

GI SPECIAL 4D3:

NO FLOWERS HERE: TIME TO COME HOME



Celebrating Iraqis hold up a U.S. helmet after a roadside explosion targeting a US Patrol destroyed a Humvee April 2, 2006 in Ramadi, Iraq. (AP Photo/Bilal Hussein)

**Nothing Is More
Important Today Than
Forging New Links With
The Troops Turning
Against This War:**

They Have The Power To Stop It.

[Thanks to Katherine G. Y., Military Project, who contributed a key part of the remarks below. T]

Remarks at the “Exposing the Empire” panel, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester NY, 3.24.06, presented by RIT Antiwar:

Thomas Barton compiles the GI Special newsletter, lives in New York City, and is a hospital worker and union shop steward.

During the American war on Vietnam, Barton helped distribute on Vietnam GI, a monthly newspaper for troops opposed to that war edited by Vietnam Veteran Jeff Sharlet. Ten thousand copies monthly were sent to anti-war troops.

Today, Barton is a member of the Military Project, an organization of veterans and antiwar activists who focus on providing aid and comfort to service personnel who question, oppose or resist U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Good evening brothers and sisters,

It’s an honor to be allowed to speak here today in Rochester.

Things are pretty messed up these days, but that’s not new.

The Biblical prophet Isaiah had this to say to the traitors who ran the government of his day:

“Ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor,

“Ye have eaten up the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

“Thy prices loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards, they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

“How is the faithful city become a harlot,

“It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it,

“But now murderers.”

Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

The good news is how far we have come in a year.

Every day more and more Americans are turning against the war.

Most importantly, resistance is growing inside the armed services as well. Where it really counts.

But you don't have to take my word that's where it really counts.

Let's look at some history.

During the Vietnam War, the anti-war movement at home was necessary to stop the war, but it was not sufficient.

The resistance in Vietnam was necessary to stop the war, but it was not sufficient.

But the rebellion against the war in the armed forces was both necessary and sufficient to stop the war.

And the war stopped.

It was the greatest insurrection against an Imperial war since the rebellion of the Russian army in 1917.

But you don't have to believe me about that, and you shouldn't.

**Check out: Heinl, Jr. Col. Robert D.
THE COLLAPSE OF THE ARMED FORCES
Armed Forces Journal, 1971**

But you don't have to believe Col. Heinl about this, and you shouldn't.

There's a new documentary film, Sir No Sir, opening next month in theaters across America that shows us the war in Vietnam didn't end because the politicians or the rich or the commanders or even the anti-war movement wanted it to end.

The war in Vietnam ended because the troops there rebelled against it wholesale. There were "search and evade missions," arranging private truces with people they didn't see as "the enemy" anymore.

There were flat-out refusals of combat missions. There were more lethal expressions of opposition as well to those in command as well.

And the rebellion spread to the Air Force: pilots refused to bomb. And it spread to the Navy: sailors disabled their ships so they couldn't engage in combat.

In Sir, No Sir, you will meet the Vietnam troops up close and personal, and you will see them with your own eyes, wrecking the war machine until it breaks down completely.

Lots of soldiers can fight in wars.

It takes something very special in soldiers to stop one. Honor and respect to them all.

Respect also to the civilians who forged the links to the anti-war troops, gave them aid and comfort, and helped make that rebellion possible.

**Now it is time for us to follow the instruction of the prophet:
Go thou and do likewise.**

Today, the anti war movement is necessary to stop the war in Iraq, but it is not sufficient.

Today, the Iraqi resistance to Imperial invasion and occupation is necessary to stop the war, but it is not sufficient.

But the coming rebellion in the armed forces will be both necessary and sufficient. It may not come as soon as we might wish, but it will come. And this war will stop.

But you don't have to take my word for that, and you shouldn't.

Here is what one soldier in the 1st ID wrote to GI Special on behalf of a group of anti-war soldiers in Baquaba Iraq:

“Before any soldier risks going to prison he should realize that his ability to communicate with other troops will be limited.

“We choose our battles and continue to speak out in our underground action.

“There has to be a point when we reach a high enough number of troops in our peace effort that a unified boycott of all military action will have a desired effect.”

“A unified boycott of all military action will have a desired effect.”

Think about that.

But you don't have to take his word for it, and you shouldn't.

Thanks to a Zogby poll released this month, you don't have to:

Today we know that 72% of the troops in Iraq say “get out this year,” and 29% are for immediate withdrawal.

What's more important is that because of the publicity about that poll, now those troops know it too.

Think about that.

Now they know there is a new political majority among men and women in arms in Iraq, which may be summarized as follow: this bullshit has gone on too long and it has to stop.

It's only a matter of time before this dawning consciousness finds expression in ways that are unmistakable, and will shake the world.

The Imperial politicians, Republican and Democrat, always knew what Iraq was really about.

They thought they would win an empire of oil.

They have ended by losing their army.

But those troops are not lost to us.

Let all of us opposed to this evil war open our arms to them and say Brothers and Sisters, welcome home.

Welcome home to sanity, decency and honor.

It's time now for Veterans, military family members and responsible civilians to act.

Not talk, act.

Specifically:

To give aid and comfort to members of the regular armed forces, reserves and Guard who are turning against the war.

In New York City, members of Veterans For Peace, Military Families Speak Out, and the Military Project are reaching out to make contact with National Guard soldiers.

Many of them have served in Iraq, some expect to be sent soon. They thank us for coming, for the publications against the war we offer, and so far, not a harsh word spoken.

This can be done anywhere there is a military presence: National Guard, Reserves or regular armed forces, like right here, and a small, or large, group of allies.

Think about that, and where that can lead.

Nothing is more important today than forging new links with the troops turning against this war. They have the power to stop it.

Please, let us all now most solemnly pledge to our brothers and sisters in arms:

We will not turn our back on you.

We will help you do what is necessary to stop this war.

Together, we can end forever the power of the predators who rule America. They have betrayed us all.

If we act together to take back our lives and our futures from those who would steal both, there is no force on earth that can stop us.

We need you by our side.

When you enlisted, you took an oath to defend our liberties.

The time has come.

We must have your protection from the enemies domestic, the Imperial politicians, Republican and Democrat, who hate our liberties.

Without you we are truly lost.

With you, everything is possible.

Now let's get to work.

Thank you for your attention.

<p>What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to thomasfbarton@earthlink.net. Name, I.D., address withheld unless publication requested. Replies confidential.</p>
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IRAQ WAR REPORTS

TWO MND-B PILOTS PRESUMED DEAD

4/2/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-04-02CJ

BAGHDAD, Iraq: Two pilots are presumed dead, but recovery efforts continue following the crash of a Multi-National Division Baghdad AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopter west of Yousifiah at approximately 5:30 p.m. April 1.

As reported earlier, the aircraft was conducting a combat air patrol. Military officials believe the crash was the result of hostile fire.

TWO MND-B SOLDIERS KILLED IN CENTRAL BAGHDAD

4/2/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-04-02CJ

BAGHDAD, Iraq: Two Multi-National Division Baghdad Soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb at approximately 9 p.m. April 1 in central Baghdad.

The two Soldiers were conducting a dismounted patrol when the roadside bomb detonated. No other Soldiers were injured in the attack.

TASK FORCE BAND OF BROTHERS' SOLDIER KILLED IN KIRKUK PROVINCE

4/2/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-04-02CJ

TIKRIT, Iraq: A Task Force Band of Brothers Soldier from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division died from non-battle related injuries sustained while taking part in an operation in the Kirkuk province March 30.

Lemay Woman Killed



3/17/2006 KSDK

A south St. Louis woman was killed in Iraq on Thursday, according to her family. Amanda Pinson was a graduate of Hancock High School.

Pinson graduated from high school in 2002, and joined the Army one year later. She was sent to Iraq in September of 2005.

Pinson's family says she was waiting for a shuttle during her lunch break, when she was fatally wounded by a mortar attack.

While the Pinson family is grieving, they say they will always remember that she was proud to serve her country.

Funeral For Kentucky Soldier



March 31, 2006 WKYT

Family and friends said good-bye today to a Kentucky National Guardsman killed in Iraq.

Staff Sergeant Brock A. Beery was laid to rest in the veterans section at Fairview Cemetery in a ceremony that included a 21-gun salute and the playing of "Taps."

The 30-year-old Beery was a member of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 123rd Armor based in Bowling Green. He was killed on March 23rd when his vehicle ran over a roadside bomb about 80 miles west of Baghdad.

Chaplain Major James Messer called Beery a "common man with uncommon valor." Beery will be posthumously presented the Purple Heart, the Kentucky Distinguished Service Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, the Good Conduct Medal and the Combat Infantry Badge.

He is survived by his wife Sara and a 7-year-old daughter.

Ramadi Attack Destroys Humvee: Casualties Not Announced



Iraqi men lift up the door of a humvee blown onto on a roof by the force of the explosion after an attack by IED on a U.S. Patrol April 2, 2006 in Ramadi. (AP Photo/Bilal Hussein)

Wounded In Action Up 1,200 In 2005

02 April 2006 By David Zucchino, The Los Angeles Times [Excerpts]

In 2005, the number of wounded in Iraq increased by 1,200 from a year earlier. Yet the number of dead remained virtually the same, 844 versus 848 in 2004, dropping the lethality rate from 9.6% to 8.4%. Just over half of those wounded have returned to duty.

The amputation rate in Iraq is double that of previous wars. Many soldiers face the rest of their lives without arms or legs, or with severe brain damage. Even for the wounded who will walk again, and perhaps return to battle, the physical damage, and the psychological scars, last forever.

**REALLY BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
HOPELESS WAR;
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



A U.S. Marine walks past a burned out bus near the Abu Ghraib prison April, 2006.
(AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

TROOP NEWS

**THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



Brian Cox embraces Rosemary Palmer after speaking at funeral services for her son Marine Lance Cpl. Edward 'Augie' Schroeder, 23, at the Church of the Savior United Methodist Church in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, Aug. 15, 2005. Schroeder was one of the 14 Marines from the Brook Park, Ohio-based 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines who were killed in two attacks in Iraq during the first week of August. Cox was a college roommate of Schroeder at Ohio State and considered the Marine his best friend. (AP Photo/Amy Sancetta)

Wounded Lewistown Soldier At Home For R&R

04/02/06 By BECKY SHAY, Billings Gazette:

A Lewistown soldier is home recovering from shrapnel wounds he received in Iraq.

Army Pfc. Ryan Jennings was wounded just before dark on March 14.

Two mortars hit as Jennings and his buddies from the 101st Airborne Division started getting out of trucks at a new patrol base in southern Baghdad.

"There's not much to tell," Jennings said from his family's Lewistown home Saturday evening. "It was pretty fast, pretty quick. It hit, and it was over. They got us inside the patrol base, got us bandaged up and got us on the helicopter."

Jennings, 19, was hit by shrapnel in both of his legs and his left arm. He underwent surgery in Baghdad "to keep the foot from swelling and to close off an artery that (was) severed" in his left ankle.

After one more stop in Iraq, Jennings was flown to hospitals in Germany, Washington, D.C., and his home base, Fort Campbell, Ky., before arriving back in Montana on Saturday.

The shrapnel in his left arm did some nerve damage, and Jennings has lost feeling in his pinkie and ring fingers.

He said doctors expect a full recovery on his legs, but he will have to wait three to six months to see whether nerves reconnect in his arm. If the nerves don't heal in that time, he said, it is likely the damage -- and loss of feeling to his hand -- will be permanent.

Jennings said he is "still hobbling" on crutches and maneuvering a black cast on his leg.

"I'm still trying to get used to walking on the boot," he said.

Jennings said it feels "really good" to be home with his parents, Chris and Denise, and brother, Chase, who is 14.

He had been in Iraq for six months.

Denise Jennings said not being able to see her wounded son has been difficult.

"We only got two calls, and they were from him in between surgeries," she said. "Not knowing was the worst part."

Jennings will be home for about three weeks. He will fly back to Fort Campbell to have the dozens of staples and stitches removed from his leg. Denise Jennings said he will have more leave after that procedure to continue healing.

Jennings joined the Army Reserve as a junior in high school. After boot camp that year, he came home and enlisted in the active Army.

"He knew what he was headed for," Denise Jennings said.

Jennings said his desire to serve stemmed from the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

"I just wanted to help fight terrorism," he said.

Jennings said much of soldiers' effort right now is doing public relations with the Iraqis.

"We're trying to get the Iraqis to trust us," he said and added progress is being made, "but there's still a long way to go."

The soldiers look forward to letters and packages from home, he said.

"Mail is a pretty big deal," he said.

Denise Jennings, whose mother died last week, said now that Ryan is home, "everything is getting back to normal, as much as it can." Her son knows he is safe at home, she said, but he wants everyone to remember his buddies who are still in harm's way.

"He's just real concerned that (people) remember everybody who is still out there," she said.

“Rumsfeld's Arrogance And Incompetence Have Done Unprecedented Damage To The Military”

<p>Contrary advice, especially from a uniformed expert in the subject of combat power, is met with swift retribution. Telling the truth in Rumsfeld's Pentagon will get you in trouble quicker than a tour of duty in Iraq's Triangle of Death.</p>
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03/31/2006 Joe Galloway, Knight Ridder [Excerpts]

Anyone else might be embarrassed when not one but two detailed studies of the way he's doing business conclude that his plans and assumptions are totally wrong, but not Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

A recent Rand Corp. study commissioned by the Pentagon of the U.S. Army in this time of war concluded that without an increase in manpower the Army "simply cannot sustain the force levels needed to break the back of the insurgent movement" in Iraq. Yet another study, conducted by the Defense Department's own Institute for Defense Analyses, concluded that the Army's Transformation program, intended to add combat brigades without boosting manpower, cuts the number of maneuver battalions in those brigades while adding more headquarters troops.

"The essence of land power is resident in the maneuver battalions that occupy terrain, control populations and fight battles, not in headquarters and enablers," the IDA study said. "Yet the Army plan reduces the number of maneuver battalions by 20 percent below the number available in 2003, while increasing headquarters by 11.5 percent."

It's of interest that when budget time came around this year, Rumsfeld told the service chiefs that they could have manpower increases or money for weapons systems. One or the other, but not both. The service chiefs, to a man, opted for money to throw at defense contractors for weapons systems that were designed 20 or 30 years ago for the Cold War, or that haven't been designed at all.

From the beginning of his current tour as defense secretary, Rumsfeld has shown an amazing ability to hear only advice that agrees with him.

Contrary advice, especially from a uniformed expert in the subject of combat power, is met with swift retribution. Telling the truth in Rumsfeld's Pentagon will get you in trouble quicker than a tour of duty in Iraq's Triangle of Death.

Rumsfeld's arrogance and incompetence have done unprecedented damage to the military in a time of peril that won't end when he leaves town.

Those who've lived long enough may recall that it took a long, difficult decade and more to repair the damage that was done to our military during another unpopular war in Vietnam.

Haley: VA Hospital From Hell

March 8, 2006 By PAUL DE LA GARZA, Times Staff Writer

TAMPA: Federal officials have broadened an investigation of patient care and management at James A. Haley VA Medical Center into "possible criminal charges" against members of the hospital's police department.

The new allegations include charges of civil rights violations and identity theft by VA police.

In the civil rights matter, Sgt. Darryl Ross allegedly struck a female suspect who was handcuffed while in police custody.

Hospital staff members also allege that VA police used the FBI's National Crime Information Center to steal people's identities and run up as much as \$30,000 in credit card charges.

At least one officer lost his job.

The investigation of the police department marks the second time in as many months that Haley, the nation's busiest VA hospital, has caught the eye of the inspector general.

In February, investigators began looking into charges of poor patient care at the hospital and at a contract with the University of South Florida.

A chief complaint is that patients routinely were placed under anesthesia in the operating room while surgeons tended to personal matters.

Investigators also are reviewing the contract worth more than \$300,000 that required USF staffers to perform heart surgeries at Haley.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

02 Apr 2006 (Reuters) & AFP & (KUNA)

Four Iraqi soldiers were killed and five others wounded in the explosion of two bombs in areas located west and southwest of Kirkuk, a police source said.

The source told KUNA three soldiers were killed and another was wounded in the explosion of a roadside bomb planted on the Huweijah-Riyadh road, west of Kirkuk. The explosion also damaged the power line of a nearby village.

The source said the second explosion targeted a convoy of the Iraqi army escorting a group of Iraqi contractors on the Kirkuk-Biji road southwest of Kirkuk. One soldier was killed and five others were wounded in this explosion.

Three policemen were wounded when a roadside bomb hit their patrol in the oil refinery of Baiji, 180 km north of Baghdad.

In Khadra, a policeman was shot dead.

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

GET THE MESSAGE?



Iraqi's look at the wreck of a humvee hit by a roadside bomb April 2, 2006 in Ramadi.
(AP Photo/Bilal Hussein)

**“A National Movement, Which
Opposes Occupation And
Sectarianism, Has Developed”**

23 - 29 March 2006 Hana Al-Bayaty, Al-Ahram Weekly [Excerpt]

Since the very day the occupation forces came to Iraq and the Iraqi state collapsed, there has been an uprising by all Iraqi movements and organisations;

including those defending women, or unemployed youth, human rights organisations, trade unions, professional syndicates, agencies defending environmental issues and the rights of prisoners, and all other cultural and political organisations, side-by-side with provincial and tribal communities and peaceful and armed resistance groups.

A national movement, which opposes occupation and sectarianism, has developed. It took various forms, from civil to armed resistance.

One does not contradict the other but rather supports the other in its own choice of struggle.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Search And Destroy Dignity



From: Richard Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: March 28, 2006

Search and Destroy Dignity

Young woman being arrested for civil disobedience at the White House on September 26, 2005.

Of all the protesters I photographed that day, this woman reached into my soul.

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran

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

A Review of Anthony Arnove's "Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal"

"We Have More In Common With The Iraqi Resistance And Its Supporters Than We Do With The Politicians And Generals Running This War"

April 1, 2006 By RON JACOBS, Counterpunch

Coherent.

That's the one word review of Anthony Arnove's latest book, Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal.

Incoherent.

That's what Washington's policy in Iraq seems to be.

What makes Arnove's book so important is that he dissects that policy and proves that the war in Iraq is not an incoherent bumble that's gone awry.

In fact, as Arnove makes abundantly clear, it's US foreign policy as it's always been.

This remains the case even in the light of Condoleezza Rice's admission of thousands of tactical errors. After all, Ms. Rice didn't admit that the war itself was an error, only the manner in which it is fought.

As the war drags interminably on and people continue to die, the antiwar movement in the US is still fumbling around questions of timetables and demands.

One element of the movement has hitched itself to the progressive wing of the Democratic party, a connection that has stifled that element's ability to make the

only reasonable demand an antiwar movement can make: Get out of Iraq now and bring the occupying troops home.

The rest of us in the movement continue to make this demand, but seem to go unheard. Part of the reason for this lies in the fact that our allies do have those connections in the public mind to the Democrats, but the greater reason is our inability to mobilize the broader mass of the US public--a public that opinion polls tell us is overwhelmingly opposed to the continuation of the war.

Like the similarly titled book written in 1966 about the US war in Vietnam by Arno's inspiration and collaborator Howard Zinn, *Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal*, is not a shrill exercise in rhetoric. It isn't full of make love not war sentiment or calls to hit the barricades with your black bandannas and gas masks.

It is exactly what it says it is: a logical, point-by-point argument to the world as to why we need to insist that US troops leave Iraq immediately. There is passion in these pages, but it is the passion of pure logic in the defense of humanity and the earth we live on.

Well-researched and well-spoken, the reasonableness of Arno's presentation does more than expose the madness of the men and women who are running this war, it peels away the madness of the system that those men and women work for.

It is this element of the book that goes beyond a mere call to end this war.

One of the debates within the movement, especially among the liberals and some leftists, is how much of the conversation should be about empire. Arno argues that because of the economic and geopolitical reasons behind the US invasion and occupation of Iraq, the occupation can only truly end when the antiwar movement understands that it must be an anti-imperialist movement.

Like Mark Twain and his circle of anti-imperialist activists back in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Arno wants the reader to understand that it is the needs of the financial system we live in that demands that our men and women go off to kill and die. He does this patiently and clearly, without a hint of self-righteousness.

Although there is a part of me that sees war as completely lacking in logic and reason, I also understand that the reasons wars are fought are completely logical if one accepts their underlying premise.

If the war is one fought to expand and maintain an empire, than that premise is that any resource or place that will help in that task is fair game. That is the logic that informs Washington, just like it was the logic that informed all empires before it.

As noted above, it is not a logic that has the best interests of the occupied people or the people whose children make up the occupier's army in mind. The only logical endeavor that benefits those people is immediate withdrawal.

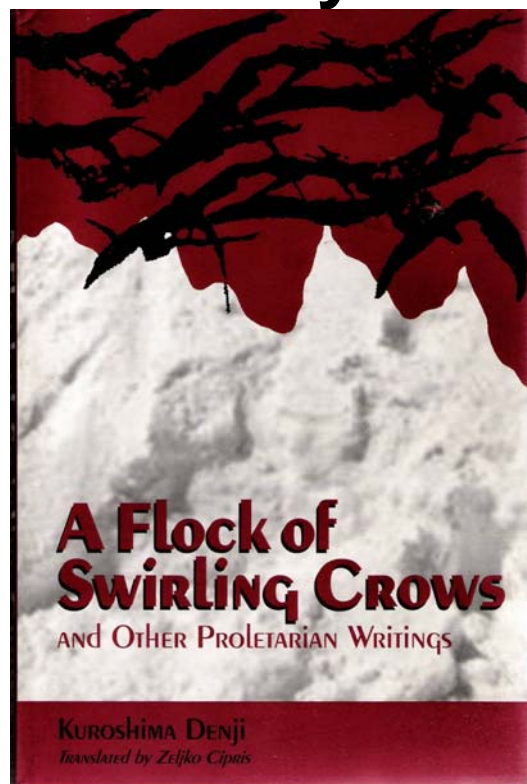
Furthermore, it is also why we in the US and Britain have more in common with the Iraqi resistance and its supporters than we do with the politicians and generals running this war.

Of course, while this may be apparent to antiwar activists that understand the true reasons and nature of this war, it is not apparent to most people. Partially because of that, even many people who opposed the war before it began are uncertain about the timetable for leaving it. Arno's book is an extremely capable and very readable introduction to the argument for immediate and unconditional withdrawal.

Not only does he list the reasons that Washington really began this war, he provides a compelling and coherent list of reasons why we should get the hell out. This compact and comprehensive text needs to reach as many people as possible. Buy it and share it. Ask your library to purchase it.

Ron Jacobs is author of The Way the Wind Blew: a history of the Weather Underground, which is just republished by Verso. Jacobs' essay on Big Bill Broonzy is featured in CounterPunch's new collection on music, art and sex, Serpents in the Garden. He can be reached at: rjacobs3625@charter.net

What Did They Do It For?! **Whom Did They Do It For?!**



MILITARIZED STREETS is a fact-based novel banned by the Japanese imperial government in 1930, and censored by the US occupation authorities in 1945.

It has been fully translated by Zeljko Cipris from the Japanese in D. Kuroshima, *A Flock of Swirling Crows & Other Proletarian Writings*, published by the University of Hawaii Press, 2005.

The scene: Tsinan (Jinan), China

Time: spring 1928, during a Japanese military intervention

Author: Kuroshima (1898-1943), once a soldier in Japan's imperial army, lifelong antimilitarist and anti-imperialist

Chapter 29

The airplanes appeared. Approaching the city airspace, they dropped one black lump after another, like birds shitting in flight. The objects streaked through the air and shook the ground with detonations. An air raid!

There were three aircraft, flying in a V-formation. They flew in a wide circle over the city as though searching for an old nest. They reached the western suburb. One of the airplanes suddenly burst open like a glass bead. A shower of sparks shot from it. Spitting black smoke, blazing, wings breaking apart, it plummeted to the ground.

The street fighting was over. The exhausted soldiers received two and a half days of rest. They drank sake and in two days smoked up the cigarettes they had gone without for a week.

Chinese corpses lay sprawled throughout the streets. A sour stench fouled the air. Countless flies buzzed. Shaggy-haired stray dogs and beggars, both licking their lips, wandered cheerfully among the corpses, the dogs wagging their tails. The sky-piercing antenna of a blown-up radio station was broken in the middle, leaning, about to fall. No one turned to look. No one repaired it. People black as earth were scraping into buckets the brain matter from skulls that lay beneath it.

Suddenly: Moving out! It was four in the morning, a time when weariness starts to give way to sensuous desire. The soldiers were roughly awakened.

Kakimoto had scraped his shin jumping into a Chinese factory through its stone window. His sock, pressed by the legging, rubbed against the festering wound he had daubed with iodine. He limped into line. The eastern sky was just starting to grow white.

They were to attack ramparts forty feet high, forty feet wide, and seven miles in circumference: orders from a bitterly cold company commander; invisible faces. Lieutenant Shigefuji walked gripping his military sword. Some of the barbed wire having been shoved aside, the soldiers passed through the narrow opening and marched in a column along the line of telegraph poles.

The road was wet with dew. There was utter silence. Only the rhythmic crunching of the men's shoes broke the stillness and was swallowed up by the dark sky. On the western side of S Hospital, responding to quiet authoritative orders, artillerymen were placing guns into position with a clatter of wheels. The soldiers silently marched on. Bluish clouds dyed purple by the red sunrise were gently drifting. It grew bright.

The house whose roof had been smashed by the downed aircraft crouched like a crab with a crushed shell. There was no one around but soldiers. The house looked devoid of life. The surrounding grass had been trampled out of recognition.

Gradually the faces of Takatori, Kitani, Nasu, and others grew distinct. They were walking like wooden dolls, shouldering rifles, knapsacks and mess tins clinging to their backs.

Kakimoto, in addition to dreading the war, felt sick with worry that his aunt Nakanojo might have had her child killed, her house plundered, and been left homeless and hungry. To have come all the way here, and then been unable to help her in any way at all! Takatori and his comrades had a reason for walking like mindless wooden dolls. They were putting up with a great deal.

The company entered a devastated street. Windowpanes, doors, walls, and roofs -- all had been destroyed. A woman's rattan clog struck against a military shoe. The soldiers turned past a tall solid stone house and wall to emerge onto a broad and desolate grassy plain. Obliquely they cut across it. Once more they passed through the rubble of what had been houses. They wound along the narrow streets.

Suddenly the sun rose radiantly bright among the jagged ruined roofs. Fragments of cloud that had been scattered throughout the sky vanished without a trace. Again it would get hot! The entire wreckage stood out illuminated intensely by the sun.

The company came out onto a main road. This led in a straight line to the outer gate of the stronghold. A Sun in the Blue-Sky flag fluttered from a structure beyond the gate.

From somewhere a signal was heard. Far to the rear, from the vicinity of the artillery emplacement, gunfire roared out. Shells moaned through the sky and exploded ahead. In response, continuous gunfire commenced from the opposite, eastern direction. Kakimoto's calves twitched and trembled. Then his entire body began to shiver.

This is when it happened. Suddenly the company column was fired upon from the flank. The company commander heard several shots crack just above his head. They came from the second floor of T Hospital. Kakimoto heard them too. The shots ceased.

"Oh, no! What a place to be ambushed from!" the special-duty sergeant major exclaimed sadly, taking cover behind an acacia. The soldiers looked at each other. Wry

smiles spontaneously creased their faces. At the same time, they heard the company commander's startled order to spread out.

"Now he'll be ordering us to attack this place too."

Takatori grinned meaningfully at the stocky Tamada. Kakimoto heard him too.

"And what the hell for? No one will be there."

Tamada raised his head and surveyed the two-story hospital.

While he was still eying it, the right flank, headed by Lieutenant Shigefuji, broke through the doors and with bayonets and rifles thrust out before them charged into the interior, which reeked of disinfectant. Other soldiers poured in after them.

Nurses in white flickered before their eyes. Patients were lying in beds. Pleurisy, nephritis, gastric ulcers, cardiac valve disease -- there were separate departments for internal medicine and surgery. The doors dividing the many rooms were banged open one after another. Muddy shoes jumped atop beds. The operating table's thick glass shattered into a web of cracks.

In the record written at the time, this incident was described as follows: "Regiment number XXX, steadily approaching fortification gate under cover of darkness, was suddenly subjected to heavy Chinese fire from T hospital to north, placing it in extreme danger. But considering said building's nature as hospital, temporary dilemma ensued concerning appropriate countermeasures. Situation growing acute, however, and cognizant hesitation would inevitably result in numerous casualties from random fire. Captain N employed section of unit to destroy enemy elements. In view of acute conditions, taken measures were truly unavoidable." And so forth.

Thirty minutes later, the soldiers pulled out of the hospital, unpleasant memories seared into their brains.

Throughout the following day they could not stop thinking about it.

The next day too, they could not stop thinking about it.

Kakimoto's movements were sluggish and seemed reluctant. He was absorbed in thoughts he himself could hardly understand.

"A sick child was stabbed against the wall. And then with the blood gushing out of its chest, the child wobbled and crouched on the floor. Can such things be done! Can such things happen!"

He was tormented by something like remorse. "That pale woman was sleeping in bed, mouth open, knowing nothing... A small triangular hole opened up in her blanket. And the woman is sleeping, never to awaken... My hands trembled then. My arms were suddenly drained of strength! Even such things we were made to do!"

Once more they formed a column and proceeded toward the fort. The assault was already at its height. Bang! Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta! Machine guns inside and outside the fort hailed each other and rattled away in rapid succession. No sooner did the noise stop for an instant than it rang out once more. Howitzer shells were bursting against the walls.

The faces of Takatori, Tamada, Matsushita and the others were looking sullen. Even Kuraya from the training institute was glum and sunken in thought. "That's right, they're all weighed down by unpleasant memories!" thought Kakimoto.

These members of the lowest class, the ones who held the blades and did the killing directly, were unable to fathom for whose sake it was that they killed. They had been possessed by someone.

Their fellow Japanese had been massacred. Their homes had been stripped down to the last plank. To them, this seemed to be the only issue.

And so they felt a passionate anger and thirst for revenge that demanded multiple retaliation for every person killed.

It was undeniable that the passionate anger and thirst for revenge were a prominent factor in the killing of the "enemy."

It was this anger that impelled them to kick the corpses of the slain Chinese -- slain Chinese whose numbers exceeded those of the Japanese killed in the street fighting by about fifteen to one.

What did they do it for?!

Whom did they do it for?!

[Thanks to the brother who sends in these selections. To be continued. T)



A Chinese hospital in Tsinan after the Japanese troops finished rampaging through it, massacring patients and staff. Library of Congress

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

**“I Am A Combat Veteran For
Peace”**

**“I Am Not, And Shall Not Be, An
OXYMORON!!!!”**

From: Billy Kelly
To: GI Special
Sent: March 28, 2006
Subject: My Iraqi 'Flower' Ator

Salaam Aleichem My Peace Warriors & Comrades,

I have just finished reading Ward Reilly's letter from a friend in Iraq. It reminded me of some letters I received from my 'god-daughter' Ator who also is living in an earthly hell solely caused by the despicable, cowardly REMF leadership we, the Americans, have 'chosen' to rule the world.

Ator is just one of millions who now suffer from our collective hubris. Her last letter is long and written in a stream-of-consciousness mode. I would encourage all to read and remember that her predicament has been caused by 'our' nation. I hope it re-inforces all to keep up the good fight to end this obscenity. And...prevent those that might follow! We will win if we do not give up!

I, John Grant, Michael McPhearson, Sean Dougherty (Kelly's dad and a Vet from America's last great debacle in Viet Nam) and Fernando Suarez del Solar (whose son Jesus was killed/murdered in Iraq 3 years ago yesterday, 27 March 2003) travelled to Iraq about 9 months into the occupation. The first excerpt was written in 2004. I keep it in my 'rubber-band' wallet at all times. It keeps me moving when I get the 'blues'.

(Written in 2004 & printed in GI Special)

As an aside, our little group had some great, courageous Iraqis (It probably is not very wise to be seen with Americans at this juncture) helping us with translation and getting about town.

One, Ator, was a sparkling young girl of great humor, intellect and wisdom beyond her years. I kept in touch with her but, after a spell of silence and a few horrific bombings in Baghdad, I asked her for a few words of reassurance. Her reply:

“hey uncle billy,

surprise I am still alive. yes i am ok outside but barley alive inside i have 2 of my friends' brothers killed and 2 of my friends' brothers have their legs and arms cut so how should i feel i feel nothing do you know i know that some thing very bad will happen ... i can not say any more ..

maybe later...

bye

ator”

How does one respond to that?

The academic, abstract debates rage on in our society. Much well-meaning pontificating.

But what about Ator?

Should she not have a say in those decisions that affect her so imminently and immediately? Does her 'reality', the constant ‘terror’ she lives in, ever enter into the minds of our leadership? Do they really give a damn about her?

Who speaks for Ator?

And who spoke for Jesus? Fernando’s proud Marine son, who is now dead?

A few years ago, we were informed of the deeds of the 'greatest' generation. Yet, when that generation took its place of leadership, it failed us in Viet Nam.

I am now of the age of leadership and I will be damned if I sit by idly and fail our soldiers in Iraq. And, fail the Iraqis as our leaders once failed the Vietnamese populace.

If not a veteran of war, who else has the moral position to speak out? And with our knowledge of the reality, who else has the greatest duty?

“But success in the mainstream will not come without first building independent strength. Courage, like fear, is contagious, and those who are afraid to be themselves can never persuade others of the justice of their cause.” Jonathan Schell, The Nation

Would our ‘leaders’ have heeded that old maxim of the docs, “First, do no harm”.

In 2004, Ator and family moved to Damascus to try to escape the maelstrom in Baghdad. During that time she married and this past January she gave birth to a beautiful daughter, Ornina. She is once again living in Iraq.

I am a combat Veteran For Peace.

I am not, and shall not be, an OXYMORON!!!!

Hoa Binh,
Billy Kelly

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

OCCUPATION REPORT



An elderly Iraqi citizen walks away as foreign fighters from the USA raid his home and interrogate his wife near the Abu Ghraib prison April 1, 2006. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and tormenting the citizens with force of arms to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?

"In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit," said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay's Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday's raid. "Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead."

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

So Much For That "Sovereignty" Bullshit:

"Alarmed" Rice Goes To Baghdad: "She Did Not Answer A Reporter's Question About Whether She Would Tell The Prime Minister He Is Through"

[Thanks to H who sent this in. He writes: **The mask is completely off now. The bush regime didn't plan to give the Iraqi People even the smallest shred of democracy. They can't even fake it anymore. Game over bush regime; you loose.**]

April 2, 2006 The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq: The top U.S. and British diplomats made a surprise trip to Iraq on Sunday to prod the country's struggling leaders to end nearly four months of wrangling and form a new government.

"We're going to urge that the negotiations be wrapped up," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said as she and British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw flew overnight to the Iraqi capital for meetings with the current interim government and ethnic and religious power brokers.

Rice and Straw were meeting with President Jalal Talabani, Vice President Adil Abdul-Mahdi, Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari and other leaders.

The diplomats' visit comes amid growing pressure on al-Jaafari to step aside as the Shiite nominee for a second term to break the stalemate in talks on forming a new government.

Before sitting down with al-Jaafari, Rice and Straw posed for pictures with stiff smiles. Rice looked especially uncomfortable, and said little before the cameras were ushered away.

She did not answer a reporter's question about whether she would tell the prime minister he is through.

Rice and Straw, who had been in northern England, arrived during a driving rain and thunderstorm at a time when U.S. officials here have been expressing increasing impatience with the slow pace of government talks following the Dec. 15 elections.

Al-Jaafari, a physician who spent years in exile in Iran and Britain, edged out Vice President Adil Abdul-Mahdi for the nomination during an alliance caucus in February thanks to the support of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

The prospect of a prime minister politically beholden to the vehemently anti-American [translation: anti-Bush military dictatorship occupying his country] al-Sadr has alarmed both Iraqi and U.S. officials.

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

<http://www.williambowles.info/gispecial/2006/index.html>;

http://robinlea.com/GI_Special/; <http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>;

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/; <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>;

<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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