

GI SPECIAL 6J5:



“I Know He Would Go With The People”

From: Johanna Pettit
To: GI Special
Sent: October 02, 2008
Subject: GI Special Oct. 1

Every word is true.

We need to work together that is where our strength lies. Everything is being staged to support their agenda. The bail out is staged but they can bring us to a depression. Congress needs to pass the right laws.

I did come across a man who was military police in the navy.

I asked him which way would the military go if the American People go in the streets.

First he said it would be against the law for the military to attack the American People. They would arrest soldiers who didn't obey orders.

I said the American People would be arrested too.

He got a very serious look on his face and said It would be awful.

I know he would go with the people.

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 wars, 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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Two U.S. Helicopters Down At Combat Outpost Ford Proximate To Combat Operation: “An Explosion After The Impact, Followed By The Sound Of Shooting” “Clashes Had Broken Out Between Iraqi Security Forces And Insurgents Near The Crash Site”

Oct 4, 2008 BAGHDAD (Reuters) & AFP

Two U.S. Black Hawk helicopters collided while landing at an American combat outpost in northern Baghdad on Saturday, the U.S. military said.

One Iraqi soldier was killed, and two Iraqi soldiers and three American soldiers were wounded.

“Two UH-60 Black Hawks have crashed while landing at Combat Outpost Ford in (the northern Baghdad district of) Adhamiya about 8:55 p.m. Baghdad time (1755 GMT) this evening,” he said.

It is unknown how many were on board at the time of the incident.

A Reuters television cameraman in the Sha’ab district of northern Baghdad, near Adhamiya, said he saw two helicopters circling overhead. The engine of one of them made a thudding sound as it lost altitude and crashed.

The cameraman said he heard an explosion after the impact, followed by the sound of shooting.

Iraqi police confirmed the crash. They gave no further details, but said clashes had broken out between Iraqi security forces and insurgents near the crash site.

**BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
POINTLESS WAR:
ALL HOME NOW**



2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, torches an area with a flame thrower in an effort to reduce insurgents’ opportunities on a road between Mushada and Tarmiyah, in Iraq, Thursday, Aug. 28, 2008. (AP Photo/U.S. Army, Sgt. Whitney Houston, HO)

Baghdad: “Bush, McCain Or Obama, They Are Merely Faces To Be Changed” “The Policy Is The Same And The Non- Actions And Honey Promises Will Be The Same”

[Thanks to James Starowicz, Veterans For Peace, for posting.]

September 29, 2008 By NBC News' Karim Hilmi

BAGHDAD – A few weeks ago, Arab satellite channels were airing live coverage of the Democratic Party convention. At a cafe in my Baghdad neighborhood, the TV was tuned into the goings-on in Denver.

The cafe was full, as it is usually is after working hours. But hardly a head was pointed in the direction of the TV as the Democratic Party raised its collective voice to welcome Barack Obama. Most just kept playing dominos, backgammon, cards and drinking tea and Pepsi.

That's despite the fact that Obama has some Islamic roots – his father was raised a Muslim and the presidential candidate spent four or five years in predominantly Muslim Indonesia as a child – and that he and his Republican opponent, John McCain, have divergent opinions on their handling of Iraq's future.

Why?

Busy lives – and a weary fatalism born of 25 years of Saddam Hussein and five-and-a-half years of American occupation.

Just a few friends sitting near me in the cafe talked about the election, and only then because they were prompted by my questions as to who they would prefer as the next U.S. president.

“I don't give a crap who wins or loses,” said Safa, a mechanic in his mid-30s. “What good did Bush do to the Iraqi people? Only death and devastation.”

The conversation started to warm up a little. “Don't you forget that Bush made us get rid of Saddam, or else we would still be ruled by him and his party and wearing khaki,” said Adnan, a plumber, referring to the military uniform he wore in the Iraqi army for about 15 years.

“But don’t forget also that Saddam used to give power, water and full foodstuffs through the ration card,” chimed in Saman, who is a member of the peshmerga, a Kurdish paramilitary group that fights for a free Kurdish state.

“But this government robs us and makes us die in life.”

Khalid, a merchant in his late 50s, jumped into the mini-debate.

“In my opinion Saddam, the Americans and the new Iraqi government are all the same – they have done nothing to help Iraqis.

“Bush, McCain or Obama, they are merely faces to be changed,” he added, “but the policy is the same and the non-actions and honey promises will be the same.”

And then just as quickly the debate died.

“I hear the sound of the mill,” said Akram, the owner of the café, “but I don’t see any flour.”

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

One War, Two Fronts, No Interior Lines Home Team Advantage; Game Over

October 2, 2008 by William S. Lind, Antiwar.com [Excerpts]

One way to look at the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is to see them as one war with two fronts.

Germany fought two-front wars twice in the 20th century, and it was almost able to prevail because it had the advantage of interior lines. The German Army could quickly shift divisions and corps from the Eastern to the Western front or vice versa, using the superb German rail system.

No railways run from Baghdad to Kabul.

Without railways running on interior lines, we cannot move three brigades from Iraq to Afghanistan this week, then move them back to Iraq again a few weeks later if the situation there demands them.

That means any shift of forces requires long-term stability in Iraq.

Even with the advantages of interior lines and excellent railways connecting both fronts, Germany was not able to deal with such a situation from the summer of 1944 onward.

[It is, of course, unnecessary for the resistance movements in Iraq or Afghanistan to move their troops from one front to another. They live there. T

TROOP NEWS

The Paulson Bailout An Unseen Boon To The Anti-War Movement:

**“A War Thought By Many Of Us In The
Anti-War Movement To Be Fueled In Part
Or Even Entirely By Petty Greed May Be
Undone By It”**

**“The War Abroad Or Economic Solvency
At Home”**



10/01/2008 By Jonathan de Wald, Iraq Veterans Against the War [Excerpts]

I've been considering the premise noted in the title of this essay a lot over the previous 24 hours, inspired by a debate I'd been having with another IVAW member regarding the market sense of Treasury Secretary Paulson's proposal to restore liquidity to our capital

markets, or any of its modifications being debated in the halls of the Congress as I write this.

Whether you support some measure of government intervention in righting the nation's economic ship (as I do) or would prefer to deal with the crisis by hanging every last investment banker with the entrails of every last legislator who sponsored the dismantling of our fiduciary oversight mechanisms (a point of view I'm not unsympathetic to but would find rather difficult explaining to the police), all indications seem to point toward our government using public debt to leverage hundreds of billions of dollars worth of distressed securities off the balance sheets of our Wall Street titans within the coming weeks.

American capital crises of this magnitude and toxicity have historically been dealt with not by Adam Smith's "invisible hand" but by the very tangible hand of the Treasury Department, simply because no one else will, the most obvious example being FDR's construction of the National Recovery Administration and "New Deal" but of particular relevance is the 1989 bailout of 747 failed savings and loans associations authorized by President George H.W. Bush and what it meant for U.S. credit-worthiness as we geared up for Operation Desert Storm a couple of years later.

It meant that our credit position prevented us from waging a protracted war in Iraq; about a decade of Reagonomics made it impossible for the first Bush Administration to fund an occupation had they wished to.

They would have been unable to procure the necessary deficit spending by floating Treasury-backed debt paper to foreign governments as all the T-bills anyone could realistically think could maintain value had already been floated to fund the S&L recovery.

Indeed, many economic historians believe our withdrawal from Vietnam was precipitated by the realization we could no longer afford the effort, a view certainly supported by the fact that the first trade deficit we ever accumulated coincided with our involvement there and was concomitant with the worst inflationary pressures felt on our markets and our dollar (prompting Nixon to abandon the gold standard) since the stock market collapse of 1929.

That's the situation we're in now, almost exactly, this S&L-like boondoggle of the 80s, though in reverse with the occupation of Iraq already long underway and the full-bore market meltdown following only just recently.

The government will need to spend between seven and ten grand per taxpayer this year alone to finance the Paulson plan, or any variation thereof, and there is simply no way to raise those funds through income taxation.

The only modality available is the T-bill, what we've been using to fund the occupation since its inception, as our Great Decider decided the best way to finance a global war was with a \$1.35 trillion tax cut.

China's been our most generous consumer of recent Treasury debt, second only to Japan in how much of it they own; the combined holdings of the two East Asian

governments account for more than half of all the borrowed money we've gone and blown on George and Dick's Iraqi Adventure.

With the Chinese central bank having already decided to disallow its commercial and investment banks from loaning money to American financial institutions, and already neck-deep itself in U.S. Treasury bonds, it seems unlikely they'll finance another trillion-dollar expenditure this year by a government already running on the fumes provided by burning the money their grandchildren's grandchildren actually have yet to be born to earn.

In fact, it seems impossible the Chinese could even marshal that kind of capital to buy the paper if it were actually worth anything anyway, given their existing, massive and hemorrhaging multi-trillion dollar exposure to American government debt.

This could, and probably will, come down to one of two things: either we choose a priority, the war abroad or economic solvency at home, or the Chinese will do it for us.

A war thought by many of us in the anti-war movement to be fueled in part or even entirely by petty greed may be undone by it.

Who would've thought the best allies the G.I.s of IVAW would find in our struggle would not be in the cafes of college towns but the snooty power lunches and chaotic floor-trading sessions of our financial centers?

940 From Wyoming National Guard Off To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: I wish the justification was as large as WW II]

September 30, 2008 By JARED MILLER, Star-Tribune capital bureau

CHEYENNE -- More than 940 Wyoming National Guard soldiers have been called to serve in Iraq and Kuwait, the largest single deployment of servicemen and women from Wyoming in generations, officials with the Guard announced Monday.

"It's almost daunting," said Col. Steve Mount, deputy director for operations with the Guard. "This is essentially the largest deployment we've faced probably since World War II."

The soldiers from the 115th Fires Brigade, a Cheyenne-based artillery unit, will begin their 12-month deployment in April by spending several weeks training in Fort Hood, Texas.

From there, the soldiers head to Kuwait, where they will be assigned largely to support-type jobs, according to Officer Candidate Christian Venhuizen.

“Mission specifics are still being worked out, but we will be doing base camp command, convoy security and force protection in Kuwait and Iraq at various locations,” added Maj. Shane Crofts, the Guard mobilization officer.

The deployment of 941 part-time soldiers from across Wyoming comes at a time when the state’s booming economy has made workers a scarce commodity in some areas. “That’s a pretty big chunk of our force, and it’s going to affect most of the communities in the state because of the sheer magnitude,” Mount said.

Guard officials, who have known about the possibility of a major deployment since February, said they are planning a series of seminars around the state to help employers adjust to the temporary loss of employees.

Employers are allowed to replace the soldiers temporarily, but they must restore soldiers to their jobs upon their return home, said Laura Jeffrey, program support specialist for the Guard’s Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program.

“We are going to do everything we can to help minimize the negative impact they might have,” Jeffrey said.

The 941 soldiers headed to Kuwait comprise about half of the Wyoming Army National Guard numbers, but officials said plenty of Army National Guard and Wyoming Air National Guard troops will remain in the state to address any local emergencies.

A total of 2,900 soldiers and airmen serve in both branches of the Guard in Wyoming.

“Yes, it is a large deployment, but we have a large force here that can take care of other missions and other things that might come up,” Venhuizen said.

The lead-up to the April deployment will be a busy time for the Wyoming National Guard soldiers.

Because of new restrictions on deployment times, the soldiers will be required to complete many hours of training before they depart for Fort Hood in April, Mount said.

That will require extending the regular “one week a month, two weeks a year” training sessions to three or four days a month and perhaps three weeks a year, respectively, officials said.

“Every soldier has to achieve all training on all requirements before they go to the mobilization site,” Mount said.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, more than 1,100 Wyoming Guard soldiers and airmen have deployed at least once to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, Venhuizen said. Fifty-eight are currently serving in the Middle East.

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

"What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms."
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.

"The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!"
-- Camille Desmoulins

Cops Vs Protesters At The RNC



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: September 18, 2008
Subject: Cops vs Protesters at the RNC

Cops vs Protesters at the RNC

The police react, just after they baited the protesters by grabbing a man and pulling him across to their side of the line. It did not work. The protesters kept their cool. Instead of bait and switch, it is grab and bait. It is a game the police play.

Mike Hastie

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) 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

Review: Spike Lee's New Film *Miracle At St. Anna* Puts Black Soldiers Back Into The Story Of The Second World War: "Many Films Critics Seem Unable To Believe That Soldiers Actually Think And Debate What They Are Doing"

October 2, 2008 By Joe Allen, Socialist Worker

MIRACLE AT St. Anna, Spike Lee's new film about Black soldiers in the Second World War, is the type of film that should provide an historic opportunity to discuss the role of race in U.S. history, especially during the much-mythologized "good war."

Instead, it has been greeted by many film reviewers in the U.S. with some of the most unfair and petty criticisms that I have read in a long time. Roger Ebert, the dean of

American film critics, recognized the importance of the film, but many of his colleagues have attacked Lee's epic as "meandering," "heavy-handed," "preachy" and "too long."

I think that Miracle at St. Anna is a great movie that everyone should go see.

The film is a fictionalized portrayal of the real events surrounding the massacre of nearly all the residents of an Italian village by the German SS in 1944. James McBride, who wrote the novel and the screenplay, created the Black characters largely on reminiscences of his uncle's combat experiences during the war.

The film revolves around the struggles of a small group of Black American soldiers caught behind the German lines in an Italian village during the approaching winter of 1944, after a botched military operation presided over by their foul-mouthed, incompetent and racist white commanding officer.

They are members of the 92nd Infantry Division (Colored), the so-called "Buffalo Soldiers Division"--the only African American infantry division to see combat in Europe during the Second World War.

Lee avoids making the four leading Black characters into predictable "types," a typical Hollywood formula for war films. All of the leading Black characters are interesting and reflect not only the increasingly urban nature of the Black population (and its ethnic diversity), but the nagging doubts that even the most enthusiastic participants have about being Black and fighting in this alleged great war for "freedom and democracy."

They are led by Staff Sgt. Stamps (Derek Luke), a competent leader who hopes that Black participation in the war effort will bring progress to Blacks back home.

Cummings (Michael Ealy) is a preacher who doesn't really believe in God, but clearly believes that Blacks will get nothing from fighting in the "white man's war."

Stamps and Cumming constantly clash over this issue during the course of the film.

This seems to have particularly annoyed many film critics who seem unable to believe that soldiers actually think and debate what they are doing.

Negron (Laz Alonso) and Train (Omar Benson Miller) round out the leading Black cast members. Negron is Black and Puerto Rican, and his bilingualism allows him some ability to communicate with the Italian villagers. Train--a huge man from a very religious, isolated and rural area--finds and then carries with him everywhere the head of a statue that he believes makes him invisible and immensely strong.

After nearly getting killed by their cowardly commanding officer, Train and Cummings find an endearing 8-year-old Italian boy, Angelo (Matteo Sciabordi), who we later find out is the sole survivor of the St. Anna massacre and can identify the Italian traitor who precipitated in it. Angelo is ill with a fever and needs care and rest.

Stamps, Cummings, Negron, Train and Angelo seek refuge in a small village, waiting for rescue. The area is a hotbed of partisan activity against the Germans and their Italian fascist collaborators. The hapless fascist mayor of the village has long given up any

effort at controlling the villagers. The villagers are wary of the Black American soldiers, not only because they have brought an ill child to their hungry village, but also because the area is vulnerable to a German counterattack.

When the attack comes, it is one of the most gut-wrenching depictions of the chaos of battle that I've ever seen.

One of the few saving graces of the overrated Saving Private Ryan was the accurate portrayal of the carnage and slaughter during the Normandy invasion.

Miracle at St. Anna easily matches this realism in the close-quarter fighting in the contested village.

THERE ARE many things in Miracle at St Anna that have rarely made it into any feature-length Hollywood film--from a white colonel complaining about Black troops as "Eleanor Roosevelt's n-word" to Stamps declaring that, being outside the U.S., he has never felt so "free," to the humiliation of Stamps and his comrades being denied service in a stateside Southern diner during basic training while, at the same time, the diner is serving white German POWs.

One of the most uncomfortable scenes in the film is the Nazi propaganda broadcasts by "Axis Sally" directed at Black soldiers, as she tries to plant doubts their minds about fighting for a country that cares nothing for them.

What makes the scene so uncomfortable is much of what she says rings true.

Some critics have called these scenes as "preachy" and "heavy-handed," yet these complaints seem reserved only for serious portrayals of racism in American films, particularly when it comes to the Second World War.

This, however, was the real war for African Americans soldiers.

Earlier this year, Spike Lee criticized Clint Eastwood's Second World War films Flag of Our Fathers and Letters from Iwo Jima for being "whites-only" and ignoring the contributions of Black soldiers to the war effort. After all, nearly 1 million African Americans served in all branches of the armed forces during the war.

Eastwood responded by telling Lee to "shut up."

Clearly, some leading figures in Hollywood are still not prepared to accept a challenge to the traditional way that the Second World War is portrayed on the big screen.

But one only has to think about it for a minute to realize that, with the exception of one small film made in 1949, some of the most popular and classic films about war--From Here to Eternity, The Great Escape, A Bridge on the River Kwai, Midway, Patton, Saving Private Ryan--have literally no Black faces on the screen.

During the war, there was a slogan popularized by Black newspapers in the U.S.--"Double Victory"--victory over fascism abroad and Jim Crow at home. It was not to be.

The struggle against Jim Crow was delayed by the postwar red scare for over another decade. And it took another half century for there to be a major film about Black soldiers in the so-called “good war.”

Hopefully, Spike Lee’s *Miracle at St. Anna* is just the beginning of correcting that rotten history.

Addendum:

As this article was being written, controversy arose in Italy over the historical accuracy of the portrayal of the massacre of civilians in the village of St. Anna.

According to *Time* magazine, a 2005 Italian military tribunal determined that the massacre was in no way provoked by the partisans, but was a premeditated plan by the Germans.

A veteran of the partisan struggle, 82-year-old Moreno Costa, who met with Lee before filming of *Miracle* began, was quoted as saying, “He talked about commemorating the Buffalo troops, but he didn’t say anything about this betrayal. We are indignant about this. I don’t understand why he had to open all this up again.”

Among those protesting the opening of the film was Giovanni Cipollini, the leader of a pro-resistance association. “When a famous director makes a major movie about a chapter in history, people will believe that his version is the truth,” says Cipollini.

Lee responded in an arrogant manner similar to Clint Eastwood’s response to Lee’s criticism of Eastwood’s films.

“I am not apologizing for anything,” Lee told the Italian press. “I think these questions are evidence that there is still a lot about your history during the war that (Italians) have got to come to grips with.”

Italy is a country that is seeing a significant rise in fascist political activity and violent racism. A rehabilitation of the old fascist leader Benito Mussolini and attacks on the anti-Nazi resistance is taking place as part of this shift to the right in Italian politics.

It’s sad and disappointing that Spike Lee who has made an important film putting African American soldiers back into their proper in history--that they were denied so long--is playing into the hands of people on the Italian far right who have nothing but disdain for him.

“Is Either McCain Or Obama Actually Up To Getting Us

Through This And Other Challenges?"

"I Haven't Heard A Single Person Say, 'Yes, My Guy Is The Answer'"

"Gate 14 Doesn't Think Any Of The Candidates Is Going To Make Their Lives Better"

"But Here's Something They Notice, We Notice. Our Leaders Are Now Removed From All This, Removed From Life As We Live It Each Day"

There is as I write broad resentment toward President Bush, and here is one reason: a fine and bitter sense that he has never had to stand in his stockinged feet at the airport holding the bin, being harassed. He has never had to live in the world he helped make, the one where Grandma's hip replacement is setting off the beeper over here and the child is crying over there.

Nor will Bill Clinton, nor the senators and leaders who fly by private jet.

SEPTEMBER 27, 2008 By PEGGY NOONAN, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

Where is America?

America is on line at the airport.

America has its shoes off, is carrying a rubberized bin, is going through a magnetometer. America is worried there is fungus on the floor after a million stockinged feet have walked on it.

But America knows not to ask.

America is guilty until proven innocent, and no one wants to draw undue attention.

America left its ticket and passport in the jacket in the bin in the X-ray machine, and is admonished.

America is embarrassed to have put one one-ounce moisturizer too many in the see-through bag.

America is irritated that the TSA agent removed its mascara, opened it, put it to her nose, and smelled it.

Why don't you put it up your nose and see if it explodes?

America thinks, but does not say.

And, as always America thinks: Why do we do this when you know I am not a terrorist, and you know I know you know I am not a terrorist?

Why this costly and embarrassing kabuki when we both know the facts, and would even admit privately that all this harassment is only the government's way of showing that it is "fair," of demonstrating that it will equally humiliate anyone in order to show its high-mindedness and sense of justice?

Our politicians congratulate themselves on this as we stand in line.

All the frisking, beeping, and patting down is demoralizing to our society.

It breeds resentment, encourages a sense that the normal are not in control, that politics has lessened everything, including human dignity.

Another thing: It reduces the status of that ancestral arbiter and leader of society, the middle-aged woman. In the new fairness, she is treated like everyone else, without respect, like the loud ruffian and the vulgar girl on the cellphone.

The middle-aged woman is the one spread-eagled over there in the delicate silk blouse beneath the removed jacket, praying that nothing on her body goes beep and makes people look.

America makes it through security, gets to the gate, waits.

The TV monitor is on. It is Wolf Blitzer.

He is telling us with a voice of urgency about the latest polls. But no one looks up. We are a nation of Willy Lomans, dragging our wheelies through acres of airport, walking through life with a suitcase and a slack jaw, trying to get home after a long day of meetings, of moving product.

No one in crowded Gate 14 looks up to see what happened with the poll.

No one.

Wolf talks to the air.

Gate 14 is small-town America, a mix, a group of people of all classes and races and ages, brought together and living in close proximity until the plane is called. Our town

appears, the plane is boarded, the town disappears. An hour passes, a new town begins. This is the way of modern life. We live in magic and are curiously unilluminated.

Gate 14 doesn't think any of the candidates is going to make their lives better.

But Gate 14 will vote anyway, because they know they are the grown-ups of America and must play the role and do the job.

But here's something they notice, we notice.

Our leaders are now removed from all this, removed from life as we live it each day.

There is as I write broad resentment toward President Bush, and here is one reason: a fine and bitter sense that he has never had to stand in his stockinged feet at the airport holding the bin, being harassed.

He has never had to live in the world he helped make, the one where Grandma's hip replacement is setting off the beeper over here and the child is crying over there.

And of course as a former president, with the entourage and the private jets, he never will.

Nor will Bill Clinton, nor the senators and leaders who fly by private jet.

I bet a lot of Americans, most Americans, don't like it. I'm certain Gate 14 doesn't.

All this is part of the mood of the moment. It is marked in part by a sense that our great institutions are faltering, that they've forgotten the mission; that the old America in which we were raised is receding, and something new and quite unknown is taking its place; that our leaders have gone astray.

There is even a feeling, a faint sense sometimes that we have been relegated to the role of walk-on in someone else's drama, that as citizens we are crucial and yet somehow...extraneous.

We long to put the past few years behind us, move on, and write something good on the page we sense turning.

If nothing else, this means we must now have our fights over big issues, issues of real consequence that are pertinent to the moment we're in. We shouldn't be fighting and hitting each other over the head over little things, stupid things, needlessly chafing ones.

When I would think of this the past few years I'd always return to one thing, a prime example of the old way of doing politics.

This was the movement, now quiescent, to alter the Constitution of the United States to outlaw...flag burning. Imagine changing that great document for such a stupid thing.

As if it meant anything if an idiot burned a flag; as if a lot of idiots were even burning flags -- which they weren't, and aren't.

I called it a movement, but of course it wasn't: it was a political game played by one team in order to embarrass the other. "He doesn't love our flag -- he won't even protect it!" Boo! goes the crowd.

And yet the oddest thing is...the crowd knows it's being played. They know their buttons are being pushed. And this doesn't leave them feeling more inspired by, more trusting in, the system.

So much of our silliness is, in the end, destructive.

So where are we now? I yank this into the present to look at the landscape on which a rise to the challenge is possible, but not, I'm afraid, very likely.

The whole year was confounding, putting the professional political class in its place, leaving the experts scratching their heads, and giving us all the feeling -- so precious, so rare -- that the people are in charge.

They make the decisions, not pollsters.

And you never knew what they'd do next. John McCain was over and done a year ago, out of money and out of luck. And then: he wins the nomination.

Barack Obama was unknown and outmatched a year ago, sure to be a victim of someone else's inevitability. Well. Nothing is inevitable. And he wins the nomination.

A year of marvels.

Something tells me that the election will show itself to be rough indeed, if not because of the candidates themselves then very much because of their surrogates or would-be surrogates -- a million freelancers and operatives, YouTube Fellinis, and political action committees.

Two huge teams are in a massive public brawl in an era in which the Internet has liberated everyone in the country from the old restrictions, the old establishment, the old, encrusted media monopoly.

And of course it is not only the result of technology, and partisanship, and human mischief.

Some of it has been the result of the past seven years, that trying time with which we have not fully come to grips.

Some of the personalities and circumstances that shaped the era are about to ease off the stage. In some way we're about to turn the page.

Yet the economic crisis brings a new question, only recently being articulated, and I know because when I mention it, people go off like rockets.

It is: Do you worry that neither candidate is up to it?

Up to the job in general?

Is either McCain or Obama actually up to getting us through this and other challenges?

I haven't heard a single person say, "Yes, my guy is the answer."

A lot of shrugging is going on out there.

The big shrug is a read not only on the men but on the moment.

Troops Cordially Invited:
Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS

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400 Miners Call Political Strike After Coal Company Lets Pro-McCain NRA Rats Come On The Property

October 4, 2008 Story by Courtney Dunn, WBOY-TV

BLACKSVILLE -- Coal production at a mine in Monongalia County came to a halt today when every union miner stayed home, as part of a political protest.

It was an idle day Monday at the Blacksville #2 Mine.

More than 440 workers who are members of the United Mine Workers of America took what's called a Memorial Day instead of going to work.

Union officials say they took the day to protest after a film crew from the National Rifle Association showed up at the Consol mine last week to interview union workers.

They say the crew tried to get union coal miners to speak out against Barack Obama.

The UMWA has endorsed the democratic presidential nominee.

“This was a surprise visit,” explained VP Local 1702, Safety Chairman Eric Greathouse, “and a lot of the miners felt this was a direct slap in the face of the union because they were trying to coerce our people into saying things against Barack Obama.”

“Consol doesn’t let anybody on their property - never,” said Safety Committee Member Mark Dorsey, “And for them to let the NRA come on the property and solicit our membership was totally uncalled for. We made our endorsement to our political process and we didn’t bother them and they shouldn’t be harassing our membership over this.”

The workers will return to work at 12:01 Tuesday morning.

A spokesperson for Consol said the company is not issuing any comment on the day.

\$700 Billion For The Wall St. Filth; But If You Want To Escape Foreclosure Eviction, You Must Be 90 And Try To Kill Yourself First



The Akron, Ohio, home of Addie Polk, 90.

October 3, 2008 CNN’s Jim Kavanagh, Brad Lendon and Mallory Simon contributed to this report.

Fannie Mae said it will set aside the loan of a woman who shot herself as sheriff’s deputies tried to evict her from her foreclosed home.

Addie Polk, 90, of Akron, Ohio, became a symbol of the nation's home mortgage crisis when she was hospitalized after shooting herself at least twice in the upper body Wednesday afternoon.

On Friday, Fannie Mae spokesman Brian Faith said the mortgage association had decided to halt action against Polk and sign the property "outright" to her.

"We're going to forgive whatever outstanding balance she had on the loan and give her the house," Faith said.

"Given the circumstances, we think it's appropriate."

Residents of Akron have rallied behind Polk, who is being treated at Akron General Medical Center. She was listed in critical condition Friday afternoon, according to Akron City Council President Marco Sommerville.

Neighbor Robert Dillon, 62, used a ladder to enter a second-story bathroom window of Polk's home after he and the deputies heard loud noises inside, Dillon said.

"I was calling her name as I went in, and she wasn't responding," he said.

He found her lying on a bed, and he could see she was breathing. He also noticed a long-barreled handgun on the bed, but thought she just had it there for protection. He touched her on the shoulder.

"Then she kind of moved toward me a little and I saw that blood, and I said, 'Oh, no. Miss Polk must have done shot herself,'" Dillon said.

He hurried downstairs and let the deputies in.

He said they told him they found Polk's car keys, pocketbook and life insurance policy laid out neatly where they could be found, suggesting that she intended to kill herself.

"There's a lot of people like Miss Polk right now. That's the sad thing about it," said Sommerville, who had met Polk before and rushed to the scene when contacted by police.

"They might not be as old as her, some could be as old as her. This is just a major problem."

In 2004, Polk took out a 30-year, 6.375 percent mortgage for \$45,620 with a Countrywide Home Loan office in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. The same day, she also took out an \$11,380 line of credit.

Over the next couple of years, Polk missed payments on the 101-year-old home that she and her late husband purchased in 1970. In 2007, Fannie Mae assumed the mortgage and later filed for foreclosure.

Deputies had tried to serve Polk's eviction notice more than 30 times before Wednesday's incident, Sommerville said. She never came to the door, but the notes the

deputies left would always disappear, so they knew she was inside and ambulatory, he said.

The city is creating programs to help people keep their homes, Sommerville said. "But what do you do when there's just so many people out there and the economy is in the shape that it's in?"

Many businesses and individuals have called since Wednesday offering to help Polk, Sommerville said.

"We're going to do an evaluation to see what's best for her," he said. "If she's strong enough and can go home, I think we should work with her to where she goes back home. If not, we need to find another place for her to live where she won't have to worry about this ever again."

For his part, Dillon hopes his neighbor of 38 years can return to her home.

"She loves that house," he said. "I hope they can get her back in. That would make me feel better because I don't know what they're going to put in there once she leaves."

He said the neighborhood is declining because so many people have lost their homes.

"There's a lot of vacant houses around here. ... Now I'm going to have a house on my left and a house on my right, vacant," he said. "That don't make me feel good, because we were good neighbors, we trusted each other, and we looked out for each other."

"This neighborhood is shot, to me, from what it used to be," he added.

"When I moved here, if it were like it is now, I would have never moved here. But it was a nice neighborhood. ..."

"I'll just tough it out. I'm too old to start thinking about buying another house."

Sommerville said that by the time people call for help with an impending foreclosure, it's usually too late.

"I'm glad it's not too late for Miss Polk, because she could have taken her life," Sommerville said. "Miss Polk will probably end up on her feet. But I'm not sure if anybody else will."

MORE:

And Here's How To Stop That Shit:

Very Angry Working Class Neighborhood Takes It To The Street To Stop Eviction Of Family From Foreclosed Home

[Mattapan is an overwhelmingly working class neighborhood. T]

September 30, 2008 By Akunna Eneh, Boston; Letters To The Editor, Socialist Worker

RECENTLY, FRANCES Louis and her husband, parents and three children were going to be evicted from their home in Mattapan, a neighborhood in Boston, by a mortgage company owned by none other than Bear Stearns--the failed investment bank that was recently saved by a government bailout and sale to JPMorgan Chase.

However, the Louis family fought back and organized an eviction blockade with the neighborhood organization City Life/Vida Urbana (CLVU) on September 22.

Over 45 people came out to picket outside of--and literally block--the entrance to the Louis home.

The blockade was deemed victorious at 10 a.m., an hour after the eviction was to take place, and word from the constable for the bank was that he had not received notice to evict the family that morning.

By leafleting and canvassing target neighborhoods for foreclosure, CLVU has been able to work with families to prevent evictions. In the past year, this kind of organizing has prevented at least three other evictions.

As with many of the victims of the current crisis, Louis' mother, Yvonne Price, bought the home in Mattapan through a sub-prime loan with increasingly expensive mortgage payments. When the mortgage company foreclosed on the property, Louis offered to buy the house back at current market value. The mortgage company refused and proceeded with evicting the family.

The hypocrisy of Bear Stearns in this case is particularly glaring given that the Louis family is merely asking for time to acquire a loan to be able to buy the home at market value, not for the tax dollars the Bear Stearns received for its bailout.

As Louis commented in an interview with the local ABC station, "They're bailing out these companies, but they're throwing out the little people."

The hypocrisy of the banks and politicians who protect them was the focus of the eviction blockade. Jim Brooks, a CLVU organizer whose wheelchair was chained to the porch of the house, said that Bear Stearns/JPMorgan have no investment in African

American communities like Mattapan, and thus are willing to watch those communities fall apart.

Soledad, also an organizer in CLVU, argued that “the banks get to start all over again with our money,” while ordinary people are never given a second chance. This sentiment was echoed during the picket as people shouted “Our money, our say! We demand to stay!”

Veteran civil rights activist Mel King called out local politicians, in particular, Gov. Deval Patrick, for voicing sympathy for those losing their homes, but not signing legislation that could put a moratorium on foreclosures.

As the economic crisis deepens, victories like these have the ability to not only secure people’s livelihoods, but also build a larger struggle against the rulers of this country, who want ordinary people to pay for the economic disaster they created.

RECEIVED

“Re Discussion About Civilian Anti-War Movement Supporting GI Resistance”

From: SB
To: GI Special
Sent: October 04, 2008
Subject: RE: GI Special 6J3: There It Is

Re discussion about civilian anti-war movement supporting GI resistance, I think it’s also important not to overlook the value of counter-recruitment and other types of outreach/education done by anti-war groups and organizations large and small.

SB
ANSWER VC
Antiwar Socialist

REPLY: T

The question is not one of some effort being valuable and other effort not being valuable. There are a variety of useful efforts, as SB point out.

The question is one concerning the allocation of forces.

Or, from another viewpoint, where labor power is most socially necessary and productive.

As things stand now, there are thousands of people involved in “counter-recruitment and other types of outreach/education done by anti-war groups and organizations large and small,” 98% of whom have nothing at all to do with helping to organize face to face outreach to active duty, National Guard and Reserve armed forces to show organized support for GI Resistance, which resistance can actually end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We all know the politicians in power have no intention of doing so.

That means overwhelming effort is directed to where it is less effective, and least effort directed to where it would be more effective.

That is a profound mistake in strategy and tactics. To quote SSG N (ret'd), it's “like spraying water on the smoke at a house fire. Makes a lot of steam, but doesn't do much good.”

Many activists don't understand this yet, and that isn't their fault, not does it make them bad people.

Our job is patient explanation of the urgent necessity of doing the work, and what hope it offers us all.

Is Death & Destruction “Service”?

From: Arnold Stieber
To: GI Special
Sent: October 05, 2008
Subject: Service?

Folks,

I'm a Viet Nam vet (Army, infantry, 1970-71). I get your updates via a friend who is also a VN vet.

Please think about the word “service”. We use it to describe the military. But is death & destruction “service”?

I think this word just helps to keep the myth alive - that the military is about “freedom, democracy”, and doing good things.

The military is a pawn for the death, destruction, rule the world cabal.

Call it what it is - the military. Smedley Butler said it correctly - war is a racket.

And the military - the pawns of the cabal - are not doing “service”.

Feel free to use my name.

We need dialogue on this topic.

Peace - Gandhi style,

ARNY

Arnold Stieber
Mitakuye Oyasin
Michigan

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

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

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

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

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

Telling the truth - about the occupations 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 to Imperial wars 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 www.militaryproject.org

*This is how Bush brings the troops home,
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.*



*GI Special is a near-daily news bulletin for service members
www.militaryproject.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.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/;

<http://www.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res1&mod=gis&rep=gis>

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