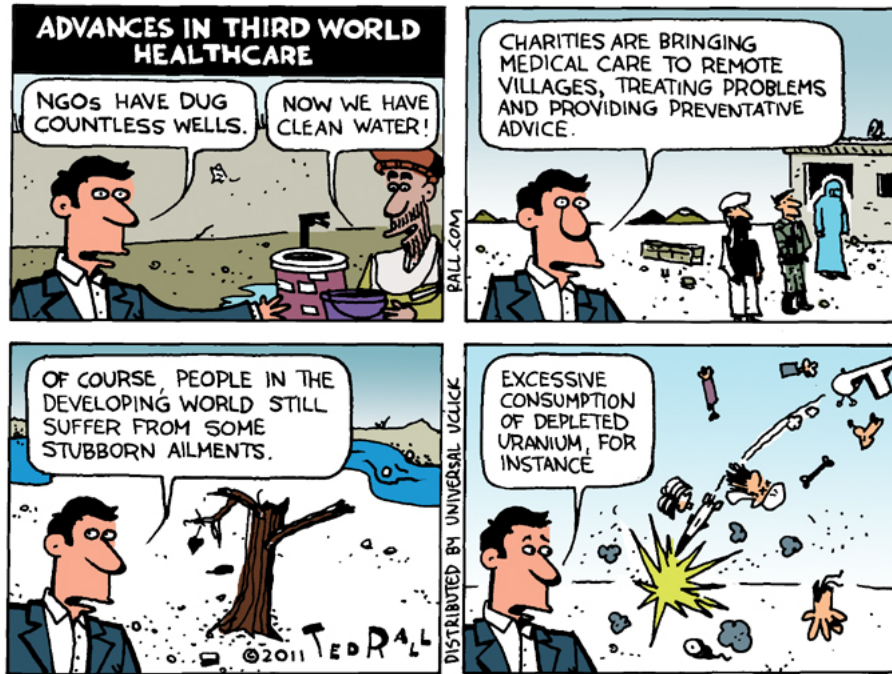


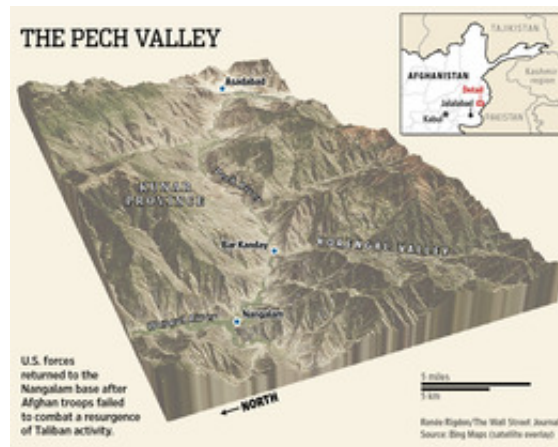
Military Resistance 9K5



“Weeks After The U.S. Army Turned Over Its Base Here In The Pech Valley To Afghan Troops In March, The Afghan Commander Went AWOL”

“His Deputy, Suspected Of Being In Cahoots With The Taliban, Ordered His Men Not To Shoot Passing Insurgents”

“It Didn’t Take Long For The Americans To Return, Dragged Back Into A Valley They Once Considered A Trophy And Now Wish They Were Rid Of”



NOVEMBER 8, 2011 By MICHAEL M. PHILLIPS, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]
Ziaulhaq Sultani and Habib Khan Totakhil in Kabul contributed to this article.

NANGALAM, Afghanistan

It didn’t take long for things to fall apart.

Weeks after the U.S. Army turned over its base here in the Pech Valley to Afghan troops in March, the Afghan commander went AWOL.

His deputy, suspected of being in cahoots with the Taliban, ordered his men not to shoot passing insurgents.

Soon the base was alive with rumors the deputy planned to let the Taliban inside the gates.

It didn’t take long for the Americans to return, either, dragged back into a valley they once considered a trophy and now wish they were rid of.

Just four months after pulling out, U.S. Army troops re-occupied the Nangalam base, where they remain to this day.

Guided at the time by a strategy that said the way to win a war is to kill the enemy, U.S. commanders sent forces into the Pech to rack up body counts.

In 2007, the Pech Valley became touted as a model for how the U.S. could win the war using a counterinsurgency strategy aimed first at protecting the locals and connecting them to government services, and only second at hunting down the enemy. U.S. soldiers and their Afghan army counterparts lived in tiny, rough outposts nestled with the villages on the valley floor.

They built a paved riverside road that linked Nangalam to the outside world. When the insurgents fired on the Americans, they were also shooting at the villagers.

That approach crystallized with the 2010 troop surge and the concentration of the 33,000 new troops on 80 key districts.

The Pech Valley didn't make the list. The population was small, isolated and, despite the earnest hearts-and-minds campaign, resistant to American charms.

So, in what the military called a “troop realignment” this March, the U.S. bulldozed one outpost in the valley and turned over Nangalam, its main base, to the Afghan army and police.

The U.S. planned to hold the line about 20 miles away at the valley's mouth and send troops in deeper once a month to keep the Taliban off balance.

“You may not have a permanent physical presence, but you still have an operational capability to go in there and disrupt the enemy,” says Lt. Col. Colin Tuley, commander of 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, the main U.S. force in the area.

The Nangalam base is on the edge of town, surrounded by rock walls, sandbagged guard towers and razor-wire coils.

But it's exposed to gunfire from the ridgelines above, which the Taliban control.

Soon after the Americans left, the situation disintegrated.

The Taliban descended into the valley and began cruising through town in pickup trucks mounted with heavy guns, according to soldiers. Local elders — respected men from the valley — had promised to use their influence to prevent attacks on the Afghan forces left behind.

But the promise proved empty.

Taliban forces moved freely along the paved river road, once the pride of the U.S. counterinsurgency campaign.

They called meetings with the locals, combining threats and promises in their own hearts-and-minds effort, according to Afghan intelligence reports.

Some locals overtly sympathized with the Taliban, according to U.S. and Afghan officials.

The Taliban and the locals are Pashtun, while many Afghan army troops belong to the country's other ethnic groups.

“There are some elders who play both sides,” says Yar Pasha, head of the local youth association.

But others were just looking beyond the next few months and wondering who would be around the longest: the Taliban or the Kabul government and its international backers. “People are scared, and that’s why they are silent,” says Mr. Pasha.

Lt. Col. Ismatullah, the Afghan army commander at Nangalam, didn’t stick around to see if the base could survive a Taliban onslaught.

One day he told his men that he was going to inspect another outpost. He never returned.

U.S. and Afghan officers say he deserted.

First Sgt. Rafiqullah, the senior enlisted man in the battalion’s headquarters company, radioed back to brigade headquarters to report the unit had no commander.

“There wasn’t much fear in the hearts of our men, but we felt hopeless when we saw our commander run away,” Sgt. Rafiqullah says now.

Afghan officials say Lt. Col. Ismatullah has since joined the national police; he couldn’t be reached for comment.

Pakistani and other foreign jihadis joined local Taliban fighters pouring out of the notoriously hostile Korengal Valley, which intersects the Pech Valley within sight of Nangalam, according to U.S. and Afghan officers.

Deprived of U.S. logistics support, the base began to run low on supplies.

The troops bought rice, flour and other food on credit from local merchants.

Ammunition was diverted to those on the guard towers or going on food runs to the market.

The Afghan troops trashed much of the base, stripping wiring, plumbing and air-conditioning units. Well pumps stopped working, according to a U.S. officer. One generator turned up at Torkham Gate, the border crossing into Pakistan, but was nabbed by customs agents, according to an Afghan officer.

Several rooms were littered with feces, say U.S. soldiers who saw the base later.

The Afghan soldiers explained they had been told by the battalion’s executive officer they would be leaving along with the Americans, so they destroyed what they could to prevent the base falling into Taliban hands.

That wasn’t the first odd command from the executive officer, or XO, Maj. Zul Faqar, and some started to assume he was in league with the enemy.

Sgt. Rafiqullah recalls going into town one day to see a doctor and spotting a truck carrying Taliban fighters. He reported it to the XO, who replied, "It's none of your business," Sgt. Rafiqullah says.

Soon, Maj. Faqar ordered soldiers not to fire on insurgents at all, according to Sgt. Rafiqullah and U.S. and Afghan officers.

One time the sergeant's men disobeyed orders and fired from a guard tower at a passing Taliban vehicle. The XO confined the men in a dark room as punishment, the sergeant says.

The sense of impotence sapped morale.

Of the 130 soldiers in the sergeant's company, Sgt. Rafiqullah says three were killed, six were wounded and about 100 deserted, leaving just 20 to fight.

By mid-April, alarm bells were going off at the Afghan 2nd Brigade headquarters in Jalalabad, 45 miles to the southwest. At 11 p.m. on April 13, brigade commanders summoned Lt. Col. Rahmdel Haidarzai, the intelligence officer, and ordered him to travel to Nangalam and take command.

Lt. Col. Rahmdel, who grew up in the Pech Valley, says he initially demurred. "I didn't want to go and get involved in tribal politics in my home valley," he says.

His commanders insisted, and three hours later he was on a U.S. helicopter to Nangalam. When he arrived, he found the base alive with doomsday rumors. The most ominous one was that the XO planned to surrender the base to the Taliban at 8 a.m. that morning.

Lt. Col. Rahmdel had served with that same battalion years earlier, and dispatched soldiers he knew to sound out other soldiers and muster support. He began immediately, he says, to sideline the XO.

That same morning, one guard-post reported five insurgents with a machine gun riding through town in a pickup truck. Lt. Col. Rahmdel says he authorized his men to open fire, and they killed the insurgents. "That gave the troops confidence that they wouldn't be overrun or handed over to the Taliban," he recalls.

The Afghans set up a checkpoint by the local government office building a few yards from the base, a tiny step that drew Taliban fire. Soon the U.S. delivered a fresh shipment of machine guns, bazookas and grenade launchers.

The Americans and Afghans disagree about how bad things got after that.

Lt. Col. Rahmdel says his men expanded their patrols around Nangalam, establishing a small bubble of security.

The U.S. Army's Lt. Col. Tuley is dubious. "They barely went outside the gate," he says.

The Afghans complain they couldn't get prompt evacuation for their wounded and dead; the Americans say helicopters were always ready if needed.

Lt. Col. Rahmdel says his battalion lost 10 killed and another 45 wounded in Nangalam after he took command.

Lt. Col. Tuley says his men, stationed at the far end of the valley, were rarely able, even with aircraft overflights, to confirm Afghan reports that Nangalam was under attack.

The Americans began making regular visits back to Nangalam, staying for a few days at a time to stabilize the situation.

In May, Afghan commanders sent out 300 new recruits. But they were green and many deserted, Lt. Col. Rahmdel says.

Meantime, it became clear that the Afghan XO, Maj. Faqar, was secretly in contact with the Taliban, according to Afghan and U.S. officers familiar with the intelligence reporting on his activities.

After one incident, in which several U.S. scouts were badly wounded, the U.S. discovered that a local Taliban commander had called the XO to tell him how well the ambush had gone, Lt. Col. Tuley says.

One day word came from headquarters that the XO's vacation request had been approved, says Sgt. Rafiqullah. A U.S. helicopter picked him up, but it was apparently a ruse. The XO was arrested and later tried by a military court, according to Col. Mohammad Numan Hatifi, spokesman for the Afghan army's 201st Corps. The XO remains imprisoned in Kabul, the spokesman said.

By July, Lt. Col. Tuley experienced what he describes as "a blinding flash of the obvious." It was: "We had to do something different."

The something different was to return to Nangalam.

Four months after the Americans left the base, the colonel assigned two platoons of American infantrymen to live there permanently, providing backbone and logistical support to the 450 Afghan soldiers and police.

He sent a relatively senior officer, a major, to oversee the U.S. presence. And he hired contractors to repair the electrical system, replace the air conditioners and scrape away the feces.

In September, a new Afghan battalion replaced Lt. Col. Rahmdel's unit, which was sent to the rear to recuperate from 18 months in Nangalam. The Afghans are once again patrolling Nangalam, and the base is no longer in danger of being overrun.

The valley, however, remains dangerous and apparently unsympathetic to the Afghan government or its international backers.

Lt. Col. Tuley's men get hit by rocket-propelled grenades or roadside bombs almost every time they drive the Pech River road by the mouth of the Korengal Valley, about three miles from the Nangalam base.

"We've got to find a solution," Lt. Col. Tuley warned Afghan army and police commanders over dinner in Nangalam in October. "One day I won't be here anymore."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Resistance Action

Nov 6 (Reuters) & 11/07/11 AP & Reuters & Nov 8 (Reuters)

Police said insurgents attacked a security checkpoint in the Anbar city of Fallujah, killing two policemen and wounding three others. The casualties were confirmed by a medic at Fallujah hospital.

MOSUL - A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol killed one soldier late on Sunday in eastern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

ABU GHRAIB - A roadside bomb targeting the convoy of Anbar Governor Qassim Mohammed wounded three of his security guards in Abu Ghraib on the western outskirts of Baghdad, army and police sources said. An army source said two Iraqi soldiers at a nearby check point were killed in the incident.

RAMADI - A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol wounded four policemen in a town just west of Ramadi, which is 100 km (60 miles) west of Baghdad, police said.

BAQUBA - A roadside bomb targeting a government-backed Sahwa militia leader wounded him when it went off in Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) northeast of Baghdad, police said.

BAQUBA - A roadside bomb targeting a local mayor went off without causing any casualties in Baquba, police said.

BAQUBA - A roadside bomb planted in front of a judge's house went off without resulting in any casualties in Baquba, police said.

BAGHDAD - A roadside bomb went off late on Monday and wounded four people, including two policemen, in Baghdad's northern Adhamiya district, police and hospital sources said.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two Foreign Occupation “Servicemembers” Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan: Nationality Not Announced

November 9, 2011 AP

Two foreign servicemembers died in southern Afghanistan. One soldier was killed in an insurgent attack, while the other one died in a bomb blast.

Three Seriously Wounded As Afghan Soldier Turns Weapon Against Australian Troops: Australian Political Leader Says “This Is Actually Part Of Our Withdrawal Plan”

November 9, 2011 By Dylan Welch, AAP and Stephanie Gardiner

A rogue Afghan soldier who opened fire on Australian and Afghan troops with a grenade launcher and automatic rifle, wounding five including three Diggers, is on the run after escaping shortly after the attack.

Defence Force chief General David Hurley announced an Australian operation involving unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) had been launched to hunt down the soldier, who fled in a vehicle following the shooting.

The Afghan National Army soldier opened fire on fellow troops on Tuesday afternoon local time at patrol base Nasir, in the Charmestan Valley region of Afghanistan.

“The three Australian soldiers suffered serious wounds and they received immediate first aid,” General Hurley said.

A Defence statement said all three soldiers were in a stable condition. They were transferred by helicopter to a medical facility at Tarin Kowt before being transferred to Khandahar, and their families have been informed.

About 10 Australian troops and about 30 members of the ANA were on a break from duty at the patrol base when the soldier opened fire.

“So they would have been sitting down during a rest period without armour,” General Hurley said.

The troops were part of Mentoring Task Force Three, which is training local soldiers in the region.

The shooting happened less than a fortnight after one of Australia’s worst losses in Afghanistan and is the third time this year an ANA soldier has targeted ADF troops.

The latest attack follows a snap visit by Prime Minister Julia Gillard to Tarin Kowt on Monday.

The executive director for the Australia Defence Association, Neil James, cautioned against drawing larger strategic trends from the latest incident - particularly suggestions that Australia should now withdraw from Afghanistan.

“I’m not sure this shows that we should withdraw - this is actually part of our withdrawal plan,” he told smh.com.au.

“Everyone’s looking for the magic bullet here and there isn’t one.

Army Sergeant From N.J. Killed In Afghanistan

October 28, 2011 By: Megan DeMarco & Peggy McGlone/The Star-Ledger

SEASIDE PARK — In high school, John Lyons was skeptical about the war in Iraq, and he was vocal in questioning whether the U.S. should get involved, recalls teacher Joseph Winkelried.

“He had opinions, very strong opinions at times,” said Winkelried, who taught Lyons a course on law and politics at Central Regional High School in Berkeley Township.

But Winkelried said his student was always willing to hear the other side of an argument, to listen to discussion. So when Lyons joined the Army after college, Winkelried was not surprised.

“That was the kind of kid he was. He was never going to be stuck in one thought, or be closed minded,” Winkelried said. “He saw some of the contradictions that other students didn’t see.

“He was very, very intelligent.”

Army Sgt. Lyons of Seaside Park died Wednesday in the Ghazni province of Afghanistan from wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit, according to the U.S. Department of Defense.

Lyons, 26, was at least the 141st service member with ties to New Jersey to die in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001.

A man outside the Lyons family home in Seaside Park yesterday afternoon declined to comment, saying it was too soon to speak.

He said many relatives were at the house, which sits on a quiet street steps away from the wharf.

Lyons joined the Army as a combat engineer in February, 2009. Since June of that year, he served with the 8th Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Brigade out of Fort Hood, Texas.

Lyons was deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in December.

According to his Facebook page, Lyons attended Rutgers University, where he studied Latin and political science. He graduated in 2008.

Winkelried said Lyons' interest in Latin was an example of his intellectual curiosity. Lyons was a member of Central Regional's mock trial team, which Winkelried coached.

"He was great," his former teacher remembered. "He explored a lot of things. He was very interested in learning."

"He would have succeeded in anything," he added. "He was so teachable and trainable. I bet he influenced a lot of young people."

Lyons received the NATO Medal, three Army Achievement Medals, the National Defense Service Medal and the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with campaign star.

In March of last year, he was a member of the winning team of the annual Bataan Death March event at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. His five-man team from the 572nd Engineer Company finished the grueling course in 5:09:18, according to the Fort Hood Sentinel.

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

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

**THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR
HEALTH;
ALL HOME, NOW**



U.S. soldiers move to the site of an insurgent attack in Kabul October 29, 2011. A car bomber attacked a convoy of foreign soldiers. REUTERS/Omar Sobhani

MILITARY NEWS

**SecDef Panetta Said That He
“Backed The Air Force’s Handling
Of The Investigation” After Air
Force Lost Body Parts Of Troops
Killed In Combat:
Special Counsel Report Says Panetta
Full Of Shit:**

Special Counsel “Critical Of The Air Force Investigation, And Said That Some Of The Service’s Findings Were Unfounded”

NOVEMBER 9, 2011 By JULIAN E. BARNES, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON—A Defense Department investigation has found two incidents in which body parts of servicemen killed in Afghanistan and taken to Dover Air Force Base were lost or misplaced.

The probe has led top Air Force officials to order an overhaul of mortuary operations at the Delaware base, and to discipline one military officer and two civilians for gross mismanagement.

The problems at Dover echo issues at Arlington National Cemetery, where an Army investigation that started last year found cases of remains that had been misidentified and urns that had been dug up but not reburied.

A report by the Air Force inspector general found that mortuary officials at Dover had failed to properly investigate incidents of missing body parts and had failed to adequately address systemic problems that led to the errors.

Because the accusations of mishandling were raised by employees of the mortuary, the Office of Special Counsel, an independent federal investigative agency that handles so-called whistleblower cases, also conducted an inquiry.

The special counsel was critical of the Air Force investigation, and said that some of the service’s findings were unfounded.

“These findings demonstrate a pattern of the Air Force’s failure to acknowledge culpability for wrongdoing relating to the treatment of remains of service members and their dependents,” the special counsel report said.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said in a statement that he was deeply disturbed to learn about the problems, but backed the Air Force’s handling of the investigation and the steps taken to strengthen oversight of the mortuary.

Col. Robert Edmondson, the commander of the mortuary center from January 2009 to October 2010, received a letter of reprimand, an administrative punishment that usually leads to the end of a military career. Trevor Dean, a director of mortuary services at the Dover facility, voluntarily accepted a reduction in pay and a nonmanagement job. The former deputy director, Quinton Keel, was also reduced in grade and given a nonmanagement job.

The special counsel report was critical of the Air Force’s decision not to fire the men.

All three men declined to comment.

The first incident, which occurred in April 2009, involved a portion of a leg that belonged to a soldier who had been killed several months before. A mortuary worker found an empty bag in a freezer that should have contained the body part.

The remains of the soldier had been returned to the family, and they expressed a wish that the military cremate any other remains that were subsequently identified.

The Air Force believes, but cannot be certain, that the missing ankle was cremated.

MORE:

**Dover Embalmer Refused To Obey Order To Cut Off Dead Marine's Arm:
"I'd Consider It To Be Mutilation, Especially If That's My Son"
"I'm A Soldier, Or I Was A Soldier,' Said Parsons, An Army Veteran"
"I'm Not Going To Do That,' Parsons Said He Told His Supervisor"**

November 8 By Michael E. Ruane, Washington Post [Excerpts]

James G. Parsons Sr. was a military autopsy embalming technician working at the Air Force's Dover mortuary when, on Feb. 2, 2010, he was assigned to prepare the body of a Marine who had been killed by a buried bomb in Afghanistan a few days before.

He had "extensive trauma" to his lower legs, Parsons later recalled.

"Some of his lower legs were missing. He had extensive trauma to his left arm."

Parsons, 53, said that the Marine already had been embalmed and that what was left of his left arm was fixed at a 90-degree angle in the process.

The handling of the Marine's body was among the most shocking elements of reports Tuesday about the treatment of the remains of war dead at the Dover mortuary.

Veterans, members of Congress and relatives of those killed in action expressed outrage about the incidents.

Parsons said he believed that, if the arm had been left in place, the Marine's face could potentially have been viewed at a funeral. The rest of his body could have been wrapped so the damage would be concealed.

"I'm a soldier, or I was a soldier," said Parsons, an Army veteran who worked at the mortuary for several years.

"If you send me home in my uniform and I've got no limbs, to let my family see me like that would be very disrespectful."

But Parson's said his supervisor, Quinton R. "Randy" Keel, who served as division director at the mortuary, wanted the Marine's body placed in a uniform — something that was difficult with the arm fixed in place.

After some conversation, Parsons said, Keel ordered the arm cut off.

"I'm not going to do that," Parsons said he told his supervisor.

Keel declined to comment Tuesday through an Air Force spokesman. Attempts to reach Keel directly were not successful.

Parsons said another technician did the cutting, and Parsons was instructed to place the limb inside the inner plastic burial garment containing the Marine's body.

"I wrapped it cotton," he said, and followed orders.

"What I'm thinking is: 'This is totally wrong,' " Parsons said. He said he had never seen anything like it done.

"I'd consider it to be mutilation, especially if that's my son."

Parsons believed the Marine's arm could have been pressed against his body and then encased in a so-called "full body wrap," but not in a uniform.

"It's immoral," he said. "It's disrespectful, so disrespectful. This guy laid down his life for his country, and then we go and treat him like he's a piece of meat. 'I can do whatever I want with him.' It's just wrong."

Parsons said the Marine's body was then dressed in a uniform, and the empty sleeve was pinned.

Keel was demoted in August and has been assigned to another job at Dover Air Force Base. An Air Force investigation concluded Tuesday that Keel was right to have the arm cut because the Marine's family wanted him buried in dress uniform. Keel no longer works in the mortuary.

But the Office of Special Counsel, an independent federal watchdog, noted Tuesday that investigators concluded that Keel had falsified records, tried to fire two workers for

cooperating with the probe and gave a version of events that were “wholly inconsistent with the facts.” The watchdog agency also criticized Keel’s decision to have the arm removed as improper.

Parsons said he was one of those Keel tried to fire after Parsons filed a formal complaint about the incident with the Office of Special Counsel.

“I believe that somebody had to know what had happened,” Parsons said. “And I believe that the person that gave the order to cut that bone off should be held accountable.”

Parsons said Keel ordered his dismissal in September 2010 after Parsons made insulting remarks to a Hispanic co-worker and after a female worker complained about an R-rated movie Parsons and others were watching in a workroom.

Parsons does not dispute those allegations but says they were a pretense for firing him amid a sensitive investigation. He apologized to those he had offended, Parsons said. The Air Force rescinded the termination three months later.

“I’m happy that it’s over,” Parsons said Tuesday. “I do want to say the problems have been corrected. We’re taking care of the remains like they should be now and we’ve always strived to.”

NOT ANOTHER DAY NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR NOT ANOTHER LIFE



The remains of Sgt. Paul A. Rivera, 26, of Round Rock, Texas, Oct. 24, 2011, at Dover Air Force Base, Del. Rivera, died Oct. 22, in Logar province, Afghanistan, of injuries suffered in a vehicle rollover during an attack by enemy forces. (AP Photo/Luis M. Alvarez)...

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

The Social-Democrats ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression no matter where it appears no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.”

-- V. I. Lenin; What Is To Be Done

Young Protester At Freedom Plaza



Young protester at Freedom Plaza: Washington DC, Oct. 4-11, 2011

From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: October 16, 2011
Subject: Young protester at Freedom Plaza

Photo and caption from the 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

**A Chill Descends On Occupy
Wall Street:
OWS Leaders' "Spokes Council"
Hijacks Organizational Control:
"Plans Of 'The Leaders Of The
Allegedly Leaderless Movement' To
Commandeer The Half-Million Dollars
Sent To The General Assembly For
Their New, Exclusive, Undemocratic,
Representational Organization"
"It Is Reasonable To Expect Any
Undemocratic Organization To Be Co-
Opted Eventually By A Vocal Minority Or
Charismatic Individual"**

Comment: T

The organizational structure of Occupy Wall Street mirrors the rule of the 1% in society at large: the dictatorship of a minority who hate democracy and wish to keep the 99% powerless, whether in society or in the movement to change society.

Clarity, program, organizational democracy and recallable elected leadership will come, because there is no other way for the majority take power away from the 1% inside this movement or in society at large, and thereby wield power for their own benefit, inside their movement and in society at large.

Hiding behind a smokescreen of lying bullshit about rejecting authority, anarchist political tendencies are deeply reactionary and deeply authoritarian self-appointed dictatorships too blind and stupid to understand that successful mass movements to end oppression and exploitation are movements from below. Vicious little packs of self appointed petty oppressors who seek to control from above merely mirror the worst of capitalist society, .

Here is a classic example of that mentality from the article below, expressed by “one of the six leaders of the teach-in.”

“When I asked him whether everybody in the 99% had a stake in the movement, he said that only those occupying or working in Zuccotti Park did.”

“I pointed out that since the General Assembly took place in Zuccotti Park, everybody who participated was an occupier.”

“He responded with a long rant about how Zuccotti Park is filled with ‘tourists,’ ‘free-loaders’ and ‘crackheads’ and suggested a solution that the even NYPD has not yet attempted: Daniel said that he’d like to take a fire-hose and clear out the entire encampment, adding hopefully that only the ‘real’ activists would come back.”

November 4, 2011 By Fritz Tucker, Fritztucker.blogspot.com

The Tangled Purse Strings

On Sunday, October 23, a meeting was held at 60 Wall Street. Six leaders discussed what to do with the half-million dollars that had been donated to their organization, since, in their estimation, the organization was incapable of making sound financial decisions.

The proposed solution was not to spend the money educating their co-workers or stimulating more active participation by improving the organization’s structures and tactics.

Instead, those present discussed how they could commandeer the \$500,000 for their new, more exclusive organization.

No, this was not the meeting of any traditional influence on Wall Street.

These were six of the leaders of Occupy Wall Street (OWS).

Occupy Wall Street’s Structure Working Group (WG) has created a new organization called the Spokes Council.

“Teach-ins” were held to workshop and promote the Spokes Council throughout the week of October 22-28.

I attended the teach-in on Sunday the 23rd.

According to Marisa Holmes, one of the most outspoken and influential leaders of OWS, the NYC-GA started receiving donations from around the world when OWS began on September 17.

Because the NYC-GA was not an official organization, and therefore could not legally receive thousands of dollars in donations, the nonprofit Alliance for Global Justice helped OWS create Friends of Liberty Plaza, which receives tax-free donations for OWS.

Since then, Friends of Liberty Plaza has received over \$500,000. Until October 28, anybody who wanted to receive more than \$100 from Friends of Liberty Plaza had to go through the often arduous modified consensus process (90% majority) of the NYC-GA—which, despite its well-documented inefficiencies, granted \$25,740 to the Media WG for live-stream equipment on October 12, and \$1,400 to the Food and Medical WGs for herbal tonics on October 18.

At the teach-in, Ms. Holmes maintained that while the NYC-GA is the “de facto” mechanism for distributing funds, it has no right to do so, even though she acknowledged that most donors were likely under the impression that the NYC-GA was the only organization with access to these funds.

Two other leaders of the teach-in, Daniel and Adash, concurred with Holmes.

Ms. Holmes also stated at the teach-in that five people in the Finance WG have access to the \$500,000 raised by Friends of Liberty Plaza.

When Suresh Fernando, the man taking notes, asked who these people are, the leaders of the Structure WG nervously laughed and said that it was hard to keep track of the “constantly fluctuating” heads of the Finance WG.

Mr. Fernando made at least four increasingly explicit requests for the names.

Each request was turned down by the giggling, equivocating leaders.

The leaders of the Structure WG eventually regained control of the teach-in.

They said that they too were unhappy with the Finance WG’s monopoly over OWS’s funds, which is why they wanted to create the Spokes Council.

What upset them more, however, was the inefficient and fickle General Assembly.

A major point of the discussion was whether the Spokes Council and the NYC-GA should have access to the funds, or just the Spokes Council.

Daniel, a tall, red-bearded, white twenty-something — one of the six leaders of the teach-in — said that the NYC-GA needed to be completely defunded because those with “no stake” in the Occupy Wall Street movement shouldn’t have a say in how the money was spent.

When I asked him whether everybody in the 99% had a stake in the movement, he said that only those occupying or working in Zuccotti Park did.

I pointed out that since the General Assembly took place in Zuccotti Park, everybody who participated was an occupier.

He responded with a long rant about how Zuccotti Park is filled with “tourists,” “free-loaders” and “crackheads” and suggested a solution that the even NYPD has not yet attempted: Daniel said that he’d like to take a fire-hose and clear out the entire encampment, adding hopefully that only the “real” activists would come back.

The main obstacle to the creation of the Spokes Council was that the NYC-GA had already voted against it four times.

One audience member observed that no organization would vote to relinquish its power.

Some of the strongest proponents of the Spokes Council responded that they had taken this into account, and were planning on creating the Spokes Council regardless of whether the NYC-GA accepted the proposal.

They claimed that, in the interests of non-hierarchy, neither the Spokes Council nor the General Assembly should have power over the other.

In the minutes of the teach-in on Saturday the 22nd, the leaders recognize that usurping power from the NYC-GA might make people uncomfortable. The Structure WG’s eventual proposal was to keep the General Assembly alive and functioning while the Spokes Council “gets on its feet.” Working Groups could still technically get funding through the NYC-GA, but the “GA may stop making those kinds of decisions because people (will) stop going...

To officially take power away isn’t necessary,” especially because the NYC-GA works on the consensus model. A small group of people aiming to delegitimize the NYC-GA could easily attend each session merely to block every proposal.

According to a member of the Demands WG, this is already occurring in several Working Groups.

To placate the rest of OWS, the Structure WG amended their original proposal and gave the NYC-GA power to dissolve the Spokes Council.

This amendment is irrelevant, however, given the 90% majority requirement in the NYC-GA, and the ability of members of the Spokes Council to vote in the NYC-GA.

The “Spokes Council”

The newly formed Spokes Council claims to adhere to the “statement of principles” adopted by the New York City General Assembly, including “direct-democracy, non-hierarchy, participation, and inclusion.”

The Spokes Council differs from the NYC-GA, however, in three main respects: the Spokes Council has the power to exclude new groups that don’t receive a 90% majority vote for admission; in the NYC-GA, everybody technically has the right to speak, whereas in the Spokes Council each Working Group has a spokesperson, who can be recalled only by a 90% majority; and the NYC-GA allows one vote per person, whereas the Spokes Council operates more indirectly, granting each Working Group one vote.

When I pointed out the contradictions these differences present to the Council's stated principles, the leaders of Sunday's teach-in insisted that the Spokes Council was the most participatory, democratic organization possible — the same slogan they repeated last month about the General Assembly. I felt like I was watching a local production of Animal Farm.

I've attended two mock Spokes Councils in the past month.

At the Spokes Council in Washington Square Park on October 15, the unelected facilitators set the agenda: Occupy Washington Square Park.

Then they set the terms of debate, breaking the group into three circles: those who wanted to occupy and possibly get arrested, those who wanted there to be an occupation and would assist those being arrested, and those who wanted to build the movement in other ways. I went with the third group.

The facilitators told each group to elect a facilitator, a note-taker, and a spokesperson who would read the notes from each group's meeting.

Almost immediately, one of the members of the OWS inner-circle asked my group if anybody had a problem if she facilitated. Nobody objected, so she was "elected." Although she was in the one group that opposed occupying Washington Square Park, she lectured us about the need to occupy public parks.

I was vocal in my group, arguing that the fundamental problem in our hierarchical, bureaucratic society is the lack of a truly democratic, dialogic way of relating to one another — not that public parks close at midnight.

I repeated the arguments I had raised in previous General Assemblies, concluding that OWS' main goal should be to develop dialogic, democratic methods in the occupied areas, and to extend this way of life into every home, workplace and school, and in local, regional, national and international bodies.

My advocacy for radical democracy wasn't particularly popular.

Ironically, the predominantly middle-class, white men leading the movement claim that their hostility to democracy is in the interest of "protecting minorities," referring to oppressed genders, races, classes, ages, and nations.

Far from being "minorities," these people make up the majority of the world's population; the worldwide outcry for democracy vitiates the paternalistic notion that the oppressed need "protection."

The discussion turned to which locations the movement should occupy, ignoring the question of whether occupation for the sake of occupation was a good idea.

I suggested teaming with evicted tenants and former homeowners to occupy foreclosed homes, abandoned apartments and unsold condos — an act that would strike at the heart of the economic crisis, and endear the movement to the oppressed.

This idea generated a lot of support, but was not repeated by my “spokesperson” when the groups reconvened.

At the teach-in on Sunday the 23rd, one of the leaders’ main gripes — rightfully so — was that the NYC-GA was inefficient and dominated by society’s vocal minorities, particularly middle-class white men. The underlying cause is not eliminated by the Spokes Council, but is in fact exacerbated by it.

The major flaw of the General Assembly is the need for a 90% majority to pass proposals. This “modified consensus” ensures the continuation of the dominant culture through the passage of only the most conservative measures.

In the Spokes Council, proposals can be blocked by 11% of the members of 11% of the Working Groups, meaning that a minority of 1.2% can stymie the will of 98.8% majority.

Instead of cutting to the structural and psychological core of oppression, the proponents of the Spokes Council merely apply a topical cream by demanding that no WG have the same spokesperson more than once a week.

The leaders of OWS seem to understand that a genuinely revolutionary movement would lead to deepening involvement by oppressed communities.

The leaders then try to reverse-engineer a revolution by consistently choosing among the few people of color and women involved in OWS to be its spokespeople and facilitators, as if this token involvement will guarantee a genuine revolutionary movement.

In fact, tokenism obscures the need for systematic change by misrepresenting the demographics of OWS. Tokenism also gives the leaders of OWS an argument to fall back upon when confronted with the fact that they have thus far been unable to mobilize and involve most of the 99%.

The Spokes Council, in fact, doesn’t have enough regard for working people, students and people with dependents to have one of their three weekly meetings on a weekend afternoon.

Instead of ensuring broad participation of traditionally marginalized and oppressed communities, OWS limits participation to individuals from these communities who are privileged enough to be able to spend three workdays a week at Zuccotti Park.

The participation of oppressed people in oppressive organizations is not a step towards liberation, but is the deepening of their complicity in their own domination.

The unabated war on women and people of color in America, during Obama’s presidency, with Hillary Clinton as his Secretary of State, is a testament to the structural and psychological nature of oppression, and the inability for spokespeople to represent the oppressed.

My Address To The General Assembly:

“Before I Could Finish, The Facilitators And Other Members Of The OWS Inner Circle Started Shouting Over Me”

After the Structure WG’s teach-in ended, I put together a short summary of what I’d heard.

I waited for two hours while the General Assembly slowly got to the announcements--the only part of the NYC-GA open for anyone to participate.

When my turn came to speak, I brought up the plans of “the leaders of the allegedly leaderless movement” to commandeer the half-million dollars sent to the General Assembly for their new, exclusive, undemocratic, representational organization.

Before I could finish, the facilitators and other members of the OWS inner circle started shouting over me.

Amidst the confusion, the human mic stopped projecting what I, or anybody was saying. Because silence was what they were after, the leaders won.

Eventually one of the facilitators regained control of the crowd and explained that I was speaking “opinions, not facts,” which is why I would not be allowed to continue.

He also asserted untruthfully that I had gone over my allotted minute.

Notably, the facilitators and members of the OWS inner circle regularly ignore time restrictions.

This reaction shouldn’t surprise anyone.

It is reasonable to expect any undemocratic organization to be co-opted eventually by a vocal minority or charismatic individual.

On Friday, October 29, the proposal to create the Spokes Council was put to the NYC-GA for a fifth time, and finally received a 90% majority.

The facilitators assisted the process by denying two vocal critics of the Spokes Council their allotted time to speak against it.

Sometimes it snows before the leaves have fallen.

The ineffective and increasingly symbolic NYC-GA will most likely continue to hang around as long as the people who congregate in Zuccotti Park hold out hope for a more participatory, democratic society.

The Spokes Council will only be more effective in its exclusiveness..

Let’s hope the inclusive spirit driving the Occupy movement is not frozen out.

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“We Must Make Every Possible Use Of The One Slogan That Can Unite The Army With The Revolutionary People: ‘Down With The War!’”

“We Must Do This So That The Officers, On The Decisive Day, Will Not Be Able To Trust The Soldiers, And The Soldiers Will Have The Same Distrust Of Their Officers”

“The Result Is That Nothing Remains But Mechanical Discipline; There Is No Longer Any Faith That Things Must, Or Even Can, Continue In The Old Way”

“Everything Else Depends On The Street, Where The Last Remnants Of The Hypnosis Induced By The Barracks Will Dissolve In The Revolutionary Enthusiasm Of The People”



Military veterans walk past the New York Stock Exchange during a march to join the Occupy Wall Street protest at Zucotti Park in New York City, 11/02/11. (photo: Robert Deutsch/USA Today)

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

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.

Soldiers and sailors were sent to the East without any hope of victory.

And when an army loses faith in its own invincibility, it is already halfway to losing faith in the invincibility of the social order it serves.

The one leads to the other.

In the current war, tsarism has shown itself for what it really is.

War is an event that focuses not just the public interest, but also the professional interest of the army. Our ships are slower; our guns have a more limited range; our soldiers are illiterate; our non-commissioned officers have neither compass nor map; our troops are barefooted, naked and hungry; our Red Cross steals; the commissariats steal — and the news and rumours of all this naturally penetrate the army and find eager listeners.

Every such rumor acts like an acid that eats away at the corrosion of moral drill.

Years of propaganda work during peacetime could never accomplish what is achieved by a single day of warfare.

The result is that nothing remains but mechanical discipline; there is no longer any faith that things must, or even can, continue in the old way.

The less faith there is in autocracy, the greater is the likelihood of faith in the enemies of autocracy.

We must make the most of this state of mind.

We must explain to the soldiers the meaning of the mass working-class action being prepared by the Party.

We must fix this knowledge in their consciousness with a continuous stream of pamphlets.

We must make every possible use of the one slogan that can unite the army with the revolutionary people: 'Down with the war!'

We must do this so that the officers, on the decisive day, will not be able to trust the soldiers, and the soldiers will have the same distrust of their officers.

Everything else depends on the street, where the last remnants of the hypnosis induced by the barracks will dissolve in the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people.

Of course, it is easier to fire over people's heads than to refuse to fire altogether or to hand over one's rifle to the insurgent masses. That is a fact.

But the difference is not so great as it may first appear to be.

The same soldier who yesterday fired into the air will tomorrow hand over his rifle to a worker, provided he is confident that the people are not just being 'rebellious' but are able and determined to hold the bridges until they win recognition of their rights.

That confidence can and will be instilled in the soldiers by the numbers and the enthusiasm of the crowds in the street, supported by the entire people, and by the news of simultaneous action throughout every region of Russia.

Therefore, in order for the proletariat's political strike, once transformed into demonstration by the entire people, to become the starting point for a victorious revolution, a sympathetic attitude must be widespread throughout the army.

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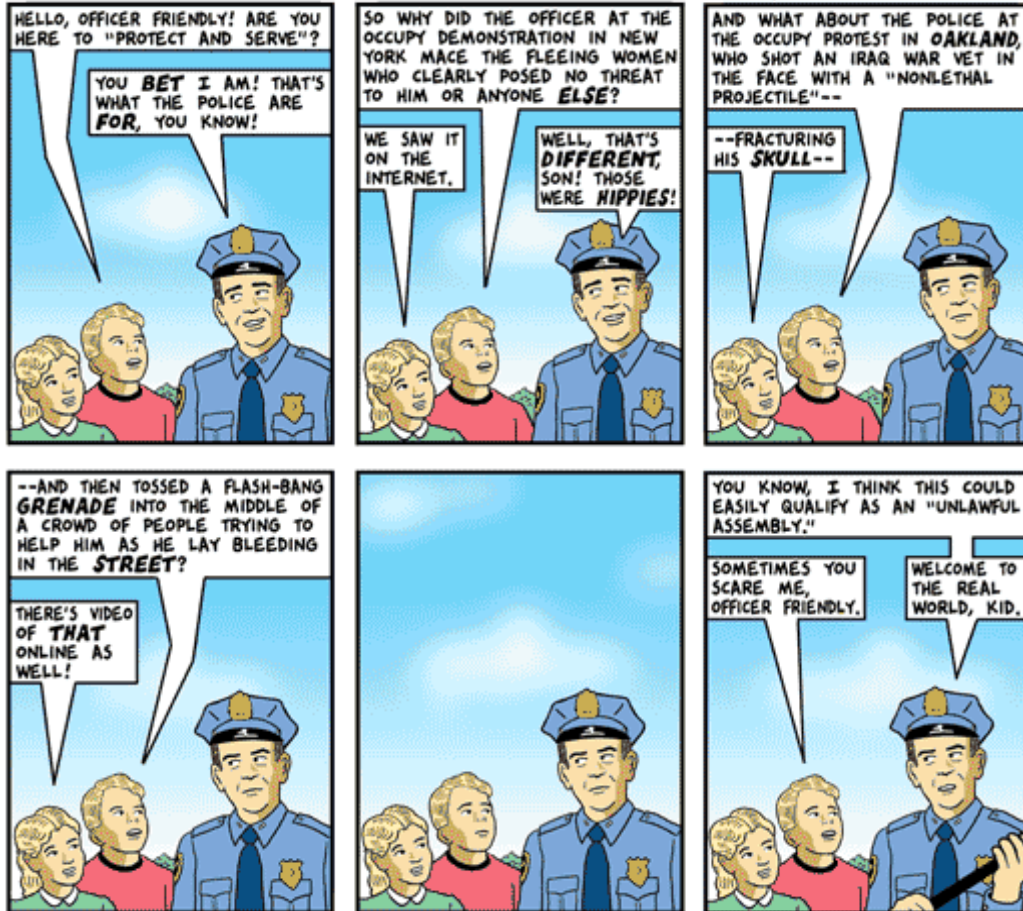
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DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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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: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Win One For Our Side: Ohio Voters Repeal Law Attacking Union Rights: “The Idea That Fire Fighters And Teachers Are Overpaid Is Preposterous”

NOVEMBER 9, 2011 By KRIS MAHER and JACK NICAS, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Voters on Tuesday defeated by a wide margin a law that would have restricted the powers of unions representing teachers, police officers and other public-sector workers.

The law would have stripped the state’s 350,000 public employees of most of their collective-bargaining rights and forced workers to pay at least 15% of their health-care costs. With 97% of precincts reporting, 61% of voters in a referendum voted against the Republican-backed law, known as Senate Bill 5, while 39% supported it

The vote was closely watched beyond Ohio as other states have debated whether to rein in public unions to help governments cut spending on wages and benefits.

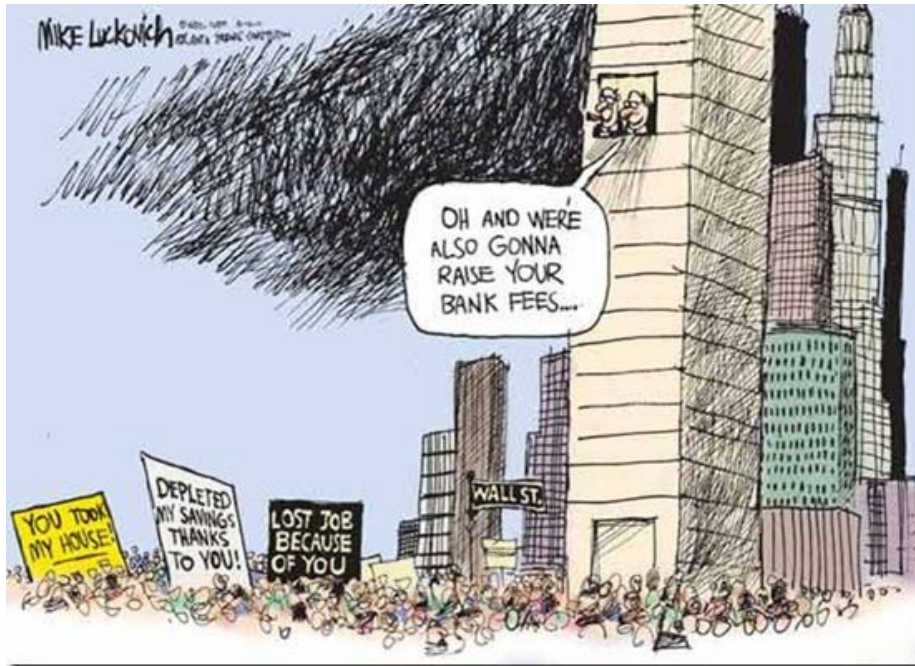
Unions have faced bruising battles with newly elected Republican majorities in various states this year. In Wisconsin, lawmakers passed a law restricting union rights, but they failed to do so in Indiana.

The Ohio law was passed by the legislature and signed by Gov. John Kasich, a Republican, earlier this year. But opponents secured enough voter signatures to force a public vote before it could take effect.

“The idea that fire fighters and teachers are overpaid is preposterous,” said Heather Reese, 25, a student at Ohio State University who voted to repeal the law.

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