whatsoever in the matter.

The planned Palestinian airport at Gaza never operated, nor did the planned harbour. Boats from Gaza (including fishing boats) going into deep water are routinely shot at and sunk by the Israeli navy.

Nor are ships allowed to enter Gaza waters. A major wall/fence separates Gaza from Israel. There – despite various promises - has never been any free “uncontrolled” passage between Gaza and the “West Bank” of Palestine.

Only quite “illegal” tunnels from Gaza to Egypt have bypassed these long-established control/blockades.

*2/ The official reason given for these blockades is Israeli security. The same reason is given for the apartheid wall, separating Israel “proper” from the West Bank Palestine, and for the multitude of roadblocks and intermittent blockades separating Palestinian towns and villages from each other within the West Bank. The question of Palestinian security is never raised.*

The “security” reason is used by the Israeli government both within Israel (where some may believe it) and constantly in the “outer world”, the USA and Europe. It has little to do with reality.

**In the Palestinian West Bank the wall is never built within “Israel” proper. It is always somewhere inside the remaining 22% of “Arab” Palestine. I.e. it is not the supposed security fence (which could be built inside Israel) but a simple land-grab.**

The Gaza blockade, tightened by the Israeli government and army since the withdrawal of Israeli settlers from Gaza, is not a land grab. It has a different, quite clearly defined, reason:

**Hamas, which won the parliamentary election in Palestine, is unacceptable to the Israeli and American governments. Hamas pre-empted a planned anti-Hamas military coup by a Fatah group inside Gaza, and now administers Gaza.**

Although Hamas has not recognised the State of Israel (nor have Israeli governments recognised the State of Palestine) Hamas has frequently proposed negotiations and cease-fires, no rocketing of Siderot if the targeted assassination, killings, of Gazans stopped, to the Israeli governments.

These cease-fire offers have been systematically refused. Such negotiations would “recognise” the “terrorist” Hamas and are thus unacceptable for the Israeli government, and for its financier, the , =Americans. They would defeat the purpose of the blockade, consolidate Hamas.

**The purpose of the blockade and “squeezing” of Gaza is – this is clearly expressed by Israeli establishment thinkers – intended to lead to the overthrow of the Hamas administration in Gaza. The Gazan population, suffering, was expected to rise up against its Hamas leaders.**

It should be noted that the Australian Hawke/Keating Labor governments used almost the same policy after the “terrorist” Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) seized control of Bougainville and particularly the huge Panguna copper/gold mine “belonging” to the multi-national Rio Tinto/CRA corporation in 1989.

After a first military effort to crush the BRA failed, a total blockade was imposed in 1990 on the big island and maintained for eight years while a military re-conquest was attempted.

Above all, medical supplies were prohibited from entering “uncontrolled” areas.

This led to up to 10,000 deaths and was supposed to turn the Bougainvillian population against the BRA government. Once “order” had been restored the “stolen” Panguna mine could be returned to Rio Tinto.

**In fact, the blockade increased the hostility of the Bougainvillians, and turned an initial local mining dispute into the Bougainville national liberation struggle. After nine years of bitter fighting the Australian-allied Papua New Guinea army was defeated and withdrew. The Panguna mine remains closed.**

**The anti-Hamas blockade of Gaza has been just as unsuccessful as the PNG/Australian blockade of Bougainville.**

**It created great misery, but - if anything - consolidated Hamas rule.**

*3/ The establishment media treat the Egyptian government’s financial dependence on American subsidies with (almost) total silence. Instead they waffle about Mubarak’s*

*hostility to the Moslem brotherhood, its links to Hamas, or on “agreements made with Israel” to explain Egyptian reasons for closing the Gaza border.*

**4/ Perhaps the most critical factor is – for the Mubarak dictatorship – the question to what extent obeying American (and Israeli) orders to close the border can cost Mubarak the support of significant sections of the Egyptian army.**

**If mass resistance to border closure by the Gazans continues, simply stringing barbed wire over the torn down wall gaps would need to be backed up by “shoot to kill” orders.**

**Some Egyptian police units may obey, but this policy would create enormous tensions for both rank and file Egyptian soldiers and some of their officers.**

Our studies (See “Left Face – Soldier Unions and Resistance Movements in Modern Armies” – Cortright, David & Watts, Max - Greenwood Press, 1991) did not consider the Egyptian military (except marginally, in its anti-British Imperialist role of the 1950’s) – but noted that in relatively poor countries (such as Egypt) SOLDIERS do NOT normally develop the kind of independent resistance, Rita, movements which sprung up in many highly capitalised, i.e. richer, countries, in the USA, in Western Europe) after the mid-1960s.

However, under certain conditions some officers in “poor” countries may begin to effectively resist their rulers.

**In Egypt, Neguib, then Nasser, ended not only the Farouk rule, but also the long-established British domination.**

**And once such officer resistance gains a foot-hold, rank and file soldiers can quickly begin their own movements. (Examples: Portugal: 1974-75; Papua New Guinea: 1997).**

**Whether eventual confrontations in Gaza will spark such resistance movements in the Egyptian military remains an unknown of enormous significance.**

Mubarak may do much, including making concessions to Hamas, to prevent such developments.

**In the last analysis however, ORDINARY GAZANS COULD BECOME THE ARBITRATORS OF THEIR, EGYPT’S, AND PALESTINE’S FUTURE.**

**A continued MASS MOVEMENT, A MASSIVE MAINTAINED BREAKOUT may change much of future history.**

**MORE:**

**“Hamas Militants On Friday  
Hauled Away Metal Spikes**

# **Egyptian Soldiers Placed At Sections Of The Gaza-Egypt Border”**

**“Egyptian Soldiers, Who Have Been Avoiding Confrontation With Hamas, Removed The Remaining Obstacles There”**

**“Dozens Of Egyptian Border Guards Watched The Scene, But Did Not Intervene”**

One large banner read: “Egypt and Palestine are one people, not two.”

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

February 2, 2008 By The Associated Press

The Hamas leader in Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh, on Friday announced that his organization will do everything to prevent Egypt from sealing its border with the Gaza Strip, a week and a half after Palestinian gunmen blew holes in the barrier separating Gaza from Egypt, prompting hundreds of the thousands of Gazans to flood across the frontier.

**So far Egyptian attempts to seal the border have been largely unsuccessful.**

“The Palestinian people have many options” Haniyeh was quoted as telling the pro-Hamas daily Palestine in an interview published Friday, when asked about the methods Hamas was planning to use to prevent the closing of the breached border.

He did not elaborate.

**Hamas militants on Friday hauled away metal spikes Egyptian soldiers placed at sections of the Gaza-Egypt border so vehicles could pass through, defying Egyptian attempts to reseal the breached frontier and curb the influx of Gazans.**

Hamas blew open the border wall on Jan. 23, ending a seven-month blockade of the Gaza Strip that began after the Islamic group violently wrested control of the territory in June of last year.

**Hundreds of thousands of Gazans have been moving in and out of Egyptian border towns since, and in the meantime, Hamas bulldozers have pried open new gaps and blocked Egyptian efforts to narrow existing ones.**

**Early Friday, Egyptian troops poured cement and laid down metal spikes around various breaches to try to choke off the flow of vehicles through gaps in the 12-kilometer-long border.**

**They also sent dozens of riot police to the area, but continued to allow pedestrians to cross over freely from Gaza to Egyptian border towns.**

**Shortly after, Hamas militants dragged away metal spikes that had been placed at the main breach.**

**Egyptian soldiers, who have been avoiding confrontation with Hamas, removed the remaining obstacles there.**

**Witnesses also reported that a Hamas bulldozer shoved aside spikes at a gap about 100 meters to the east.**

Several hours later, dozens of vehicles were lined up on either side of the frontier as trucks tried to negotiate their way through a narrow, muddy border gap.

On Friday, about 600 Hamas supporters rallied at the border to demand it remain open.

One large banner read: "Egypt and Palestine are one people, not two."

A protester shouted, "Keep the border open."

Sami Abu Zuhri, a senior Hamas hardliner, told the crowd that we will not return to the siege, and accused the Abbas government of working for the interest of Israel.

**Some of the protesters jumped over metal barriers into Egypt, raising Hamas flags on the Egyptian side.**

**Dozens of Egyptian border guards watched the scene, but did not intervene.**

Gaza's Hamas rulers want a role in running the border with Egypt, a demand rejected this week by Egypt and Hamas' rival, moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Egypt and Abbas have proposed returning to an internationally backed arrangement for the Gaza-Egypt border that would shut out Hamas, but grant Israel the final say over operations there. The arrangement was negotiated in 2005, after Israel's pullout from Gaza. However, the border has been closed for long stretches since then, including in response to the Hamas takeover.

Since the border breach, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have rushed into Egypt, shopping and visiting relatives on the other side. Most have returned to Gaza after brief visits to Egyptian towns along the shared border.

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## IRAQ WAR REPORTS

### UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; ALL HOME NOW



12.7.07: A US soldier inspects an explosive device that was found buried in the ground during a street patrol in Baquba. (AFP/Gianluigi Guercia)

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## Siblings Share Memories

**“When the Army, Marines or Navy recruiters call for Josh, which they have been lately, I just say, ‘Nope, you’re not talking to him. You already got one of my brothers. You’re not getting another one,’”** Kylee said.

24 January 2008 By KAREN CAMPBELL, Staff Writer, The Wapakoneta Daily News

CRIDERSVILLE — Before the brother of a 15-year-old Cridersville girl left for Iraq, he sent her a text message.



Rereading it Wednesday afternoon, Kylee Schoolcraft said she kept it just in case something happened to her oldest brother, Jon Michael “Mike” Schoolcraft III, when he was overseas fighting in Iraq as a specialist with the U.S. Army. She never really thought anything would.

“If something happens to me in Iraq, I want you and Josh to know I love you very much and I’ll always be with you,” “Mikey,” as he was known by his younger half siblings, wrote in messages to Kylee and her older brother, Josh Schoolcraft.

Josh, who turned 18 years old on Friday, the day his brother was killed by a roadside bomb, did not keep his.

Why would he — he always believed his brother was coming back.

Kylee was at a friend’s house when she got the call from Mike’s wife late Friday night. She said she did not want to believe her. The siblings, who share a father, Jon Michael Schoolcraft II, did not always get to spend a lot of time together. They shared memories when they were very young, but hardly saw each other once their parents split up. Kylee, being the youngest, was so young that she hardly remembers those times.

She remembers more vividly times spent together before her oldest brother graduated high school and enlisted in the Army. Kylee said she laughed at how her brother’s shaved head looked right before he left for basic training.

Since then, he has been gone so much that it was not until six months ago, when everyone was older and family meant a lot more, that they had reconnected.

“I got his phone number and I was scared to call, so I texted him,” Kylee said of the pair that was talking every day before he left.

“I’m glad we got back in touch before this happened,” she said. “I’m glad we got a chance to catch up.”

Kylee, who had written several letters to her brother but never got them sent because she had been waiting until he was securely in one place where he could receive mail, began talking to him more through e-mail since his December deployment as a member of 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, “Wolfhounds,” of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

The pair exchanged e-mails at Christmas and for his birthday. It was sometimes hard for him to get computer time, but she received another e-mail from him the day before he died. He died Saturday (Friday in Ohio) when his vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb near Taji, Iraq, an al-Qaida stronghold approximately 20 miles north of Baghdad.

“He just wanted to know how I was doing and told me that he hoped to see me soon,” Kylee said. “He said he wanted to hang out when he got back.”

Mike told family he planned not to re-enlist in the Army in 2009 and he wanted to move back to Ohio, have children with his bride, Amber, and be near family again.

He never got to read Kylee’s response.

"I always asked him about it over there, but he didn't like to talk about it," Kylee said. "He said it was hard, that he missed his family and that it was hot and far away.

"He said he was helping his country, but that he just hated the conditions," she said.

Kylee said there are certain things about her brother that she will always remember, like how he could make everyone smile no matter what the situation — and that he promised to give charleyhorses to anyone who would not smile — that he had a lot of friends, liked listening to loud music and skateboarding.

From the moment his youngest siblings were born, Mike was constantly wanting to hold them and play with them, said their mother, Denise Wilmoth.

"He could make any situation fun," Kylee said. "He would always make people apologize. He wanted everyone to get along."

"He always smiled — always," Josh said.

Kylee and Josh, students at Wapakoneta High School, plan to get tattoos, one of their brother's loves, in his memory. Kylee wants to get a heart with his name, and Josh wants either a cross or a portrait.

"That way, he'll always be with me forever, just like he said," Kylee said.

Kylee said it would be nice if they got them at the same time so they could spend the time bonding over their loss. She said she hopes their loss makes them take inventory and that they use it to become even closer themselves. She hopes the same for their relationship with their father and the rest of the family.

She said for some reason, probably because of the way luck runs in the family, she was more worried about her brother's deployment this time than last.

Kylee, Josh, Mike and his sister, Megan, had the chance to reunite for the first time in years in November at Mike's wedding. Kylee said he was full of hugs, kisses and "I love yous."

One of the things that worried Kylee and Josh the most is that there could be protestors at their older brother's funeral.

"He didn't choose to fight in Iraq, he chose to serve his country," Kylee said.

"I think it would be really disrespectful if they chose to protest there," she said. "He wouldn't want that. That's the kind of thing they need to do at the White House."

Even though Kylee and Josh do not agree with the war in Iraq, they supported their brother.

**"When the Army, Marines or Navy recruiters call for Josh, which they have been lately, I just say, 'Nope, you're not talking to him. You already got one of my brothers. You're not getting another one,' "** Kylee said.

Josh said his brother was just too young — anybody would be — for what happened to him.

“I’m proud of him,” Kylee said. “I told him not to go, but he said he had to.

“I miss him a lot,” she said. “Our family is known for breaking up and never getting back in touch. Finally we got back in touch and he died, but I believe he’s looking over us and taking care of us.”

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## **TROOP NEWS**

# **“Once Again, It Seems Retirees Must Fight The Enemy At Home” Argument For Hiking Tricare Charges That “Having Health Care Appearing To Be Free Is A Bad Signal” Condemned As “Ridiculous” “Sharon Bakke, ‘Proud Wife Of An Air Force Retiree,’ Called Wilensky’s Comments An ‘Insult’ To All Military Retirees”**

02/04/2008 By Alex Keenan, Army Times [Excerpts]. Alex Keenan is a retired command master chief petty officer who served 28 years in the Coast Guard.

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Judging from my mail over the past few weeks, a lot of retirees are upset about the conclusions issued recently by the Pentagon’s Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care.

Particularly for older retirees - the dwindling ranks of the World War II and Korean War veterans - a promise of free health care for life has splintered into a broken promise, and then more broken promises, as the issue gets batted around in Washington.

The task force called for increases in out-of-pocket costs for some Tricare beneficiaries, mainly retirees - to include hikes in enrollment fees, deductibles and pharmacy co-payments.

One proposal for “working age” retirees younger than 65 and their families calls for a new fee structure based upon the amount of retired pay received, phased in over a four-year period.

**Dr. Gail Wilensky, a senior fellow at the international health education foundation Project HOPE and a co-chair of the task force, made what I think was a serious gaffe in seeking to justify the higher fees.**

**She said part of the reason for the proposed fees increases is to make the military health plan, and its associated costs, “more acceptable” to the general public.**

She acknowledged that some of the proposals, such as a \$10 monthly fee for older retirees in the Tricare for Life program, would not cover any specific program expenses and would barely make a dent in the bottom line.

**Still, she said, “Having health care appearing to be free is a bad signal.”**

What?

A “bad signal”?

To whom?

To the American people who benefit immeasurably from the sacrifices of those willing to wear the uniform in long years of service to our nation?

Wilensky’s statement is simply ridiculous.

Anyone who thinks retirees don’t earn their health care with their sweat and blood should put on a uniform and serve a career in our nation’s armed forces themselves.

**Sharon Bakke, “proud wife of an Air Force retiree,” called Wilensky’s comments an “insult” to all military retirees.**

**“If we are going to be charged \$10 a month that will be of virtually no benefit to the program, but only appease the general public because ‘having health care appear to be free is a bad signal,’ then Dr. Wilensky is indicating we may all just as well tear up the \$10 bill and toss it into the wind,” she wrote.**

**Steve Strobridge of the Military Officers Association of America said some of the proposed Tricare cost hikes, such as the monthly \$10 fee for Tricare for Life, seem to be designed mainly as “irritants” to possibly discourage retirees from enrolling.**

**The bottom line, he said, is that “military people do pay premiums up front - very heavy premiums, larger than any civilian ever pays - through 20 to 30 years of service and sacrifice.”**

**Wilensky's comments are unconscionable and shortsighted.**

Certainly, rising military health care costs are a very real concern. But suggesting that out-of-pocket costs must increase out of some public-relations concern about how the American people otherwise might resent military retirees is absurd.

**Once again, it seems retirees must fight the enemy at home.**

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

# **NO OIL FOR OCCUPATION! TRADE UNION RIGHTS NOW!**

**Demonstrate At The Middle East Energy 2008  
Conference Sponsored By Shell And BP And Attended  
By Iraqi Oil Minister Dr Hussein Al Shahrstani**

<p><b>Trade Union Recognition Now! – Tell Iraq's Oil Minister - stop using dictatorship laws to repress trade unionism Dr Shahrstani also refuses to recognise trade unions in Iraq. He has issued decrees for the national oil company not to negotiate with unions and ordered the shut-down of union offices.</b></p>
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From: Ewa Jasiewicz  
Sent: January 31, 2008

**When? Tuesday 5th February 2008  
Where? Royal Institute of International Affairs  
10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE  
(map: <http://tinyurl.com/38gajj>)  
What time? From 8.30am**

Called by the Hands Off Iraqi Oil campaign, [www.handsoffiraqoil.org](http://www.handsoffiraqoil.org)

Tell Shell and BP:

No Oil for Occupation! – privatisation laws and contracts signed under occupation can have no validity.

**The vast majority of Iraqis want an immediate end to the military and economic occupation of their country.**

Most Iraqis also want their resources to stay in the public sector.

**Trade Union Recognition Now! – Tell Iraq’s Oil Minister - stop using dictatorship laws to repress trade unionism Dr Shahrstani also refuses to recognise trade unions in Iraq.**

**He has issued decrees for the national oil company not to negotiate with unions and ordered the shut-down of union offices.**

British and international oil company executives will gather at the Royal Institute of International Affairs this Monday and Tuesday for a Shell and BP sponsored conference. ‘Middle East Energy: Risks and Opportunities’ represents the ongoing positioning and pressuring of Shell and BP, aided by the British government, in gaining long-term control of Iraqi oil reserves - against the wishes of the majority of Iraqis.

### **Whose Oil?**

Iraq’s economic future and potential independence hangs in the balance. Iraqi oil accounts for approximately 90% of government revenue. Whoever controls Iraq’s oil development has a controlling stake in the country’s overall development. Since 2003, the British and US governments, and international oil companies have been pushing for an oil law which will hand over control of Iraq’s oil to foreign companies.

**In spite of massive military, political and economic pressure, from Britain and the US, opposition at every level of Iraqi society has meant that this law cannot be passed in its present form.**

Despite mass opposition to the draft Oil Law, Oil Minister Dr Hussein al Shahrstani has declared Iraq ‘open for business’ and invited oil companies to invest under existing Baath regime legislation.

### **Trade Union Recognition Now!**

**Dr Shahrstani is also applying Saddam Hussein’s anti-union laws, re-imposed by the occupation authorities and now kept on the law books by the Iraqi authorities. This is clearly unacceptable and ironic given Shahrstani’s imprisonment by the Ba’ath regime for over 10 years.**

Iraq’s trade unions have called the contracts pushed by the foreign companies and the Oil Law – Production Sharing Agreements – a ‘red line’. PSAs will allow foreign companies to control the development and depletion of oil reserves for 25 years. Once signed, PSAs will not be re-negotiable.

Iraq’s sovereignty will be surrendered and its economic future effectively mortgaged to the agendas of oil companies.

### **End The Military And Economic Occupation**

We are asking the Minister of Oil to listen to the Iraqi people, particularly those who work in the oil sector, in their demands for a democratic process for deciding how and by whom Iraqi oil will be controlled.

We are calling for an immediate end to economic and military occupation by foreign interests.

No to PSAs, No Oil for Occupation!  
All Troops and Occupation Institutions Out Now!  
Union Recognition and Resource Democracy Now!

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REMINDER:  
HANDS OFF IRAQI OIL INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION AGAINST THE THEFT OF  
IRAQI OIL AND OCCUPATION - SATURDAY FEBRUARY 23RD 2008

US and UK-Wide actions will be taking place targeting Shell, BP and Exxon over the rip off of Iraq's resources - see [www.handsoffiraqoil.org](http://www.handsoffiraqoil.org) for latest details.

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HANDS OFF IRAQI OIL is a coalition of development, anti-war, environmental and human rights groups. HOIO is War on Want, PLATFORM, Voices UK, Iraq Occupation Focus, Jubilee Iraq, and Corporate Watch UK. We are supported by the Stop the War Coalition and Naftana.

Events: This list contains subscribers from around the world - send us your Iraqi oil related events, wherever they're taking place, and we'll do our best to include them in these updates. Email [handsoffiraqoil@gmail.com](mailto:handsoffiraqoil@gmail.com).

Campaign materials: A reminder that you can download Hands Off Iraqi Oil campaign materials from the website: [www.handsoffiraqoil.org](http://www.handsoffiraqoil.org).

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE  
END THE OCCUPATION**

## **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. Frederick Douglas, 1852**

# “Work Will Set You Free”



“Work Will Set You Free”

From: Mike Hastie  
To: GI Special  
Sent: February 03, 2008  
Subject: Work Will Set You Free

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: [hastiemike@earthlink.net](mailto: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



# **Dead Soldiers And The Antiwar Movement; “If The Left Could Move Away From Questioning The Lack Of Outrage And Get To The Real Work Of Hammering Out A Strategy To End The War, We’d All Be A Whole Lot Better Off”**

Sometimes I get the feeling that some in the movement almost wish there were more casualties, thinking that more casualties automatically leads to ending the war.

What this does however is throw up a roadblock between the civilian and soldier sides of the antiwar movement, effectively dividing and conquering our movement without the war mongers lifting a finger.

From: Joshua Karpoff  
To: GI Special  
Sent: February 01, 2008  
Subject: Stupid Liberals and GI casualties

Josh Karpoff is an engineer and antiwar activist. He served as chair of the student antiwar group at the Rochester Institute of Technology, a founding organizer of Rochester Against War and the Northeast representative to the national coordinating committee of the Campus Antiwar Network. He currently lives and organizes in Albany, New York. You can reach him at [trotskyghost@hotmail.com](mailto:trotskyghost@hotmail.com)

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So last night I was in a planning meeting for the local protests to mark the 5th Anniversary of the start of this stupid war.

We were discussing our plans for a memorial to the fallen GIs and Iraqis that we're planning on leaving at someplace of political significance.

**This one older activist, out of nowhere brought up this crazy idea that the number of dead GIs must be AT LEAST 10 times bigger than what the Pentagon was reporting.**

**What struck me the most was that about half the room seemed to at least tacitly agree with this idea.**

His "logic" seemed to be based from 1) an extrapolation that previous wars had a lot more dead and 2) the Pentagon lies more than it tells the truth.

Now the second point isn't off-base, but one shouldn't go basing an entire theory off just that.

The point about there were a lot more dead in previous wars is all too rarely taken up amongst the antiwar movement.

**Sometimes I get the feeling that some in the movement almost wish there were more casualties, thinking that more casualties automatically leads to ending the war.**

**What this does however is throw up a roadblock between the civilian and soldier sides of the antiwar movement, effectively dividing and conquering our movement without the war mongers lifting a finger.**

The notion that the Pentagon could hide a secret about the number of soldiers is preposterous.

**The National Security Agency, a part of the DoD, can't hide its illegal wiretapping operation, the Army couldn't hide the horrors of Abu Ghraib, how in the hell are they going to hide 27,000 dead soldiers?**

Wouldn't this be something that the Iraq Veterans Against the War be speaking out on if it were actually the case?

The assumption that since past wars had greater numbers of dead, thus this war should too, lacks any connection to reality.

In Vietnam you had significantly higher numbers of troops in-theater, with a higher proportion of those troops in combat roles. There are currently 150,000 or so US soldiers in Iraq.

More than 75% of these troops are support and command personnel.

The US military last I heard, had a ratio of roughly 1 officer to every 5 enlisted, which is ridiculously high compared to most military's, past and present (the ideal ratio is theorized as being around 1:10). These support personnel are the mechanics, technicians supply clerks and truck drivers that are necessary to keep such a technologically advanced military in the field.

Infantry and air cavalry in Vietnam also spent much of their time in the field on dismounted patrols, trying to draw out the enemy into combat. The US military hadn't yet made kevlar body armor a standard issue item to infantry. These soldiers largely went out with little more protection than their clothes and a steel helmet (which couldn't stop an AK-47 round).

Today's troops wear advanced kevlar helmets and body armor, do a lot of their patrols from vehicles (which at the very least afford some minimal level of protection).

When US soldiers are wounded, modern communications technology allows units to call in medical support much faster than in any previous war. As any EMT can tell you, the first hour after a trauma injury such as gun shot wound, is critical. With Med-Evac helicopters and modern medical technologies, those severely physical wounded in combat are more likely able to survive their injuries, though the psychological effects are all too frequently ignored. When this war is over we will probably have a greater proportion of disabled veterans to those that died from their injuries than in any previous war.

So with modern armor, vehicular patrols, infantry portable radios, better medical technologies and fewer actual combat troops, the US military has been able to keep its casualty figures lower then ever before; which is good considering how many tax dollars went into making that possible.

What it doesn't mean is that those deaths and injuries are any less significant or that they should have even happened at all.

**I think that the roots of this issue lie somewhere near the idea that there isn't enough outrage amongst the greater population.**

**Even though every poll shows that a majority of Americans are against the war, these dedicated activists are demoralized that more isn't being done to stop the war.**

This really has less to with a sense of outrage and more to do with the lack of a coherent strategy to end the war amongst the movement, the sad state of the American Left and from being on the losing side of a 30 year brutal class war.

The Vietnam antiwar movement had over 10 years of successful examples of struggle from the Civil Rights movement to draw on.

We don't.

I'm nearly 25 years old, having been politically active for 10 of that and I can't think of a sustained, successful movement during any of that.

**If the left could move away from questioning the lack of outrage and get to the real work of hammering out a strategy to end the war, we'd all be a whole lot better off.**

## **Get The Message?**

**“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

**“The military are the final, essential weak point of Bush and Cheney.” David McReynolds 9.29.07**

**Troops Invited:**

**What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org):. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.**

**“Let Any Group Of People Organize  
To Show Their Opposition To An  
Injustice, And They’re Certain To Be  
Told To Be Patient”**

February 1, 2008 Editorial, Socialist Worker [Excerpt]

**OBAMA’S SPEECHES about voters coming together behind him to accomplish change in U.S. society fit very closely with what we’re encouraged to believe about how society operates.**

**Let any group of people organize to show their opposition to an injustice, and they’re certain to be told to be patient--let the system work or get behind a political candidate who can advance their cause.**

**This is a myth about how political and social change takes place--every bit as wrong as Hillary Clinton’s contention that Martin Luther King spoke well, but it took a white Southern politician like Lyndon Johnson in the White House to get civil rights passed into law.**

**U.S. history tells the opposite story.**

The demand for civil rights and an end to Jim Crow segregation was ignored for years by Republicans and Democrats--the Democrats, after all, presided over Jim Crow in the South. It was only when masses of Blacks moved into struggle that the political establishment was forced to act.

The same is true about the other political transformations of U.S. society that we see as the highlights of history.

The end of slavery, the vote for women, the right to organize a union, Social Security and unemployment insurance--none of these happened because a politician proposed them, but because masses of people organized and struggled for them.

In most elections, the Republican candidate is likely to be to the right of the Democrat.

But the distance between the two parties at any given point isn't nearly so large as the distance they travel together, depending on the political climate.

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# Military History: Down-Low Department

January 31, 2008 Via David McCreynolds

By Col D. G. Swinford, USMC, Ret and history buff.

You would really have to dig deep to get this kind of ringside seat to history:

1. The first German serviceman killed in WW2 was killed by the Japanese (China, 1937), the first American serviceman killed was killed by the Russians (Finland 1940); highest ranking American killed was Lt Gen Lesley McNair, killed by the US Army Air Corps.
2. The youngest US serviceman was 12 year old Calvin Graham, USN. He was wounded and given a Dishonorable Discharge for lying about his age. His benefits were later restored by act of Congress.
3. At the time of Pearl Harbor, the top US Navy command was called CINCUS (pronounced "sink us"), the shoulder patch of the US Army's 45th Infantry division was the Swastika, and Hitler's private train was named "Amerika."

All three were soon changed for PR purposes.

4. More US servicemen died in the Air Corps than the Marine Corps. While completing the required 30 missions, your chance of being killed was 71%.
5. Generally speaking, there was no such thing as an average fighter pilot. You were either an ace or a target. For instance, Japanese Ace Hiroyoshi Nishizawa shot down over 80 planes. He died while a passenger on a cargo plane.
6. It was a common practice on fighter planes to load every 5th round with a tracer round to aid in aiming.

This was a mistake. Tracers had different ballistics so (at long range) if your tracers were hitting the target 80% of your rounds were missing. Worse yet tracers instantly told your enemy he was under fire and from which direction.

Worst of all was the practice of loading a string of tracers at the end of the belt to tell you that you were out of ammo. This was definitely not something you wanted to tell the enemy.

Units that stopped using tracers saw their success rate nearly double and their loss rate go down.

7. When allied armies reached the Rhine, the first thing men did was pee in it. This was pretty universal from the lowest private to Winston Churchill (who made a big show of it) and Gen. Patton (who had himself photographed in the act).
8. German Me-264 bombers were capable of bombing New York City, but it wasn't worth the effort.
9. German submarine U-120 was sunk by a malfunctioning toilet.
10. Among the first "Germans" captured at Normandy were several Koreans. They had been forced to fight for the Japanese Army until they were captured by the Russians and forced to fight for the Russian Army until they were captured by the Germans and forced to fight for the German Army until they were captured by the US Army

AND I SAVED THE BEST FOR LAST....

11. Following a massive naval bombardment, 35,000 United States and Canadian troops stormed ashore at Kiska, in the Aleutian Islands. 21 troops were killed in the firefight.

It would have been worse if there had been any Japanese on the island.

## **DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE SERVICE?**

**Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657**

## **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

**Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.**

**<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! ([www.ivaw.org/](http://www.ivaw.org/))**

## OCCUPATION REPORT

# 60% Of Iraqis Want U.S. Troops Dead: Big Surprise



Foreign occupation soldier from the US soldiers search a house during home invasion in Baghdad, on January 16. (AFP/File/Jewel Samad)

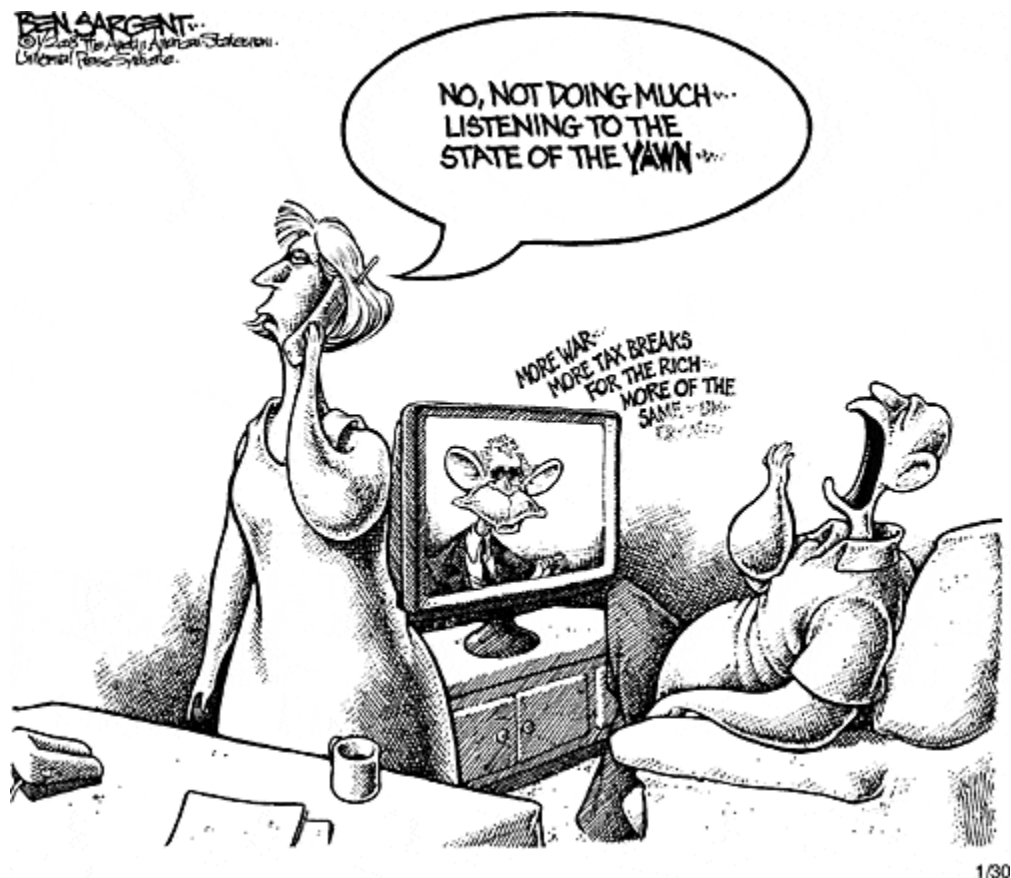
**[61% of Iraqis say they approve of attacks on U.S.-led forces in their country, up from 47 percent in January. A solid majority of Shiite and Sunni Arabs approved of the attacks, according to the poll. 9/27/2006 By BARRY SCHWEID, AP & Program on International Policy Attitudes**

**Declared Bill Ehrhart, a marine in Vietnam:**

**In grade school we learned about the redcoats, the nasty British soldiers that tried to stifle our freedom.... Subconsciously, but not very subconsciously, I began increasingly to have the feeling that I was a redcoat. I think it was one of the most staggering realizations of my life.**

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION  
BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

# DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



## George W. Bush And The Labrador

January 31, 2008 From wndbear, Firebase Humor

George Bush called Laura into his office one day and said: "Laura, I have a great idea. I know how we can win back middle America and secure presidential victory for the Republican party, in 2008."

"Great, but how do you propose we go about that?" asked Laura.

"Well," George responds. "We'll go down to a local Wal-Mart, get some cheesy clothes and shoes, like most middle Americans wear, and then we stop at the pound and pick up a Labrador.

When we look the part we'll go to a nice old country bar in middle America and we'll show them that we really enjoy the countryside and show admiration and respect for the hard working people living there."



A few days later, all decked out and with the requisite Labrador at heel, they set off from Washington in a westerly direction. Eventually they arrived at just the place they were looking for.

With dog in tow, they walk into the bar. They step up to the bar and the bartender takes a step back and says: "Aren't you George and Laura Bush?"

George answers: "Yes, we are and what a lovely town you have here. We were just passing through and Laura suggested that we stop and take in some local color."

They then order a couple of cocktails from the bartender and proceed to drink them down, all the while chatting up a storm with anyone who would listen.

All of a sudden the bar room door opens and a grizzled old farmer comes in. He walks up to the Labrador, lifts its tail and looks underneath, shrugs his shoulders and walks out the door.

A few moments later, in came another old farmer.

He walks up to the dog, lifts its tail, looks underneath, scratches his head and then leaves the bar.

Over the course of the next hour or so, another four or five farmers come in, lift the dog's tail and go away, looking puzzled.

Eventually George and Laura could stand it no longer and called the bartender over.

"Tell me," said George.

"Why did all those old farmers come in and look under the dog's tail like that? Is it some sort of old custom?"

"Good Lord, no!" said the bartender.

"It's just that someone has told them that there was a Labrador in here with two assholes!"

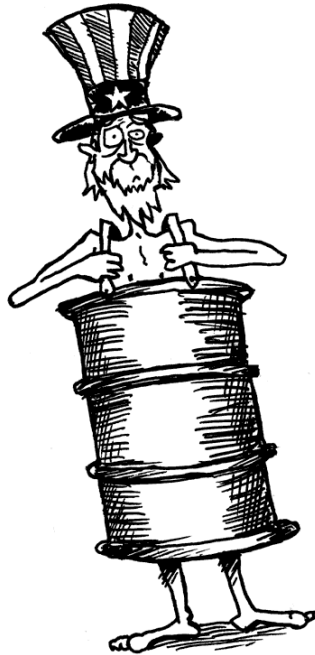
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## **CLASS WAR REPORTS**

**Capitalism At Work:**

***Ready To Shit Your Pants?***

# The Worst Financial Crisis In 60 Years



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ALCARRAZ  
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SYNOPSIS

1/22

January 22 2008 By George Soros, The Financial Times [Excerpt]

The current financial crisis was precipitated by a bubble in the US housing market.

In some ways it resembles other crises that have occurred since the end of the second world war at intervals ranging from four to 10 years.

**However, there is a profound difference: the current crisis marks the end of an era of credit expansion based on the dollar as the international reserve currency.**

The periodic crises were part of a larger boom-bust process.

The current crisis is the culmination of a super-boom that has lasted for more than 60 years.

Boom-bust processes usually revolve around credit and always involve a bias or misconception. This is usually a failure to recognise a reflexive, circular connection between the willingness to lend and the value of the collateral.

Ease of credit generates demand that pushes up the value of property, which in turn increases the amount of credit available. A bubble starts when people buy houses in the expectation that they can refinance their mortgages at a profit. The recent US housing boom is a case in point.

The 60-year super-boom is a more complicated case.

Every time the credit expansion ran into trouble the financial authorities intervened, injecting liquidity and finding other ways to stimulate the economy. That created a system of asymmetric incentives also known as moral hazard, which encouraged ever greater credit expansion.

The system was so successful that people came to believe in what former US president Ronald Reagan called the magic of the marketplace and I call market fundamentalism.

Fundamentalists believe that markets tend towards equilibrium and the common interest is best served by allowing participants to pursue their self-interest.

It is an obvious misconception, because it was the intervention of the authorities that prevented financial markets from breaking down, not the markets themselves.

Nevertheless, market fundamentalism emerged as the dominant ideology in the 1980s, when financial markets started to become globalised and the US started to run a current account deficit.

**Globalisation allowed the US to suck up the savings of the rest of the world and consume more than it produced.**

**The US current account deficit reached 6.2 per cent of gross national product in 2006.**

The financial markets encouraged consumers to borrow by introducing ever more sophisticated instruments and more generous terms. The authorities aided and abetted the process by intervening whenever the global financial system was at risk.

Since 1980, regulations have been progressively relaxed until they have practically disappeared.

The super-boom got out of hand when the new products became so complicated that the authorities could no longer calculate the risks and started relying on the risk management methods of the banks themselves.

Similarly, the rating agencies relied on the information provided by the originators of synthetic products.

It was a shocking abdication of responsibility.

**Everything that could go wrong did.**

What started with subprime mortgages spread to all collateralised debt obligations, endangered municipal and mortgage insurance and reinsurance companies and threatened to unravel the multi-trillion-dollar credit default swap market.

Investment banks' commitments to leveraged buyouts became liabilities.

Market-neutral hedge funds turned out not to be market-neutral and had to be unwound.

The asset-backed commercial paper market came to a standstill and the special investment vehicles set up by banks to get mortgages off their balance sheets could no longer get outside financing.

**The final blow came when interbank lending, which is at the heart of the financial system, was disrupted because banks had to husband their resources and could not trust their counterparties.**

**The central banks had to inject an unprecedented amount of money and extend credit on an unprecedented range of securities to a broader range of institutions than ever before.**

**That made the crisis more severe than any since the second world war.**

Credit expansion must now be followed by a period of contraction, because some of the new credit instruments and practices are unsound and unsustainable.

**The ability of the financial authorities to stimulate the economy is constrained by the unwillingness of the rest of the world to accumulate additional dollar reserves.**

**Until recently, investors were hoping that the US Federal Reserve would do whatever it takes to avoid a recession, because that is what it did on previous occasions. Now they will have to realise that the Fed may no longer be in a position to do so.**

With oil, food and other commodities firm, and the renminbi [Chinese currency] appreciating somewhat faster, the Fed also has to worry about inflation.

**If federal funds were lowered beyond a certain point, the dollar would come under renewed pressure and long-term bonds would actually go up in yield.**

**Where that point is, is impossible to determine.**

**When it is reached, the ability of the Fed to stimulate the economy comes to an end.**

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## **Number Of Workers Filing New Claims For Jobless Aid Highest Since 2005**

31 January 2008 By Joanne Morrison, Reuters

Washington - The number of workers filing new claims for jobless aid surged last week to the highest since October 2005, and consumer spending softened at the end of last year, according to reports on Thursday that heightened worries about a possible recession.

The Labor Department said initial claims for state unemployment benefits jumped by 69,000 last week to 375,000. It was the biggest jump since September 2005 and the highest since October of that year, just after Hurricane Katrina devastated the U.S. Gulf Coast.

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**Welcome To The Occupied USA:**

**Chicago Coward Cops Torment  
Day Laborers:  
Arrested Repeatedly For Trying To  
Feed Their Families By Looking For  
Work On Public Property:  
“They Treated Us Like We Were  
Robbers, Like We Were Delinquents,  
Threatening Us With Their Police Sticks”**

**[Brave copes like this waste their talents in Chicago. Put them on the next plan for Iraq; let them replace some of the troops on their fourth and fifth tours of duty. Unless, of course, they're stinking cowardly rats who can't face anybody that can fight back. T]**

January 31, 2008, In These Times [Excerpts]

On Dec. 5, two day laborers, in conjunction with the workers' rights group Chicago Committee for the Right to Work, filed a federal lawsuit against the city of Chicago. They charged city police with systematically harassing and falsely arresting workers who gather on the city's street corners in search of employment.

“Day laborers have been suffering from police harassment for decades in this city and it's come to a point where we want to do something to end it,” says B. Loewe, planning director of Latino Union of Chicago, a workers' rights organization that helped prepare the lawsuit.

In the first lawsuit filed by day laborers against the city, the two workers allege wrongful detention, violation of First Amendment rights, conspiracy to violate civil rights and malicious prosecution.

**The lawsuit cites examples of police intimidation, such as an instance where a police officer forced an employer and three day laborers out of a car at gunpoint, and a sting operation in which undercover officers, posing as contractors, lured**

**workers to a Home Depot to discuss employment and then arrested them for criminal trespass.**

**At least 150 charges and arrests have been dismissed in court in favor of the day laborers, according to the Latino Union, highlighting the tenuous relationship between the police and workers' right to assemble on public space.**

"We've seen workers being arrested repeatedly for nothing more than just trying to feed their families by looking for work on public property," says Jessica Acee, an organizer with the Latino Union.

"It's unjust for the police to arrest us because we're not criminals. We're simply people who are looking for work," says Quintin Moran, a day laborer who shows up six days a week looking for work on the busy Chicago street corner of Belmont and Milwaukee Avenues.

"They treated us like we were robbers, like we were delinquents, threatening us with their police sticks."

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## **Prison Nation**

January 31, 2008 RAW STORY [Excerpts]

**2.2 million people were imprisoned in 2007 in the United States, a 500 percent increase over the past 30 years and equivalent to five times the entire prison population of Britain.**

**In addition to having the largest prison population in the world, the report added, the United States imprisoned blacks at a rate 6.5 times higher than that of whites.**

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