

## **Military Resistance 9K4**



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**Command Lies And  
Cover-up Exposed:  
“Investigation Into The 2008  
Friendly Fire Death Of Pfc.  
David Sharrett II In Iraq Blasts  
The Platoon Leader Who Shot  
Sharrett And Abandoned Him  
As He Lay Dying”**

**“At Various Points In The Days  
After Sharrett’s Death, His  
Commanders Denied To Sharrett’s  
Father That It Was Fratricide Or  
Omitted That Information In An  
Email To Him”**

**“At One Point, A Commander  
Claimed Certain Information About  
The Incident Was Classified”**

**“Sharrett’s Father Ripped Into Hanson’s  
Superiors For Their Failure To Mete Out  
Stern Punishment In Light Of The  
‘Depth And Dimension Of Hanson’s  
Cowardice’”**

10.31.11 By Joe Gould, Army Times [Excerpts]

A new investigation into the 2008 friendly fire death of Pfc. David Sharrett II in Iraq blasts the platoon leader who shot Sharrett and abandoned him as he lay dying, saying the officer displayed “serious personal judgment errors.”

After a botched pre-dawn raid, then-1st. Lt. Timothy Hanson left the battlefield on a helicopter while Sharrett and two of his soldiers were still missing, the report stated.

Sharrett was found clinging to life at least 10 minutes after Hanson left.

“(Hanson) failed to uphold the Soldier’s Creed to include the Warrior Ethos,” wrote the chief investigator, Brig. Gen. David Bishop, chief of staff of Third Army, U.S. Army Central, “and he displayed a lack of regard for completing his assigned mission and ensuring the welfare and safety of his Soldiers which calls into question his leadership.”

**The new investigation dated March 31 is the third since Sharrett was killed.**

**It backtracks on the first investigation's widely reported conclusion that Hanson "misidentified" Sharrett as an insurgent and shot him because Sharrett failed to switch on his infrared beacon.**

**"I find no evidence to support that finding," Bishop stated in the report, obtained by Army Times.**

**Though evidence suggests Hanson may have been within six feet of Sharrett when he shot him, Hanson repeatedly told Bishop in an interview that he was firing only at the thicket, that he never targeted an individual and was unaware he hit anyone.**

Hanson also told Bishop he was disoriented by the intensity of the firefight.

According to Sharrett's father, Dave Sharrett, Bishop has recommended that Hanson receive a general officer reprimand. Sharrett Sr. said the Army official who ordered the new investigation, Director of the Army Staff Lt. Gen. William Troy, told him this.

The Army has redacted the wording of this recommendation in the report, as well as the names of many of the players; however, Army Times was able to independently identify Hanson and some others.

**Hanson, who received a local letter of reprimand following the engagement, has since become a captain in the Reserve.**

Sharrett's father has for years met with his son's colleagues and superiors, investigators and other officers in an effort to wrangle information about how his son died.

**Sharrett's father said facts about the case have only come to light through his efforts and those of James Gordon Meek, a family friend and former reporter for the New York Daily News.**

**Sharrett's father ripped into Hanson's superiors — Maj. Michael Loveall and Lt. Col. Robert McCarthy — for their failure to mete out sterner punishment in light of the "depth and dimension of Hanson's cowardice."**

**"He's radioactive to the Army," he said of Hanson, "but the thing that's still massively problematic to me is they never asked his superiors, given the fact that they knew what this guy did, why they never held him accountable."**

Sharrett's father called the latest investigation, "an enormous waste of paper and time and effort.

**"General Bishop's conclusions are just awful about this guy," Sharrett said of Hanson. "He should have been charged, and his captain and his colonel chose to overlook this thing."**

Loveall declined to comment and McCarthy did not respond to an email from Army Times.

Bishop stated in his report that he found no evidence that called into question the leadership or actions of Hanson's superiors and recommended no adverse action be taken against them for their planning of the mission, or their communications with Sharrett's father.

**Though Sharrett's father claims he was stonewalled and repeatedly misled by his son's superiors, the investigation attributes this to a series of unintentional miscommunications and misunderstandings.**

**At various points in the days after Sharrett's death, his commanders denied to Sharrett's father that it was fratricide or omitted that information in an email to him.**

**At one point, a commander claimed certain information about the incident was classified, the report said.**

Hanson received a reprimand in his local Iraq file, which was shredded when he redeployed.

**Sharrett's father had been told Hanson would receive a harsher reprimand in a permanent personnel file from the battlefield commander, but it never happened, according to the report.**

Hanson's eight-man team was part of 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, which was then conducting Operation Hood Harvest to clear insurgents from the Bichigan Peninsula in northern Iraq.

On Jan. 18, 2008, the team surrounded six men hiding in a dense thicket, believing them unarmed.

The thicket erupted into a fierce firefight, in which Pfc. Danny Kimme, 27, of Fisher, Ill., and Cpl. John P. Sigsbee, 21, of Waterville, N.Y., were killed by enemy fire.

Sharrett, 27, of Oakton, Va., was killed by a round from Hanson's weapon.

**The reports said Hanson turned left during the firefight, away from the thicket at 12 o'clock and shot Sharrett in the left buttock as Sharrett ran past Hanson's flank.**

Hanson maintained in the interview that he believed he was returning enemy fire at the thicket and never saw or heard Sharrett as he ran past. "I shot what I thought was the bush and I took off. I didn't hear anything," Hanson told Bishop.

In the midst of the firefight, Hanson "excitedly" called in helicopter fire support and backup from his higher headquarters, according to the report. Another soldier told investigators there was "terror on his face," but that Hanson still functioned.

**After the firefight subsided and backup arrived, an uninjured Hanson, "inexplicably" and without orders to do so, left the battle-field in a helicopter, the report stated. At the time, Sigsbee, Sharrett and Kimme were still on the battlefield and their whereabouts were unknown.**

“I believe that (Hanson’s) inexplicable departure from the battlefield violates a key tenet of our Warrior Ethos by leaving four soldiers behind,” Bishop’s report stated.

The report called Hanson’s battle handover to a junior soldier with 2nd Platoon inadequate, as he did not provide the locations of his men and was not ordered to leave.

By leaving, Hanson, “abdicated his duty” as the team leader and “failed to act in accordance with the Army’s expectations of an officer of his grade and experience.”

**Soldiers at the scene eventually discovered Sharrett breathing faintly and had him evacuated.**

“Another person looking in that area may have helped locate him sooner,” the report said of Sharrett.

“This is only speculation, and there is no way of knowing if the additional 10 — 13 minutes would have made a difference in saving PFC Sharrett’s life.”

Although Hanson has said he sought to return to squadron headquarters at Forward Operating Base Paliwoda to report, his commanders already knew about the engagement.

Investigators concluded, “the reasonable person ... would have remained on the scene where his greater duty was to regain accountability of his soldiers and tend to their safety.”

“My mission was over,” Hanson is quoted in the report.

“We had failed that mission and I thought that the squadron would want a debrief right away on what happened, so I got on the bird and we went to Joint Base Balad and dropped off the wounded and then refueled and went back to Paliwoda.”

**Hanson had boarded the helicopter with two wounded men, but if his intent was to escort them to the hospital at Balad, he never did so, the report stated.**

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

# **Marine Sgt. Stephen Dunning, Of Milpitas, Killed Disarming Bomb In Afghanistan**

10/29/2011 By L. Goldston, San Jose Mercury News

Staff Sgt. Stephen Dunning tried to live a selfless life, a life that put him in danger to save the lives of others. He volunteered to be one of the Marines who dismantled the crude bombs insurgents laced along the treacherous trails of Afghanistan.

Dunning, 31, of Milpitas, was killed by one of those bombs -- called an improvised explosive device by the military -- on Thursday. His parents talked to him by phone just two days before he died.

"He was joking around, he was in great spirits," said his father, Robert. "He was talking about the mud hut he was living in and a villager's donkey they had made friends with."

A career Marine with nearly 13 years of service, Dunning was on his second tour of duty in Afghanistan. He had been back in the country for about a month and a half when he was killed in Helmand Province.

"We were walking out of Starbucks when they called," his father said. "At first, I thought maybe they just wanted us to donate to the military."

Robert Dunning had been a pilot in the Marine Corps and his son, Stephen, wanted to follow in his dad's military path.

"He was originally in the high-tech field, but that wasn't what he wanted. When he got into EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), he absolutely loved it. He thought that by taking bombs apart, he was saving the lives of others."

At Milpitas High School, Stephen Dunning didn't care for sports but loved video games. Almost as soon as he graduated in 1998, he went into the Marines.

"He liked to be able to think three steps down the road," his father said.

Dunning spent two weeks with his family before heading to Afghanistan and shared some videos of what his work was like.

"I saw a video of my son lying on top of 60 pounds of explosives," Robert Dunning said. "I was really proud of him."

The young Marine, whose photo was featured in a photo essay about the war in Vanity Fair in July 2010, never talked about being afraid or worried about what he did, just that it was what he felt he should do. He felt so deeply about "living a selfless life," that he made a sign and left it on his younger brother's bulletin board at home: "Live A Selfless Life."

His parents tried not to worry either but "prayed for him all the time. We just knew he'd be home in seven months," his father said. "He planned to put in 20 years and retire."

As his family copes with the death of Stephen Dunning, they are receiving emails from some of the men he served with in Afghanistan.

"Steve preferred going to Iraq and letting the married guys stay back," one of them wrote. "He was such a great friend and was always there when I needed him."

Dunning was one of 50 Marine EOD specialists assigned to the III Marine Expeditionary Force in Japan. He was an EOD team leader and was dispatched to different locations as needed.

In Afghanistan, he was attached to a Marine infantry battalion. If the Marines on the front lines found an IED, they called Dunning and his team to come to the front and explode or dismantle the device. He died as he tried to live, keeping others safe.

In the long days ahead, a special gift to the family will arrive in Seattle, where a 29-year-old daughter lives.

"We're getting ready to have our first grandchild," Robert Dunning said.

Stories about Uncle Steve will be shared for a long time.

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

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

**REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:  
ALL HOME NOW**



US soldiers, right, carry a body from the site of a car bomb in Kabul, Afghanistan, Oct. 29, 2011. (AP Photo/Ahmad Jamshid)...

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## **MILITARY NEWS**

**THIS IS HOW OBAMA BRINGS THEM HOME:  
ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



The remains of Sgt. Carlo F. Eugenio Oct. 31, 2011 at Dover Air Force Base, Del. Eugenio, of Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., died after a bomber attacked his convoy Oct. 29, 2011 in Kabul, Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Steve Ruark)...

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**Obama Regime Charged With  
“Jeopardizing The Health Of  
Veterans In The Name Of The Drug  
War”**

**“Rejected A Proposed Research  
Study On The Effects Of Marijuana  
On Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder”  
“Many Veterans With PTSD Experience  
Nightmares, Anxiety, Flashbacks And**



# Headaches, And Use Marijuana To Alleviate These Symptoms”

10.31.11 By Patricia Kime, Army Times [Excerpts]

The Department of Health and Human Services has rejected a proposed research study on the effects of marijuana on post-traumatic stress disorder — even though the Food and Drug Administration had approved it.

The sponsor of the study — the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, or MAPS — received the decision by letter in late September after an HHS committee weighed the research proposal for scientific merit.

The denial by HHS is not a flat-out rejection; rather, it includes suggested changes in the study’s methodology to meet the deciding committee’s scientific standards.

The committee’s letter agreed that studies to find therapies for PTSD are needed, but it went on to say that the MAPS proposal was not designed well, with problems in dosing strategies and a lack of experienced researchers.

MAPS Director Rick Doblin called the letter’s conclusions “outrageous” and said HHS is trying to block his research.

**“They’re trying to pretend it’s a fair process, but it’s not. With this feedback, they are essentially saying that the standards held for pharmaceutical companies aren’t good enough,” Doblin said.**

The FDA approved the study in April. The three-month study would give 50 veterans with PTSD 0.9 grams of pot per day — about two joints — to smoke or inhale by vaporization. Researchers would use marijuana of various strains and potency for comparison purposes.

Participating veterans would submit to weekly observations and confirm by video that they followed protocol.

In addition to FDA approval and HHS authorization, MAPS needs an agreement with the National Institute of Drug Abuse to purchase government-grown marijuana and a registration number from the Drug Enforcement Administration before it can proceed.

Many veterans with PTSD experience nightmares, anxiety, flashbacks and headaches, and use marijuana to alleviate these symptoms.

**Former Navy corpsman Jesse Clock said he began smoking marijuana after suffering panic attacks following his last deployment with a Marine combat battalion.**

**“I knew they’d try to put me on various medications, which I’d rather not take and become dependent on,” Clock wrote in an email.**

**“I understand I might have some minor dependence on cannabis, but the difference is at least I can potentially grow my own medicine and not rely on some chemical combination created in a lab.”**

**The HHS decision comes as the Obama administration is clamping down on the medical marijuana industry. In October, the U.S. Attorney’s Office in California sent letters to 50 for-profit pot shops ordering them to close.**

Doblin said the politics of marijuana are irrelevant to his study. The HHS committee “is jeopardizing the health of veterans in the name of the drug war,” he said.

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## **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.”**

**“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”**

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

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

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

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly.

Whether in Afghanistan, 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 and economic injustice, 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

**“One Of The Main Elements Of  
Military Hypnosis Is The Faith  
Energetically Promoted Among  
The Soldiers That They Are  
Invincible, Mighty, And Superior  
To All The Rest Of The World”**

**“The War Has Killed That Faith  
Everywhere”**

**“In Recent Years, There Have Been  
Numerous Alarming Symptoms: The  
Army Is Grumbling, Discontented,  
And In A State Of Ferment”**

# “There Is Obviously Discontentment In The Ranks And A Vague Feeling Of Sympathy For The ‘Rebels’”



Military veterans march past the New York Stock Exchange in support of Occupy Wall Street on Nov. 2 in New York. / By Robert Deutsch, USA TODAY

## From “Up To The Ninth Of January,” 1905; By L. Trotsky [Excerpts]

The exact moment when manoeuvres turn into a battle will depend on the numbers and revolutionary solidarity of the masses who have taken to the streets, on the thickening atmosphere of universal sympathy and support that these masses are breathing, and on the attitude of the troops that the government will send against the people.

These three elements of success must govern our preparatory work.

The revolutionary proletarian masses are already at hand. Across the whole of Russia, we must be able to summon these masses into the streets and unite them with a single slogan.

There is hatred for tsarism in every stratum and class of society, which means there is also sympathy for the liberation struggle. We must focus this sympathy on the proletariat as the only revolutionary force whose appearance at the head of the popular masses can secure the future of Russia.

**Finally, the attitude of the army is less and less able to inspire the government with confidence.**

**In recent years, there have been numerous alarming symptoms: the army is grumbling, discontented, and in a state of ferment.**

**When the masses move decisively, we must do everything possible to ensure that the army does not see its own fate linked to that of the autocracy.**

A successful political strike by the proletariat imperatively requires that it be transformed into a revolutionary popular demonstration.

**The second important condition is the attitude of the army.**

**There is obviously discontentment in the ranks and a vague feeling of sympathy for the 'rebels'.**

There is also no doubt that only a small part of this sympathy is directly due to our agitation among the troops.

Most of it results from the practice of using the army in clashes with the protesting masses.

**All of the correspondents who have described battles between tsarist forces and the unarmed people emphasise that the great majority of soldiers resent the role of executioner.**

**The great mass of ordinary soldiers fire into the air.**

**All one can say in that regard is that anything else would simply be unnatural.**

At the time of the general strike in Kiev, the Bessarabsky regiment was ordered to march on Podol.

**The regimental commander replied that he could not guarantee the mood of his troops.**

**Then an order went out to the Kherson regiment, but there too not a single half-company of troops would comply with the orders coming from their officers.**

In that respect, Kiev was no exception.

**Correspondents report that during the 1903 general strike in Odessa, soldiers frequently did not rise to the occasion. For example, in one case, they were posted to guard a doorway through which demonstrators had been driven, but they simply took it upon themselves to look the other way when those under arrest fled through adjoining doorways.**

As a result, between 100 and 150 people escaped.

Workers were seen chatting peaceably with the soldiers, and there were cases where they disarmed them with no particular resistance.

That is how things stood in 1903.

Then came the year of warfare.

It is obviously impossible to say with any numerical precision how the past year has affected the consciousness of the army, but there is no doubt that its impact has been colossal.

One of the main elements of military hypnosis is the faith energetically promoted among the soldiers that they are invincible, mighty, and superior to all the rest of the world.

The war has killed that faith everywhere.

### **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 email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

## **ANNIVERSARIES**

**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.

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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.

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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.**

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**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.

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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.

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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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## **November 9, 1989: A Prison Wall Goes Down**



Pictureworldbd.com

November 9, 1989

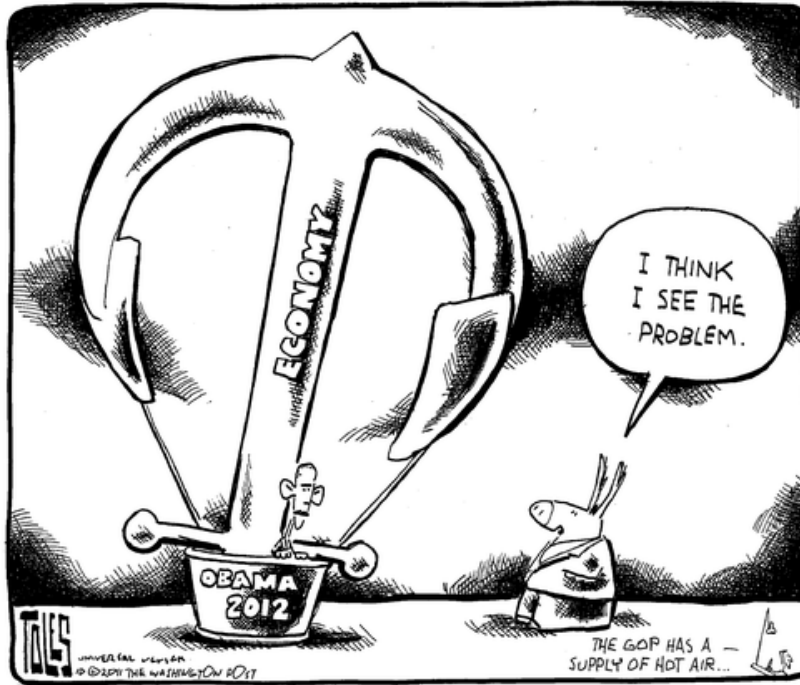
From Wikipedia

Crowds of East Germans crossed and climbed onto the Berlin wall, joined by West Germans on the other side in a celebratory atmosphere.

Over the next few weeks, a euphoric public and souvenir hunters chipped away parts of the wall; the governments later used industrial equipment to remove most of the rest.

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# DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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