

GI SPECIAL 6K5:



Meanwhile, Back In The Real World: NO ASS-KISSING FOOLS HERE; They're On The Receiving End Of Imperial Glory

"We have seen nothing positive from any American president, and McCain and Obama are two faces of one coin, one policy."

--Hameed Kamil Hilal, a 65-year-old retired government employee in the southern oil hub of Basra.

"It doesn't really matter to me either way. It's not going to change anything for me today, right?"

-Sgt. 1st Class Oliver Wallace, Iraq.

[Soldier commenting on election, quoted by Leila Fadel and Corinne Reilly, McClatchy Newspapers, November 5, 2008

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

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Baghdad IED Kills U.S. Soldier, Two Wounded

Nov. 8, 2008 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20081108-06

BAGHDAD, Iraq – A Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier died of wounds and two Soldiers were wounded in a blast in northern Baghdad Nov. 8.

The Soldiers were wounded when the vehicle they were traveling in was struck by an improvised explosive device at approximately noon. The Soldiers were quickly transported to the medical facility; however, one Soldier later succumbed to the wounds.

Karmah IED Wounds Two U.S. Soldiers

November 7, 2008 AP

American losses listed Wednesday included two U.S. soldiers wounded in a roadside bomb attack near the town of Karmah west of Baghdad as they responded to reports of a bomb in the area, the U.S. military said.

FUTILE EXERCISE: ALL HOME NOW!



U.S. soldiers search an empty school in a village near Baquba in Diyala province, some 65 km (40 miles) northeast of Baghdad, October 22, 2008. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

British Soldier Killed In Musa Qaleh

5 Nov 08 Ministry of Defence

It is with great sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that a British soldier from 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles was killed as a result of enemy fire yesterday afternoon, Tuesday 4 November 2008, in the Musa Qaleh area of Helmand province.

He was taking part in a joint ISAF/Afghan National Security Forces operation against enemy forces to the south of Musa Qaleh. He received medical treatment at the scene, but unfortunately he died of his wounds.

Great Moments In U.S. Military History:

The Mass Murder Of The Wocha Bakhta Wedding Party; U.S. Forces Butcher 33 Women And Children

[Thanks to Elaine Brower, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

Nov. 5 (Xinhua) & Canwest News Service & AFP & November 7, 2008 By Abdul Waheed Wafa and Sangar Rahimi, International Herald Tribune

As many as 37 civilians have been killed in an airstrike of U.S.-led troops in southern Afghanistan while attending a wedding party, local Afghan villagers said Wednesday.

Witnesses to the wedding party attack said the death toll among civilians was much higher than the official figure of 40.

"I counted 90 dead bodies," Abdul Rahim, 26, who described himself as a survivor of the family who hosted the wedding party, said in a telephone interview from Kandahar province. "I saw them with my own eyes. I discovered them under the debris."

He said he lost 15 members of his own family, including two brothers aged eight and 10, and several women and children. Rahim said he was in a neighboring village collecting more food for the wedding party when the airstrike happened.

The bombing started at 2 p.m. local time Monday at Wocha Bakhta village in Shah Wali Kot district of Kandahar province.

Haji Roozi Khan, owner of the mentioned house, told Xinhua on the spot that the air bombing and firing hit the wedding gathering, killing 10 women, 23 children, and four men, all civilians. "The foreign forces' firing lasted until late that night and left another 35 people including the bride wounded," he said.

Villagers told said that a wedding lunch had just ended and the bride was preparing to say farewell to her family when it was believed a Taliban insurgent fired at international troops on a nearby hill.

The soldiers returned fire into the village and called for air support, said a man who gave his name as Abdul Jalil and said he was a cousin of the wounded bride.

"They surrounded the village. From 2:00 pm until 12 at night they kept the village under fire from helicopters, jet fighters and troops on the ground," Mr Jalil said.

The father of the bride, Roozbeen Khan, said he had lost six relatives.

"My wounded son was in my arms, right here, bleeding," he cried, standing next to a large blood stain. "He died last night."

"I lost two sons, two grandsons, a nephew, my mother and a cousin," Mr Khan wailed, adding "Why? Why?"

His daughter was among seven of his relatives who were wounded. The groom survived but his father, mother and sister were killed, he said.

Villagers showed reporters a large compound that they said was turned into rubble by the strikes while body parts and blood stains could be seen in the area.

"They bombed six to seven houses. They pounded and fired into the village from afternoon until midnight," he said.

The Xinhua reporter on the scene Wednesday saw many locals there were searching the debris for their relatives' dead bodies.

"Facts are unclear at this point," said Cmdr. Jeff Bender, spokesman for the U.S. forces. [Really? Pile the dead on this miserable piece of shits fancy desk. Maybe that will make the facts "clear."]

Obama, the new U.S. president-elect, has said before that he, if elected, will send 7,000 more troops to the Afghan battlefield, and he also threatened to launch unilateral attacks across the Afghan border.

Insurgents Kill District Governor

Nov 8 (AFP)

Afghan government and international military officials said Saturday that Taliban insurgents had killed a district governor overnight. Militants ambushed the governor of Taywara district in the remote central province of Ghor late Friday as he was driving to the provincial capital, police said.

"The district governor was killed and his driver was wounded," Ghor police chief Shah Jahan Noori told AFP.

Resistance Action

04 November 2008 By VOA News & Nov 5 Reuters & (AFP) & 06 November Ququnoos & Nov 8 (AFP)

Afghan authorities say two insurgents on a motorcycle have shot dead an intelligence official in southern Afghanistan. Officials say Kandahar's deputy intelligence chief, identified in local media as Azizollah Noori, was killed Monday night. The attackers have not been caught. The Afghan Islamic Press reports that a Taliban spokesman has claimed responsibility for the attack in a phone conversation with one of its reporters.

A roadside bomb blast struck a police patrol south of Kabul Wednesday, killing five policemen guarding archaeological sites, police said. The officers were in the Miss-e-Ainak area of Logar province when their patrol was hit, provincial police chief Mustafa Mohssini said, blaming the attack on Taliban militants.

A ROADSIDE bomb targeting the governor of Badakhshan exploded on Tuesday while Governor Munshi Abdul Majid was driving home after visiting the Baharak district, close to the capital Faisabad. The governor escaped the bomb unhurt, but two of his colleagues suffered minor injuries.

Two men delivering voter registration materials for presidential elections due next year were meanwhile missing for a second day and believed captured, the Independent Election Commission said. Two Afghan drivers contracted by the election commission to transport materials went missing on Friday in Wardak, an unstable province bordering Kabul, election and government officials said. "The attackers also set ablaze some papers, which were blank registration forms, and other material," Deputy Chief Electoral Officer Zekria Barakzai told AFP.

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Resistance On Offensive In Mogadishu



November 4, 2008: Islamist fighters from the nationalist Shabab movement take part in a military drill at a camp in the northern outskirts of Mogadishu. Nationalist insurgents on Friday attacked bases housing Bush administration allied Somali and Ethiopian occupation troops in the capital Mogadishu. (AFP/File/Abdurashid Abdulle Abikar)

TROOP NEWS



"Yer lucky. Yer learnin' a trade."

By Bill Mauldin, Up Front, 1945 W.W. Norton & Co., New York
[Thanks to "Comrade Tribune," Vietnam Veteran, who sent this in.]

**"Wounded American War Veterans
Are Being Wounded Twice"**

**"First By The Agonizing Injuries They
Suffer In The Iraq War And Then By
Our Own Military, Concerned More
About Cash Than Their Lives"**

**"I Feel Like They Kicked Me To The
Curb"**

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Project, who sent this in.]

They get a check to compensate them for their wounds. Then the military tries to get it back. "You're basically no good to them no more because you can no longer carry your rucksack, carry all that weight and go the distance."

October 18, 2008 By BYRON HARRIS, WFAA-TV

A News 8 investigation finds that thousands of wounded American war veterans are being wounded twice.

First by the agonizing injuries they suffer in the Iraq war and then by our own military, concerned more about cash than their lives.

For five years, thousands of wounded American vets have been hounded by a bill collector - the very army they served in.

They got discharged because they're wounded.

They get a check to compensate them for their wounds.

Then the military tries to get it back.

News 8 has discovered cruel financial practices engaged in by the military, with the full knowledge of Congress.

They combine to increase the pain for wounded men and women who are already suffering.

"I led raids. I led combats ops. They were all successful," said one veteran.

That was until his Humvee was hit by a roadside bomb.

He suffered a concussion, broken nose, torn tendons, mangled back and neck and a traumatic head injury.

He was still alive, but the Army he discovered, was done with him.

"You're basically no good to them no more because you can no longer carry your rucksack, carry all that weight and go the distance," he said.

We'll call him Alex. He doesn't want to us to reveal his identity because of all the problems he's dealing with.

He can't eat, can't sleep, and can't hold a job because of his war injuries. He drinks a liquid diet because a mouth injury makes chewing painful.

He takes methadone for back pain, as well as anti-depressants and tranquilizers for his post traumatic stress disorder.

More drugs for sleep but they don't always work.

The fact is, the war now lives with his wife and son.

"If I'm asleep and they're awake and I have a nightmare, they see it. They see me while I do dreams because I wake them up because I started shouting. I start yelling commands, as if I was still out there," he said.

There were 28,884 men and women wounded in Iraq between the beginning of the war and January of this year.

And there are thousands like Alex. Because of their pain and their medication, they struggle to find work.

"It's very hard to get a job. Because due to all the meds I'm on, when they do a urinalysis, I'll flunk them right off the bat," said Alex.

Without a job, they don't get enough money to pay the bills.

Alex, for example, is supposed to get about \$1,000 in disability payments from the Veterans Administration every month.

But he, his son and wife end up with just \$225.

Here's what happened to Alex. He got medically discharged two years ago and he got a lump sum medical severance check of about \$25,000 from the Department of Defense.

He didn't know there'd be strings attached.

"The lump sum how they explained it to me was for the years I served in the military and my disability," said Alex.

He started coming here to the VA for treatment of his injuries. They decided he had major medical problems and awarded him disability payments of about \$1,000 a month.

Then he was shocked to learn the Army wanted its \$25,000 back. "They didn't say that if you went to the VA and you filed for disability you'd have to pay them back," he said.

So, while the VA pays him more than \$1,000 a month, the Department of Defense takes about \$800 a month back, until the \$25,000 is repaid.

Congress in this year's defense bill did a little to stem the problem.

Beginning this year, servicemen and women don't have to pay the money back.

But section 1646 of the bill is not retroactive.

Those hurt before January of this year, most of those wounded in the Iraq war, are not covered.

"There's a lot of soldiers, airmen and marines that are going through this. Basically, I feel like they kicked me to the curb," said Alex.

Troops 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

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

GET THE MESSAGE?



Iraqi nationalists burn American flags in Baghdad as they demonstrate against the proposed security pact between Iraq and the U.S. that would keep U.S. troops in Iraq for three more years Nov. 7, 2008. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

Resistance Action



A police car burns after an explosion in front of a police station in Baquba in Diyala province, some 65 km (40 miles) northeast of Baghdad, November 3, 2008. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

Nov 4 (Reuters) & November 5, 2008 (CNN) & Nov 6 (Reuters) & BBC & Nov 7, 2008 DPA & Nov 8 (Reuters)

A car bomb wounded four policemen when it targeted their patrol in southern Mosul, police said.

Insurgents shot dead a policeman in western Mosul and killed an off-duty police officer in a drive-by shooting in eastern Mosul, police said.

Insurgents killed one policeman and wounded three others when they opened fire in the Ghadir district of eastern Baghdad, police said.

A policeman was wounded when a bomb, which had been planted on his car, exploded, also wounding his two children in the Karrada district of central Baghdad, police said.

A bomber drove a minibus packed with explosives into a police checkpoint on the road that leads to Baghdad's airport. The explosion happened about 5:30 p.m. (9:30 a.m. ET) just a few kilometers from Baghdad International Airport. Those killed included two police officers. Another 12 were wounded, including three national police officers, the official said.

A roadside bomb wounded nine people, including five employees of Baghdad Municipality, near al-Hamza square in Sadr City district of northeastern Baghdad, police said.

Four people have been killed in twin bomb attacks at a checkpoint in Baghdad, Iraqi police say. At least two of those killed were members of a militia group allied with the U.S.

A tribal police member was killed Friday and another four members were injured when a bomb struck their car in Diyala province, security sources said. The tribal police members were stopping a car when the blast occurred, the source told the Voices of Iraq (VOI) news agency, without giving further details. Tribal police, also known as Awakening Councils, are tribe members who collaborate with the US forces.

A roadside bomb killed one Iraqi soldier and wounded two others on their patrol on Friday in northern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, and killed an off-duty policeman in a drive-by shooting in southern Mosul, police said.

Two bombers killed at least four police in an attack on a police headquarters just outside the western Iraqi city of Ramadi on Saturday, police said. The bombers detonated their explosive vests simultaneously outside the station, police Captain Shakir Aswad, told Reuters.

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

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**Hidden History:
THE NEW ORLEANS GENERAL
STRIKE OF NOVEMBER 8, 1892
“The First General Strike In
American History To Enlist Both
Skilled And Unskilled Labor, Black**

And White, And To Paralyze The Life Of A Great City” “White Supremacy Was A Political And Social Creed; It Never Saved Labor From Being Paid As Little As The Negro”

[Very special thanks to Melissa Reilly, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, for going to the library to copy this otherwise lost article. T]

By ROGER WALLACE SHUGG, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, Vol. 21, #2

This paper was read before the third annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association at a session held in Chapel Hill, N. C., Nov. 19, 1937.

It is drawn largely from the files of contemporary New Orleans newspapers, to which specific citations are omitted because of the necessary condensation of material.

The first general strike in American history to enlist both skilled and unskilled labor, black and white, and to paralyze the life of a great city occurred in New Orleans in November of 1892.

More than 20,000 men, who with their families made up nearly half the population, stopped work for three days.

Despite wild alarm and the threat of military intervention, there were no riots or bloodshed. It was an orderly demonstration for union recognition, the right to bargain collectively, and a preferential closed shop.

The failure of the strike did not detract from its significance: it was the climax of the strongest labor movement in the South during the last century.

New Orleans was almost as well unionized as any other city in the nation. Here labor reached its high water mark in the South, and in the crucial year of 1892 waged an economic battle as symptomatic of popular discontent and ambition as the larger political crusade of Populism.

To understand this proletarian uprising it is necessary to trace briefly the origin and development of working-class organization in New Orleans with some regard for the changing but always difficult position of labor in the South.

The Old South was naturally hostile to combinations among workingmen.

It was agricultural, not industrial, and the cultivation of the most productive land was mainly in the hands of people whose race designated their caste as one of involuntary servitude.

Because the South was dominated by slavery and plantation agriculture, it lacked the free labor, cities, manufactures, and extensive commerce which have been historically prerequisite to the formation of proletarian guilds. Trades unionism could not take root where trades were few, and those of a manual nature, accessory to plantations, and commonly supplied by slave artisans.

But wherever towns grew into cities, there could be found the freedom and division of labor characteristic of unionism.

Especially was this true of New Orleans, metropolis of the lower Mississippi Valley, a city in but not wholly of the South. Here unions arose among the skilled white workers even in the days of slavery. The earliest to leave any record was a Typographical Society, established by the printers in 1810, and permanently revived in 1835 to enforce uniform wages and prices. Eighteen years later, delegates were sent to Pittsburgh to participate in the organization of the International Typographical Union, which is still in existence.

Strongest of all local crafts in the South was the Screwmen's Benevolent Association, established in 1850 by a hundred New Orleans stevedores who performed the highly skilled operation of "screwing" bales of cotton aboard transatlantic packets. In gangs of five they commanded a joint daily wage of \$13.50, and advanced this rate without a strike but through a monopoly of labor to an ante-bellum peak of \$21. Two companies of Screwmen's Guards, proudly mustering 350 soldiers, fought for the Confederacy. Except for mechanics at Baton Rouge, however, the screwmen and printers were the only crafts in Louisiana to organize before the Civil War.

In Southern cities it was almost impossible to unite the jealous elements of labor, colored and white, bond and free, native and foreign-born, divided among themselves, suffering the competition or disabilities of slavery, and isolated from their fellows in the North.

Organization was anomalous to a slaveholding society which believed status rather than contract to be the natural order of its working class.

The Old South boasted that slavery made it immune to labor trouble; there might conceivably be servile revolts, but never a strike.

That employers were not disposed to bargain with workers of one race when they owned so many of another was revealed by a casual but significant incident. Mississippi River steamboat-owners induced the Louisiana Legislature to outlaw marine and wharf strikes and authorize the arrest of agitators for "tampering" with crews as if they were recruited from slaves.

So long as human bondage was the law for one race, workers of different color were in peril of losing their liberties and being swept into the orbit of slavery.

The Federal occupation of New Orleans in 1862 brought new favors and unprecedented power to native white labor.

It drew subsistence from military doles and public works. From ten to forty thousand poor people, of whom three in every four were white, depended on the army commissary for food throughout the War. Several thousand workingmen were beneficiaries of the high wages fixed by military decree.

Under these circumstances a number of short-lived unions arose to support the Free State party in an abortive attempt at reconstruction.

Many artisans sat in the convention of 1864, and in response to a petition from 1,500 laborers, wrote into the constitution a generous schedule of minimum wages on public works. Because this movement was largely political, a hot-house plant cultivated by General Banks, it collapsed at the end of the War.

White labor was depressed by the economic and political troubles of reconstruction. Its unhappy plight may be briefly illustrated by incidents ten years apart.

In December of 1865 the carpenters established a union, unskilled workers a benevolent association, mechanics and laborers united in mass meeting to demand an eight hour day, and white and colored longshoremen together went on strike for higher wages.

Ten years later, the panic of 1873 threw thousands out of work, and the animosity engendered by carpetbag government led to race riots on the levee, where the negro was willing to work for half what the white man claimed he needed to live.

Employers took advantage of this racial difference in standards of living wherever it was economically feasible.

When at last they required the votes of white working-men to overthrow the carpetbaggers, whites were hired instead of blacks, but at the same low wages.

White supremacy was a political and social creed; it never saved labor from being paid as little as the negro.

The Civil War emancipated the slave but failed to define the measure of his new freedom, and likewise the liberty of any worker, black or white.

For thirty years after Appomattox, especially during the sorry years of reconstruction, the South was preoccupied with a fourfold quest for home rule, the restoration of agriculture, industrialization, and — underlying all the others — a practical definition of free labor.

The rights and duties of the last concerned the white worker nearly as much as the colored, for they were economic rivals in Southern cities, frequently in the same occupations, skilled and unskilled.

The questions which wanted solution were how far employers might extend the stigma and penalties of colored to white labor, and to what lengths by way of reaction the latter would dissociate themselves from the former.

Labor in Louisiana met the competition of unorganized negroes by two interesting expedients.

In crafts like those of the cotton trades, where freedmen threatened the integrity of wages, they were organized into affiliated associations by the screwmen and yardmen, and bound to fill a certain but smaller proportion of jobs at no less than the white man's wage. Eventually the skilled negro came to share this work almost equally with whites, and the standard of living of both races was mutually protected.

For nearly a generation after the War a daily wage of \$6 was maintained, and this liberal remuneration was enjoyed in 1892 by over 1,000 white and nearly as many colored screwmen.

No other craft followed the example set by the cotton trades of keeping a monopoly of labor divided between the two races.

The Knights of Labor inaugurated a new form of racial cooperation in the 'Eighties with their characteristic assemblies of workers, skilled and unskilled, colored and white, organized in geographical districts. By 1887 they boasted twelve assemblies in New Orleans and thirty outside.

It was the sugar plantation negroes who rallied to the Knights and led to their eventual undoing in Louisiana. The local prestige and power of this mushroom organization was destroyed in 1887 by a disastrous strike in the Teche sugar fields, where 5,000 negroes were reported to have joined District Assembly 194 of the Knights.

On November 1st, at the height of the grinding season when the whole cane crop was at stake, they refused to work because planters would not increase their wages.

To all white people, however, it was not a question of wages but of negro organization, reminiscent of reconstruction; and the strike was everywhere regarded as a racial insurrection.

Eight companies of State militia, whose expenses were privately defrayed by the Planters' Association, policed Lafourche, St. Mary, and Terrebonne, while landed proprietors began to evict workers from their cabins, threatening them with starvation, and arranged to import strike-breakers of both races.

Within three days the negroes returned to the cane-fields and sugar houses. They were not subdued without some violence, and ring-leaders were first jailed and then run out of the parishes to avoid lynching.

The white Knights in New Orleans condemned these summary tactics, but their power, national as well as local, was on the wane.

Not until the general strike was another attempt made to organize the negro, and then in crafts by the American Federation of Labor.

The twenty-five years after Appomattox were the seed-time of the labor movement in Louisiana.

Unions arose and disappeared, only to rise again; none but those in the cotton and printing trades preserved an uninterrupted existence; yet one by one, with increasing momentum after recovery from the panic of 1873, the skilled crafts organized.

In 1880, there were twenty unions in New Orleans, which joined in the creation of a Central Trades and Labor Assembly. Economic unrest grew as the century wore on, because workers became dissatisfied with prevailing wages and hours. There were epidemics of strikes in 1880 and 1887.

The working- class awakened to a sense of its power, if organized, in trades too numerous to mention.

It was ready in the 'Nineties to expand the traditional definition of free labor.

The general strike was foreshadowed in the spring of 1892 by the struggle of street-car drivers, first for shorter hours and then for a closed shop.

This union, established in 1870, had long fought in vain against the sixteen hour day required on railways. It was an "anachronism" so late in the nineteenth century, admitted conservative newspapers, and the employers consented to shorten it to fourteen hours, or even to twelve if wages were cut.

With a favorable public opinion, and almost all the utility employees organized, the car-drivers easily won a trade agreement which conceded a twelve hour day at regular wages and prohibited any discrimination against members of the union.

This guarantee was soon violated by the leading companies. Organized employees were penalized for every offense, large or small, but the unorganized became notorious as "company pets."

The last straw was the dismissal on frivolous charges of the sixteen workers who had sponsored the twelve hour movement.

The apparent policy of the street railways, to divide and rule, demoralized their employees and undermined the union in which they had found security and strength to improve working conditions.

The sole alternative to its eventual disruption, and consequent loss of any concerted bargaining power, was thought to be a preferential closed shop: only union men to be hired whenever available: this was the logic of the dilemma to which the railway presidents, who had recently banded together, reduced their employees.

Accordingly, the car-drivers went on strike in the third week of May, 1892.

Both capital and labor were deaf to the Mayor's immediate plea for arbitration.

Each side summoned to its support every interested ally with a grim resolution to settle the issue of a closed shop conclusively and thus establish a precedent for other trades.

Labor felt itself stronger than ever before. Sentiment in favor of a sympathetic strike swept the rank and file of other unions, and was checked only by the conservative leaders who took charge of the car-drivers' fight.

This was the first crisis in which New Orleans crafts stood ready to risk the existence of all for the preservation of one.

No less united were the railways. They had the natural sympathy of prosperous citizens who were outraged by the demands of labor and inconvenienced by the curtailment of street transportation.

More effective allies were the newspapers.

All except the Item gave head-lines to disorderly incidents, colored them with the appearance of anarchy, condemned the Mayor for his refusal to allow the police to be used as strike-breakers, called for the militia, and attributed to labor a conspiracy to usurp the traditional prerogative of management — the power to hire and fire employees without let or hindrance.

Fearful of losing this essential control, a committee of fifty merchants from the Board of Trade and commodity and security exchanges, representing the commercial capital of New Orleans, came to the aid of the railways. They also denounced the strike, refused to consider arbitration, and appealed for the military protection of property.

The cry for force can be explained only by the fervor with which employers desired to crush the strike, because there was no serious disturbance of the peace.

The merchants were too powerful to be denied: if they could not obtain the militia at once, they might rely on the local courts.

The officers of the car-drivers' union were arrested on the charge of violating a reconstruction conspiracy law of 1870.

While the case was never pressed, it served the purpose of bringing the strikers to terms. Both capital and labor were stalemated, the former by the Mayor, the latter by the court, and arbitration was the obvious solution. With Mayor Fitzpatrick acting as chairman and casting the odd vote consistently for labor, the car-drivers snatched from the struggle a preferential closed shop.

Although this strike lasted but a week and involved less than a thousand workingmen, it set the pattern of the general strike.

Capital and labor had come to grips in organized array.

A dispute between the car-drivers and railways had involved all large employers and unions. The issue which brought them into conflict was no less acute in other trades. The question for the future, and soon to be answered, was whether New Orleans would become a city of the closed shop.

Toward this end, spurred on by the car-drivers' victory, labor extended and consolidated its forces.

The campaign of the American Federation of Labor for additional unions, inaugurated early in the year when Samuel Gompers appointed local organizers, met with quick success. Thirty new associations were chartered, raising the total number to ninety-five, and over-confident leaders boasted that they would soon muster every workingman in the city. As the movement spread, it also achieved greater unity.

The Board of Labor Organization Presidents, created solely to deal with the street railways, gave way in the summer months to a democratic but centralized Workingmen's Amalgamated Council.

It consisted of two delegates from each of forty-nine unions affiliated with the A. F. of L., and represented a membership of over 20,000 laborers.

The Council was as strong in numbers and skills as the Board of Trade, commodity and security exchanges in property and influence.

A clash was inevitable between these federated bodies of labor and capital because they divided the economic jurisdiction of New Orleans without agreement as to their respective functions and spheres of interest.

The growing unrest of labor during the summer brought the eventual conflict closer.

It was noticeable that workers demanded recognition of their unions as well as better hours and wages. Upon the latter agreement could be reached within the customary bounds of benevolent, paternal management with its unilateral power; but for the former — union recognition, and its twin, the closed shop—there was no historic precedent.

“On Tuesday, November 8, The Long Threatened General Strike Went Into Effect”

What led directly to the final struggle was the strike of the so-called Triple Alliance, made up of three recently organized A. F. of L. unions, the Teamsters, Scalesmen, and Packers.

A minority of these workers were negroes, whose economic interests united them with whites. The peculiar strength of their combination in The Triple Alliance lay in the fact that they performed the manual labor essential to moving the internal commerce of New Orleans.

When business was at a peak, on October 24, 1892, between two and three thousand men left their jobs, because the Board of Trade refused to grant them a ten hour day, overtime pay, and — chief bone of contention as with the car-drivers — a preferential closed shop.

Both parties to the controversy were well prepared to fight it out.

The merchants had enlisted many allies: the four railway systems entering New Orleans, the cotton, sugar, and rice exchanges, the clearing house, and mechanics' and dealers' exchange. A defense fund of several thousands of dollars was on hand. Conduct of the strike was entrusted to a committee of five merchants from the Board of Trade.

Their strategy was to appeal to the Governor and courts for whatever legal and military action might be necessary to curb the unions and preserve the property rights of management.

To meet this formidable opposition, which promised to be political as well as economic, the Triple Alliance relied upon the support of the Workingmen's Amalgamated Council. If necessary, every craft would assist them, declared President Leonard, because the strength of unionism and perhaps its survival depended on the extension of the closed shop.

Direction of the strike was placed in the hands of five men, not one of whom represented the Triple Alliance.

Conservative leaders of the oldest unions, the screwmen, printers, and longshoremen, including a negro, controlled the Labor Committee.

For a week the Board of Trade refused to recognize the existence of a Triple Alliance and played out the farce of hearing complaints from individual employees.

Then the Labor Committee, moved to action by the indignation of the rank and file, called a general strike.

The Board of Trade was at once persuaded by other employers to meet the union leaders, and an agreement was reached to resume work pending a final settlement.

The Labor Committee recalled its general strike order with evident relief.

But in a few hours the situation was worse than ever, because many laborers failed to return, some employers refused to restore them to jobs already filled by others, and mutual accusations of bad faith made both sides bitter and suspicious.

The merchants now insisted that every man should resume work before arbitration could even be considered.

Their position was ironic and indefensible: ironic because it taxed labor with a control of men which it would not grant, and indefensible because the unions desired to arbitrate the controversy immediately.

Since the merchants were recalcitrant, the Labor Committee appealed to the Amalgamated Council for advice.

Again a general strike was ordered and again it was postponed.

This time the delay was in response to a plea from the Mayor and City Council to meet the merchants under their auspices in a last attempt at reconciliation. It failed miserably: tempers ran high, and the Mayor was rebuffed as a labor politician.

The unions were still ready to arbitrate, but the Board of Trade invited a test of strength by refusing to discuss or settle the Triple Alliance strike until it was cancelled.

There was nothing left for labor to do except to meet the challenge, and accordingly a general strike was finally set for Monday morning, November 7.

During the week-end the unions polled their members in heated meetings which generally ratified the strike order. Despite such eagerness for a demonstration of strength, the Labor Committee did all in its power to avoid it. The hour of the walk-out was twice postponed, first to noon, and then to six o'clock, in the vain hope that the Governor would intervene to force a settlement. But pleas to this official for a hearing of both sides to the dispute were of no avail, since he could hardly command it in the high state of public temper.

On Tuesday, November 8, the long threatened general strike went into effect.

Over 20,000 men from forty-two union locals stopped work.

The demonstration enlisted about half the organized crafts in New Orleans.

It may nevertheless be designated a general rather than a sympathetic strike, because not only was business almost at a stand-still, with bank clearings cut in half, but each union on strike demanded recognition and a closed shop, and in many cases, like that of the sugar refinery workers, added special claims for hours and wages.

It was also a strike of skilled crafts in sympathy with the unskilled white and colored workers of the Triple Alliance.

The outstanding fact of the strike was that capital and labor were pitted against one another and committees of five represented and controlled each side.

Except for the street-car drivers and printers, however, no union with a trade agreement broke its contract to join the movement. The powerful cotton trade unions remained at work; and their Cotton Exchange employers abstained from any overt cooperation, financial or otherwise, with the Board of Trade.

Among the organizations participating in the strike were two of novel type: associations from lower middle class occupations, the musicians, hat, clothing, and shoe clerks, and certain kinds of labor in the utilities, such as gas and water workers and electric light trimmers, of whom a few had been recently organized with full appreciation of the indispensable character of their services.

As in every serious strike, newspapers and the general public feared and prophesied a reign of anarchy.

The Governor, Murphy J. Foster, was especially apprehensive that the interruption of vital services like gas, electricity, and street railways would lead to violence.

At his behest, the Labor Committee ordered resumption of all utilities, only to be twice defied by the workers.

Then the merchants asked the Mayor to operate the utilities with special deputies, and offered to pay their wages; he refused on the grounds that his power was limited "to the preservation of peace and good order," and could not be used to "force men to work."

Mayor Fitzpatrick was again in the position that he had assumed during the car-drivers' tie-up, unwilling to make strike-breakers of the police, or to augment their number to terrify strikers. The Mayor's stand was ambiguous, and confirmed his reputation for being strongly sympathetic to the cause of labor.

The merchants kept the small police force of 250 men busy with many and frequently needless calls.

Under such pressure, the Governor at last persuaded Fitzpatrick to call for special deputies. But fifty-nine citizens responded, for the public had been advised by conservative newspapers like the Times-Democrat not to heed the Mayor.

He was condemned out of hand and pilloried as one who ought to be impeached. His defence was to point to the police record to prove that they had been able to preserve order. With the grand jury in session, there were only fifty-seven arrests, including those of obscene language; and after the strike was over, even the conservative press denied that there had been violence — no arson, murder, or robbery — nothing but an occasional case of battery and assault.

It was not what actually happened, however, but the hysterical fear of what might happen that the newspapers and merchants played upon to arouse the public and discredit the Mayor.

Capital and labor were equally to blame for refusing to arbitrate the main issue of the strike, a preferential closed shop. Since the unions were weaker, they tried constantly to settle by negotiation every question of hours and wages, but only through recognition and consultation of their organizations. Because the Board of Trade was stronger, it welcomed even as it had invited the strike, and purposely obstructed its early settlement.

The merchants were arrogant, reckless, and blind to every economic or social consideration except their own interest, which they identified with the welfare of the city. It is easy to understand but difficult to condone their actions.

If the strike was successful, they believed that labor would pass beyond the control of management, and wages advance to a level ruinous to the survival of New Orleans business, engaged since 1880 in a losing commercial struggle with other seaports. Merchants were therefore convinced that it was necessary for the prosperity of their city to crush trades unionism, and there would never be a better opportunity than in this general strike.

Employers were united, every newspaper except the Item vociferously behind them; their defense funds were large; Northern and Western industrialists were sympathetic, ready to contribute, and watching the struggle with a lively sense of

how its conclusion might affect labor relations elsewhere; planters and farmers in the country parishes, as rural editors and ex-Governor Warmoth testified, were apprehensive lest the virus of labor organization infect the negro and spread to plantations.

Under these favorable circumstances, the Board of Trade, by the confession of leading members, took strong measures to defeat the strike.

They raised the cry of anarchy, treated Mayor Fitzpatrick as if he were the ring-leader of labor, and scorned every plea that he made for arbitration.

They called for the operation of the utilities, again by their own admission, chiefly to demoralize and discourage the strikers, and even to provoke enough salutary violence to require military intervention.

With the assistance of the railroads they began to import strike-breakers, and telegraphed Birmingham, Memphis, Mobile, and Galveston for recruits.

Finally, they offered to pay all the costs of the State militia, if the Governor would muster it in force, and proceeded in some mercantile houses to train their clerks for any contingency.

In contrast to the aggressive opposition of the Board of Trade, the Labor Committee beat a gradual retreat. It repeatedly offered arbitration of every issue except its own recognition, and with almost any disinterested umpires, including members of the Catholic hierarchy.

The referee whom labor solicited persistently, always to be rebuffed, was Governor Foster.

He was an astute politician who had been recently elected to the gubernatorial chair by a coalition of Democratic and Farmer's Alliance factions temporarily united against the recharter of the Louisiana Lottery. He had no economic understanding of labor's claims, and less political sympathy for the masses of New Orleans who had opposed his election.

The strike afforded him an opportunity to make a bold stroke that would consolidate his position, increase his following, and advance his political ambitions.

Whatever he did must win the approval, not of the strikers, but of the planters, merchants, and indignant middle class.

He bided his time until after the national elections, which came on the first day of the strike.

He was visited by a succession of committees and individual businessmen from the banks, exchanges, and industries of New Orleans. Their pleas finally moved him to circumspect action: he would not serve as arbitrator, and bring down on his head like Mayor Fitzpatrick the wrath of one side or the other; nor would he call the merchants and labor chiefs into consultation lest they wrangle and ignore him. The Governor

sympathized with the merchants, but sought to settle the strike with a semblance of neutrality.

On the third day of the dispute he issued a proclamation, credited by the press with ending it, in which he ordered all citizens not to congregate in crowds and clearly implied that the militia would be summoned if the strike continued.

Then he warned labor of possible bloodshed. It was, in effect, martial law.

Unless the unions dared to stake their existence upon a collision with the militia, the Labor Committee had no choice but to call off the strike. It was accordingly concluded at two in the morning of November 11th, hardly more than three days after it started.

The end was hastened by the intervention of a disinterested, public-spirited citizen of great diplomatic ability, Mr. W. S. Parkerson, who worked out a formula acceptable to both sides. After two days of tedious argument he succeeded in modifying the conditions laid down by the merchants, which in his opinion were as "tyrannical as the ukase of a Czar."

Wages and hours, it was finally agreed, would be adjudicated by immediate arbitration; and it was accomplished the next evening without difficulty by the two committees of merchants and union leaders.

The Triple Alliance gained its original demands,—a ten hour day, overtime pay, and adjusted wage schedules.

But the closed shop was not mentioned, nor was any union recognized by name. Workers were to be restored to all jobs which remained open.

Employers asserted their customary right to deal directly with individuals, and to hire and fire as they pleased. It was, in short, an open shop victory for the Board of Trade, and the report of the Labor Committee to the unions could scarcely gloss the fact.

The merchants organized on a stronger and permanent basis; the Workingmen's Amalgamated Council carried on; and never again, as the Picayune observed, would business fear a general strike. "The American doctrine," defined by the Times-Democrat as the prerogative of employers "to employ whomsoever they pleased," had been vindicated.

The principal mission of the Labor Committee was henceforth to try in vain to find work for many black-listed strikers.

A curious aftermath of the strike was the suit entered in Federal Circuit Court against forty-four union leaders on charges of violating the Sherman Anti-Trust Act by a conspiracy to restrain trade. A month later, the case was indefinitely postponed, and before it was quashed, the District Attorney consulted with the Department of Justice in Washington.

Samuel Gompers was alarmed, but few then realized the significance of this first application of the Sherman Law to labor unions.

The New Orleans general strike was over, and soon forgotten: it came a few months after Homestead and two years before Pullman in a decade marked by the increasing antagonism of capital and labor, to whose rising tide the struggle in New Orleans added a wave.

One may search the annals of American labor history without finding any mention of this strike.

The indefatigable pioneer researches of John R. Commons and his associates did not bring it to light, because they naturally paid scant attention to the agrarian South. A local historian is prone to exaggerate essentially local discoveries, and to attribute to them unwarranted national significance. We would not wish to fall into so presumptuous an error.

But among the conclusions which can be legitimately drawn from this brief account are the following: the South, to judge by New Orleans, had craft labor movements smaller but similar to those in Northern cities; trades unionism in New Orleans was remarkable not only for its early origin, strength, persistence, and rapid development after the Civil War, but also for its racial accommodations; the general strike in 1892, if not defeated, would have marked the greatest victory of the American Federation of Labor in its early career, made New Orleans a city of the closed shop, and raised up urban allies for the rural Louisiana Populists; the logic of the suit entered against New Orleans union leaders under the Sherman Law was a precedent for the later prosecution of Debs in the Pullman Strike; and finally — if speculative reminiscence may be indulged — the New Orleans general strike was not, either in the problems it raised or in the way it was conducted and defeated, without strong resemblance to contemporary strikes and controversy over the proper relations of management and organized labor in a political democracy.

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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.

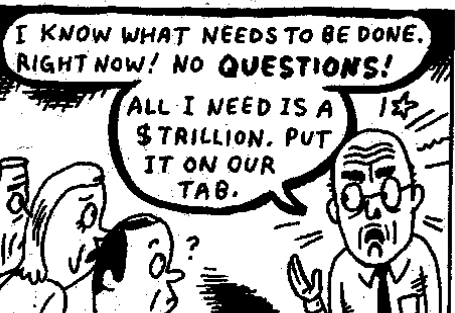
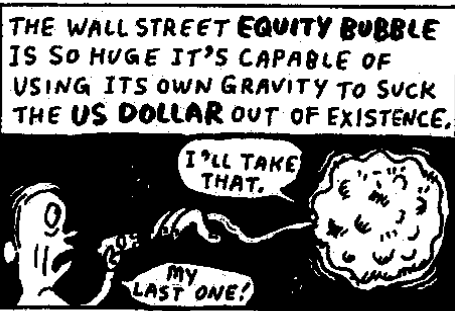
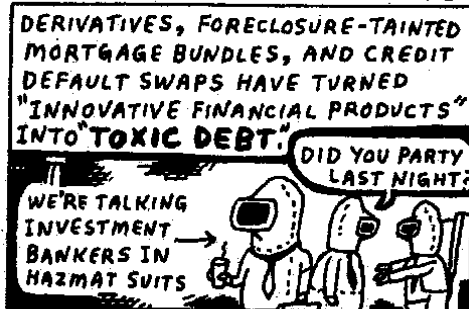
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DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

TROUBLETOWN

BY LLOYD DANGLE



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CLASS WAR REPORTS



RECEIVED

“Hang In There Things Are Going To Change”

From: Pete Sutherland
To: GI Special
Sent: November 05, 2008
Subject: RE: All your Emails 2 me

T ~ Thanks 4 all your hard work . . .

I stand with the Vets4P in Asheville some of which are IVAW others Vets who stood in rice paddies 4 days on end 'serving' the USA others from even WWII Korea ie multiple 'wars' . . .

Hang in there things are going to change in lg part d/t people like you . . . ~ P

REPLY:

Thanks for your email; good for morale!

But the reality is that the people making it happen are the organizers on the ground, like you and the good people you work with in Asheville. That's what really counts.

Thanks to a lot of help from a lot of people, GI Special can report what you and others do, including Military Project organizers, but the doing is everything.

Respect to you all,
T



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