

GI SPECIAL 6G16:



Rats

To: GI Special

From: [soldier's wife]

[All identifying information removed.]]

You would not believe what I'm watching on AMC now... The Graduate... I do so love Simon and Garfunkle.

[XXXXX] called me from [Iraq] tonite... he's not in a regular barracks yet. He said he's in a Hell Hole, and didn't really say much more than that.

T, I heard something in his voice tonight that I've never heard in all the years I've known him...fear.

It was raw fear.

Never before have I heard that. Not once.

I am scared this go round. I truly am.

REPLY: [Excerpts]

If only there were some magic that could relieve your fears, and [xxxxx's], and restore him to you here and now, this minute!

People are beginning to realize that the politicians aren't likely to bring an end of the horrors the troops are going through. Especially people stuck in Iraq, or likely to get sent there.

People who object to demanding the immediate return of all troops from Iraq have cold hearts; they have no sense whatever of what being there is like, or what it's like to have someone there that one cares about deeply, and consequently live in constant fear of the worst news there can be.

Politicians afraid to demand or opposed to the immediate return of all troops from Iraq are despicable, loathsome rats.

And that goes for McCain, Obama, Nader, and every other one, with no exceptions.

T

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT THE
BLOODSHED**

THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WAR

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

No Shit?

Jul 26 by Marc Bastian, AFP

BAQUBA, Iraq: In the war-ravaged streets of Iraq, US-led forces say insurgents are recruiting women driven by despair or revenge to act as suicide bombers in the latest tactic against coalition troops.

"One of the reasons for women to kill like this is a desire for vengeance," said Captain Kevin Ryan, commander of a US base in Baquba. "Often, they have lost parents, brothers or children in the fighting."

Fearful for their safety, US soldiers patrolling the streets avoid women wearing these long dresses.

"Each time you see one, you wonder if she is going to blow herself up," one soldier said.

NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP GO HOME



U.S. soldiers of the 1st Armour Division in Baghdad's Sadr City July 13, 2008. (Damir Sagolj/Reuters)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

British Soldier Killed In Sangin; Six More Wounded

07/25/08 AP & MoD

A British army dog handler was fatally shot by insurgents in southern Afghanistan.

Six troops were wounded, all from the elite Parachute Regiment, the ministry said.

Britain's Ministry of Defense said the soldier from the Royal Army Veterinary Corps was hit by small arms fire during a patrol in the Sangin area of Helmand province on Thursday. An explosives sniffer dog also died.

On Thursday 24 July 2008 a routine patrol from Forward Operating Base Inkerman in the Sangin area came under enemy fire. Five other soldiers from 2nd Battalion the Parachute Regiment and one from 3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment were injured by small arms fire.

Danish Soldier Killed In Helmand; Three More Wounded

07/25/08 AP

A Danish soldier died in a roadside bomb attack, officials said Friday.

Denmark's army said a Danish soldier was killed and three others were wounded Friday when their armored vehicle hit an explosive device, also in Helmand province.

The victim was a member of the Jutland Dragoon Regiment, the Danish army said.

Two Danish Soldiers Wounded In Gereshk

July 24, 2008 International Herald Tribune

COPENHAGEN, Denmark: The Danish army says two soldiers were injured, one of them seriously, when a rocket hit their armored vehicle in a battle with Taliban fighters in Afghanistan.

The army says the Danish unit came under attack Wednesday in the southern district of Gereshk.

The injured soldiers were to be transferred to Denmark for treatment. No details were given on their injuries.

Afghanistan Resistance Movement Uses High Tech To Spread Word

Jul 25, 2008 Naval Toosi, ASSOCIATED PRESS [Excerpts]

KABUL—The Taliban have created a sophisticated media network to undermine support for the Afghan government, sending threats by text message and spreading insurgent propaganda as text messages, according to a new report.

Taliban propaganda exploits the killings of civilians by foreign soldiers and corruption in the U.S.-backed Afghan government to add to citizens' disillusionment about their lives, according to the report released yesterday by the Brussels-based group.

Many messages – some not directly produced by the Taliban – come as songs, religious chants and poems appealing to Afghan nationalism and Islamic pride.

One poem – "Death is a gift" – included the phrase, "I will not kiss the hand of Laura Bush."

The Taliban movement also has a website, Al Emarah, or The Emirate, which has various domain names due to attempts to block it. The Taliban also publish pamphlets and magazines, and its communications come in multiple languages including English. DVDs and audio cassettes also are used.

Widespread illiteracy and scarce Internet and TV access mean the Taliban also use traditional tools, including shabnamahs – flyers, often distributed at night.

TROOP NEWS

Here's The Obama Plan Just For You:

Soldiers "Won't Get More Dwell Time With A Drawdown In OIF" "They Will Instead Deploy To OEF" War-Wearry Soldiers "Who Hope For More Time At Home Will Not See Relief If Military Leaders Follow Through With The Push To Send More Soldiers To Afghanistan"

[As everybody who isn't brain dead knows by now, Obama is demanding troops be pulled out of Iraq and sent to die for the Empire in Afghanistan. And now for the good news: T]

July 28, 2008 By Michelle Tan, Army Times [Excerpts]

War-weary soldiers — serving multiple combat tours is now common — who hope for more time at home will not see relief for a while if military leaders follow through with the push to send more soldiers to Afghanistan, the senior Army planner said.

“(Soldiers) won’t get more dwell time with a drawdown in OIF,” he said. “They will instead deploy to OEF about the same time they were scheduled to deploy to OIF.”

Montour [Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Montour, the top enlisted soldier for 2nd BCT, 10th Mountain Division], who has deployed twice to Iraq and once to Afghanistan, said the rugged terrain in Afghanistan could be one of the biggest challenges for soldiers.

“If you’re going to be operating in Afghanistan, you’re going to be operating at 3,000 to 9,000 feet,” he said. “At 9,000 feet, cardio is a must because your oxygen intake is much greater (and) your heart rate is higher. You’re not driving vehicles at 9,000 feet. You’re walking.”

Isolation is another factor, Montour said.

“You could have platoons in outlying areas that are literally separated by 25 to 35 kilometers,” he said.

“Unless the command makes the effort to get out and physically get out on the ground, talk with the soldiers, see what the soldiers are doing, see what living conditions the soldiers have, you’re never going to know (how they’re doing).”

The enemy in Afghanistan tends to test the Americans, and they use a lot of small-unit tactics, Montour said.

“Initially they will hit you from far-out distances,” he said.

“They want to see what your capabilities are, and for the most part they know what you’re capable of doing.

“In some areas they may know how long it takes to get air support and the fight will last for minutes, and in some places they may know that you can’t get air support and the fight will last a long time.”

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: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

Iraq War's Cost Nearing Vietnam's Price Tag

Jul 25 By CHRISTINE SIMMONS, Associated Press Writer [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON - The total cost of the Iraq war is approaching the Vietnam War's expense, a congressional report estimates, while spending for military operations after 9/11 has exceeded it.

The new report by the Congressional Research Service estimates the U.S. has spent \$648 billion on Iraq war operations, putting it in range with the \$686 billion, in 2008 dollars, spent on the Vietnam War, the second most expensive war behind World War II.

All estimates, adjusted for inflation, are based on the costs of military operations and don't include expenses for veterans benefits, interest on war-related debts or assistance to war allies, according to the nonpartisan CRS.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**21 December 1918, French-Canadian Soldiers Mutinied In The Streets Of Victoria, British Columbia:
Their Story Has Never Been Told:
“The Prospect Of Soldier–Labour Unity Created Much Apprehension In Senior Ranks”**

“The Majority Of The Soldiers Present Were With The Labor Speakers” For “The Withdrawal Of The Troops”

Part 2:

[Conclusion Of Article That Began In Preceding GI Special]

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Project, who sent this in.]

[This is a long article for GI Special, but brings little known resistance to light. T]

By Benjamin Isitt, The Canadian Historical Review 87.2 (2006) 223-264

Benjamin Isitt is completing his PhD in Canadian history at the University of New Brunswick. Under the supervision of Dr Gregory S. Kealey, Isitt is specializing in the political history of the Canadian working class, with specific attention to the labour movement in British Columbia and social-democratic politics.

Isitt has conducted extensive research on domestic unrest during the First World War and on Canada's military intervention in Siberia. His doctoral dissertation examines the transition from an 'old left' to a 'new left' in British Columbia in the decades following the Second World War, in relation to changes in the economic structure of the province. A recipient of the Canada Graduate Scholarship, awarded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRCC), Isitt resides in Victoria.

“The Prospect Of Soldier–Labour Unity Created Much Apprehension In Senior Ranks”

Officers Fail To Disrupt Protest Meeting: “The Majority Of The Soldiers Present Were With The Labor Speakers” For “The Withdrawal Of The Troops”

A group of CSEF officers attempted to disrupt the meeting, flooding onto the platform, singing 'God Save the King,' and accosting the speakers. The Federationist, however, reported that 'the majority of the soldiers present were with the labor speakers.'

Labour's Semi-Weekly Tribune claimed 'the whole house, composed mostly of the Siberian contingent, were unanimous in expressing their sentiments to the withdrawal of the troops.'

The prospect of soldier-labour unity created much apprehension in senior ranks, foreshadowing the heavy-handed response to veteran-labour unity in Winnipeg the following spring.

The lieutenant governor of British Columbia, Sir Thomas S. Barnard, sent a secret letter to Borden on 4 December, requesting the prime minister 'urge upon the Imperial Government the importance of keeping a few large Cruisers upon this Coast, if for no other reason, than for that of having a force to quell, if necessary, any rising upon the part of the I.W.W.'

Barnard felt 'the presence of a warship' would 'do more than any local military force to settle any local trouble,' since 'the personnel of such force would not be subjected to the insidious socialistic propaganda which reaches the soldier – in other words, would be more amenable to discipline, and not affected by local influences ...

"In the event of labor strikes, with demonstrations leading to riots, a serious situation would arise if the soldiers were in sympathy with the strikers.'

From labour halls across the country, a flood of protest resolutions arrived in Ottawa.

The Vancouver Trades and Labour Council placed itself 'on record as being against intervention in Siberia or interfering in Russia's internal affairs.' Ernest Winch, an SPC member and president of the council, warned that 'if the government desired evolution, and not what was called revolution,' it would halt its campaign of repression against radical labour.

In Winnipeg, the labour council entertained a proposal for a general strike to force the withdrawal of Allied troops from Siberia.

Victoria's Semi-Weekly Tribune, meanwhile, suggested "Ottawa should at once be notified by the Military Authorities of the real state of affairs at the Willows.

"It is common knowledge that the vast majority of the men in camp are strongly averse to embarking for Siberia."

Evidence of discontent at the Willows Camp abounds.

In November, eighty-seven soldiers in the Russian platoons of the 259th Battalion were moved across the city to the Work Point Barracks, 'these men not being anxious to proceed to Siberia.'

Bolshevik sympathies had developed among the men, as did an aversion to fight other Russians.

A loyal soldier in the CSEF reported confidentially that the Russians at the Willows 'are all Bolsheviki'; they intended to join the Red Army if deployed to Russia and were 'debating all the time the social question and predicting the downfall of the rich': 'I am not

afraid to fight the enemy ahead of me ... but I don't want to be shot from behind with our own machine guns.'

Only eighteen of the Russian troops were deemed reliable for service in Siberia and permitted to leave Canada.

Within the other units of the 259th, efforts were made to contain discontent: English-speaking troops were transferred out of 'D' company (which the War Diary describes as the 'French-Canadian Company'), while French-Canadians were transferred from 'C' company to 'D' company.

In the 20th Machine Gun Company, seven soldiers were declared 'deserters' by a Court of Inquiry on 20 December 1918; every day, punishments were meted out for infractions ranging from 'breaking out of camp' to 'highly improper conduct in the ranks.'

As Skuce observed, 'barrackroom lawyers fomented discord by pointing out the illegality of the government's intent,' which was highlighted by a government order of 7 December authorizing MSA troops for service in Siberia.

A soldier wrote to his sister-in-law from the Willows Camp, 'Well, things are beginning to look awful black over here. We are going to be railroaded to Siberia, and we cannot do a thing to help ourselves.

"They started to dish out our clothes to us the first day, and out of 78 of us 77 refused to take them.'

Efforts to ameliorate the situation were unsuccessful.

The YMCA provided regular recreation and entertainment for the troops, and the military organized a 'sports day' and a mandatory lecture on the geography and political climate of Siberia, attempting to counter the influence of the labour meetings.

When gale force winds and driving rain forced the cancellation of rifle practice at the Clover Point Range, Brigade Commander H.C. Bickford addressed all ranks in the CSEF 'on discipline, complaints, etc. and propaganda against the Siberian Force.'

As the brigade war diary records, 'So-called Socialistic meetings have been held in Victoria at which there were speeches made ... against the Siberian Force.'

White wired Borden in London: 'There is a good deal of feeling in labour and other quarters here against our continued participation and my personal view is that a serious political situation may arise later unless some definite statement can be made as to the return of the expedition within a reasonable time.'

Borden responded, insisting Canada had made commitments that had to be honoured, regardless of the armistice in Europe.

And so Departure Day arrived, 21 December 1918.

A total of 856 enlisted men in the 259th Battalion and the 20th Machine Gun Company, along with Headquarters Detachment and several smaller units, left the Willows Camp for the six-kilometre march up Fort Street toward the outer wharf and the troopship Teesta. They were under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Swift, along with forty-two other officers.

The most detailed description of the events that followed appeared in a lieutenant's letter to his wife, mailed from Japan, which was published in the Federationist and is worth quoting at length:

"Yesterday morning (Saturday, December 21) we turned out a reveille, 5 A.M., and turned in all our camp equipment at quartermasters' stores. We breakfasted at 6 A.M., and marched out of camp at 7:30 A.M. for the wharf, a distance of four and a half miles.

"When we got half way the signal came from the rear to halt, so we stopped for about ten minutes. Then the commanding officer blew his whistle as a signal for everyone to resume his place in the column, and we jumped into our places waiting for the further signal to advance, which was an unusually long time coming."

"We could not see the rest of the column, as we had turned a corner of the road – and a few minutes later a shot rang out, but still we waited till eventually we received word to resume the march.

"In the meantime it appears that our gallant ... or a number of them, had absolutely refused to fall in again when the signal blew, or to go down to the boat at all.

So then the colonel drew his revolver and fired a shot over their heads – in the main street of Victoria – when some more got into line, though there were still a large number who would not, so the other two companies from Ontario were ordered to take off their belts and whip the poor devils into line, and they did it with a will, and we proceeded."

"While all this was happening the general staff car was flying round with good effect, so that after marching another half mile we came to a 'guard of honour' (fifty men in close formation, with rifles and fixed bayonets on either side of the road) who presented arms in the approved fashion to us – scouts, bugle band, and the Toronto company – but as soon as the other company was just nicely between them the order was given to the guard to 'Outwards turn,' with the result that this company continued the march virtually at the point of the bayonet, they being far more closely guarded than any group of German prisoners I ever saw, and they were put under armed guard till we actually pulled out to sea, and even now a dozen of the ringleaders are in the cells – the two worst handcuffed together – awaiting trial."

'Mutiny and Willful Disobedience'

Evidence to corroborate this story is sparse, the victim of military and press censorship, and a historiography that failed to ask the right questions while the participants were still alive.

The accounts of Rodney, MacLaren, Swettenham, and Skuce consign the events of 21 December 1918 to the margins, providing only passing references that are neither explained nor interrogated for meaning.

These interpretations do not extend beyond a superficial reference to French-Canadian anti-militarism.

Mirroring the weakness of the larger literature on conscription in Canada, these accounts ignore the complex interplay of class and national cleavages, and the dual role of soldiers as workers; they confine opposition to conscription to the province of Quebec.

In framing anti-conscription sentiment and mutinous activity as purely French-Canadian phenomena, these accounts distort the experience, and deny the agency, of British Columbia's working class, and simplify the motivations of the Quebecois troops.

Research into the regimental records of the Siberian Expedition has produced scant evidence of the mutiny.

According to the war diary of the 16th Infantry Brigade, 'On the march from the camp to the dock some of the French-Canadians of the 259th Battn. created trouble and objected to embarking. The trouble was soon overcome, however, and the delinquents placed under arrest to be dealt with.'

The diary of the 20th Machine Gun Company is even more vague: 'Parade formed up at 7:00 A.M. to march to Rithet's wharf. Made several halts en route and arrived at wharf at 10:30 A.M.'

A court martial later concluded that the trouble started 'at the date when the men were asked whether they were willing to volunteer for service in Siberia.'

Brigadier-General Bickford admitted that only forty per cent of the troops agreed to go voluntarily.

Due to a requirement of the Records Office, the troops march in alphabetical order. 'This completely changed the company organization so that the men were not under the command of their own Platoon officers and NCOs. There was one case of an officer who could not speak French being in charge of a platoon of men who could not understand English.

The commanding officer of the 259th, Lieutenant-Colonel Swift, described the troublemakers as 'French-Canadians, farmers and recruits' with 'very little education,' who were 'mislead by some civilians while stationed in Victoria, BC, in December 1918.'

Military censorship prevented contemporary reports from appearing in the local press.

The labour council's Semi-Weekly Tribune alluded to 'recent happenings, the knowledge of which is common property in this community.' But no details of these 'happenings' are provided: 'The Tribune has no desire to infringe the

regulations by giving publicity to these happenings unless forced to do so in self defence.

In the mainstream press, the Toronto Globe was one of the few voices calling for the withdrawal of the Canadian troops, citing protests ‘general throughout the country.’

While the Globe acknowledged ‘sixty to seventy per cent of the men despatched to Siberia went unwillingly,’ it dismissed reports of ‘some-thing very much like mutiny’ aboard an unspecified troopship, commending the men for embarking ‘without serious disturbance.

For a more detailed picture of the events that transpired in Victoria on 21 December 1918, we must turn to sources generated by the labour movement.

“In Victoria, if street corner reports are true, some members of the Siberian Expeditionary Force refused to go, and were compelled to do so by the use of forceable [sic] methods, amongst which was the use of revolvers by the officers,’ the Federationist reported on 27 December, ignoring the censorship restrictions.

Two weeks later, an editorial asked rhetorically, ‘Why is the Canadian government so bent on sending troops to Russia that unwilling men were forced to embark for Siberia at Victoria ... after leading protestors were put under arrest? Surely the answer is not in the announcement of the birth of the Canadian Siberian Development Company.”

J.S. Woodsworth addressed an FLP meeting in Vancouver, describing ‘some disgraceful scenes’ that had taken place ‘when certain Canadian troops were only recently shipped at Victoria for Siberia. We had grown accustomed to hear of German and in the past of Russian troops being driven by force to the fighting front, but it was something new for Canada, and ... for the British Empire itself, to have troops driven aboard ship by bayonet and revolver.”

Having resigned from the Methodist Church, Woodsworth was working as a longshoreman in Vancouver, where, according to daughter Grace MacInnis, he ‘downed tools and gave up his day’s work and pay’ when he discovered he was loading munitions bound for Siberia.”

Another BC socialist, William A. Pritchard, discussed the Siberian Expedition with a Victoria audience in the wake of the mutiny: “No matter how many millions of gallons of Allied blood’ were spilt ‘combating the Soviet regime, and no matter how successful it might be in subduing it, nothing could overthrow the conditions which had brought the Soviets into existence.”

Further insight into the Victoria mutiny can be gleaned from the proceedings of the Western Labour Conference, which convened in Calgary in March 1919.

Helen Armstrong, representing the Women’s Labour League of Winnipeg, asked the British Columbia delegates whether the troops aboard the Teesta had arrived in Siberia: ‘Some of our members have not been heard from since Christmas ... and we heard ... that it took half a regiment at Christmas to put the other half on the ship for Siberia.’

A Victoria delegate by the name of Flewin responded that as an organizer of the FLP meetings in the city, he had met personally with several soldiers, including some from Winnipeg: 'When these boys were given notice they were to leave for Siberia there was a plan among them that they would refuse to go. There was one man chosen to lead them, but when he struck down one of the officers the rest didn't give him support. However, it took 23 hours to get those men aboard the ship.'

Out of these fragmentary pieces of evidence the general contours of the mutiny emerge.

Influenced by labour agitation, their morale weakened by poor weather and the Spanish flu, a company of francophone conscripts in the Canadian Siberian Expeditionary Force refused to leave Victoria for Vladivostok, and the military authorities used force – revolvers, canvass belts, and bayonets – to ensure their deployment to Russia.

At sea, the fortunes of the campaign failed to improve.

One soldier died aboard the Teesta, as did a Chinese crewmember. Private Frank Joseph Kay, of the 259th Battalion, fell down a coal chute during a storm.

Discontent continued during the crossing.

Battered by rough weather, the Teesta pulled into the northern Japanese port of Muroran for bunkering on 9 January.

The officers were allowed ashore, while the lower ranks were not.

Thirty-eight men were subsequently found guilty of being absent without leave, and penalized fourteen days forfeiture of pay. The Teesta arrived in Vladivostok on 12 January, followed by the Protesilaus three days later. In these two ships, carrying 899 and 1808 men respectively, nearly three-quarters of the Canadian force reached Siberia.

When the Teesta docked, ordnance personnel discovered 'all blankets etc infested with lice,' and provided the troops, who lacked winter kit, with fur caps. According to the war diary of base headquarters, 'All troops on board the S.S. "TEESTA" had to be bathed on arrival owing to men (being) lousie.'

Determined to avoid a disturbance similar to the one at Victoria, officials had prepared a careful plan for the disembarkation of the men.

Major-General Elmsley and other senior officers boarded the ship upon its arrival in Vladivostok, while fifty troops were detailed 'to act as a guard' as the 259th unloaded in two stages – 'C' Company and one platoon of 'D' Company on 13 January, and the remainder of 'D' Company the next day. This strategy appears to have worked, but the unloading of cargo proceeded less smoothly: Cranes, derricks, and other hydraulic equipment had frozen, so 1700 tons of ammunition and 398 tons of other supplies were unloaded by hand, by Chinese labourers.

On 24 January 1919, ten men belonging to the 259th Battalion appeared before the deputy judge advocate general in Vladivostok, on charges of 'mutiny and willful disobedience.'

The men, judging by their surnames, were all French-Canadian, and all held the rank of rifleman. All had been drafted under the authority of the Military Service Act.

They were Onil Boisvert, Sylvio Gilbert, Joseph Guenard, Alfred La Plante, Egard Lebel, Adore Leroux, Edmond Leroux, Edmond Pauze, Arthur Roy, and Leonoe Roy.

Over five days of hearings, the military judge found nine of the men guilty, one innocent, and delivered sentences ranging from three years penal servitude to twenty-eight days forfeiture of pay.

Arthur Roy, a twenty-three-year-old from Montreal, who listed his occupation as saw-maker and resided in St Catharines at the time he was conscripted, received a three-year sentence; Boisvert, a farmer from Drummond, QC, and La Plante, a mechanic from Richelieu, both aged twenty-three, received two years hard labour; Edmond Leroux, a twenty-two-year-old lumberjack from St Apolline, was sentenced to one year hard labour.

The sentences imposed on these working-class Quebecois youth were designed to have a deterrent effect within the CSEF.

In April, however, as the Canadians prepared to evacuate Vladivostok and questions arose over the legality of deploying conscripts, the judge advocate received an application to release on suspended sentence the 'men convicted of mutiny at Victoria, BC' – a request that Elmsley authorized.

Vladivostok and the Return Home

In their main barracks at Gournestai Bay, at the East Barracks, and at Second River, eight kilometres west of Vladivostok, members of the Siberian Expedition remained restive.

The first week in February, British Colonel John Ward, second in command of British forces in Siberia, wrote in his diary, 'I heard news of general insubordination among the Canadian troops that had just arrived at Vladivostok. If all the information received could be relied upon, the sooner they were shipped back to Canada the better. There is enough anarchy here now without the British government dumping more on us.'

The daily routine orders from force headquarters in Vladivostok reveal regular incidents of courts martial and breaches of conduct.

The soldiers' perspective, however, is difficult to discern, as censorship restrictions were not lifted until mid-February, and military regulations dictated that only officers could keep personal diaries.

In a letter home from Vladivostok, Private Harold Steele described an officer in the 260th Battalion, Lieutenant Alfred Henry Thring, who was 'either murdered or committed suicide here last night.'

In another letter, Private Steele described Vladivostok as 'this God forsaken hole.'

Lieutenant Eric Henry William Elkington, a doctor in the 16th Field Ambulance from Duncan, BC, confirmed this view in an interview six decades later: 'That was a tough place, Vladivostok,' he recalls. 'It was wintertime, and there were always people getting shot or killed in the streets.'

A siege mentality developed among the troops and within the Canadian command, as the occupying armies came into conflict with the local population.

The RNWMP commander in Vladivostok, a city of 160,000, conceded that 'the inhabitants are about ninety percent Bolshevik.'

In March, two White Russian officers were found murdered, their bodies showing signs of torture and mutilation.

The incident prompted an emergency meeting of the Inter-Allied Council, and CSEF headquarters ordered 'all Officers to be careful when leaving main streets' and that other ranks 'carry bayonets.'

Amid rumours of 'disturbances and rioting which are expected from Bolshevik sympathizers,' CSEF base headquarters released 'Instructions in Case of Riotous Disturbances in Vladivostok Area,' outlining a procedure to quell any Bolshevik rising.

As anxiety mounted, the judge advocate was requested to investigate 'alleged Bolshevik activities of a Private in the 259th Battn.'

Tension was evident in Vladivostok, but few of the 4000 Canadians actually saw active engagement. Only a fraction moved 'up country' to Omsk, serving as headquarters staff for the 25th Middlesex Regiment and providing protection on transport trains; some troops in the 259th Battalion were deployed to Shkotova, a village on an important rail line north of Vladivostok, to join Japanese, Italian, French, and Czech forces in repelling a Bolshevik advance.

Most of the CSEF never left Vladivostok.

Beyond guard duty, policing, and training White Russian troops, members of the CSEF occupied themselves in the local bazaar and at dances organized for members of the force. The YMCA and Knights of Columbus, which had assigned representatives to the Siberian Expedition, opened canteen huts and movie theatres at the Canadian barracks, and held concerts, lectures, boxing matches, and church services. An eight-team hockey league was established, as were two brigade newspapers, the Siberian Bugle and Siberian Sapper.

On occasion, the men marched to a central bathhouse for a hot shower. As spring approached, Lieutenant Elkington was deployed inland with a contingent bound for

Omsk, to aid the British forces defending the White governor of Siberia, Admiral Kolchak.

However, as the troops made their way along the Trans-Siberian Railroad toward Lake Baikal, the rail-workers went on strike: 'We had a Russian train, and Russian drivers. And eventually they refused to go any further. Despite being prodded in the backside with bayonets.'

The troops returned to Vladivostok, as the Canadian government scrambled to find ships to bring the force home.

When exactly the Borden government resolved to end the Siberian Expedition remains unclear, as does the precise rationale.

From the beginning, Canadian officials were unable to decide on a clear policy, vacillating between the ambivalent position of Japan and the United States, and the more aggressive stance of France and Britain.

The prime minister's failed attempt to organize a peace conference between Bolshevik and White Russian forces at the Turkish island of Prinkipo also influenced the decision to withdraw Canadian troops.

At the beginning of January 1919, with the Teesta and Protesilaus still at sea, the cabinet cancelled a planned deployment of troops aboard the ship Madras, citing 'increasing popular opposition' and Japan's decision to reduce its commitment in Siberia.

Elmsley informed unit commanders that Canadian government policy in Siberia had changed, and rather than move 'up country,' the troops would be confined to Vladivostok.

An 'Operation Plan for Evacuation of Vladivostok' was drawn up, couched in hypothetical terms but betraying the fears of the Canadian command: 'The whole country has risen in revolt and large Bolsheviki irregular forces, indifferently armed, are preparing to attack this detachment.'

Waning Japanese, American, French, British, and Czech support – influenced by domestic opposition to the campaign, the conflicting agendas of the Allied powers, deteriorating conditions in Vladivostok, and the growing strength of the Red Army – sealed the fate of the Siberian Expedition.

In Canada, the labour situation grew increasingly tense.

In February 1919, the Victoria Trades and Labour Council voted seventeen to two to endorse 'the aims and purposes' of the Russian and German revolutions, empowering its executive 'to call general strikes should the Allies continue to oppose (the Bolshevik regime) or oppose a Soviet government that may be formed elsewhere' – a stand affirmed by the 234 delegates at the Western Labour Conference in Calgary.

Fearing the domestic incarnation of Bolshevism, the Canadian government strengthened its security apparatus, extending the jurisdiction of the RNWMP into British Columbia and initiating rigorous surveillance of the working-class leadership.

The Privy Council was 'much concerned over situation in British Columbia,' White informed Borden: 'Bolshevism has made great progress among the soldiers and workers there.'

Warning of 'a revolutionary movement' associated with the One Big Union, White repeated the lieutenant governor's earlier request that a British cruiser be deployed to Victoria or Vancouver.

Borden dithered, unwilling to sully the reputation of the Dominion by calling on British forces to suppress 'purely local Canadian riots, or insurrection': 'As far back as 1885 we have attended to our own rebellions.'

Borden was not oblivious to the domestic situation, however.

On 13 February, he informed Lloyd George that Canadian troops would be withdrawn from Siberia, and wired Mewburn, minister of militia and defence, instructing him to withdraw the troops in early spring.

At a meeting of the British Empire delegation to the peace talks on 17 February, 'I adhered absolutely to my determination to withdraw our troops from Siberia in April,' Borden wrote.

A month after the main body of the force arrived in Vladivostok, the order was issued to demobilize the units still in Canada and bring the troops home.

On 21 April 1919, 1076 Canadians boarded the *Monteagle*, and by June, the last Canadian units left Vladivostok for the voyage across the Pacific.

They returned to a country divided along the lines of social class.

Victoria, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Amherst, and several other cities were tied up in general strikes.

Members of RNWMP 'B' Squadron arrived in Vancouver on 22 June, to a barrage of bricks and stones from angry longshoremen, and were promptly ordered to serve strike duty in the city. A day earlier, their counterparts in 'A' Squadron had broken the back of the Winnipeg strike, and RNWMP agents from Victoria to Montreal raided the homes and offices of socialist and labour leaders at the end of June.

Working-class militancy reached a high-water mark in Canadian history, as the Canadian state expanded its war against radical labour on the home front, part of the 'Red Scare' that set in across the Western world. Under the banner of One Big Union, a substantial layer of Canadian workers employed industrial methods in what they viewed as an international movement to usher in the New Democracy.

The Russian revolution had provided them with an interpretive framework, and an example of agency, to challenge the authority of employers and the legitimacy of the state.

In Siberia, the once-reliable Czecho-Slovak Legion had grown restless, its members increasingly unwilling to prolong their return to the new homeland. They clashed with Japanese and White Russian forces, and surrendered Kolchak to the Bolsheviks.

The Red Army seized the remnants of the Imperial Russian Gold Reserve and asserted Soviet authority over the Russian Far East. The Czecho-Slovaks were finally permitted to leave Vladivostok in May 1920. They sailed to Vancouver, arriving on 9 June 1920, and marched through the city, fully armed, before travelling across Canada by train for the voyage home.

Battered by the corrosive force of time and elite history, the story of the Siberian Expedition was forgotten.

Conclusion

A total of 4197 Canadians served in Russia with the Siberian Expeditionary Force. Nineteen never returned home.

This study has attempted to provide fresh insight into the complex motivations behind the Siberian Expedition; to highlight the forgotten mutiny of 21 December 1918; to explore the connection between class and national cleavages in relation to the mutiny; and to contextualize the departure of the force within conditions in Victoria and British Columbia.

This Canadian story must be integrated into the larger picture of Allied intervention in 1918–19, and into the Canadian historiography of the First World War and postwar labour revolt.

The fields of military history and labour history must enter into a closer dialogue with one another, and extend their terrain of inquiry beyond Armistice Day and the Western Front.

Out of the disparate sources that comprise this study, the picture emerges of Vladivostok as a beachhead of Western interests, established and maintained by the force of Allied armies, and grudgingly surrendered amid the mounting unrest of soldiers and workers in Russia, Canada, and beyond.

From Victoria to Vladivostok, the Canadian government engaged in a battle against labour radicalism – Bolshevism, in the lexicon of the day – a failed attempt to alter the outcome of the Russian revolution and install a more sympathetic government in Russia.

In the unstable climate following the war in Europe, geopolitical patterns were contested in Siberia and in the streets of Victoria. Decades before the Cold War, the battle lines were drawn.

Located at the confluence of class and national cleavages, the Victoria mutiny of 21 December 1918 provides a window into the social history of the First World War – and the complex motivations driving the historical actors at the time.

French-Canadian antipathy to the war aims of the British Empire combined with growing sympathy for the Bolshevik government of Russia – a relationship that was encouraged by the active intervention of Victoria's labour movement.

War weariness, and discontent generated by poor camp conditions and influenza, eroded morale among the troops.

The presence of pro-Bolshevik Russian soldiers within the ranks of the 259th Battalion provided a direct connection to the Russian working class and its radical mood.

These factors coalesced into mutiny.

The fragmentary historical record – a reflection of military and press censorship, and the tendency to understate dissent within the armed forces – makes it difficult to determine with precision the individual motivations behind this collective act of resistance.

However, evidence supports the conclusion that class and ethnicity drove the conscripts to mutiny. The Siberian moment exposed deep fissures in Canadian society, as the latent discontent of Quebecois soldiers was translated into collective resistance in an encounter with the radical section of British Columbia's working class.

While the mutiny was suppressed, the leaders jailed, and the 259th Battalion deployed to Vladivostok, this flash of soldier-labour unity has much to tell us of the Canadian experience during the war.

The agency of the working-class Quebecois youth who mutinied in Victoria, and the socialists they encountered in British Columbia, suggests that a more penetrating narrative is in order, one that combines the class and national bases of anti-militarism.

The Federationist recognized the historical significance of the events unfolding at the time:

“When the true history of the machinations of the Allied countries in their efforts to overthrow the Soviet regime is written, it will disclose such an amazing story of intrigue and duplicity as to make honest people shudder ... Not half of the story has been told, and never will be told if the ruling class of the Allied nations can prevent it.”

As Cold War passions fade into the past – and working-class movements in Canada and Russia develop fresh responses to enduring questions of power – this story of resistance from Victoria to Vladivostok deserves attention.

And It Came To Pass, In The Eighth Year Of The Reign Of The Evil Bush The Younger (The Ignorant)

July 25, 2008 By Gerard Baker, Times Newspapers Ltd. Gerard Baker is United States Editor and an Assistant Editor of The Times.

And it came to pass, in the eighth year of the reign of the evil Bush the Younger (The Ignorant), when the whole land from the Arabian desert to the shores of the Great Lakes had been laid barren, that a Child appeared in the wilderness.

The Child was blessed in looks and intellect. Scion of a simple family, offspring of a miraculous union, grandson of a typical white person and an African peasant. And yea, as he grew, the Child walked in the path of righteousness, with only the occasional detour into the odd weed and a little blow.

When he was twelve years old, they found him in the temple in the City of Chicago, arguing the finer points of community organisation with the Prophet Jeremiah and the Elders. And the Elders were astonished at what they heard and said among themselves: "Verily, who is this Child that he opens our hearts and minds to the audacity of hope?"

In the great Battles of Caucus and Primary he smote the conniving Hillary, wife of the deposed King Bill the Priapic and their barbarian hordes of Working Class Whites.

And so it was, in the fullness of time, before the harvest month of the appointed year, the Child ventured forth - for the first time - to bring the light unto all the world.

He travelled fleet of foot and light of camel, with a small retinue that consisted only of his loyal disciples from the tribe of the Media.

He ventured first to the land of the Hindu Kush, where the Taleban had harboured the viper of al-Qaeda in their bosom, raining terror on all the world.

And the Child spake and the tribes of NATO immediately loosed the Caveats that had previously bound them. And in the great battle that ensued the forces of the light were triumphant. For as long as the Child stood with his arms raised aloft, the enemy suffered great blows and the threat of terror was no more.

From there he went forth to Mesopotamia where he was received by the great ruler al-Maliki, and al-Maliki spake unto him and blessed his Sixteen Month Troop Withdrawal Plan even as the imperial warrior Petraeus tried to destroy it.

And lo, in Mesopotamia, a miracle occurred. Even though the Great Surge of Armour that the evil Bush had ordered had been a terrible mistake, a waste of vital military resources and doomed to end in disaster, the Child's very presence suddenly brought forth a great victory for the forces of the light.

And the Persians, who saw all this and were greatly fearful, longed to speak with the Child and saw that the Child was the bringer of peace. At the mention of his name they quickly laid aside their intrigues and beat their uranium swords into civil nuclear energy ploughshares.

From there the Child went up to the city of Jerusalem, and entered through the gate seated on an ass. The crowds of network anchors who had followed him from afar cheered "Hosanna" and waved great palm fronds and strewed them at his feet.

In Jerusalem and in surrounding Palestine, the Child spoke to the Hebrews and the Arabs, as the Scripture had foretold. And in an instant, the lion lay down with the lamb, and the Israelites and Ishmaelites ended their long enmity and lived for ever after in peace.

As word spread throughout the land about the Child's wondrous works, peoples from all over flocked to hear him; Hittites and Abbasids; Obamacons and McCainiacs; Cameroonians and Blairites.

And they told of strange and wondrous things that greeted the news of the Child's journey. Around the world, global temperatures began to decline, and the ocean levels fell and the great warming was over.

The Great Prophet Algore of Nobel and Oscar, who many had believed was the anointed one, smiled and told his followers that the Child was the one generations had been waiting for.

And there were other wonderful signs. In the city of the Street at the Wall, spreads on interbank interest rates dropped like manna from Heaven and rates on credit default swaps fell to the ground as dead birds from the almond tree, and the people who had lived in foreclosure were able to borrow again.

Black gold gushed from the ground at prices well below \$140 per barrel. In hospitals across the land the sick were cured even though they were uninsured. And all because the Child had pronounced it.

And this is the testimony of one who speaks the truth and bears witness to the truth so that you might believe. And he knows it is the truth for he saw it all on CNN and the BBC and in the pages of The New York Times.

Then the Child ventured forth from Israel and Palestine and stepped onto the shores of the Old Continent. In the land of Queen Angela of Merkel, vast multitudes gathered to hear his voice, and he preached to them at length.

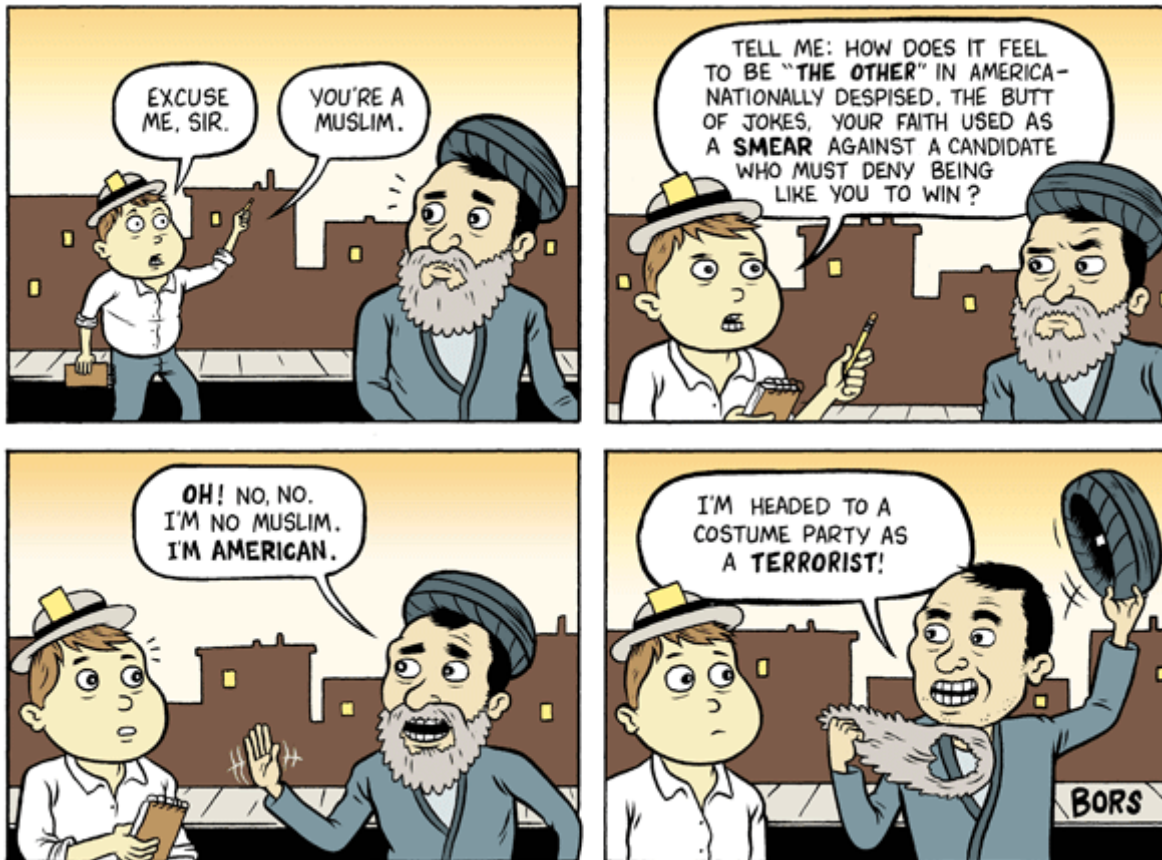
But when he had finished speaking his disciples told him the crowd was hungry, for they had had nothing to eat all the hours they had waited for him.

And so the Child told his disciples to fetch some food but all they had was five loaves and a couple of frankfurters. So he took the bread and the frankfurters and blessed them and told his disciples to feed the multitudes. And when all had eaten their fill, the scraps filled twelve baskets.

Thence he travelled west to Mount Sarkozy. Even the beautiful Princess Carla of the tribe of the Bruni was struck by awe and she was great in love with the Child, but he was tempted not.

On the Seventh Day he walked across the Channel of the Angles to the ancient land of the hooligans. There he was welcomed with open arms by the once great prophet Blair and his successor, Gordon the Leper, and his successor, David the Golden One.

And suddenly, with the men appeared the archangel Gabriel and the whole host of the heavenly choir, ranks of cherubim and seraphim, all praising God and singing: "Yes, We Can."



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. Phone: 917.677.8057

OCCUPATION REPORT

Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!

U.S. Occupation Commands' Stupid Terror Tactics Recruit Even More Fighters To Kill U.S. Troops



An Iraqi citizen is forced to get out of his house by a foreign occupation soldier from the U.S. Army during a home invasion in Sa'ada, about 30 kilometers (20 miles) north of Baghdad in Diyala province July 7, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

[Fair is fair.

[Let's bring 150,000 Iraqi troops over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives.

[They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country.

[What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that?

[You'd want that in your home town, right?]

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

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

**Rafah, Gaza And West Bank In Iraq;
"These Walls Are Still Extended Even In
The Safe Neighborhoods For The
Interest Of The Owners Of Concrete
Walls, And You And All Iraqis Know Who
Are They"**

July 26, 2008 By Laith, "Inside Iraq"

One of the gifts of God to Iraqis is their ability to make fun of everything. Without this great gift, I think there would be no Iraqi people because we are the nation that has the best relation with Sadness and pain.

Four days ago, I came to work around 10:00 a.m. I had to go an area known as Aden Intersection as a first step. When I reached the intersection, I had to pass through the blast wall that separates the residence area from the main street.

There was a very small space between two concrete blocs. Only one person can go through this space.

So you can imagine two long lines of old and young men and women waiting for their turn to pass. In fact, there were two groups of people not lines because each one wants to pass without even thinking about the others. I waited for about a minute. I was only three steps away from the gap but I didn't want to pass because I kept listening to the funny comments of the young men.

A group of young men started talking as if we are in Palestine passing through the big blast wall that was made the Israeli authorities.

Young man 1:- "how is the situation in Gaza?"

Young man 2:-"It's very bad. The Israeli tanks surround the city and bothering the civilians (referring to the American Humvees which we saw near the main residence area.

Young man 3 "I don't know about that. I just came from Rafah and everything was fine."

I started laughing in pain.

We make fun of our pains always but that was never the solution for the big problem of occupation.

I'm afraid that one we would envy the People in Palestine because in spite of the improvement of the security situation, the Iraqi authorities insist on putting more blast walls. I'm afraid that I might wake up one day and I find an Iraqi checkpoint near my room's door searching me every time I get in and out.

I think at that time, I would be happy if I can travel to Gaza (the real Gaza in Palestine) for some peace.

COMMENT:

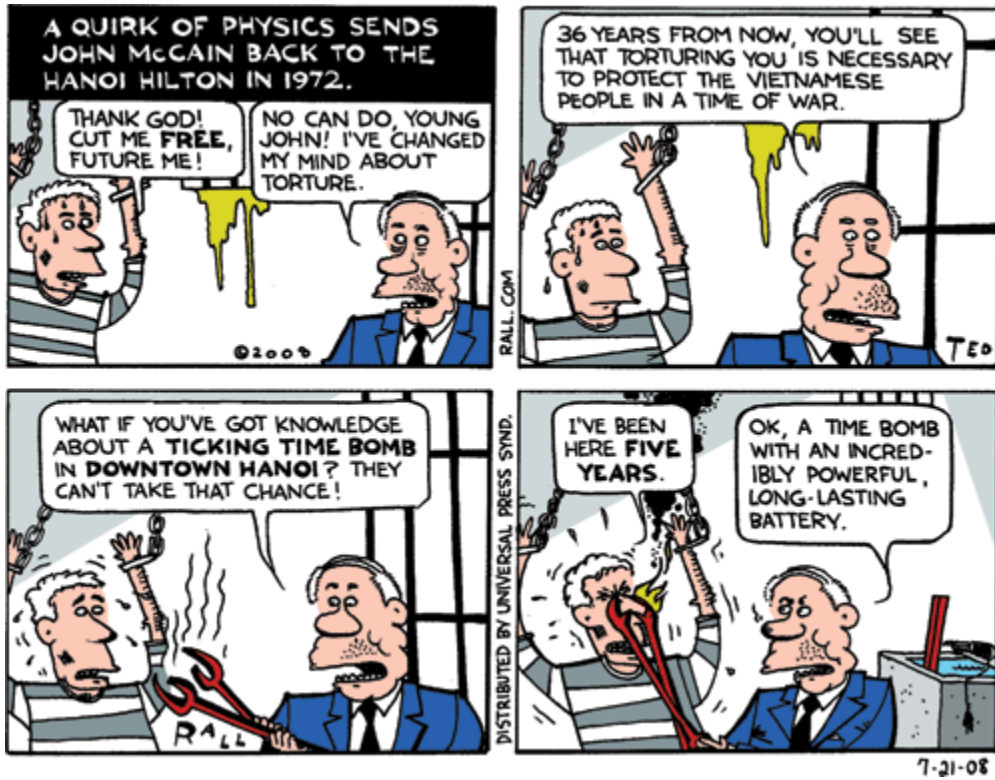
Posted by: Iraqi citizen, July 26, 2008 at 03:51 AM

dear laith

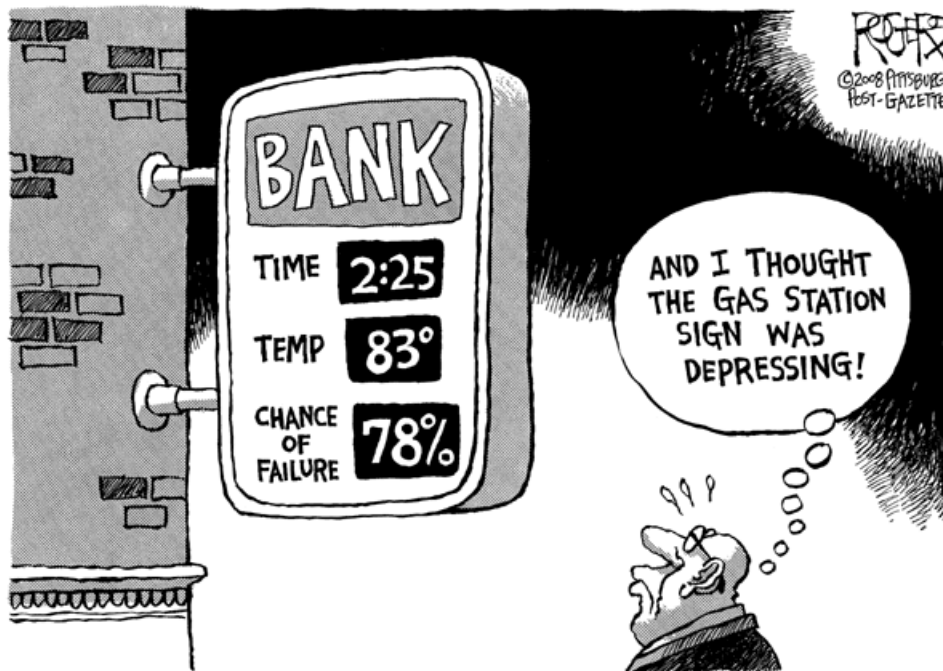
I hope the day will come when Iraqis get rid off from all these ugly walls that permeated in the body of Iraq like deadly cancer.

these walls are still extended even in the safe neighborhoods for the interest of the owners of concrete walls, and you and all Iraqis know who are they...!!!

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS



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/)



GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/2008/index.html>; <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=6&l=e>; http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/;
<http://www.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res1&mod=gis&rep=gis>

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for

in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.