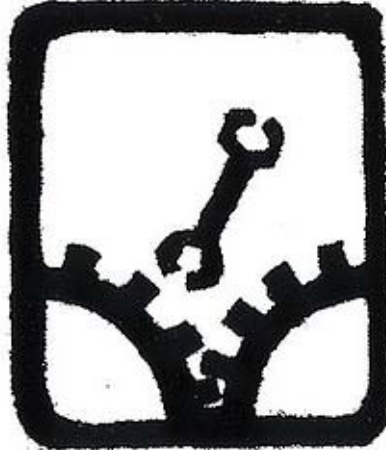


GI SPECIAL 7C19:



**Chief Warrant Officer
Adisa “A.J.” Aiyetoro
Defies Dishonorable
Rats In Command:
Given Chance To Resign, He
Demands Court Martial:
Other Courageous Soldiers At Fort
Wainwright Organizing To Force A
Congressional;
They Say Officers Have Engaged In
Deceit, Cruelty, Slander And Forcing**

Troops To Deploy After Found Medically Unfit For Duty: Wounded By IED, Soldier Called “A Sorry Excuse For A Non-Commissioned Officer”

The command offered to allow him to resign. Aiyetoro chose a court-martial instead, the trial is slated for Monday at Fort Richardson, outside Anchorage.

March 23, 2009 By Gregg Zoroya, ABC News Internet Ventures [Excerpts]

FAIRBANKS, Alaska — When the “Arctic Warriors” Stryker Brigade left for Iraq from nearby Fort Wainwright late last year, commanders told soldiers who were suffering medical problems that they would also go to war.

Spc. Mark Oldham was on a plane to Iraq by Dec. 5 despite being declared unfit because he passes out during training and requires a 30-day heart-monitor exam, his medical records show.

Sgt. Jesse McElroy, a combat veteran who had shoulder surgery in September and could barely move his arm, according to his medical records, was told to deploy or face charges for malingering.

Chief Warrant Officer Adisa “A.J.” Aiyetoro, a 19-year veteran who is stricken with active tuberculosis and unable to wear body armor because of back injuries, according to medical and court records, refused to go.

“I’m not getting on that plane,” he says.

His court-martial on charges of disobeying an order and missing a deployment is scheduled for Monday.

The only reason that I’m being deployed is they want (greater) numbers” of troops in the field, Oldham said before leaving. He is assigned to communications.

Army Col. Ronald Stephens, commander of Bassett Army Community Hospital at Fort Wainwright, says his doctors work well with commanders and follow all fitness guidelines.

Several soldiers caught in the process and willing to speak out tell a different story.

They describe a climate where commanders constantly pressure soldiers with health issues to deploy, even when their medical records — which they provided — show physical problems.

In response, a group of soldiers that includes McElroy plans to meet Monday at the Alaska Peace Center here to gather signatures for a petition to mail to members of Congress.

The petition says, "As the shortage of troops has become more and more difficult to overcome, our commanders have become more and more aggressive in deploying soldiers with injuries and illnesses."

"What we're trying to do is just get our stories heard," says Sgt. Stephen Scroggs, who tracks the progress of ailing soldiers left behind for the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment. He is part of the rear detachment and is involved in the petition drive.

"A lot of soldiers are suffering, I just don't want them to suffer anymore."

Aiyetoro began developing chronic, debilitating back pain after an earlier combat deployment. He is an armament maintenance technician with the 25th Brigade Support Battalion.

Medical records show that Army orthopedic surgeon Nick Sexton classified him as non-deployable Aug. 25.

Sexton wrote that Aiyetoro is unable to wear his body armor and recommended a medical review that could lead to a medical discharge.

Central Command specifically forbids a soldier to deploy if body armor cannot be worn: "In general, individuals should not deploy ... (with) conditions which prevent the wear of personal protective equipment, including ... body armor."

A revised evaluation issued for Aiyetoro a few days later by another doctor found that he could wear body armor but "only during mission-essential movements."

The Army did not make Sexton available for an interview.

Stephens, the hospital commander, declined to discuss Aiyetoro's case despite a waiver Aiyetoro signed allowing Stephens to do so.

Stephens said in situations like Aiyetoro's, it is possible for an initial medical opinion to later be overruled.

Since then, doctors have again changed Aiyetoro's medical status. In February, doctors concluded that Aiyetoro needed further tests on his back to determine the extent of injuries and he needs additional tests to determine whether his tuberculosis is active, according to court records.

Aiyetoro says commanders cared more about filling their ranks than about him getting better when they ordered him to deploy in September.

They made him feel like a malingerer for complaining about his back pain, he says, and "they pretty much classified me as a dirt bag."

“They were not intending on getting me better (as much as) getting me on that plane,” says Aiyetoro, 36, married and the father of four.

The command offered to allow him to resign.

Aiyetoro chose a court-martial instead, the trial is slated for Monday at Fort Richardson, outside Anchorage.

“If I walk right now, it's as if I never served in the military,” he says, explaining that he would lose benefits if he resigned.

McElroy says he also felt pressured by commanders.

A veteran of a previous tour in Iraq, McElroy aggravated a shoulder injury in 2006 when his Stryker vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb.

An initial surgery after his return from combat failed to correct the damage, according to his records, and he underwent another operation last September.

His surgeon, Gregory Komenda, wrote in a December report that McElroy “should be considered unable to perform his duties.” Military doctors reached the same conclusion with one, Mark Clifford, writing in a January report, “Soldier is unable to perform Infantry tasks.”

Yet McElroy's immediate commander continued to tell him he would deploy, first saying the second surgery should be delayed and then saying McElroy would leave for Iraq after a 30-day, post-operative convalescence, McElroy says.

After months of haggling, records show, McElroy was finally slated for a medical review and a possible discharge for health reasons.

McElroy says he was accused of malingering and being a “sorry excuse for a non-commissioned officer,” because of his health issues.

In December, he says, he was told that if he was not in Iraq, he would be charged with malingering.

The charges never came, and at the urging of Army doctors, McElroy was eventually slated for a medical board review that could lead to a medical discharge.

“I signed up ... knowing that at some point I would be sent into combat. I have risked my life to defend this country,” McElroy says, adding that he feels “belittled, humiliated, threatened, angry, (in) mental shock.”

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

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

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. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

IED Targets U.S. Convoy In Baghdad; No Casualties Reported

03/24/09 By Sahar Issa and Hussein Kadhim, McClatchy Newspapers

A roadside bomb targeted a U.S. military convoy in Baladiyat neighbourhood in east Baghdad at 2 p.m. Tuesday injuring two civilians. No casualties were reported by the U.S. military.

Resistance Action

March 22 (Reuters) & March 23 (Reuters) & By Anthony Shadid and K.I. Ibrahim; Washington Post Foreign Service & 03/24/09 By Sahar Issa and Hussein Kadhim, McClatchy Newspapers

Police said a powerful blast tore through a house in Haswa, 15 miles east of Fallujah, killing nine people. Hospital officials said eight people were wounded. The Interior Ministry put the number of injured at 23.

Police said the blast targeted Emad and Ayad al-Halbousi, brothers who served as leaders of Awakening -- a U.S. -allied armed force that fought insurgents in Sunni regions.

The family of Ayad al-Halbousi discovered an explosive planted outside the house Monday morning, said Mohammed al-Zawbae, a Haswa police major. The family alerted

police, who came to disarm it. As family members and neighbors waited outside in the street, another explosive tore through Emad al-Halbousi's house before noon, he said.

Both brothers were killed, along with three of their children, said Khalil al-Dulaimi, a doctor at Abu Ghraib Hospital, near the town.

"We were at home when the police came and asked us to evacuate it to dismantle the explosives," said Latifa Annad, a 50-year-old neighbor who had taken her children to a relative's house, down the street, while the bomb was disarmed. "Then the explosion happened. I was wounded by flying glass."

Police said they found the body of an Iraqi soldier on Saturday in southern Mosul.

A bomb attached to a car wounded four people, including an official from immigration and Displacement ministry and a Danish national woman who was with him in his vehicle, police said two other policemen were wounded.

A bomber wearing an explosive vest blew himself up near a police patrol, seriously wounding four policemen including a lieutenant colonel in western Mosul 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Mosul: Two roadside bombs detonated in succession targeting an Iraqi Army patrol in al Hadbaa neighbourhood at around 9 p.m. Monday injuring one civilian and one serviceman.

A bomber killed an off-duty policeman and wounded five civilians in Tal Afar, 420 km (260 miles) northwest of Baghdad, police said.

Interior Ministry officials said a car bomb detonated in Tall Afar, 50 miles west of Mosul. One policeman was killed.

Insurgents targeted a policeman on his annual vacation in al Najafi Street, central Mosul at 1.30 p.m. Tuesday, killing him straight away.

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

Welcome To Liberated Iraq:

U.S. Military Dictatorship Has Held Some Prisoners Without Charges Or Trial For “Almost Six Years” “Where Is The Alleged Democracy, With The Detention Of Innocents?”



Placard reads “Where is the alleged democracy, with the detention of innocents?” A protest demanding the immediate release of detainees in Baghdad March 23, 2009. About 250 demonstrators, mostly women, gathered during the protest. REUTERS/Kahtan al-Mesiary

March 22, 2009 Tim Cocks, Reuters [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD -- Thousands of Iraqi prisoners being held indefinitely without charge by U.S. forces will be freed or prosecuted in Iraqi courts by the middle of this year, the U.S. commander in charge of them said on Sunday.

Some detainees had been held without trial for almost six years - under a U.N. Security Council resolution which expired on Dec. 31 - stoking the anger of Iraqis and rights groups.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Resistance Action

March 21, 2009 Agence France-Presse & March 22, 2009 Associated Press & Mar 23 (AFP)

Nine policemen were killed along with a district chief in a clash yesterday with Taliban in the northern province of Jawzjan, an unusual battlefield for the nationalists, who focus on southern and eastern Afghanistan. The fighting was in a district called Koshtipa, on the border with Turkmenistan, he said.

Nine of a mob of policemen were killed and three wounded in the southwestern province of Farah when Taliban attacked them.

North of Khost in Nangarhar province, a bomber in a car blew himself up at a police checkpoint, killing one policeman, said police spokesman Ghafor Khan. The blast also wounded four civilians and a policeman at the security post set up to search cars entering Chaparhar district for the new year celebrations, he said.

Sunday, a roadside bomb exploded in the country's eastern Khost province, wounding 12 road construction workers who were travelling in a minibus to their job northeast of Khost city, said the provincial police chief, Gen. Abdul Qayum Baquizai.

Taliban fighters ambushed a police vehicle in southern Afghanistan's Kandahar province early Monday, killing eight policemen, a senior official said. "A police vehicle was attacked in an ambush in the Rabat area of Spin Boldak district in which eight police were killed and one wounded," said local highway police commander Sahib Jan.

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

Welcome To Liberated Afghanistan: “The Manager Of An Afghan Television Network Who Refused To Censor Images Of Women Dancing In Short Skirts And Plunging Necklines Was Arrested”

Mar 24 By HEIDI VOGT and AMIR SHAH, Associated Press Writers

The manager of an Afghan television network who refused to censor images of women dancing in short skirts and plunging necklines was arrested in what appeared to be a new sign of the government's struggle to define the role of Islam in a country once led by extremists.

The government has previously censured television stations and taken others to court, but the arrest of Emrose TV's Fahim Khodamani on Monday was the first for airing overly salacious content, the Afghan deputy attorney general said Tuesday.

Khodamani was arrested for refusing repeated requests to pixelate or otherwise obscure images of women dancing in short skirts or outfits with low necklines, said Deputy Attorney General Fazel Ahmad Faqiyar.

The videos are relatively tame by Western standards, but many do feature women in tight outfits or showing off cleavage. In one typical video, an Indian woman emerges from a pool of water with a thin dress that clings to her body.

Afghanistan's media oversight commission repeatedly reproached the channel for the amount of bare skin on its programs, and for airing pop music videos during the Islamic holiday of Ashoura in January, according to Faqiyar and the station's owner, Najibullah Kabuli.

Kabuli confirmed that Khodamani refused to edit or censor the programming, saying it was station policy to air unaltered programs.

The arrest comes days after Afghanistan's top Muslim clerics called on the government to block stations from "airing prohibited and hypocritical anti-Islam programs and immoral scenes and movies."

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



A U.S. soldier of 101st Airborne Division searches for hidden arms as another looks on, on patrol in the outskirts of Bagram north of Kabul, Afghanistan, March 8, 2009 (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

A leading scientist at the Israeli Defense Department developing the ultimate terrorist detector but having trouble working out a rather damning glitch.



MR. FISH

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

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**Priest Arrested For Filming
Incredibly Stupid Racist Cops In
Action:
Busted For “Holding An Unknown
Shiny Silver Object”
“But A 15-Second Video Shows East
Haven Police Officer David Cari Asking
Manship, ‘Is There A Reason You Have A
Camera On Me?’”**



Marcia Chacon and her husband, Rodrigo Matute, talk to a reporter in their store in East Haven, Conn., Friday, March 13, 2009. A Roman Catholic priest, the Rev. James Manship, their pastor, was arrested at the store Feb. 19, 2009 as he was videotaping East Haven police removing auto license plates from a wall inside the store. (AP Photo/Bob Child)

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

March 13, 2009 The Associated Press

(AP) A Roman Catholic priest who monitors law enforcement treatment of minorities with a video camera released footage that appears to contradict the police account of his own arrest.

A police report says the Rev. James Manship was confronted and arrested Feb. 19 because he was holding an “unknown shiny silver object” and struggled with an officer who was trying to take it from him.

But a 15-second video released this week by Manship's attorneys shows East Haven police Officer David Cari asking Manship, “Is there a reason you have a camera on me?”

“I'm taking a video of what's going on here,” Manship replies.

“Well, I'll tell you what, what I'm going to do with that camera,” Cari says as he approaches the priest. The tape then goes blank.

The arrest has reignited the debate about racial profiling and ethnic discrimination in East Haven, a working-class community of about 28,000 that borders New Haven. The shooting death of an unarmed black man by an East Haven officer in 1997 sparked harsh criticism by minority groups that has lingered.

Manship and his parishioners say officers have been unfairly targeting Hispanics in recent months.

Hugh Keefe, a New Haven attorney who represents East Haven police, said the videotape shows only a small portion of what happened and confirms part of what Cari wrote in his report. He also said the tape doesn't show what happened from the time the camera was turned off until Manship's arrest.

Marcia Chacon, co-owner of My Country Store, where Manship was arrested, said Friday that the priest surrendered peacefully after the camera was shut off.

“He didn't say anything,” she said.

Manship was not at his parish, St. Rose of Lima Church in New Haven, midday Friday and did not return a telephone message left Friday afternoon. He is due in court March 27 on misdemeanor charges of disorderly conduct and interfering with an officer.

Keefe criticized Manship for “creating controversy where none needed to be.”

A police report says Manship was arrested because he was holding an “unknown shiny silver object” and struggled with an officer. But a video released this week shows the officer asking Manship, “Is there a reason you have a camera on me?”

Chacon, a 36-year-old immigrant from Ecuador who moved to the U.S. 15 years ago and a parishioner of Manship's church, said she had called the priest to her store that day because the two officers were confiscating license plates displayed on the store's wall, saying they were illegal.

She and her husband, Rodrigo Matute, were given a \$372 ticket.

She said the seizure and ticket were part of a pattern of racial profiling against Hispanics by town police over the past eight months.

"I don't know why it happened," Chacon said of the priest's arrest and the seizure of the license plates. "We work very hard and ... everything we do is legal."

Last weekend, anti-immigrant fliers apparently printed by a white supremacy group were left in front of Chacon's store, she said. And on Monday, someone broke the window of her home's basement door, she said.

"I'm very scared," Chacon said.



CLASS WAR REPORTS

**General Strikes Shake French Colonies:
20,000 People Celebrate Success Of
Martinique General Strike In A March
Through The Streets**



Strikers march in Fort-de-France, Martinique

March 19, 2009 By Richard Fidler, Socialist Project E-Bulletin No. 195 & March 20, 2009 By François Laforge, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

A 38-day general strike in the Caribbean colony of Martinique ended March 14 with the signing of a protocol between the government and the February 5 Collective, a coalition of unions and other social movements named after the day the strike began.

The agreement grants the coalition's key demands.

Their strikes were waged over a combination of economic demands, such as increases in the minimum wage and lower prices for consumer goods, as well as political demands, such as equal rights for Creole speakers.

Strikers paralyzed economic activity for more than two months by setting up roadblocks.

About 20,000 people celebrated the historic victory in a march through the streets.

AFP reported that “the signing ceremony drew a crowd of thousands who gathered outside the island's head administrative office.

They repeatedly chanted a slogan ‘Matinik leve,’ or ‘Martinique stand up’ in the local Creole language.”

On the day before, thousands marched through the capital, Fort-de-France, chanting slogans directed at the békés, the wealthy white descendants of colonists and slave-owners who dominate Martinique's economy. Most of the island's population is descended from African slaves brought to work on its colonial-era sugar plantations.

The draft agreement, reached early in the morning of March 11, calls for a €200 (\$250 US) monthly wage increase for 47,000 low-wage earners, with smaller increases for those with higher incomes. Workers will get retroactive pay to March 1.

Major business owners had already agreed to lower prices on roughly 400 basic necessities by 20 percent one month after stores reopen.

These and other terms are similar to the agreement that ended a 44-day general strike on the neighboring island of Guadeloupe on March 4.

Michel Monrose, the head of the February 5 Collective, told AFP that the Collective “reserves the right to re-launch the strike if the accords are not respected.”

MORE:

Strike Movement Spreads To French Colony Of La Réunion

“A Vast Movement Challenging The Situations Of Privilege, A Social And Political Movement”



Demonstration in St-Denis, La Réunion, March 11

In the Indian ocean colony of La Réunion, a coalition headed by trade unions continues to press for an accord similar to those reached in the Caribbean colonies.

In recent weeks, the island of 800,000 inhabitants has seen huge demonstrations of up to 35,000 marching in support of their demands. So far, however, ongoing negotiations with representatives of the employers and French government officials have stalled, achieving only a freeze on rents in social housing.

At a mass rally in St-Denis on March 5, Gilles Leperlier, a leader of COSPAR, the organizing coalition, described what it is and what it wants.

“COSPAR,” he said, “is above all a genuine collective, a coalition of trade unions, political organizations and community movements, a coalition without precedent in the recent history of La Réunion.

“COSPAR is the Collectif des Organisations Syndicales, Politiques et Associatives de La Réunion. It was formed at La Possession on February 5, 2009, and quickly was joined by les forces vives — the bone and sinew — of Réunion society, a total of 45 organizations come together to defend a set of immediate demands and develop, consensually, a platform of demands to end La Réunion's economic dependency and put an end to the social injustice that prevails....

“COSPAR belongs to the Réunionnais and to no one else!”

Leperlier noted that 52% of the population of La Réunion lives below the poverty line, and 24% of the work force is unemployed.

COSPAR has advanced 62 specific demands as “an initial basis” for action. It echoes many of the demands, now won, in Guadeloupe and Martinique: an immediate €200 increase in the lowest wages and pensions, the minimum wage and student bursaries; a 20% reduction in the prices of basic consumer goods; a freeze on rents and the construction of social housing; equal wages for women; taxation of the wealthy (some 800 rich families currently pay no income taxes), etc.

“But the COSPAR sees further,” Leperlier said.

“Something is developing in the Overseas Territories (France's name for its colonies), a vast movement challenging the situations of privilege, a social and political movement that will not stop until the overseas territories have taken in hand their own destiny and put an end to the iniquity of a system that maintains them in economic dependence.”

MORE:

After 44 Day General Strike Ends With “Victory,” Guadeloupe Employers' Federation Attempting

To Renege On The Settlement Signed By Its Representatives And The French Government; “Either They Respect And Implement The Agreement, Or They Will Leave Guadeloupe” “We Will Not Allow A Band Of Béké To Re-Establish Slavery On Our Soil”

March 19, 2009 By Richard Fidler, Socialist Project E-Bulletin No. 195 & March 20, 2009
By François Laforge, Socialist Worker

In Guadeloupe, where the 44-day general strike ended March 4 with a “first victory” on the major demands of the organizing coalition, the LKP, the employers' federation MEDEF, a local branch of the one in mainland France, is attempting to renege on the settlement signed by its representatives and the French government.

Some MEDEF members left the negotiating table before the deal was signed, and are now challenging its legality.

Addressing a mass rally on March 13, LKP leader Elie Domota read off a long list of major employers that had signed the final accord, and denounced French officials — including the local prefect (governor) and a cabinet minister who signed it — who are now challenging certain aspects.

“The comrades were right to mobilize in their companies to demand enforcement of the accord,” he said.

Some workers are still on strike in industries where the bosses have not signed.

Domota also denounced attempts by MEDEF to reinterpret the accord. The accord provided that the €200 increase on low wages would be paid on a shared basis by the employers, local government and the French state for three years, after which it would be paid in full by the bosses. The latter are now claiming the wage increase would cease after three years, despite a clear provision to the contrary!

And French officials and politicians, debating the accord in the French parliament, are now challenging the language in the preamble to the accord, which calls for a “new economic order” to end the “plantation economy” model that blocks “endogenous economic and social development.”

More seriously, Elie Domota himself has been charged by the French Attorney General for French overseas departments and territories with “fomenting provocations and promoting the use of force to extort the signing” of the accord.

And he has threatened legal action against the trade union leader for “provoking discrimination, hatred and violence against a category of persons based on their ethnic origin.”

A U.S.-based solidarity group, the International Liaison Committee, explains:

“This announcement of possible legal action by the French authorities came in response to a statement made by Domota to a celebration rally on Thursday, March 5 — the day after the Jacques Bino agreement was signed.

“(Bino was the trade unionist killed the night of Feb. 16 by bullets now widely believed to have been fired by masked government provocateurs who infiltrated one of the barricades on the outskirts of Pointe-à-Pître.)

“In response to a question from the crowd as to whether the French government and the white ruling elite in Guadeloupe, the Béké, could be trusted to live up to the signed agreement and to pay the 200 euro monthly increase in the minimum wage, Domota stated: ‘Either they respect and implement the agreement, or they will leave Guadeloupe. ... We have to be very firm about this. We will not allow a band of Béké to re-establish slavery on our soil.’

“The attack by the Attorney General against Domota is an attack against the UGTG, which was the backbone of the general strike movement.

“It echoes the racist diatribes in the French media against the people of Guadeloupe and the LKP Strike Collective, in particular.

“The media portrayed the French government as the victim of ‘mob violence’ that had compelled the government to sign an unjust agreement under duress and in violation of all conventional labor relations.

“This reference to a ‘mob’ — a reference to the overwhelming Black majority on the island — is not only racist to the core, it shows the total contempt by the colonial authorities for the democratic aspirations of an entire people.

It reveals the deep fear of the Béké, as the ATPC communiqué puts it, that their stronghold over political power and their privileges have been greatly undermined by the powerful general strike movement that swept the entire country.

“The question that arises is this: Does the announcement by the Attorney General against Domota foreshadow an attempt by the French government to invalidate, through the courts, the agreement signed officially by all the concerned parties on March 4th at 8 p.m.?

“Given the wording of the charges, it appears that this may be the intent. We urge you to join us in demanding of the French government: ‘Hands Off Elie Domota! Implement the Jacques Bino Agreement!’

According to a press release by the International Liaison Committee, a U.S.-based group that helped build solidarity with the strikes in Guadeloupe and Martinique:

“The scorn and racism of the colonialist power and of the white ruling class elite on the island, the béké, comes through loud and clear...

“How dare (French journalist) Péresse use the term “mob” to describe a valiant, organized, peaceful (despite all the provocations by a 5,000-strong contingent of French Riot Police, the CRS) and disciplined people--the overwhelming majority of whom are Black--who were able to withstand the hardships of 44 days of a general strike, with the creation of soup kitchens, agricultural procurement committees, self-defense committees, picket lines, cultural committees, and barricades.”

In France, the major trade unions have called for a day of general strike and mass mobilizations on March 19 to protest private and public sector layoffs and support demands for major increases in minimum wages, pensions and other social benefits to confront the developing economic and social crisis.

A supporting statement issued by the major left parties cites the strikes and victories in the colonies as an example of the kinds of mobilizations that must be built in the metropolis.

MORE:

[Background]

2.17.09

Guadeloupe “On The Verge Of Rebellion”

Feb, 17, 2009 (AP)

The French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe was on the verge of rebellion, a political leader said Tuesday after stone-throwing protesters set cars and buildings ablaze, forced the international airport to close and clashed with police.

“It is a political crisis, an institutional crisis and we are on the brink of sedition,” Guadeloupe's Regional Council President Victorin Lurel told France-Info radio.

Police said they arrested 18 people overnight.

An official, speaking on the standard condition of anonymity, said at least three officers suffered minor wounds due to gunshots

Guadeloupe's main airport was closed Tuesday because workers could not pass through barricaded and debris-clogged roads, said Guadeloupe's top appointed official, Nicolas Desforges, and several flights were canceled.

Police detained 50 demonstrators on Monday after they were pelted by stones as they tried to take down barricades. Roadblocks were being gradually lifted Tuesday morning and a trickle of vehicle traffic was resuming, the police official said.

The U.S. Embassy in Paris issued Americans in Guadeloupe and Martinique to avoid crowds.

"Most commercial activities have ceased, and there are mounting shortages of food, water, and power on both islands," the embassy said.

In Martinique, taxi and bus drivers blocked streets on Tuesday and honked their horns as they arrived at city hall in the capital, Fort-de-France.

Lurel warned that the islands were heading toward "radicalization, a rise in extremism."

"We have the impression that we have been abandoned, that there is an organized indifference," he told the radio station.

MORE:

One Day Before Union Activist Murdered, Strike Committee Warned "This Repression Is Going To Continue, As The French State Has Just Sent In A Reinforcement Of 1,000 Mobile Police Troops"

February 17, 2009 Liyannaj Kont Pwofitasyon

As we wrote in our last international appeal of February 6, 2009: "The bosses and the representatives of the French State are hoping that the general strike will die down, so that they can then begin the repression."

This is visibly the political thinking that prompted the French State to take action, as they did on February 16. Youth were arrested the night of February 16-17, 2009.

In the face of the obstinate refusal by the French State and the bosses to heed our demands, in the face of their scorn for the people of Guadeloupe, the Liannaj Kont

Pwofitation Strike Collective, or LKP, issued a call to the population on the 28th day of the General Strike to reinforce the picket lines across the country.

The French State proceeded to repress the movement, seriously injuring one trade union leader, injuring others less seriously, and arresting more than 70 activists, including many trade union leaders of the LKP Strike Collective.

The population, the workers, the youth have said, "Enough is Enough!" They refuse to give up the struggle. A number of elected officials protested against this State violence, which was also denounced by the LKP.

The workers, the youth, the people of Guadeloupe have strengthened their mobilizations on the ground. Their resolute actions won the freedom of all the jailed activists.

Today, on the 29th day of the general strike [Feb. 17], Guadeloupe is paralyzed by barricades in nearly every commune.

This repression is going to continue, as the French State has just sent in a reinforcement of 1,000 mobile police troops [to bolster the 4,000 troops sent in on Feb. 7 -- translator's note].

The LKP has issued a call to the population to reinforce their mobilizations.

MORE:

“A Dispute That Many Fear Could Spread To Mainland France.



Closed shops in Pointe-a-Pitre February 25, 2009. REUTERS/Jacky Naegelen
Strikes over pay have crippled the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe as protesters demand a 200 euro increase in the lowest monthly wages in a dispute that many fear could spread to mainland France. [The rich fear, the rest hope.]

MORE:

Open Class War Between French Police And Union Workers.



A striker fights colonial police in Pointe-a-Pitre on the French occupied Caribbean island of La Guadeloupe. France mobilised police reinforcements Wednesday. A union activist was murdered as the month-long strike on the French Caribbean island broke into open class war between French police and union workers. (AFP/Julien Tack)

MORE:

**[Background]
2.18 – 2.19.09**

**Union Activist Murdered:
“They Wanted Beirut; They've Got
Beirut,” One Protester Told The
Libération Newspaper:**

“Anger Within The Local Afro-Caribbean Community - Many Of Whom Are Descendants Of Slaves Brought To The Island By France - That The Vast Majority Of Wealth And Land Remain In The Hands Of Colonist Descendants”

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

18 February 2009 By Lizzy Davies, Paris; Guardian News and Media Limited & February 19, 2009 AlJazeera

The public revolt on the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe claimed its first victim as an increasingly embattled Nicolas Sarkozy staked his presidency on efforts to calm social unrest caused by the economic crisis.

Burning roadblocks manned by armed civilians have been erected around Pointe à Pitre, Guadeloupe's biggest city, where 70% of people live.

Several policemen, using teargas to disperse the crowds, have been injured and dozens of demonstrators have been arrested.

France has sent hundreds of police reinforcements to the French-Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, as month-long strikes over declining economic conditions have spilled over into violence.

Michele Alliot-Marie, the French interior minister, said 280 police reinforcements would be sent to the island, after holding an emergency meeting on Wednesday.

The move comes after Jacques Bino, a 50-year-old union activist, was shot dead after driving his car near a roadblock.

Three policemen were fired on while attempting to reach Bino and secure the area, Hubert Vernet, a government official, told the Reuters news agency.

The movement, led by the umbrella group Collective against Extreme Exploitation, began on 20 January as a general strike and protest against the island's high living costs.

But since negotiations with the French government over state aid broke down, frustration has increased and the island, an idyllic holiday destination known for its beaches and luxury hotels, has come to resemble a war zone.

“They wanted Beirut; they've got Beirut,” one protester told the Libération newspaper.

Nicolas Sarkozy, the French president, said he would meet with elected officials from the island on Thursday, to “address the anxiety, worries and also a certain form of despair from our compatriots”.

Sarkozy, fearful that the unrest in France's overseas territories could spread to the mainland, unveiled a package of state aid at a meeting with French union leaders worth between €1.65bn and €2.65 bn, including tax cuts and one-off payments for the unemployed.

Commentators believe a mishandled approach to such a sensitive problem could spell disaster for Sarkozy.

Sebastian Walker, Al Jazeera's correspondent in Pointe-a-Pitre, said: “The protesters say they have been ignored by the French government for many years.

“Unemployment here is the third highest in the European Union. Away from the luxury hotels and resorts there is a severe economic situation that has angered a lot of people.”

Union leaders have said that the situation in Guadeloupe is spiralling out of control, and there are fears that the unrest could spread to mainland France.

Bino is the first victim of the violence on the island which has been crippled by strikes that began on January 20 over low pay and the high price of basic goods.

Earlier in the week, protesters set buildings and cars on fire and clashed with police in Point-a-Pitre and at least two other towns.

Thousands of tourists have also fled the island and neighbouring Martinique.

Strikers' are demanding a raise of \$250 a month for low-wage workers who now make about \$1,130 a month.

Underlying much of the unrest in Guadeloupe and Martinique is anger within the local Afro-Caribbean community - many of whom are descendants of slaves brought to the island by France - that the vast majority of wealth and land remain in the hands of colonist descendants.

MORE:

[Background]

3.8.09

**44 Day Guadeloupe General Strike
Finally Forces Shocked Government**

And Employers Federation To Agree To Demands: “To Them, It Is Out Of The Question That The Nègres (The Negroes) Would Rebel And Demand Increases In Their Wages.”



Labor union members during a protest in Pointe-a-Pitre, on the French Caribbean colony of Guadeloupe, Feb. 25, 2009. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

The bosses and the government, he said, had overlooked the fact that “when a people arises, when it develops awareness, when it is convinced of the rightness of its actions... there is nothing that can stop it. The people sweep aside all obstacles placed in their path, like a whirlwind cleaning out all the dirt in a country.”

Reporting on the draft Accord at a mass meeting on the night of March 4, the 43rd day of the strike, union leader Rosan Mounien said: “From now on, things will no longer be done as before! That’s over! We have come to realize that when we are together, we are stronger! So there is only one thing to do: stay together!”

March 8, 2009 Life on the Left & March 20, 2009 By François Laforge, Socialist Worker

The general strike in Guadeloupe ended March 4, when an Accord was signed between the LKP Strike Collective and the local governments, the employers' federation and the French government that granted the strikers their top 20 immediate demands and provided for continued negotiations on the remaining 126 mid-term and long-term demands.

The LKP, or Lihannaj Kont Pwofitasyon – League Against Profiteering in Creole -- is a coalition of 49 unions and grassroots organizations.

In a country with 30 percent unemployment and deep poverty, news of the victory led to spontaneous celebrations in the streets.

The LKP Strike Collective voted to end the strike, its member unions and community groups declaring this a “First Victory” after 44 days of general strike, repeated mass demonstrations, and negotiations.

Some strikes are continuing, however, where the bosses’ associations have not signed the agreement on wages: for example, at the Gardel sugar refinery and in the supermarkets belonging to various béké families (the békés are the white elite that controls most industry and agriculture on the island).

On Saturday, March 7, 30,000 persons marched through the streets of the capital, Pointe à Pitre, to celebrate the victory achieved to this point.

The Accord on wages, reached initially on the night of February 26-27, provides for a €200 monthly increase for workers with a gross income of between €132 and €1849 per month (i.e. the minimum wage or up to 40% higher than the minimum); a 6% increase for those between €1849 and €2113; and a 3% increase for those with higher incomes.

This agreement is called the “Jacques Bino Accord” in memory of the union activist who was killed during the strike.



Relatives and comrades carry the coffin of union representative Guadeloupe's Jacques Bino during his funeral in Petit Canale, in the French Caribbean colony of Guadeloupe, Feb. 22, 2009. Bino was murdered Wednesday. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

The cost of these wage increases is allocated between the employers and the French and local governments, with small business employers responsible for only a quarter of the increase.

Other concessions accepted by the bosses and the French and local governments, after lengthy and difficult negotiations, included:

- an average 6% reduction in the price of water;
- hiring of 22 Guadeloupien teachers on the waiting list;
- €40,000 in compensation for truckers and bus operators left out when urban and inter-city transportation was reorganized;
- various measures to aid farmers and fishers, including the setting aside of 64,000 hectares of farmland for future use, and a grant of €350,000 for the modernization and renewal of fishing gear for full-time fishers;
- an emergency plan for young people (jobs and training for 8,000 youth aged 16-25);
- lower bank service rates on certain products for individuals and small businesses; lower interest rates on loans are still being negotiated;
- **a housing rent freeze and ban on evictions;**
- some improvements in union rights, appointment of mediators to resolve outstanding conflicts in some major industries; and
- provisions for cultural development.

A parity commission with equal representation of unions and employers will oversee implementation of the agreements.

Leading the militant general strike, which shut down most businesses, schools, government offices and services, were the General Union of Workers of Guadeloupe (UGTG) and the various affiliates of the major French union centrals.

The mass demonstrations, often mobilizing tens of thousands, were led by large disciplined contingents of marshals dressed in the LKP t-shirts.

The strike collective held frequent mass meetings to report to the people on developments in the strike.

A popular website included constant update reports, photos, and video presentations of speeches at the major rallies and demonstrations. See http://ugtg.org/?lang=cpf_gp.

Reporting on the draft Accord at a mass meeting on the night of March 4, the 43rd day of the strike, union leader Rosan Mounien said: "From now on, things will no longer be done as before! That's over! We have come to realize that when we are together, we are stronger! So there is only one thing to do: stay together!"

The bosses and the government, he said, had overlooked the fact that “when a people arises, when it develops awareness, when it is convinced of the rightness of its actions... there is nothing that can stop it. The people sweep aside all obstacles placed in their path, like a whirlwind cleaning out all the dirt in a country.”

Asked by a French newspaper why the bosses had proved so resistant to the workers’ demands, LKP leader Élie Domota said: “To them, it is out of the question that the nègres (the negroes) would rebel and demand increases in their wages.”



Local citizens and union members participate in a memorial march for Jacques Bino, a union member, who was murdered the night before, in Point-a-Pitre, on the French occupied Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, Feb. 18, 2009. Bino was the first fatality in a nearly month-old general strike that has hammered this Caribbean island's tourist industry and paralyzed daily life. (AP Photo/Dominique Chomereau-Lamotte)

MORE:

Does A Guadeloupian People Exist?

“Guadeloupe Is Just A Colony Of France, A Country Occupied By The French State”

“The Right Of The Guadeloupian Nation To Full Sovereignty And National Independence Is Undeniable”

“The Interests Of The Working Class, Of The Guadeloupian Producers And Creators, Will Be Preserved Only Through Their Engagement In The Struggle For The National Liberation Of Our Country”

Does A Guadeloupian People Exist?

Text of the resolution adopted by the Union Générale des Travailleurs de Guadeloupe at its 12th Congress, April 2-5, 2008 (excerpts)

To this question, the French Constitution replies “NO”, considering that we, the sons and daughters of slaves and others who have come from various continents, are but a population, a component of the French People, thereby integrating its last colonies within the French bosom; in a word, the red green yellow (colours of Guadeloupe), a component of the blue, white, red (colours of the French flag).

And yet, we Guadeloupians... we have a history, a language, a land, beliefs, social and cultural practices... All indicators that make us a People....

To this question, the response of the French State cannot be different, for Guadeloupian society is built on relations of colonial domination in accordance with a “natural” order established for centuries: at the top of the scale, the whites, and at the bottom, the nègres.

Department, Monodepartmental region, French Department of America, Ultraperipheral region, Overseas Department, Ultramarine regions, so many terms to try to hide a glaring reality: Guadeloupe is just a colony of France, a country occupied by the French State.

And a colony lives, survives only in order to serve the Metropolis, its Metropolis. ...

In this situation, what should we do?

Let it be and disappear, or fight for the right of self-determination of the Guadeloupien people?

An inalienable right, constantly reaffirmed and perpetually denied and invalidated by the various French and European policies through laws for adaptation and readaptation, orientation and programming, with the criminal complicity of the elected politicians.

The dynamism of the social movement and the political and symbolic implications of the demands, demonstrating the rejection of submission, of capitalist and colonial exploitation, the right to respect to all of its potentialities, including that of creating new social relations in a new, more just and more equitable society.

We Guadeloupiens are, along with the Martiniquais and the Guyanais (the people of Martinique and La Guyane), colonized and dominated, not through some curse or twist of fate but as the consequence of imperialist strategies that systematically attempt to dominate us.

The Guadeloupien people have the right to self-determination. The right of the Guadeloupien nation to full sovereignty and national independence is undeniable. The interests of the working class, of the Guadeloupien producers and creators, will be preserved only through their engagement in the struggle for the national liberation of our country.

The UGTG is and remains a class and mass organization convinced of the need to transform social relations for the purpose of achieving a more just society, securing for everyone his or her right to work, to health, to education, to culture, to life.

More than ever, we proclaim our adherence to the patriotic option, and we enshrine our style, our methods, our principles, values and conceptions within the perspective of affirming the Guadeloupien identity.

UGTG – 12th Congress, April 2-5, 2008

Published by Le Congrès, Sunday, March 8, 2009. Full text (in French and Creole) at http://ugtg.org/article_388.html

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. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

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THE BLOODSHED**

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

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