

GI SPECIAL 7E24:

lib·er·al (noun): one who favors maximum individual freedom, esp. protection of civil liberties

pro·jec·tion (noun): The attribution of one's own attitudes, feelings, or suppositions to others



**Behold The Dawn Of Day
That Breaks Upon The
World:
Fort Hood Active Duty Soldiers
March Against The Wars:**

**“There Are Thousands Of Guys
Who Are Not Coming Home To
Their Mom And Dad”
“I Lost Three Buddies In My Platoon
In Iraq And For What?
“Why Lose More When We Don’t Have
To?”**

May. 26 2009 By Rebecca LaFlure, Killeen Daily Herald

“Get up. Get down. There’s an anti-war movement in this town.”

A group of active-duty Fort Hood soldiers and nearly 70 other anti-war protesters took to the streets of Killeen Monday afternoon in the city’s first peace march since the Vietnam War.

Toting picket signs that read, “War is not the answer,” and “Blessed are the peacemakers,” the demonstrators gathered for one common purpose – to call for an end to the wars in the Middle East.

The action, held on Memorial Day, was organized to honor the nation’s fallen soldiers, and help prevent the further loss of lives in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“We’re paying homage to the ones we’ve lost. We don’t want to lose anymore,” said Chris Saylor, an Iraq War veteran who traveled from Detroit to participate.

The protest was organized by Under the Hood Cafe – a local outreach center for soldiers. Members from peace organizations across Texas as well as college students, active-duty soldiers and veterans came out to show their support.

The march began at the cafe house at 17 College St. and continued down Veteran’s Memorial Boulevard to Fort Hood Street and then up to Fort Hood’s East Gate.

The demonstrators waved colorful flags decorated with peace symbols and chanted slogans like, “They’re our brothers, they’re our sisters. We support war resisters,” and “What do we want? Peace! When do we want it? Now!”

Many people honked their car horns as they drove by. Not all the responses were positive, however. One man shouted, “You don’t have the right to do this!” as he drove by.

Ben Fugate, an Army specialist who returned from Iraq two months ago, was one of several Fort Hood soldiers who came to the event. Wearing a black T-shirt with the slogan, "Got rights?"

Fugate called the Iraq war "unjustified" and recently decided to speak out against it.

"They say they're there to build up Iraq, but all you see is destruction of Iraq," he said.

"There are thousands of guys who are not coming home to their mom and dad. I lost three buddies in my platoon in Iraq and for what? Why lose more when we don't have to?"

Cindy Thomas, manager of Under the Hood Cafe and the protest's organizer, said she hopes the day's action will influence other military community members to speak out.

"We want to let the soldiers out there know that we're here. They have somewhere to come to," she said.

"A lot of them don't know that they actually have rights. You're allowed to speak out. You're allowed to march."

MORE:

Truly Heroic Fort Hood Soldier Openly Defies Order To Deploy To Afghanistan

**"Politicians Aren't Going To
Stop This War," Says Spc.
Victor Agosto:**

**"Soldiers Are The Going To Be
The Ones Who Have To End It"**

“I’m Not A Pacifist. I Just Won’t Take Part In Another Imperialist Occupation”

He Chooses To Remain On Base And “Become A Model Of Resistance, An Example To Other GIs Who Might Be Willing To Make A Principled Stand Against An Unjust War”



Victor Agosto, Iraq Veterans Against The War
Branch of service: United States Army (USA)
Unit: C. Company, 57 ESB, 35 Sig BDE
Rank: SPC
Home: Florida

Served in: Fort Jackson, Fort Gordon, Fort Hood, FOB Q'West.

[Thanks to Pham Binh, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

Back on base, a platoon sergeant warns Victor to “stay away from his soldiers.”

If the higher-ups at Fort Hood seem nervous, it’s for good reason. While walking around base, a private asked to shake his hand: “I want you to know that I really look up to you.”

This week, a staff sergeant in the same battalion gave him more than compliments: he also refused an order to deploy to Afghanistan, citing Victor as his inspiration.

May 26, 2009 By Holly Lewis, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

April 28 2009 at 11:46 am:

Victor Agosto can no longer live a double life.

ALTHOUGH IT read like the first line of a novel, everyone knew the Facebook post was nothing less than Army Spc. Victor Agosto's declaration of independence.

His friends at Under the Hood, an antiwar coffeehouse for soldiers in Killeen, Texas, knew what the sentence meant: Victor was going to refuse to deploy to Afghanistan.

But his plan went far beyond excusing himself from what he considered to be another imperialist occupation.

Victor would remain on base.

He would become a model of resistance, an example to other GIs who might be willing to make a principled stand against an unjust war.

Agosto enlisted in August 2005 after two years of study at Miami Dade College. "I joined for the usual reasons," explained Agosto in an interview. "All the things they tell you about America when you're growing up. But mostly, I was tired of sitting in classrooms. I wanted to do something. I wanted to see the world."

Despite his patriotic upbringing, Victor had become skeptical of the war in Iraq even before his 14-month tour of duty in 2006.

"It took me awhile to be against Afghanistan though," says Agosto.

Agosto insists that his stand against the war is not related to his personal experience as a communications specialist at Qayyarah Airfield West, a forward operating base with a 12-mile security perimeter located 200 miles north of Baghdad.

"I didn't have any traumatic experiences in Iraq," says Agosto.

"I don't have PTSD. I don't have any injuries at all. I was never in any danger."

Agosto takes every opportunity to ground his resistance in a commitment to justice and a desire to take responsibility for the damage already done.

During his 24th birthday celebration at Under the Hood café, Agosto explained his feelings about his role in the war:

"My job in communications, its effect on human suffering could be even greater than the actions of a combat soldier. My job is to maintain communications infrastructure so troops can complete their missions. Combat soldiers are only responsible for the people

they kill. It's difficult to quantify the effects of my actions, how much suffering I've helped make possible."

The animated young woman sitting beside Victor, also a communications specialist, laughs and nudges him. "Man," he says, "I was just worried about getting the job done and getting the hell out of there! Did you really think about all that in Iraq?" Victor's voice is quieter than usual. "I thought about it every day."

FORT HOOD sits against a mesh of strip malls, take-out joints and patriotic billboards that comprise the city of Killeen. Set more than 80 miles northwest of Austin, the military installation and the city it sustains are isolated by miles of brush and wildflowers, by rolling pastures that eventually crash into the concrete ribbon of Route 35.

If Killeen is remote, Fort Hood is another galaxy.

Cynthia Thomas, the manager of Under the Hood, underscores the problem of troop isolation when she courts supporters across Central Texas. "Come visit even if you don't know anything about the military," she says.

Victor maintains that it is the antiwar movement and the support of his "family" at Under the Hood that ultimately helped him find the courage to resist. But it was the books he read on war and imperialism that gradually changed his understanding of the world and his place in it.

A copy of his Army counseling statement dated May 1, 2009, reveals his transformation.

Defying a direct order from his company commander, he stated on record, "There is no way I will deploy to Afghanistan. The occupation is immoral and unjust. It does not make the American people any safer. It has the opposite effect."

Spc. Agosto's clarity of thought may prove to be as beneficial to the antiwar movement as the strength of his conviction.

Most resisters, through circumstance or self-preservation, go absent without leave, or AWOL, to get civilian help or avoid incarceration.

Victor is still on base.

"My superiors pretty much want me to go AWOL," he explains.

"Going AWOL allows them to demonize the absent soldier. If you go AWOL, you lose the ability to defend your resistance. Nobody really knows for sure why you left, so they can just tell everyone you're a coward."

But no one can call Victor a coward.

Not only does he refuse orders from his superiors almost daily, he has refused conscientious objector status because it undermines his public critique of the war.

“I’m not a pacifist,” explains Victor. “I just won’t take part in another imperialist occupation.”

AGOSTO’S COMPOSURE, intelligence and reserved humor make him a formidable fighter.

Before he was a model of resistance, he was a model soldier. In 2008, the army awarded him a medal for good conduct. He even sympathizes with the sergeants swamped by the paperwork produced by his resistance. “I have no vendetta against my superiors,” he says. “I just want to be an example for other soldiers.”

Victor doesn’t refuse all orders, only those aiding the war effort. He does not refuse orders involving “company beautification,” minding the barracks or sweeping the motor pool line.

But on April 30, Victor told his commander that--“Sir! No, sir!”--he would not be deploying to Afghanistan.

On May 11, he informed his company commander that he would refuse all orders supporting his unit’s deployment to Afghanistan.

On May 14, Victor refused to do administrative maintenance on trucks going to Afghanistan.

On May 19, when Victor’s first sergeant ordered him to attend SRP (Soldier Readiness Processing) to prepare his paperwork and receive the preventative medical treatment necessary for deployment, he refused in front of his entire company.

On May 22, he received his first disciplinary “reading” under Article 15 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. He was charged with disobeying orders from a non-commissioned officer and with disrespect to non-commissioned officers.

Victor objects. “The disrespect charge is totally bogus,” he says. “When I called out my first sergeant on this, he said, ‘You disobey my orders, you are disrespecting me.’”

Agosto is well aware that he may be sent to jail any day now.

His refusal presents an obvious--and “unforgivable”--challenge to a political and military establishment poised for a massive escalation of the war in Afghanistan.

The Democratic Senate has just approved a \$91.3 billion bill backed by Barack Obama to expand the campaign against Afghanistan.

“Politicians aren’t going to stop this war,” says Victor, who explains that he’s not afraid of being punished for refusing to facilitate the slaughter of civilians.

“It can only be stopped at the grassroots level.

“Soldiers are the going to be the ones who have to end it.

“But community support is crucial. It’s difficult to make a stand in solitude.”

Back on base, a platoon sergeant warns Victor to “stay away from his soldiers.”

If the higher-ups at Fort Hood seem nervous, it’s for good reason.

“People have been supportive,” says Victor. “People who disapprove of what I’m doing haven’t mentioned it to me.” Victor has added an update to his Facebook page.

While walking around base, a private asked to shake his hand: “I want you to know that I really look up to you.”

This week, a staff sergeant in the same battalion gave him more than compliments: he also refused an order to deploy to Afghanistan, citing Victor as his inspiration.

[Contribution to Victor Agosto’s legal defense fund may be made at the Courage to Resist Web site: couragetoresist.org/victor

**DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE
MILITARY?**

**IF YOU DON’T SEND THEM THIS ISSUE OF GI SPECIAL,
YOU REALLY GOT YOUR HEAD UP YOUR ASS.**

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

Thought For The Day:

**Quit Whining And Pissing On Everybody
In Sight With Your Condescending,
Elitist, Finger-Pointing Lame-Ass
Bullshit About How Stupid & Apathetic**

Americans Are And How Wise And Good You Are:

**If You Don't Spend Time In The Real World
Reaching Out To Real Troops, You Have Nothing
Whatsoever To Sneer At Others About.**

YOU Are The Problem.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Belleville Soldier Killed In Baghdad Blast 'Died Doing What He Loved'

May 20, 2009 BY MARIA BARAN AND JACQUELINE LEE, News-Democrat

A Belleville soldier died doing what he loved, family and friends said Tuesday.

Army Spc. David A. Schaefer Jr., 27, died Saturday in Baghdad when an improvised explosive device detonated near his unit.

"He was born to serve his country," his wife, Shelly, said. "He wanted to be a soldier -- that's all he talked about when he was younger -- and that's what he did."

The Schaefers last talked on Thursday, and David Schaefer told his wife everything was fine. They discussed their plans to move their family -- Jason Phillips 13, Logan Schaefer, 7, and Savanna Schaefer, 6 -- to Germany as soon as what was his second tour in Iraq ended in November.

Shelly said her husband took good care of his family, and loved his children. They often watched motorcross together.

"He loved being in the Army," Army Sgt. Joshua Wood said of his friend. "He loved being an infantry soldier."

Wood got to know Schaefer in 2006, when Schaefer decided to make the leap to active duty after serving in the National Guard.

"Davey had a heck of personality; he's just a magnetic person," Wood said. "You really couldn't meet the person and not like him."

Schaefer was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade, Schweinfurt, Germany. "He died doing what he loved," said Wood, of Fort Bragg, N.C.

Schaefer's father, David A. Schaefer Sr., said: "His memory will always be in my soul."

Schaefer's aunt and uncle, Karen and Danny Schaefer, of Belleville, said their nephew visited them before he enlisted, and his excitement about joining the military was tangible.

"Like all young men, he got himself all ripped up and excited about going into the Army," Karen Schaefer said. "I answered the door and didn't recognize him. He said, 'Aunt Karen, it's Little Davey!' and I gave him a big 'ol hug. He did good for himself."

Schaefer attended Freeburg High School, but left before he graduated, they said, but got his life in order -- he got his GED and quit smoking, drinking and cursing -- because he wanted to join the Army.

Karen Schaefer said her fond memories of "Little Davey" and his three siblings include family trips that involved camping, fishing and swimming.

"I want them to remember him as a hero," Danny Schaefer said. "I think his goal in life was to go to the service, and he fulfilled that. He went over there to fight for his country. He'll always be tops in my books."

Schaefer's remains were returned Monday to the United States; his casket was brought to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Soldier From La Puente Dies In Combat

19 May 2009 Associated Press

The U.S. Army says a Fort Drum soldier from California has died from injuries suffered in a firefight last week in Afghanistan.

The Pentagon identified the soldier Monday as 25-year-old Staff Sgt. Esau Delapena Hernandez of La Puente, Calif.

Delapena Hernandez and Sgt. Charlie Lee III, 23, of Birmingham, Ala., died from their wounds on May 15 at Forward Operating Base Shank and were with the 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment.

Delapena Hernandez joined the Marine Corps in 2002 and signed up for the Army in April 2006. He had previously served in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is survived by his wife.

Family Mourns Fallen Soldier

05/19/09 Yenu Wodajo, ABC 33/40

City, AL - The family of a Jefferson County soldier grieves as it prepares to say farewell. Twenty-three year old Nicky Lee died Friday in combat in Afghanistan.

His mother Norma Lee says he loved his work in the military. After being home for just a month from his first tour of duty, he re-enlisted and was deployed two months later.

"It's been rough. I miss him and I know he was doing a good thing for our country and he loved everybody in our country," said Lee's younger brother. "It's just tough. I can't believe he's gone."

A tearful goodbye from Lee's brother. Sergeant Lee was his mother Norma's first son. She calls him her joy.

None of the family was prepared for the knock on their door.

"They were like 'your son, Nicky Lee has died in combat, small arms fire in Afghanistan."

The proud family eagerly anticipated Lee's return home from his second tour in Afghanistan this July.

"Don't get to make it now," said his brother.

"I've got to bring him home in a box."

His mother put a bracelet on her arm the day her son reported for boot camp. Friday, she will leave it in his coffin.

"All the families that's had to go through this, I know what they're going through," said Lee. "I care about them, too, and they're going to be in my prayers."

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

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

NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP GO HOME



A U.S. soldier of 10th Mountain Division during a search operation in Nerkh district of Wardak province in west of Kabul, Afghanistan, May 2, 2009. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

TROOP NEWS

HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS?



The remains of U.S. Army Sgt. Paul F. Brooks, 34, of Joplin, Mo., at Dover Air Force Base, Del. May 24, 2009. Brooks was one of three soldiers killed May 21 near Baghdad from wounds suffered from an improvised explosive device. (AP Photo/Luis M. Alvarez)

**MORE FROM FORT HOOD:
“We Marched In The Blazing Texas
Sun For More Than A Mile To A Point
Across From The East Gate”
“The Reaction Of People Who Drove By
With Thumbs Up Signs And Honks Of
Support Was Even More Surprising”**



Memorial Day at Under the Hood. GI's gather at coffee house before marching for peace. Photo by Alice Embree / The Rag Blog

May 26, 2009 By Alice Embree, The Rag Blog

Killeen, Texas is nestled up to Fort Hood, the largest military base in North America, where soldiers are on a rapid deployment schedule to Afghanistan.

On Memorial Day, I joined about 70 people at Under the Hood Café on College Street in Killeen for a peace march led by active duty soldiers.

An antiwar presence is surprising enough in a military town, but I must say that the reaction of people who drove by with thumbs up signs and honks of support was even more surprising.

We marched in the blazing Texas sun for more than a mile to a point across from the East Gate before returning to the shelter of Under the Hood.

Two of the soldiers who led the march have recently made their resistance known, issuing statements on why they won't go to Afghanistan.

Killeen is a tired military town, full of tattoo parlors and other businesses catering to GIs. In contrast, the suburbs of Copperas Cove and Harker Heights seem to be full of new and shiny franchises.

Under the Hood has been open since February 1, gradually becoming known as a "free speech zone" for GIs -- a place where soldiers can gather, throw darts, play guitar, surf the internet, and occasionally get treated to Manager Cindy Thomas' Spanish rice.

The Memorial Day fare also included barbeque, beans, and home-made cookies.

War may seem to be a million miles away to much of the population, but it is never more than a deployment order away from the minds of these young soldiers.

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

**Marine Veteran Christopher
Gallagher Says:
“Democracy Doesn’t Come
From The Barrel Of A Gun.”
“The Most Important Thing We
Can Do Is Let The World Know**

United States Imperialism Is Wrong”



May 14, 2009 Jacqueline Moore and Aaron Moore, Indymedia.us [Excerpts]

Winter Solder Southwest hearings were held in Pasadena, Calif. on May 9. Veterans gave testimonies and discussed lessons to learn from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Marine veteran Christopher Gallagher went on a total of three tours to Iraq.

He said, “The most important thing we can do is let the world know United States imperialism is wrong.”

He criticized the waste involved in paying “trigger-happy mercenaries” such as Blackwater up to five times the pay given to soldiers who do the same work.

He went on to say that “the choice to prosecute global terrorism by conducting two wars against countries that had little or nothing to do with the September 11th attacks was mistaken” and that “democracy doesn’t come from the barrel of a gun.”

Mother Of Soldier Killed At Baghdad Stress Clinic Says Shooter “Needed Help And Couldn’t Get It Fast Enough Because You Have To Wait On Everything With The Army”

Her Son Told Her Stress Clinic “Was Kind Of Stupid Because He Had To Color And Do Arts And Crafts And Cut And Paste”



Pfc. Michael E. Yates Jr. was one of five service members shot to death at a stress clinic in Baghdad, Iraq.

While she said that “doesn’t excuse” the shooter’s actions, “I believe that if he would’ve gotten the help that he was there to get, maybe sooner, or got more help and other people recognized the signs, because there are signs, and you don’t have to be a rocket scientist to figure those signs out.”

May 13, 2009 (CNN)

The mother of one of the American service members killed in a military stress clinic shooting in Baghdad said Wednesday she harbors “mixed emotions” toward the attacker who killed her son.

“I feel for him, but at the same time I am very angry at him,” said Shawna Machlinski, mother of slain 19-year-old Pfc. Michael E. Yates Jr.

Sgt. John M. Russell has been charged with five counts of murder in the killing. Yates of Federalsburg, Maryland, was one of the five service members slain Monday.

“I think he needed help and couldn’t get it fast enough because you have to wait on everything with the Army,” said Machlinski, referring to the alleged shooter and the problems the stress clinic addresses.

She and Yates’ stepfather, Richard Van Blargan Jr., spoke with reporters Wednesday in Maryland.

“As much as I have a lot of anger towards him, I also have some sympathy because I know he must have been going through a lot, as well,” Machlinski said of Russell.

While she said that “doesn’t excuse” the shooter’s actions, “I believe that if he would’ve gotten the help that he was there to get, maybe sooner, or got more help and other people recognized the signs, because there are signs, and you don’t have to be a rocket scientist to figure those signs out.”

“We’re not sure as to what happened over there,” Van Blargan said.

Speaking about Yates, he said, “We do know that he was at the stress clinic. Like quite a few other military people, they’ve all dealt with the stress the best way they could. He was due to go back to his unit today, until this unfortunate event.”

Van Blargan said he didn’t know much about the shooting suspect.

“He was probably under a lot of stress as well. Quite a bit more from my understanding,” Van Blargan said of the shooting suspect. “He has friends and family, extended families that will miss him dearly.”

Van Blargan said Yates told Machlinski in a phone call on Mother’s Day that Yates had met the suspected shooter, saying he was a “very nice guy” and “could deal with him” but that the man had “some major issues.”

“He was out there on the branch hoping for somebody to help him,” Van Blargan said.

Van Blargan said Yates -- who was a father himself -- is going to be missed.

“He was a good man, a good father. He took care of his responsibilities. He was very honorable. He was a good son. He treated everyone with respect and he just wanted respect back,” Van Blargan said.

Machlinski said her son told her in the Mother’s Day phone call that the clinic program he attended “was kind of stupid because he had to color and do arts and crafts and cut and paste.”

But Machlinski said her son knew he had to complete the program so he could go back to his base.

“He was one of the lucky ones that understood that he needed help,” Van Blargan said.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

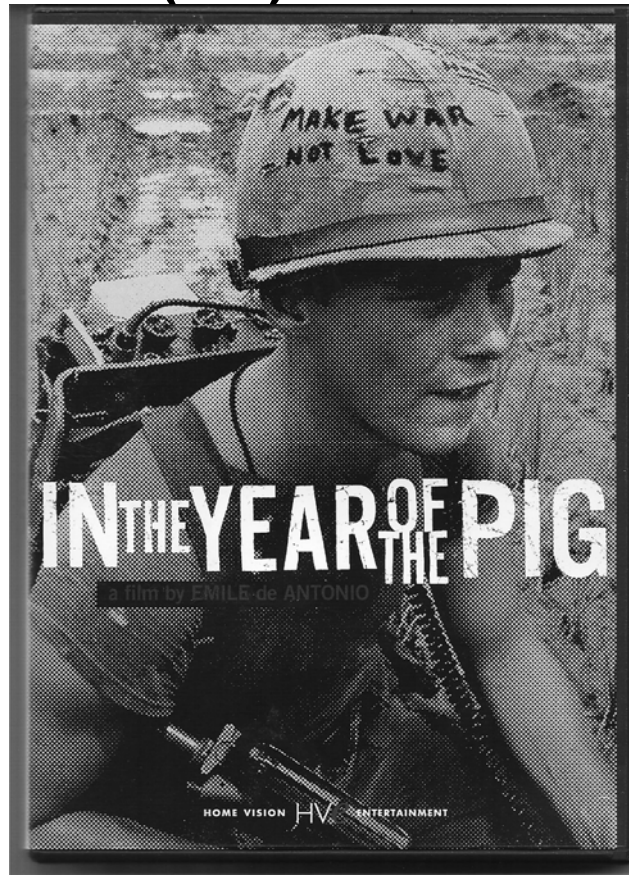
“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

“Hope for change doesn’t cut it when you’re still losing buddies.”
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War

“As A Veteran, De Antonio Was Clearly At Pains To Separate His Critique Of American Foreign Policy From The Foot Soldiers Carrying Out Orders”

“*In The Year Of The Pig* Does Not Demonize The Troops, Saving The Commanders And Power Elite For That (Dis)Honor”



Notes on Emile de Antonio's *In the Year of the Pig*

By Douglas Kellner [Excerpts]

These notes are adapted from the introduction co-authored with Dan Streible to *FILM. ART AND POLITICS, AN EMILE de ANTONIO READER*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Emile de Antonio's Vietnam film *In the Year of the Pig* is often judged his best and most influential.

Paradoxically, however, his provocatively titled documentary was as much a cool, intellectual work of cinematic art as it was a hot "cry of outrage" or agitprop.

In making a film that communicated the historical background of the war in Vietnam while also compelling people to turn against US involvement in it, de Antonio brought together massive filmic documentation and daring modernist cinematic form.

Spending at least two years on historical and archival research, de Antonio set about the making of *In the Year of the Pig* with a serious and deliberate vigor. He applied his intellectual training in a disciplined way. While reading, he said, over 200 books on the history and geopolitics of Indochina and Vietnam, de Antonio began creating a conceptual timeline that became the structure of his documentary.

Like an artist stretching a canvas in his loft, the filmmaker wrote out key historical events and concepts on an enormous sheet of paper. As he acquired footage and shot interviews, this became the blueprint that guided his cutting of the film, effectively serving as his storyboard.

As with his *Point of Order* and *Rush to Judgment*, the opposition that de Antonio met in the making of *In the Year of the Pig*, and the lengths to which he went in countering it, testified to the polemical power of his film.

His methods again made a striking contrast with those of the US television networks.

Since these companies were both largely defining America's perception of the war and archiving much of the existing footage of events in Vietnam, de Antonio's film was "at war" with television as much as it was with the Pentagon and the US political establishment.

Not content with what mainstream journalists had brought back from the front and from press conferences, de Antonio sought out forgotten material in film archives around the world.

After a year of searching, he assembled an amazing collection of documents that revealed the colonial history of Indochina, Ho Chi Minh's fights against occupying forces, and contemporary scenes of the war.

The found footage represented many ideological viewpoints: the colonial arrogance of Western travelogues; French nationalists' coverage of the war in the 1950s; US military

records; newsreel of dramatic and everyday scenes; and views from the North, sympathetic to communist battles against the US.

Much of the material was gathered in Europe. In East Germany, one of the world's largest but least accessible film archives was opened to de Antonio in exchange for his appearance on the GDR's radio propaganda broadcasts. He was a willing tool for such programs, both because he wanted access to film and because he supported a communist victory. (After the release of *Pig*, de Antonio appeared on Radio Hanoi with other American dissidents he met through John Towler, the Green Beret defector who appears in the film.)

After East Berlin, de Antonio harvested archival footage in Prague, where the National Liberation Front had an office. British news archives also held material. But the biggest caches of film came through Paris, where the peace talks were being conducted. North Vietnamese officials gave de Antonio a print of a rare biographical documentary, *The Life of Ho Chi Minh*, which contained most of the existing footage of Ho's early career.

The French military archives were a rich source as well. Although de Antonio was allowed to go through virtually the entire catalog of war films from Indochina, French officials did not admire his cause and so reneged on some of his buys.

In the US, government sources - not surprisingly - were also uncooperative. . Even letters of introduction from de Antonio's friend Senator Javits failed to open doors at the Department of Defense.

With his trademark collection of found, pilfered, donated, and scavenged footage in hand, the director began filming original interviews for his project.

Some, like former British Prime Minister Anthony Eden, backed off the project (de Antonio thought due to CIA harassment). However a surprising number of talking heads from US officialdom willingly sat for questions about America's role in the war.

Getting Thruston B. Morton, the Republican senator who was leading Richard Nixon's 1968 election campaign, to compare Ho Chi Minh to George Washington was a coup.

De Antonio also clearly relished Morton's verification of CIA involvement in 1950s Vietnam.

To punctuate the cinematic moment of admission, de Antonio left in footage showing the clapboard marking the take with Morton. We also get a glimpse of the director himself and hear his off-camera voice prompting a response to "my letter to you, Senator."

By getting other officials to confirm that the US wronged Ho - "We betrayed him," one bluntly says - de Antonio's filmic essay mustered considerable strength from the establishment itself.

In the *Year of the Pig* also included extensive interviews with French writers and scholars whose knowledge had guided de Antonio's research. Yale professor Paul Mus, who had met Ho in his native Vietnam, became an important voice for the film's interpretation of the battles in southeast Asia.

Mus and other French writers on Vietnam (Phillippe Devillers, Jean LaCoutoure) recount the achievements, status, and political philosophy of Vietnam's patriot-president.

De Antonio's treatment was unabashedly romantic. He saw in Ho an idealized life, one which perhaps shamed his own uneasy mixture of leftist politics and indulgent lifestyle. The filmmaker's romanticization of his protagonist was only strengthened with the death of the leader in the year of the film's release.

The film opens with an image of a Civil War soldier from the 163rd Pennsylvania infantry. This image highlights the theme of a "good" war opposed to the "bad" Vietnamese war and was also a personal symbol for de Antonio, who had himself fought in World War II as a Pennsylvania soldier - another "good" war.

De Antonio's opening montage also included an image of the statue of Lafayette on Union Square in New York, across from his office, with focus on the words: "As soon as I heard of the American Revolution I enlisted in its cause."

Pig frames Ho Chi Minh as the George Washington of Vietnam and presents the struggle as a revolutionary war of national independence, parallel to the American Revolution.

In addition to the montage of visuals, the manipulation of sound became important to de Antonio to a degree it had not with his earlier achievements in compilation filmmaking. Several aural machinations stand out as punctuation marks in the film.

The director seems to have been most fond of the musical "helicopter concerto" he had created for the *In the Year of the Pig* soundtrack. De Antonio thought the effect evocative of the technology that put American troops in the field.

He dropped the sound over black screen in key moments of the film, using it as a signifier of America's deepening involvement in jungle warfare. Later, his friend Martin Sheen would report that Francis Coppola took Pigs helicopter effects as inspiration for his treatment in *Apocalypse Now*.

In addition to these experimental uses of sound, de Antonio constructed many darkly comic or ironic moments that employed old-fashioned propaganda techniques to contrast picture and soundtrack.

Over archival scenes of French colonials lording it over Indo-Chinese rickshaws he plays "The Light Cavalry Overture," cobbled together from scratchy old phonograph records. After seeing a re-enactment of General Xiap's defeat of French forces at Dien Bien Phu, we hear a pentatonic "La Marseillaise" played on native instruments followed by shots of Charles DeGaulle and military grave sites.

To similar effect, the film brazenly concludes with shots of defeated US forces backed by a bamboo flute rendition of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

With *In the Year of the Pig* de Antonio moved into a more sophisticated use of aural technique. He continued to go against the grain of conventional documentary practice, neither practicing straight cinema verite nor "voice of God" narration. But while his

Vietnam film stood out precisely because it lacked the “crude intrusive” voice of a Walter Cronkite or Mike Wallace, de Antonio could again make an exception for himself. In the Year of the Pig, after the Dien Bien Phu episode; his own voice appears anonymously on the soundtrack. He delivers a cool, detached reading of articles from the 1954 Geneva treaty that forbade Western military presence in Indochina.

Again, he is ironic, not explanatory. His voice blends with the others as the voice of History that testifies in favor of Ho and his people.

In retrospect, In the Year of the Pig can also be read as a quasi-autobiographical tracing of de Antonio’s life. The historical figures who populated his film oeuvre - Joseph McCarthy, Richard Nixon, and even Father Daniel Berrigan (who would become the protagonist of In the King of Prussia) - appear as villainous and heroic commentators on Vietnam. Only arch-nemesis J. Edgar Hoover is absent.

Furthermore, in interviews de Antonio pointed out that the still image that opens and closes the film is self-referential. He likened the statue of a Union infantryman at Gettysburg to himself: a Pennsylvania soldier who reluctantly fought in a just war.

As a veteran, de Antonio was clearly at pains to separate his critique of American foreign policy from the foot soldiers carrying out orders.

In the Year of the Pig does not demonize the troops, saving the commanders and power elite for that (dis)honor.

Some soldiers are even interviewed as heroic dissenters, like deserter Towler and David Tuck, a black veteran who testifies about the racist indoctrination of US troops.

In the Year of the Pig gained wide exhibition through college and alternative political circuits, won acclaim at many film festivals throughout the world, and was even nominated for Best Documentary Feature at the Academy Award ceremonies. Henceforth, de Antonio was considered one of the major US and world-class documentary filmmakers.

In terms of contemporary filmmakers, de Antonio’s role is similar in some ways to that of Michael Moore, although their work has major differences as well as similarities.

In terms of style, de Antonio eschewed “voice of God” point-of-view narration and even commentary, using images and the juxtaposition of archival material with interview material without narrative or commentary, whereas Moore inserts his personality into the center of his films and provides narrative commentary on the events.

Both de Antonio and Moore use documentary montage to speak truth to power and ridicule dominant authority figures, but while Moore’s aesthetics and politics are accessible and populist, de Antonio is a more rigorous modernist and more orthodox Marxist in his politics.

Obviously, de Antonio and Moore are both leftwing partisans and eschew the ideal of so-called objectivity, admitting they are making partisan and interventionist political films.

But de Antonio is a classical modernist who creates difficult works that require an active audience.

Thus, this DVD provides an opportunity for new audiences to get history lessons in Vietnam and lessons in constructing documentary filmmakers by one of the masters of the art.

**May 30, 1937: Massacre
Chicago Police Cowards Murder
Striking Steel Workers:
“All But Four Of The Fifty-Four Gunshot
Wounds Were To The Side Or Back And
One Victim Was Shot Four Times”**



Carl Bunin Peace History May 28-June 3

1000 striking steel workers (and members of their families), on their way to picket at the Republic Steel plant in south Chicago where they were organizing a union, were stopped by the Chicago Police.

In what became known as the “Memorial Day Massacre,” police shot and killed 10 fleeing workers, wounded 30 more, and beat 55 so badly they required hospitalization.

The Memorial Day Massacre of 1937

uhigh.ilstu.edu [Excerpts]

The 1930s was a period of economic unrest for the United States. Following the prosperous “roaring twenties”, the Great Depression hit the general population hard. Many employees were fired and those who were not lost much of their former salary.

Then, in 1933, as part of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal, the National Recovery Act was passed. One of its most important concessions to laborers was the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing.

The number of strikes nationwide grew to the highest amount in American history.

When the National Recovery Act was declared unconstitutional in 1935, Congress was still sympathetic to the young labor unions that had been formed under it. They soon passed the Wagner Act, or National Labor Relations Act, to reassert the rights of the laborers.

By the 1930s the steel industry had survived much adversity, yet there were still changes to come.

The Committee for Industrial Organization, (CIO), was founded in November 1935.

Encouraged by the CIO, the steel industry became one of the first to begin organizing under the Wagner Act. Accordingly, on June 17, 1936 The Steel Workers Organizing Committee, (SWOC), was created.

The industry itself did not accept this movement.

Many companies began to stock up on tear-gas, firearms, and ammunition as well as, refining their espionage and police systems.

After a long struggle for further organization and acceptance within the steel industry, the United States Steel Corporation, (the leading producer of steel, dubbed “Big Steel”), signed an agreement recognizing SWOC. This contract allowed for five dollar a day wages in addition to a 40-hour week with time-and-a-half for overtime. By May 1937, there were 110 firms under contract.

Still, some companies refused to sign. In response, SWOC called its first strike involving 25,000 workmen against Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation. Thirty-six hours later, the corporation agreed to a Labor Board election. The union won 17,028 to 7,207.

Despite this enormous victory, a combination of “Little Steel” companies including Bethlehem Steel, Republic Steel, Inland Steel, and Youngstown Sheet & Tube, refused to sign.

Their leaders had strong anti-union attitudes and felt that the U.S. steel decision to “surrender” to SWOC was a betrayal. Tom Girdler, chairman of the Board of Republic Steel, was one particularly influential anti-union spokesperson.

The company anticipated a strike so they placed a stockpile of industrial munitions at various plants of Republic Steel.

Then, on May 26, 1937, SWOC decided to strike three of the "Little Steel" companies: Republic, Youngstown Sheet & Tube, and Inland. Most of the plants ceased production during the strike; they were willing to wait it out because the steelworkers' union strike benefits were meager.

Picket lines were set up at these plants to prevent any attempt to reopen them.

However, Republic Steel remained defiant and refused to close all of its plants. They even housed non-union workers in the plant, so they could continue working without the hassle of picket lines outside.

One of these plants was the Republic Steel South Chicago Plant.

One half of this plant's 2,200 employees had joined the strike. When the walkout began on May 26, the police interfered in an attempt to prevent other non-committed workers from joining the cause.

The SWOC organizers attempted to form a picket line in front of the gate.

Police Captain James Mooney, despite the fact that the picketers were peaceful, broke up the line and arrested 23 people who refused to move. The rest were forced to 117th Street, 2 blocks from the plant.

Because of this action, the police no longer played an impartial role in the strike. Instead, they were clearly supportive of Republic.

Strike headquarters were established in Sam's Place, at 113th and Green Bay Avenue.

Chicago mayor, Edward J. Kelley, announced in the Chicago Tribune that peaceful picketing would be permitted.

In response to this article, the strikers attempted to establish pickets, but were turned away.

On the next day, at around 5:00 PM, another attempt was made to picket. The marchers marched from Sam's Place to 117th Street. There were a few policemen present, but the marchers continued west towards Burley Avenue.

Once the marchers reached Buffalo the police line had strengthened a great deal. The workers continued and fighting broke out. The police used clubs to fight the workers back. A few had drawn revolvers without orders and discharged them in the air. No one was killed, but there were several bloody heads.

May 28 was a quiet day, but the marchers were upset with police actions.

Nick Fontecchio, a Union leader, called for a mass meeting at Sam's Place the next day, Memorial Day Sunday. Captain Mooney received an anonymous report that on Sunday

an attempt would be made to invade the plant to drive out the remaining non-union workers. He did not check the rumor, but proceeded to station 264 policemen on duty at the Republic Steel Mill.

By 3:00 p.m. on May 30, 1937, a crowd of around 1500 strikers had gathered. It was a sunny, warm day with the temperature at around 88 degrees.

Many of the union members and supporters had brought along their wives and children to join in this almost festive gathering organized by SWOC leader Joe Hunt. Several speakers addressed various labor issues most importantly, the right to organize and picket.

Some resolutions were approved to send to government officials concerning police conduct at the Republic plant. It was then moved to march to the plant and establish a mass picket.

When this was approved about 1000 people went into formation behind two American flags. Instead of marching south down Green Bay Avenue, they turned onto a dirt road across a open prairie chanting, "CIO, CIO!"

When the police, saw this they moved their position from 117th street between Green Bay and Burley Avenue to across the dirt road, just north of 117th on Burley.

The 200 police were in double file and watched the approaching marchers with their clubs drawn. The Republic mill had armed some of the officers with non-regulation clubs and tear gas.

The marchers met the police line and demanded that their rights to picket be recognized by the police letting them through.

They were "commanded in the name of the law to disperse", but the picketers persisted. This continued for several minutes. While marchers armed themselves with rocks and branches, foul language was passed between the two parties. Tension was mounting.

Recording all of this was cameraman Orland Lippert. Unfortunately, he was changing lenses at the start of the actual violence. This has caused some dispute as to which side initiated the fighting. The following account, determined at the hearings under Senator Robert LaFollette, is generally accepted.

Police were trying to prevent marchers from outflanking their line.

As some strikers began to retreat a stick flew from the back of the line towards the police. Instantaneously, tear gas bombs were thrown at the marchers.

The next few moments were total chaos.

More objects were thrown at the police by the marchers.

Acting without orders, several policemen in the front drew their revolvers and fired point blank at the marcher's ranks, many of whom were beginning to retreat.

The actual shooting only continued for fifteen seconds, but the violence did not end there.

Using their clubs, the police beat anyone in their paths, including women and children.

During this time, arrests were also made. Patrol wagons were filled to twice the mandated capacity of 8 prisoners. The injured were not even taken directly to local hospitals.

As a result of this atrocity, four marchers were fatally shot and six were mortally wounded. Thirty others suffered gunshot wounds.

Thirty-eight were hospitalized due to injuries from the beatings and still thirty more required other medical treatment.

It is noteworthy that all but four of the fifty-four gunshot wounds were to the side or back and one victim was shot four times.

There were minor police casualties with thirty-five reported injuries, (no gunshot wounds), but only three needed overnight hospital care.

After the riot, sympathetic strikers fervently protested the police brutality. On the other hand, the press, especially the Chicago Tribune, portrayed the marchers as communist conspirators who had essentially attacked the police and attempted to throw out non-union workers.

The LaFollette Committee investigated this tragedy and came to four conclusions.

First, the police had no right to limit the number of peaceful pickets and that the march was not aimed at freeing remaining plant workers.

Second, the police should have halted the march with limited violence, if this action is even justifiable.

Third, the force used by the police was excessive and the marcher's only methods of provocation were abusive language and throwing of isolated missiles.

Fourth, the police could have avoided the bloodshed.

In addition to those killed in the Memorial Day Massacre, 6 other union members lost their lives in pickets of the "Little Steel" strike of 1937.

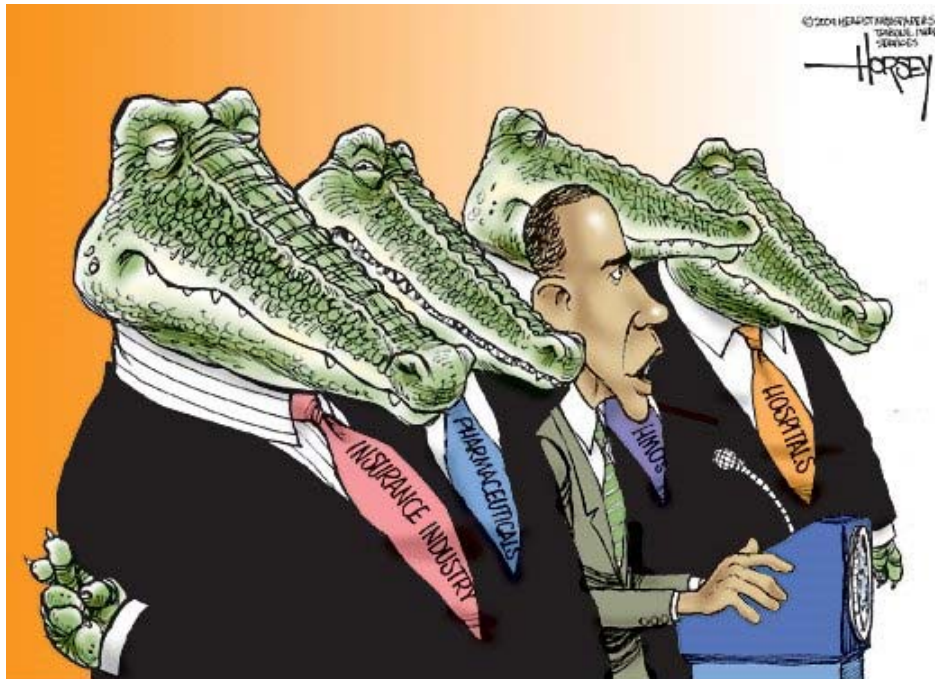
In fact, the "Little Steel" strike is surpassed by few in the areas of viciousness, press distortion, suppression of rights, and police brutality.

The strike was called off when the many hardships suffered began to demoralize union workers. However, in August of 1941, under legal pressure, the Little Steel companies agreed to cease the committing of unfair labor practices.

A year later, they signed their first contract recognizing the new union, United Steelworkers of America.

The massacre has been referred to as the “blackest day of modern labor history”, but the sacrifices of these workers were not in vain. Little Steel had only delayed the inevitable march of unionism in America.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



"THESE GENTLEMEN HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO HELP DRAIN THE HEALTH CARE SWAMP..."
[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Project, who sent this in.]

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

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
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