

Military Resistance 7K7



Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes:
"So, if we're fighting to build democracy in Afghanistan, can we go home now?"

**"I Don't Agree With This War"
"You Don't Want This Thing To
Continue"**

**Mother Of Queens Staff Sgt. Luis
Gonzalez, Slain In Afghanistan,
Condemns The War**



"I don't agree with this war," Bienvenida Gonzalez, 60, told the Daily News as she grieved for her son. Above, Staff Sgt. Luis Gonzalez.

October 31st 2009 BY Kerry Wills, Daily News Staff Writer [Excerpts]

A Queens mother whose youngest son was killed this week in Afghanistan tearfully condemned the war on Friday.

"I don't agree with this war," Bienvenida Gonzalez, 60, told the Daily News as she grieved for her son, Staff Sgt. Luis Gonzalez. "There's a lot of families that it's tearing apart."

The 28-year-old died Tuesday along with six other soldiers when enemy forces blew up their vehicle.

The soldier's wife, Jessica, who also is in the Army, declined to comment, saying, "This is our time to mourn."

They have a 5-month-old son, Isaiah.

Gonzalez, who grew up in Corona, eagerly enlisted in the Army eight years ago after graduating from John Bownes High School - and asked his mother to pray that he passed the test.

"He was a good boy, very happy," she recalled.

In their last phone conversation two weeks ago, she said, "he said not to worry about him at that moment because he was fine," and talked about coming home from combat in January.

Family friend Miriam Polanco said Gonzalez's parents were anguished over whether to talk about their opposition to the war.

“They decided you have to speak up,” she said.

“You don’t want this thing to continue.”

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

Forward Military Resistance 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 Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

U.S. Service Member Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan

Nov 8 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

An American service member was killed in an insurgent attack Saturday in western Afghanistan. The statement said the death was not part of the ongoing search operation for the two missing paratroopers but gave no further details.

Soldier From 2 RIFLES Killed Near Sangin

8 Nov 09 Ministry of Defence

It is with sadness that the Ministry of Defence must announce that a soldier from 2nd Battalion The Rifles, was killed in Afghanistan, yesterday, Saturday 7 November 2009.

The soldier, serving with 4th Battalion The Rifles, was killed as a result of an explosion that happened near Sangin, in central Helmand province, during the afternoon

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

Mom On Son Killed In War: 'He Was So Scared'



Kimble A. Han, 30, of Lehi, died of wounds in Afghanistan after an improvised explosive device exploded nearby.

10/27/2009 By Mathew LaPlante, The Salt Lake Tribune

Saratoga Springs

Lisa Barnes knew.

She'd never heard fear in her son's voice before, but somehow she recognized it when he called home from Afghanistan last week.

Her son, Kimble Han, was a big, strong man. A patriot. A soldier.

But he was afraid.

"I guess a mom just knows those sorts of things," Barnes said. "I'd never heard that from my son before, but yes, I could tell. He was so scared."

Barnes told her boy to be careful. Then, as often happens during calls connecting two sides of the globe, the phone cut out.

"I figured he'd call back when he was free," she said. "I didn't get to tell him that I loved him. I didn't know it would be the last time I would get to talk to him."

Han, 30, who enlisted in the Army in 2008 in search of a life he could be proud of, died alongside another soldier on Friday when the vehicles in which they were riding were struck by a coordinated two-strike roadside bomb attack near Kandahar. Eleven other soldiers were wounded in the ambush.

Han leaves behind a wife, Melissa, and three stepchildren. Funeral services are pending.

Barnes said her son, who had begun his tour of duty in Iraq before being transferred to Afghanistan, had told her that the improvised explosive devices being employed by Taliban fighters were getting bigger and harder to detect. Just a week earlier four other soldiers with the same Colorado-based company were killed when their vehicle was attacked in the same manner.

"Those were his buddies," said Han's older brother, Jerod, who graduated a year ahead of his sibling from Cheyenne High School in Las Vegas. "He told me that it was getting crazy. He said that the highway they were clearing and patrolling was the most dangerous road in the world. And when he put it like that, you could tell, he really didn't want to be there."

But Jerod Han -- who moved to Utah to seek work with his younger brother in 2002 -- said his soldier sibling didn't waiver. He'd joined the Army at a time of war, knowing that his enlistment would almost certainly include a combat deployment. "He was finally proud of something he was doing in his life," Jerod Han said. "It gave him purpose and meaning in life. He was scared, but he was proud. He was a soldier."

“A Huge Number Of Casualties” As Occupation Forces Attack Occupation Forces: “Five Of The Wounded Were U.S. Soldiers”

2009-11-08 AFP

KABUL: Investigations were under way Sunday into the deaths of seven soldiers and police killed in what Afghan officials called a mis-targeted U.S. air strike, one of the worst "friendly fire" incidents of an eight-year war.

It occurred while U.S. and Afghan forces, searching for two missing American paratroopers in a barren, rugged area, clashed with Taliban insurgents on Friday, they said. Azimi said U.S. troops who were fighting the rebels alongside the Afghans also suffered casualties but he refused to give figures.

Earlier NATO's International Security Assistance Force said five of the wounded were US soldiers.

One Western military official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP it appeared to be a "blue-on-blue incident" -- a military term for friendly fire -- with "a huge number of casualties".

Coordinated Two Province Ambush Hits Occupation Fuel Supply Convoy



A burning fuel truck on a road outside Jalalabad, Nangarhar province, east of Kabul, Afghanistan, Nov. 8, 2009. A supply convoy of foreign forces was attacked by militants near Jalalabad city, two of the tankers were set on fire and three others damaged. (AP Photo/Rahmat Gul)

Nov 8 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

In the east of the country, militants twice attacked a fuel supply convoy as it traveled along a main supply route between Pakistan and the Afghan capital of Kabul. Police said at least two private security guards and a policeman were wounded in the attacks.

The convoy first came under fire near the city of Jalalabad, during which two fuel tankers were set on fire and three other trucks were damaged, provincial police spokesman Ghafor Khan said. Two security guards were wounded.

Afghan police later joined the convoy to escort the remaining vehicles to Kabul.

But the vehicles came under attack again in the neighboring province of Laghman, leaving one policeman wounded and damaging three other trucks, said deputy provincial police chief Naqibullah Hotak.

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

THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WARS

FUTILE EXERCISE: ALL HOME NOW!



U.S. air support flies over as U.S. soldiers in Soviet Union war era bunkers high in the mountains above the Pech Valley in Afghanistan's Kunar province on Oct. 25, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATIONS

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

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

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

TROOP NEWS

NOT ANOTHER DAY NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR NOT ANOTHER LIFE



The casket of Army Staff Sgt. Nekl B. Allen at his burial services at Arlington National Cemetery Oct. 8, 2009. Allen, 29, from Rochester, N.Y., died Sept. 12 in Wardak province, Afghanistan, when enemy forces attacked his vehicle with an improvised-explosive device and small arms fire. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

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 to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 888.711.2550

Military Resistance Available In PDF Format

If you prefer PDF to Word format, email contact@militaryproject.org

“I Am Lucky Because I Am Alive” “Anybody Who Comes Back From Afghanistan Alive Is Lucky”



Fusilier Thomas James injured in Afghanistan Photo: David Rose

07 Nov 2009 By David Harrison, Telegraph Media Group Limited [Excerpts]

Plastered with bandages, a patch over his eye and medical equipment on his lap, Fusilier James sat in a wheelchair outside Coventry Cathedral earlier this year, ignoring his own horrific injuries, to salute a friend killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

Just five weeks after being blown up by the Taliban, the brave 20-year-old soldier left his hospital bed to attend the funeral of Fusilier Shaun Bush, 24.

He listed his injuries without a shred of self-pity or bitterness: he lost an arm, an eye and several fingers, broke his pelvis and a leg, and suffered burns all over his body in an explosion hours before the one that killed Fusilier Bush on August 15.

“I am lucky because I am alive,” he told The Sunday Telegraph at his home in Coventry where he returned on Friday after a spell at Headley Court in Surrey, the Ministry of Defence’s rehabilitation centre for wounded soldiers.

“Anybody who comes back from Afghanistan alive is lucky.”

64% Of British Say Afghan War “Unwinnable”

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Resistance.]

November 8, 2009 The Sunday Times [London]

A new ComRes poll for the BBC indicated that 64% of the public feel that the war is “unwinnable”, up from 58% in July.

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

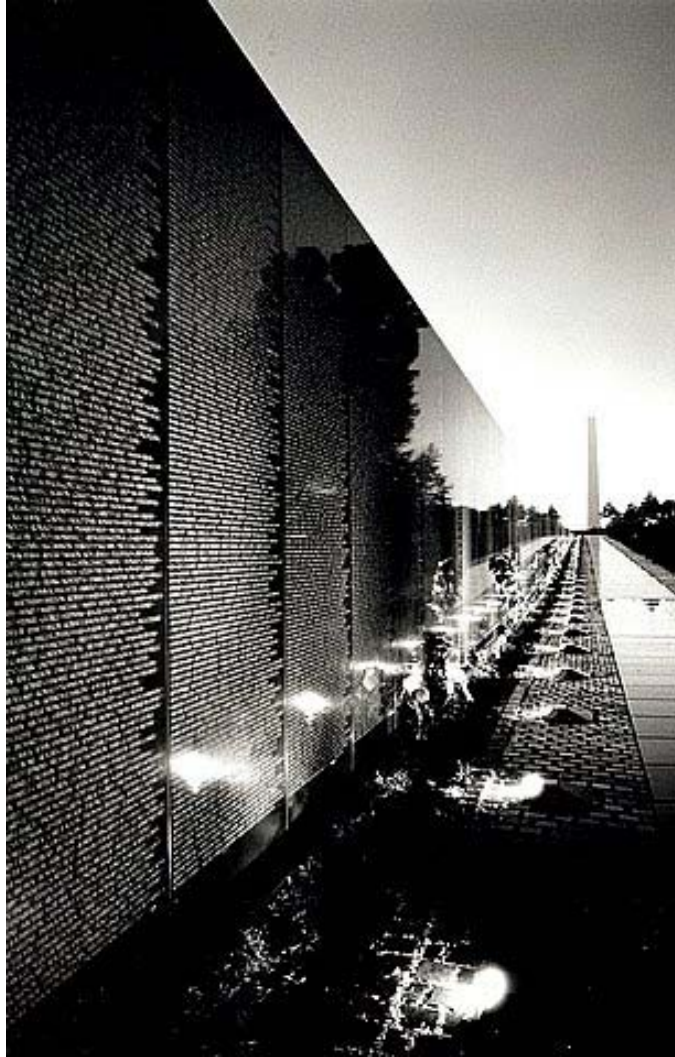
**“Hope for change doesn’t cut it when you’re still losing buddies.”
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

**I say that when troops cannot be counted on to follow orders because they see the futility and immorality of them THAT is the real key to ending a war.
-- Al Jaccoma, Veterans For Peace**

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

**Firearms are second only to the Constitution in importance; they are the peoples’ liberty’s teeth.
-- George Washington**

Iron Curtain



Vietnam Veterans Memorial Washington, D.C. October 1986.

From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance
Sent: October 29, 2009 10:14 AM
Subject: Iron Curtain

Iron Curtain

**Some tragedies are so horrible in human history,
There is a stampede to bury the truth,
so to make room for the next horrible lie.**

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
October 29, 2009**

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004

Hidden History: THE NEW ORLEANS GENERAL STRIKE OF NOVEMBER 8, 1892 “The First General Strike In American History To Enlist Both Skilled And Unskilled Labor, Black And White, And To Paralyze The Life Of A Great City” “White Supremacy Was A Political And Social Creed; It Never Saved Labor From Being Paid As Little As The Negro”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Old South was naturally hostile to combinations among workingmen.

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

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

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

Especially was this true of New Orleans, metropolis of the lower Mississippi Valley, a city in but not wholly of the South. Here unions arose among the skilled white workers even in the days of slavery. The earliest to leave any record was a Typographical Society,

established by the printers in 1810, and permanently revived in 1835 to enforce uniform wages and prices. Eighteen years later, delegates were sent to Pittsburgh to participate in the organization of the International Typographical Union, which is still in existence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Knights of Labor inaugurated a new form of racial cooperation in the 'Eighties with their characteristic assemblies of workers, skilled and unskilled, colored and white,

organized in geographical districts. By 1887 they boasted twelve assemblies in New Orleans and thirty outside.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

More effective allies were the newspapers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Capital and labor had come to grips in organized array.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Employers were united, every newspaper except the Item vociferously behind them; their defense funds were large; Northern and Western industrialists were sympathetic, ready to contribute, and watching the struggle with a lively sense of how its conclusion might affect labor relations elsewhere; planters and farmers in the country parishes, as rural editors and ex-Governor Warmoth testified, were apprehensive lest the virus of labor organization infect the negro and spread to plantations.

Under these favorable circumstances, the Board of Trade, by the confession of leading members, took strong measures to defeat the strike. They raised the cry of anarchy, treated Mayor Fitzpatrick as if he were the ring-leader of labor, and scorned every plea that he made for arbitration.

They called for the operation of the utilities, again by their own admission, chiefly to demoralize and discourage the strikers, and even to provoke enough salutary violence to require military intervention. With the assistance of the railroads they began to import strike-breakers, and telegraphed Birmingham, Memphis, Mobile, and Galveston for recruits.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The merchants organized on a stronger and permanent basis; the Workingmen's Amalgamated Council carried on; and never again, as the Picayune observed, would business fear a general strike. "The American doctrine," defined by the Times-Democrat as the prerogative of employers "to employ whomsoever they pleased," had been vindicated. The principal mission of the Labor Committee was henceforth to try in vain to find work for many black-listed strikers.

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

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

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

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

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

But among the conclusions which can be legitimately drawn from this brief account are the following: the South, to judge by New Orleans, had craft labor movements smaller but similar to those in Northern cities; trades unionism in New Orleans was remarkable not only for its early origin, strength, persistence, and rapid development after the Civil War, but also for its racial accommodations; the general strike in 1892, if not defeated, would have marked the greatest victory of the American Federation of Labor in its early career, made New Orleans a city of the closed shop, and raised up urban allies for the rural Louisiana Populists; the logic of the suit entered against New Orleans union leaders under the Sherman Law was a precedent for the later prosecution of Debs in the

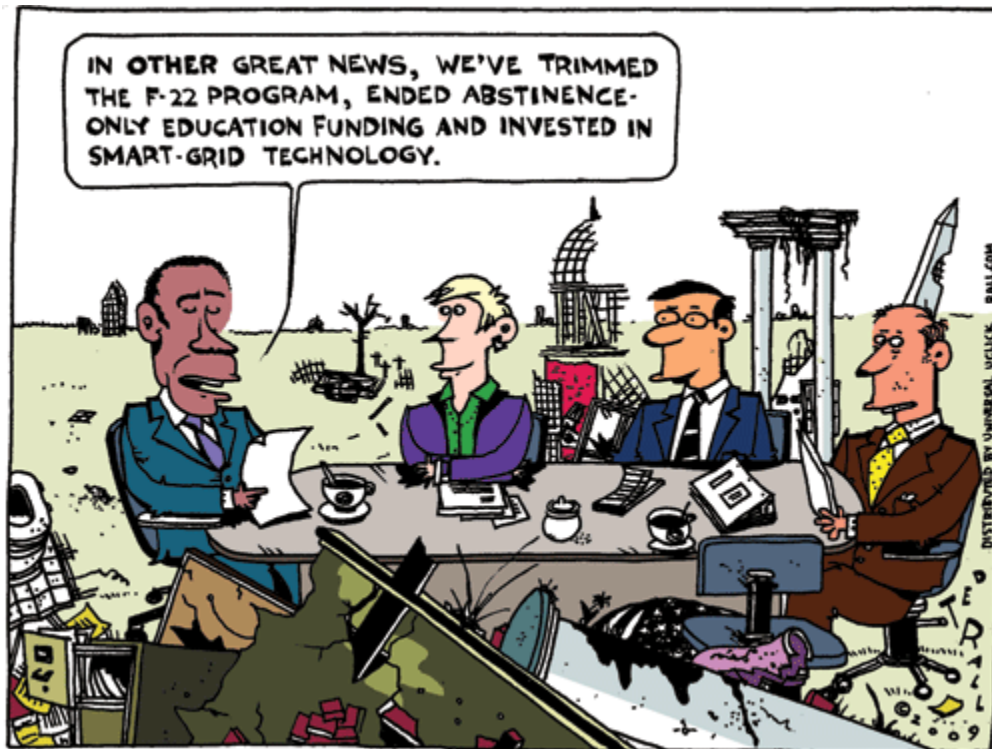
Pullman Strike; and finally — if speculative reminiscence may be indulged — the New Orleans general strike was not, either in the problems it raised or in the way it was conducted and defeated, without strong resemblance to contemporary strikes and controversy over the proper relations of management and organized labor in a political democracy.

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