

# GIs Resist War – Then ... and Now

By Susan Galleymore

Resistance comes in many forms: passive and active, individual and collective, organized and unorganized, violent and non-violent, and more. Our world offers examples of all of these...if we seek them. One of the best-kept secrets of our times is GI resistance against the Vietnam War. It took place in barracks and on aircraft carriers, in army stockades, navy brigades, and the towns around military bases. It penetrated West Point, spread through the battlefields and by 1971 had “infested the entire armed services.” Like the resistance developing today, it began with a few heroic individuals who were willing to stand up and express the questions and understandings that the war was generating among those sent to fight it.

Until the film, *Sir, No Sir*, most Americans had forgotten or never heard about GI resistance to *that* war. Today, there’s budding GI resistance to *this* war, the so-called Endless Global War on Terror. It hasn’t blossomed fully yet, but the ground is fertile and the

roots are deep. Indicators suggest it will be active, individual, non-violent ... and persistent. GIs in growing numbers are saying “no” to illegal war, refusing to deploy, and leaving their bases.

Official Pentagon numbers state that about 40,000 troops from all branches of the military have gone Absent without Leave (AWOL) or UA (Unexcused Absence) since 2000. Unofficial numbers are much higher: counselors at GI Rights Hotline (1-800-394-9544) report that over 75% of the calls they answer concern troops already AWOL/UA or about to go AWOL/UA. In 2005 alone, the Hotline answered over 38,000 calls.

AWOL and UA describe service member resistance: Soldiers (in the Army, National Guard, and Individual Ready Reserve) “go AWOL;” Marines, Sailors, or Airmen (in the Navy, USAF or USMC) “go UA.” Initially, none is a “deserter,” as this describes service members who never intend to turn themselves back in to the military. AWOLs and UAs fully intend to turn themselves back into the military – within the time period required by the military branch. While many nuances pertain, the distinction between

AWOL/UA and deserter is not mere semantics: the maximum penalty for desertion during wartime is execution.

If it’s impossible to describe all the reasons why troops go AWOL/UA, it is possible to highlight a common theme: incompatibility with the military institution. By the time they go AWOL/UA, most service members have exhausted the military’s processes for redress -- with little success. Most find the AWOL/UA option worth the risk.

A few of the current GI resisters include the following brave people (listed alphabetically):

## Agustin Aguayo, 1st Armored Division

After a year as a medic in Iraq, Agustin applied for Conscientious Objector status, and was refused. When he was threatened with forced return to the combat zone, he went AWOL, then turned himself in. He was returned to his base in Germany to face court martial. Agustin stated, “I have come to believe that it is wrong to

## DAYS OF ACTION IN SUPPORT OF GI RESISTANCE & RIGHTS! DECEMBER 8-10, 2006

by Lori Hurlbaus

We urge you to join us December 8-10th for a weekend of action in support of GI Resistance and GI rights. It’s time for us to escalate public pressure and action in support of the growing movement of thousands of courageous men and women GI’s who have in many different ways, followed their consciences, upheld international law, taken a principled stand against unjust, illegal war and occupation and stood up for their rights. Widespread public support and pressure will help create true support for courageous troops facing isolation and repression, and help protect their civil liberties and human rights.

We call for the following:

### SUPPORT FOR WAR OBJECTORS PROTECT THE RIGHT TO CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION PROTECT LIBERTIES & HUMAN RIGHTS OF GI’S SANCTUARY FOR WAR OBJECTORS

Objection by military service persons is a healthy and important assertion of democracy, particularly in a country where the decisions to invade, to maintain occupation, and to engage in widespread ongoing torture, human rights violations and war crimes are made undemocratically, in violation of the US Constitution and international law, and based on continuing lies and disinformation.

Showing widespread support for soldiers who resist is one of the best ways those of us outside the military can encourage the growing momentum of the GI resistance movement — a movement that has the direct power to end this war.

We ask you to begin mobilizing your group, community and networks now. As well as educating your organization’s members, please consider hosting a public event. Download the organizing kit at <http://www.CourageToResist.org> We will provide a updates and a down-loadable mobilizing and education kit: a flyer and poster with space for your local info/dates, a sample press release, background materials and audio visual and informational resources - everything you need for a teach in or public event.

### TELL US ABOUT IT

**BEFORE:** Let us know what you’re planning and we will post a list to inspire others, tell the media and build momentum! Send to: [courage@riseup.net](mailto:courage@riseup.net)

**AFTER:** Don’t forget to send pictures and reports from your local action! We will post reports to our website. Send to: [courage@riseup.net](mailto:courage@riseup.net)

### KEEP IT UP

Use this action to build momentum and CONTINUED SUPPORT for soldiers who have the courage to resist. You can do this by continuing to educate your community about the GI resistance movement and why support is crucial.

Join the many Canadians calling on the Canadian government to demonstrate its commitment to international law and the treaties to which it is a signatory, by making provision for US war objectors to have sanctuary in Canada. Let the Canadian people and Government know most US people oppose the war and many support the right to sanctuary for courageous war resisters. For more information about Canada’s War Resisters Support Campaign go to [www.resisters.ca](http://www.resisters.ca)

destroy life, that it is wrong to use war, that it is immoral, and that I can no longer go down this path. Because I have taken this stand, I am free even though my body will probably be locked up. This is something I can live with. Something I can’t live with is being a participant of war.”

You can send donations to support his family via paypal to [HelgaAguayo@aol.com](mailto:HelgaAguayo@aol.com) or by check or money order to: Helga Aguayo, 36838 57th Street East, Palmdale, CA 93552. Learn more: [www.AguayoDefense.org](http://www.AguayoDefense.org)

### Darrel Anderson, 1st Armored Division

After 7 months in Baghdad, Darrel was wounded by a roadside bomb. He witnessed US troops abuse and kill civilians. He refused to fire on an automobile containing civilians. He concluded that the war is wrong. With the possibility of a second deployment to Iraq and at the urging of his conscience, he fled to Canada. Recently returned to the US, Darrel received an “other than honorable” discharge (OTH) without court martial. Darrel stated, “Fellow resisters ... if we stay strong, stand our ground, speak the truth, and stand up for what’s right we will always be free.”

You can send a tax-deductible contribution to help with Darrell’s expenses. Make your check out to ‘CKCPJ,’ mark it for ‘Darrell Anderson Legal Expense Fund’ or ‘Darrell Anderson Family Expense Fund.’ Mail it to: Central Kentucky Council for Peace & Justice, P.O. Box 363, Lexington, KY 40536-0363. Learn more: <http://www.peaceandjusticeky.org/DAnderson.htm>



### Sgt. Kevin Benderman, 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division

Kevin applied for C.O. status after a year in Iraq during which he witnessed homes bombed and people begging for food and drinking water from mud puddles. He saw the arm of an 8 or 9 year-old girl burned up to her shoulder and heard the executive officer say the unit could not help as medical supplies were limited. Kevin refused a second tour to Iraq. He was court-martialed and spent 15 months in jail. Amnesty International declared him a prisoner of conscience. Kevin stated, “We kill people in the name of keeping the peace – an oxymoron if there ever was one. After months of contemplation I concluded I no longer wanted to contribute to the ultimate violence toward other human beings that war is.”

You can write to him: Kevin Benderman, c/o Benderman Defense, PO Box 2322, Hinesville, GA 31310. Learn more: <http://www.bendermantimeline.com/>

### Sgt. Ricky Clousing, Army Interrogator

Ricky served as an Army Interrogator in Iraq in 2004 and 2005. Attached to tactical infantry units during daily patrols, he learned what civilians thought of coalition forces. He witnessed baseless incarceration and physical harassment of civilians, an innocent Iraqi killed by US troops, and abuse of power with no accountability. Ricky pled guilty to being AWOL and was sentenced to three months confinement, forfeiture of 2/3 pay while confined, and a bad conduct discharge (BCD). Ricky stated, “My experiences in Iraq forced me to reevaluate my beliefs and ethics. Ultimately, I felt I could not serve. I’d rather spend a year in jail than participate in an illegal war and be part of the machine suppressing Iraq.”

Learn more: <http://www.sdccc.org/rickyclousing/> You can also contact IVAW (Iraq Veterans Against the War) at P.O. Box 8296, Philadelphia, PA 19101, 215.241.7123 or at [ivaw@ivaw.org](mailto:ivaw@ivaw.org)

### Spc. Suzanne Swift, Military Police

Stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington and deployed to Iraq in 2004 and 2005, Suzanne was sexually harassed and assaulted by superiors. She suffered a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) breakdown and went AWOL rather than subject herself to the horrors she experienced during her first tour of duty. Suzanne was arrested at her mother’s home in June 2006.



She will face special court martial for the charges of AWOL and “missing movement”. Suzanne stated, “When you are over there, you are lower than dirt; you are expendable as a soldier in general, and as a woman, it’s worse.”

Learn more about Suzanne’s case: [www.SuzanneSwift.org](http://www.SuzanneSwift.org) or write to Friends of Suzanne, P.O. Box 51584, Eugene, OR 97405

### First Lt. Ehren Watada, US Army

Ehren is the first US commissioned officer to refuse to deploy to the Iraq war and occupation. Charged with “contemptuous words” towards President Bush and conduct unbecoming an officer, he faces over seven years in military prison. Ehren’s is the first military persecution of an objector for First Amendment speech since 1965. Ehren stated, “I [have] a radical idea... born from the very concept of American service: to stop an illegal and unjust war, the soldiers can choose to stop fighting. [This] is not easy... Soldiers must be aware that they are being used for ill-gain. They must hold themselves responsible for individual action. They must remember that duty to the Constitution and the people supersedes the ideologies of their leadership. Soldiers must be willing to face ostracism, worry over the survival of their families, and loss of personal freedom. But they must also know that resisting an authoritarian government at home is equally important to fighting a foreign aggressor on the battlefield. Finally, those wearing the uniform must know beyond a shadow of doubt that by refusing immoral and illegal orders they’ll be supported by the people not with mere words but by action.”

Lt. Ehren Watada’s vision is one of radical American heroism. Will his words stimulate GI resistance to war similar to that of the Vietnam War? Learn more: [www.thankyoult.org](http://www.thankyoult.org) or by calling (866) 797-0967. You can send a donation to: Hawaii People’s Fund, Attn: Lt. Watada Defense Fund, 810 N. Vineyard Blvd., Honolulu HI 96817-3590.

Meanwhile, service members will continue to resist actively, individually, non-violently and with dogged persistence.

Susan Galleymore is a “military mom” and a core member of *Courage to Resist* who supports the troops that refuse to fight.

**Courage to Resist**  
484 Lakepark Ave. # 41  
Oakland, CA 94610  
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[www.couragetoresist.org](http://www.couragetoresist.org)



# FIGHTING FASCISM FOR TWO DECADES

2007 will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of People Against Racist Terror (PART) – now Anti-Racist Action Los Angeles (ARA-LA). PART was founded by Michael Novick, a veteran of the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee to call for an action against the Los Angeles-area appearance of convicted Birmingham church bomber J. B. Stoner, as part of a campaign by his “Crusade Against Corruption” to recruit the early nazi boneheads. At our first rally, 2-3000 showed up to protest a scheduled appearance by Stoner at the Glendale Public Library, which was canceled. We then marched over to the Glendale Holiday Inn, where Stoner supporters had booked a room for his appearance. When some arriving boneheads got the business end of a boot, the Glendale cops, who had already shut down the freeways to keep people away, declared the entire protest an illegal assembly, and brought out a water cannon to threaten and disperse the crowd. 2007 also marks the 20<sup>th</sup> year of

publication of *Turning the Tide: Journal of Anti-Racist Action, Research & Education*, begun as a photocopied newsletter on PART’s first anniversary to call attention to the revived trial of nazi Tom Metzger, against whom charges were reinstated on a 1993 triple-cross-burning in Sunland-Tujunga. (In the interim between the cross-burning and the trial 5 of Metzger’s co-defendants in the LA cross-burning had become federal fugitives as part of the Order white supremacy underground). In the coming year, ARA-LA/PART will be holding a series of educational and fund-raising events to commemorate these significant milestones. We invite your participation. Call us at 310-495-0299, email us at [antiracistaction\\_la@yahoo.com](mailto:antiracistaction_la@yahoo.com) or write us at ARA-LA, PO Box 1055, Culver City CA 90232. One way to join in is to take our a subscription, renewal, or gift sub to *Turning the Tide*: \$16 for six bi-monthly issues; 2nd subscription at the same time only \$15; 3rd for \$12. Pay to Michael Novick.

## WHITE PANTHER ORGANIZATION TO WORK IN TANDEM WITH NEW AFRIKAN BLACK PANTHER PARTY

Greetings, comrades

The decision has recently been made to form a White Panther Organization (WPO) to work in tandem with and under the leadership of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party-Prison Chapter. The purpose of the WPO is to provide a Panther-based means through which white brothers and sisters can uphold the tradition of revolutionary abolitionist John Brown against white supremacy and racism, stand in the struggle of national liberation for Blacks, Latinos and other oppressed nationalities, and fight for proletarian revolution on an international scale.

The WPO is one of many organizations and groups in the United Front Against Imperialism which is seeking to end capitalist oppression and imperialist

domination over the international proletariat. Our specific focus is to include whites everywhere in this world-wide struggle.

For those interested, write to the following address and request the White Panther Organization Manifesto, along with details for membership: WPO, PO Box 4362, Allentown PA 18105. I can also be reached for correspondence at: Billy Johnson #322385, PO Box 549, Whiteville TN 38075. I can receive mail from other prisoners.

In the struggle,  
Spider,  
Spokesperson, White Panther Organization

## DIRECT ACTION TO REBUILD NEW ORLEANS: HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The “Home for the Holidays” coalition is putting out a call, nation-wide, to bring volunteers to New Orleans, to gut houses in the 9th Ward.

Our goal is to help every family signed up for assistance to have their home gutted by the New Year!

Cleaning and gutting out flood-damaged homes is vital to the health and viability of a recovering New Orleans, and is the first step towards rebuilding for the homeowners.

The “Home for the Holidays” coalition is asking you, your family, your friends to come volunteer with us, to help bring the families of the 9th Ward back to New Orleans.

The “Home for the Holidays” coalition is a project of All Congregations Together, the People’s Hurricane Relief Fund, and Common Ground Relief.

For more information, contact:

[www.nolahomefortheholidays.org](http://www.nolahomefortheholidays.org)  
[nolahomefortheholidays@gmail.com](mailto:nolahomefortheholidays@gmail.com)  
(504) 218-6613

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### *Military Racists, Continued from p. 2*

Extremist groups are not new to the military. With its report, SPLC presented a timeline with incidents dating back to the 1950’s. A Ku Klux Klan group at Camp Pendleton in the mid-1970’s harassed black Marines and civilians on base and in nearby Oceanside, beat a black child at a local beach, and burned a black Marine officer’s car on base. Their actions sparked retaliation by black Marines in what came to be known as the Pendleton 14 case. [Editor’s note: The Marines response was to transfer members of the klavern to other Marine bases in Texas and North Carolina, thus spreading the problem.] Investigations at the time found Klan and similar groups at a number of other bases in the US and Europe. Periodic discoveries of caches of stolen military weapons, linked to extremist groups, were made during the 1970’s and 1980’s.

In 1995, Americans were shocked to learn that Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bomber, was a decorated Gulf War veteran who met his accomplice while serving in the military. Also in 1995, two members of a skinhead group within the elite 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg were charged with the murder of a black couple off base in order to gain prestige within their group. About 19 other members of the group were discharged after an investigation disclosed that they saluted Nazi flags in their barracks, distributed neo-Nazi literature on base, and held drunken parties with blatant racist music on base. The racist group was organized by National Alliance member (and 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne soldier) Robert Hunt. Among other things, he placed a billboard on the main road outside Ft Bragg with the Alliance’s phone number and the words “Enough! Let’s Start Taking Back America” on it.

In response to public pressure at the time, the military commissioned a study of “extremist” groups in the service. The study found extensive activity by racist and neo-Nazi organizations, and noted that “Young civilian extremists are encouraged by adult leaders to enlist in the military to gain access to weapons, training, and other military personnel.” DoD also tightened existing regulations prohibiting active membership in extremist groups. The regs make it clear that such groups are prohibited. Commanders are given a wide range of options to respond to these groups, from court-martial for criminal activity to involuntary discharge for misconduct or unsatisfactory performance to poor performance evaluations. At the same time, they leave

commands unclear about the implications of mere membership in such groups, and make it easy for ignorant or racist commanders to ignore all but the most egregious incidents.

Unfortunately, the racism of military training and culture creates a strong environment for neo-Nazi and racist recruitment. While racial discrimination is officially forbidden, and the military prides itself as an equal opportunity employer, the fact remains that racism is deeply rooted in the ranks and in military leadership. Discrimination against people of color in promotions, assignments, punishments and less than honorable discharges have declined little since these disparities were brought to public attention decades ago. The threat of punishment for overt racial discrimination has simply led many enlisted personnel and officers to be less obvious in their racism. The same is true with activity in racist groups, which counsel their members to maintain low visibility in clothing, tattoos, etc., to avoid punishment or discharge.

The current and more explicit racism against our “enemies” is also comfortable ground for extremist groups. People identified as “ragheads” or “sand n-rs,” described as subhuman in culture and morals, are more easily viewed as enemies, and more easily killed. It is no surprise that inspector Barfield speaks of Aryan Nation graffiti in Baghdad.

The problem of extremist groups in the military cannot be solved without changing its racist culture and without strict enforcement of existing regulations. Neither will occur unless the military faces on-going pressure from civil rights groups, the public, and Congress.

This article borrows heavily from the Southern Poverty Law Center report, “A Few Bad Men,” written by David Holthouse, with contributions from Anthony Griggs, Joseph Roy, Sr., and Laurie Wood. It is available on SPLC’s website and in their publication, *Intelligence Report*. The Center remains the single most important monitor of extremist activity within the military. For more information about this and other SPLC work, readers can contact the organization at 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104; 1-888-414-7752. This article originally appeared in the Oct.-Dec. 2006 issue of “Draft Notices,” from San Diego’s Committee Opposing Militarism & the Draft (COMD) ([www.comdsd.org](http://www.comdsd.org)).



## PART's PERSPECTIVE:

# WHEN TYRANNY IS LAW, REVOLUTION IS IN ORDER

by Michael Novick, Anti-Racist Action-LA/People Against Racist Terror (ARA-LA/PART)

Sterile debates about the nature of fascism and the question of whether fascism has taken or will take root in the US can now be set aside. Under SB 3930, the Military Commissions Act of 2006, signed into law by pResident George W. Bush on October 17, torture is now legal in the US. So-called “enemy combatants” can be detained indefinitely by order of the pResident with no judicial review. The Military Commissions it establishes have jurisdiction to try any offense committed by an alien unlawful enemy combatant before, on, or after September 11, 2001. The “great writ” of Habeas Corpus, the right to appeal to a court for hearing on one’s imprisonment, first adopted in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, no longer applies in the US.

An unlawful enemy combatant is “a person who has engaged in hostilities or who has purposefully and materially supported hostilities against the US or its co-belligerents ... or a person who, before, on, or after the enactment of the Act has been determined to be an unlawful enemy combatant by a Combatant Status Review Tribunal or other tribunal established under the authority of the President or the Secretary of Defense.” The Act provides that “no court, justice, or judge” can consider petitions or other actions related to treatment or imprisonment filed by anyone designated as an enemy combatant, now or in the future. In other words, all previous crimes committed by the Bush regime are untouchable retroactively, and all future acts are no longer crimes. Like Alice, Bush may not say what he means, but he means what he says. And like the Queen of Hearts, Emperor Bush has “only one way of settling all difficulties, great or small. ‘Off with his head!’ [he] said, without even looking round.” Whatever Bush did, is doing or does is legal; whatever Bush says was, is, or will be a crime can be punished on his unchallenged say-so. Can you say “Nuremberg Laws” – the act that legalized

the Hitler regime?

It should go without saying, but unfortunately cannot, that the problem is far greater than Bush. The Military Commissions Act passed the House and Senate with significant margins that included Democrats, as has every other measure legalizing and authorizing the war crimes and domestic political terror he has carried out. Anyone who imagines, even if the rulers allow the Democrats to regain control of the House or Senate, that this Act will be repealed, that Bush, Cheney or Rumsfeld will be removed from office, or that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will be swiftly ended, hasn’t been paying attention to reality.

The question now becomes, what do we do about it? If people simply heave a great sigh of relief after the elections (assuming that the balloting in fact produces the partisan shift tracking polls that predict) we are really screwed.

Around the world and pressing up against the militarily-imposed border between the US and Mexico, people are demonstrating, through enormous sacrifice, the only effective way to deal with imperialism. It involves recognizing that Empire is a state of non-stop war against the people and the planet itself. It involves direct action, mutual aid and solidarity by the people to meet their own needs and to defend themselves from the predatory system that requires their suffering and exploitation to sustain itself. It involves resistance by any and every means necessary.

Forty years ago, at the founding of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, Minister of Defense Huey P. Newton and Chairman Bobby Seale put forward a strategy of “exhausting all legal means” to liberate the Black colony and end the rule of avaricious businessmen, demagogic politicians and racist dog police by showing the Black community its power. Today, nobody can doubt or deny that all legal means have long since been exhausted. Allowed

by the failures of the last revolutionary upsurge to advance from parasitism into necrosis, the Empire is destroying us all to extend its life still further. Polar ice is melting, ocean water is acidifying, and the hole in the ozone is larger and deeper than ever before.

Unless we act now to topple the Empire, long before peak oil disintegrates industrial society, coal gasification and other similar measures will accelerate the already destructive rate of global warming and catastrophic climate change. Mass extinction of marine life, rising sea levels, desertification of agriculturally productive areas, exhaustion of aquifers will increase correspondingly. As George Jackson said in *Blood In My Eye*, “come together, understand the reality of our situation, that fascism is already here, that people are already dying who could be saved, that generations more will live poor butchered half-lives if you fail to act. Do what must be done, discover your humanity and your love in revolution.”

But revolution in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century must learn from all the failed revolutions of the past, must transcend both colonialism and nationalism, white supremacy and class privilege, male chauvinism and women’s oppression. We cannot afford structures that, like the vanguard parties of the past, can be decapitated, coopted or corrupted by a taste of power. Nor can we afford a white “left” that presumes to base itself on the territorial configuration and social stratification of Empire and to dictate the terms, pace, methods and purpose of revolutionary change to oppressed and colonized people. We need deep-rooted forms of organization that can resist fierce repression, reject seductive reforms, and not only make the Empire pay a price for its attacks, but take the initiative to force it to react and respond to us.

## COUNTERPOINT: FASCISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

by Malcolm Y. Azariah (excerpted from a lengthy letter)

In your response to my letter printed in the Sept.-Oct. issue of TTT, you raised several points I’d like to address. I believe this can contribute to a more informed understanding of how fascism plays a central role in the conflicts in the Middle East. Even the best of us are subject to romanticizing those portrayed as fighting wars of resistance. The left is not immune to a political correctness that makes certain facts unpleasant, but we must guard against becoming ideologues. So I hope you’ll print this brief history lesson and welcome any responses.

The facts you state about the colonization of the Muslim world are mostly correct but they should be put in context. The entire map of the Mid-East was established through colonialism, when the defeated Ottoman Empire was carved up by the victorious Allied powers. Jewish communities have existed in areas of the Middle East and North Africa for more than 2500 years, but with the rise of Islam, their situation became precarious. In areas outside the Arabian peninsula, Jews were allowed to remain provided they accepted the humiliating status of the dhimmi, a second class citizen required to pay a special tax. There were pogroms and terror equivalent to that visited by the KKK to keep the “uppity” in their place. There were exceptions at times such as the moderate Islamic rule for a time in Spain and later the Ottoman Empire, but they were the exception. Jews in Morocco today are relatively few and under the protection of an authoritarian ruler committed to secularism.

You mention the “continuing occupation of parts of Lebanon and Syria as well as the West Bank and Gaza.” I assume you refer to the Sabaa Farms area as part of Lebanon; but the UN admits this area was never under Lebanese control, and Israel has been in negotiations with Syria over it. It is no justification for Lebanese aggression toward Israel, which withdrew completely from Lebanon in 2000, but has been subjected to continual aggression since. The same has happened after full withdrawal from Gaza, with Palestinians launching 1000s of rockets into Israel targeting civilians. I can’t speak on the motivation for US and Israeli support for the formation of Hamas as a counter to the PLO, but they did not create it. In its constitution it declares, “Israel will exist until Islam obliterates it.” I must also take issue with your assertion that “Zionism is not an authentic national liberation movement, because there is no Jewish nation.” Though Palestinians and Arabs can become citizens of other states, you recognize them as distinct nationalities. Why not Jews? Judaism is a religion, but the majority of Jews are secular, including Israelis, and many who are religious are in religions other than Judaism. Yet there are cultural and ethnic – though not racial – elements that can only be attributed to a sense of nationhood.

While I share your dream of a stateless society, we live in a world of nation states, and in such a world, the stateless cannot guarantee themselves the freedoms you speak of. You claim that Zionist provocation in Syria and elsewhere drove Sephardi Jews to Israel. Was it Zionism who committed pogroms against Sephardim in Syria and elsewhere in the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century? During WWII, there was a real Islamo-Nazi axis. This led to a Holocaust-era pogrom against Jews in Iraq by Nazi sympathizers in 1941, the deportation of Jews from North Africa to concentration

camps, and the enthusiastic support for Hitler by Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. He rallied Bosnian Muslims in Croatia to serve in SS units. In 1943, he went to Berlin and established the Arab Institute for Research into the Jewish Question. Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* and the fraudulent “Protocol of the Elders of Zion” were translated into Arabic and are still available widely. The Baath Party modeled itself on National Socialism. The silence on the relationship between al-Husseini and Hitler, not to mention on the fact that Yasser Arafat was al-Husseini’s nephew, is an example of historical revisionism. Modern revisionism – Holocaust denial – is widespread in the Arab world. The discredited David Irving is considered a serious historian; David Duke has been a guest of the Syrian government. Finally, regarding the events of the summer, even the Arab states initially recognized that Hezbollah was the aggressor. No side is blameless in a war, but Israel took great precautions to avoid civilian casualties. They dropped leaflets to warn Lebanese civilians to clear out of their neighborhoods because an air raid was coming, whereas Hezbollah deliberately used civilians as human shields. There are suggestions the tragedy in Kana was staged. Those who face “asymmetrical warfare,” like Israel are caught in a Catch-22. Those who single Israel out for human rights abuses while ignoring the challenges she faces, are also guilty of willful ignorance of what motivates the groups that pose an existential threat to Israel, like Hezbollah and Hamas. Unlike Saudi Arabia, Israel allows freedom of religion. If the Arabs put down their weapons, there would be no war in the region. If Israel puts down its weapons, there would be more Israel. Anti-Zionist means that Israel, regardless of its leaders, policies, and other aspects of how its society is run, has no right to exist.

PO Box 708, Spruce Pine NC 28777

### RESPONSE: ANTI-ZIONISM IS ANTI-IMPERIALISM

Although Malcolm tries to couch his response in comradely terms, he ultimately concludes that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism. It is striking that with numerous articles on all sorts of aspects of imperialism and racism, it is critiques of Zionism that always elicit lengthy and hostile responses to TTT. (Prisoner Mark Jordan also wrote to defend the existence of a Jewish nation with the right to self-determination). Recently, here in LA, pro-Zionist forces launched a major attack against my union, United Teachers Los Angeles, and its Human Rights Committee simply for planning to host a meeting by Movement for a Democratic Society to discuss a boycott of Israel. They succeeded, where they failed to get the Human Relations Commission to withdraw awards to Muslim peace-makers, and have now gone on to attack the AFSC and the Coalition Against Militarism in the Schools. We don’t have the space to undertake a point by point refutation of the above piece; but suffice it to say that Zionist collaboration with Hitler is also well documented. The asymmetry of warfare, as seen in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq and elsewhere is primarily about the massive overkill of imperial state terror. We have always opposed both Zionism and Arab reaction as tools of empire; we believe in armed self-defense, mutual aid and solidarity, and a non-state solution to end all exploitation, oppression and colonialism.



In 1930, Japanese writer Kuroshima Denji (1898-1943) published an antiwar novel that remains startlingly and tragically timely in a world of nationalist-driven military intervention. Zeljko Cipris here introduces Kuroshima and presents excerpts from his novel, *Militarized Streets*, which Cipris translated for the University of Hawai'i Press. Zeljko Cipris teaches Japanese language and literature at the University of the Pacific in California. He is translator of Ishikawa Tatsuzo's *Soldiers Alive* and of *A Flock of Swirling Crows and Other Proletarian Writings*, a collection of works by Kuroshima Denji. These are excerpts from a Japan Focus article that is adapted from the introduction to *A Flock of Swirling Crows*.--Editor

## Against The System: Antiwar Writing of Kuroshima Denji

By Zeljko Cipris, Japan Focus

The origins of the anti-militarism and anti-imperialism that continue to motivate the opposition of most Japanese people to rearmament, and to participation in 21st-century imperial adventures, precede the nation's defeat in World War II. They date back more than a century, to a time when Japan was still a rising military and industrial power. In 1901 radical journalist Kotoku Shusui published his prophetic and grimly titled essay *Imperialism, the Monster of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. In 1904 a pacifist poem by Yosano Akiko struck a forceful note of antiwar sentiment at the very height of Japan's victorious war with Russia. By the '20s, anti-militarism and anti-war activism in Japan formed a part of vigorous movements for profound social change: among them a labor movement, women's movement, student movement, peasant movement, and a movement for the emancipation of social out-castes. Dissident artists and writers of this exuberant era were producing posters, paintings, poems, plays, and prose with anti-militarist, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist themes.

One of the most dedicated anti-militarist intellectuals active at the time was Kuroshima Denji (1898-1943), who was born into a poor farming family on Shodo Island and went to Tokyo to work and study. Conscripted into the army in 1919, he was sent to fight in a doomed counter-revolutionary war against the newly formed USSR waged by Japan and its World War I allies, including the US, Canada, Britain, and France. After his return and recovery, Kuroshima joined a flourishing proletarian literature movement. He researched a passionately anti-imperialist novel in China. Kuroshima is best known for his Siberian stories of the late 1920s: vivid descriptions of agonies suffered by Japanese soldiers and Russian civilians during Japan's invasion of the USSR. Kuroshima also wrote powerful narratives dealing with the hardships, struggles, and rare triumphs of Japanese peasants. His only full-length novel, *Militarized Streets*, is a shocking description of economic and military aggression against China.

Kuroshima's work forms an integral part of the proletarian literary movement, a major current in modern world literature whose revolutionary aims inspired and engaged many Japanese writers, particularly in the 20s and early 30s. The movement produced literature depicting the harsh lives of women, workers, peasants, and other downtrodden members of society, and their persevering struggles for change. Although the movement was ultimately suppressed by the state, it continues to be recognized as a significant development in the cultural and political history of modern Japan. Its literary output still retains considerable power to galvanize thought and action. Kuroshima's narratives, like those of Chekhov, whom he greatly admired, are unadorned in style, straightforward, and rich in detail. Their content conveys a sense of authenticity, grief over unnecessary suffering, and above all the urgent need for change. Devoid of easy optimism, his stories are open-ended chronicles of abuse and resistance.

Ultimately, Kuroshima is convinced, only a vast international movement based on grassroots solidarity stands a chance of replacing a heartless status quo with a world of justice and generosity. Meanwhile, faced with the daily tragedies of an irrationally structured world, radical artists everywhere are morally bound to persevere in their oppositional work. In his 1929 essay *On Antiwar Literature*, Kuroshima writes: "So long as the capitalist system exists, proletarian antiwar literature must also exist, and fight against it."

One of the early incidents that eventually led to full-scale war between Japan and China occurred in the spring of 1928 in Jinan, capital of Shandong province, during a northward advance by Chinese nationalist troops attempting to reunify the country. Possessing considerable commercial and industrial investments in Jinan, and faced with a collapse of its favored warlord in the area, Japan rushed in its own troops, ostensibly to safeguard the Japanese residents of the city. After a tense standoff, Japanese units clashed with their Chinese counterparts. The Japanese army, needing reinforcements, claimed that hundreds of Japanese residents had been massacred by the Chinese troops. Though the dead actually numbered no more than 13 or 14 suspected opium

smugglers, Japanese newspapers reacted to their deaths with outrage and demanded armed intervention. Japan's Prime Minister dispatched an additional division to the region, and the troops launched an attack against Jinan, killing and wounding thousands of Chinese civilians. Japanese military responses of this kind deepened Chinese hatred of Japan's imperialism and helped to ignite popular resistance to it that culminated in the Chinese Revolution.

Not all Japanese subscribed to the official story: a small but energetic anti-interventionist movement called for an end to Japanese militarism and for solidarity between the people of China and Japan. Kuroshima Denji, who knew war at first hand, traveled to China to view the war up close. His research resulted in the novel *Militarized Streets*, published in Nov. 1930. Kuroshima's novel was instantly banned, censored again fifteen years later by the US occupation authorities, and not reprinted in full until 1970, four decades after its initial publication. *Militarized Streets* offers a penetrating analysis of an exploitative system in action, cautions against an impending imperialist war, and suggests a path to a humane, peaceful world: by forging powerful bonds of international solidarity. Written decades ago, his book remains startlingly, tragically timely in a world of nationalist-driven military intervention. A complete English translation of *Militarized Streets* is available in *A Flock of Swirling Crows and Other Proletarian Writings* by Kuroshima Denji (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005). Here are excerpts:

Massacre of Innocents

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 2-1/2 days of rest. They drank sake and 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 dogs and beggars, both licking their lips, wandered cheerfully among the corpses, the dogs wagging their tails. 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, artillery-men 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.

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. They cut diagonally across it. Once more they passed through the rubble of what had been houses. They wound along the narrow streets. Suddenly the sun rose radiant among the jagged ruined roofs. Fragments of cloud that had been scattered throughout the sky vanished without a trace. 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. A signal was heard from somewhere. Far to the rear, from the vicinity of the artillery emplacement, gunfire roared. 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.

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 morosely, taking cover behind an acacia. The soldiers looked at each other. Wry smiles spontaneously creased their faces. At the same time, the flabbergasted commander's order arrived 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.

A Revolutionary Alliance

Soldiers were falling in quick succession like straw puppets. The officers' ambition and rivalry weighed heavily upon the soldiers. Kakimoto and his comrades could see that clearly. There was no time even to untie their leggings. They were dead tired. It was too much. They dozed unawares while aiming their rifles. Within the confusion, men lost track of their comrades-in-arms. It was so hot in the city it might as well have been raining burning tongs. Torn off by the yellow wind, young acacia leaves mixed with dust flew blindingly through the streets.

Kakimoto was thinking about the slightly foolish, reckless Takatori. Where had that honest, genial fellow gone? He seemed foolish but was in fact anything but a fool. It had been Takatori who had approached the workers before anyone else. He had made friends with them. Soldiers had thrown away their lives in the Russo-Japanese and Sino-Japanese wars. Now they were risking their lives to protect the settlers and their property. But those were bloody lies. Takatori had pointed this out before anyone else. "In truth, all they're making us do is kill the Chinese," he had said.

"They send us all the way over here," resumed Takatori, "and we wouldn't even be able to protect our own parents... That's the truth of it. Only those with a pile of money get protected. And for that, sacrificing us no matter how much they have to sacrifice us is something that they don't give a second thought to. While guarding the factories here, we torment the workers. We drive off the Southern Army. This way, they're thinking, they'll get their hands on the Manchurian interests. Because for them, Manchuria is the grand prize."

"We get paid about seven yen a month. Our lives get thrown away for free. We get nothing out of it. When we go back, we get nothing unless we go out to work for it. Maybe we're their Manchurian bulwark, but they won't give us any time off or free food for it." Kakimoto felt deeply moved, quite out of keeping with the spirit of Takatori's bold speech. "We're being used to beat China down. And the more we stand in the way of the workers and peasants movement here, the harder our own lives'll get back home."

"It's only the rich who grin while crushing China. The rich will get even richer from it... They'll profit, and they'll use those profits to keep us pinned in our place. In any case, we can never win alone. Unless the Chinese do their damndest, our own task at home will be really tough!" And now Takatori had vanished. It was only those last words that Kakimoto did not yet understand clearly. What worried the officers far more than any outlaws or Southern troops holding out in a fort were those ninja leaflets, and the likes of Takatori, as well as the possibility of a revolutionary alliance between the workers and the soldiers. This was what they feared most. That much was for sure.

by  
Kathy Gilbert

## RACIST GROUPS IN THE U.S. MILITARY

Recent news reports have focused public attention on a long-standing problem—the presence of active racist and extremist organizations in the military. In July, the Cape Cod Times reported that a Coast Guard petty officer, Chad Blair, faced court-martial charges for recruiting for the Ku Klux Klan, and for illegal possession of weapons and explosive material. Blair was initially investigated for placing Klan recruitment flyers at a local airport. Seven non-military weapons, including a "large capacity" firearm (a term used to describe semi-automatic rifles or shotguns) and explosive powder were later found in his home.

In the same month, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) released a detailed report describing extensive activity by extremist groups in all branches of the service. (The widely discussed report is available at <http://www.splcenter.org/intel/news/item.jsp?aid=66>.) The author, David Holthouse, gave examples of active duty military members of the Aryan Nations, the Klan, and similar organizations. He interviewed veterans who had worked in these groups while in the military, and talked extensively with a military investigator who specialized in gang activity. The stories are both revealing and frightening.

Matt Buschbacker, a Navy Seal, was ordained as a reverend in the neo-Nazi World Church of the Creator before his enlistment. While in the Navy, he attended a "leadership conference" of the racist National Alliance, for whom he wrote fliers, created computer screen savers and wrote website articles. Although SPLC notified the military of his activity, he was allowed to continue serving in Iraq. James Ross, Jr., a military intelligence officer, was caught sending AK-47's from Iraq to the US; a search of his house revealed a large cache of weapons and hate

literature. After his court-martial and bad conduct discharge, he continues efforts to recruit military personnel into his current organization, the Eastern Washington Skins. Airman First Class Andrew Dornan, a member of the US Air Force Honor Guard, was court-martialed after posting pro-Hitler messages on his webpage and threatening to set off a bomb on base.

These and other service members named in the report are not isolated individuals. Scott Barfield, a military investigator interviewed for the SPLC report, estimated that members of extremist groups number "well into the thousands, just in the Army." His own investigations at Ft. Lewis, in Washington, identified 320 extremists stationed at that base alone. With other investigators, he helped to uncover an online network of some 57 neo-Nazi soldiers and Marines stationed at Ft. Lewis, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, Ft. Hood, Texas, Ft. Stewart, Georgia, and Camp Pendleton. Several neo-Nazi groups have made it clear they are sending their members in to the military for training as well as recruitment purposes.



# Echoes of the Toledo Uprising: Failures of Anti-Racist Action and the Left in North East Ohio

by  
Nick Long for the ARA Network (Toledo Solidarity Working Group)



On October 15, 2005, the mostly-Black North Toledo community erupted in a small popular uprising against organized white supremacists and police abuse. There was a history of economic frustration and police brutality facing portions of the population. Earlier that year an African American man died in police custody after being shocked by a TASER nine times. Though the coroner ruled the death a homicide, no officers were charged. Those frustrations finally came to a head with the introduction of several new elements: a neo-Nazi rally under police protection, and outside left groups opposing the fascist presence. The community reaction to the Nazi organization, the National Socialist Movement (NSM), is clear. However the effect the introduction of organized, easily identifiable groups advocating an anti-racist, multicultural, and liberation-oriented politic has had requires a deeper discussion.

As the Nazi and anti-fascist demonstrations got under way, many community youth participated in the anti-racist manifestation. Many more community members observed from windows and porches. Taunts from anti-racists grew and some community youths threw eggs over the heads of the police at the white supremacists. In response, a police riot was initiated to defend the Nazis. As police fired tear gas, charging the anti-racist demonstration with their horses, the entire community reacted. Ultimately, a spontaneously organized force of 600-1000 community members repelled the police and the Nazis. The mayor declared a state of martial law lasting into the next morning.

When the dust settled, over 100 people had been arrested, and a bar known for the racism of its owner, who had purportedly invited the Nazis into the community, was burnt down. Many of those arrested couldn't afford lawyers; court dockets show a number of them had gone before the court on debt-related cases. All those arrested were anti-racists engaged in a battle for community self-determination. With the exception of a white Toledo resident who participated in organizing opposition to the Nazi rally, all were African American.

The uprising made international headlines in the corporate, independent, and Left media. The mainstream media misrepresented the event. Their portrayal was racist. It disfigured the politically conscious and heroic nature of the event to spin a tawdry tale of gangs, drugs, and black 'insanity.' This inaccuracy fit with America's default cultural perspective, i.e. white supremacist patriarchy. This was so glaring, it wouldn't have been inappropriate for the Nazis to thank these "journalists" for their rhetorical support. The grassroots and left media gave a more accurate account of the day's events, but it wasn't widely read. Unfortunately, it's regarding the various manifestations of the Left that a critique towards a more successful integration of theory and practice is necessary.

The initial reaction of left groups was to publicize the event and provide an analysis appropriate to their particular theoretical platform. Three groups need special consideration because of their relationship to events on Oct. 15: the International Socialist Organization (ISO), the Anti-Racist Action Network (ARA), and a group of Toledo anarchists. The local Anarchist group formed a coalition with the ISO and other interested residents. ARA, with chapters in Kent, Ohio and other cities in the northeast, was invited to mobilize outside support and come to Toledo to oppose the Nazis. At that point ARA entered the coalition. But on the day of the demonstration, ISO broke with the coalition for unknown reasons, and refused to march on the same side of the street as the other activists. When people took to the streets to defend their community from a police riot, ISO instantly abandoned the scene. ARA and the Toledo activists remained in the community throughout the course of the uprising.

All those arrested were subject to high bail, up to \$30,000, without an option for 10% bond. For many, reduced bail wasn't offered unless they agreed to a drug test by urinalysis. This unusual condition was an attempt to associate the demonstrators with other crimes, without having to make an actual allegation. Authorities knew combining the words "riot," "black", and "drugs" would assist a certain segment of the population in rationalizing the events to justify the actions of city officials and police. It would also play on the internalized racism of Black residents, who'd be less dangerous perceiving themselves as criminals than as political actors.

ARA sent out a public call for funds to support those who were arrested. The money was collected via the Kent chapter and was sent to the Toledo activists for disbursement. ARA also made a contribution from its legal defense fund for the local activist who'd been arrested, who like the others wasn't released for weeks.

The ISO was MIA after October 15. The group was privately hostile, condemning the uprising and blaming "anarchists" for ruining their peaceful march. Their private analysis lacked any sympathy for the determination of the community and took a paternalistic approach, claiming it was impossible "to protect" community members. Their press, however, told a different story of ISO's role. They asserted the community had the right to rebel and carried interviews with North Toledo residents who expressed their outrage at the Nazi presence. Further, they were more than happy to publicize inaccurate media reports associating them with the clash. Said one article in the ISO's Socialist Worker:

*"For their part, the Nazis denounced left-wing groups, including the ISO, who supposedly showed up and 'handed out eggs to African American residents,' according to an allegation in one news report. Ford actually went along with this, telling CNN, 'Based on the intelligence we received, that's exactly what they do--they come to town and get people riled up.'"*

Here the ISO embellishes their "role" in the event. The organization was more than willing, by not challenging the statements by the mayor and media, to claim the role of "outside instigator" they derided the "anarchists" for on the local level. Beyond its opportunistic reporting, the ISO contributed no support to the community in the aftermath of the uprising. The group of Toledo anarchists did initially appear to show support. They participated in ARA's fundraising efforts, and attended a community forum to address what had occurred. They also provided arrest lists to outside groups, including ARA.

Two months after the Toledo Uprising, despite the reaction of the people and the disaster it presented to city government, the city allowed the Nazis back. This time they spent even more money to protect them, and conceived a much more elaborate scheme for defending this outfit. In the months leading up to this "sequel" there were several events worth mentioning. The Toledo anarchists joined the Anti-Racist Action Network, becoming Toledo ARA. In Bowling Green, OH a group of students came together using the name ARA. They publicly claimed the Toledo Uprising as the motivating force for their formation. They had a relationship with Toledo ARA, but failed to successfully incorporate themselves with the Anti-Racist Action Network.

The city of Toledo filed injunctions against ARA, the ISO, Type A (an anonymous anarchist group), and the National Socialist Movement. This injunction banned these organizations from the city of Toledo. The only exception to this injunction referred to the date of the December Nazi rally – the named organizations could enter the city as long as they limited their presence to protest pens organized by the city. Anyone the city could associate with the four groups would be subject to arrest if they were found anywhere else in the city. The NSM was the only group to oppose these sanctions in the courts. NSM leader Bill White represented himself on behalf of the organization. The city lifted the ban on the Nazis on December 17. The ban on anti-fascist organizations was enforced until December 24. During this period, groups of Nazis made informal incursions into the city. Toledo ARA successfully monitored them. As a result, their presence was never felt. When the second Nazi rally occurred, in downtown Toledo, there were over 20 arrests; this time with a higher number of outside activists. Most were arrested at random while peacefully demonstrating in the city's "protest pens." Additionally, several anti-fascists who had driven from Chicago were arrested near a library for violating the city's injunction.

## **From then 'Til Now: The Failure of the Left**

In the aftermath there was little response from the left, and a drop in activity by those sectors that originally responded. ISO continued to be uninvolved. Toledo ARA had some success supporting outside activists who were arrested in December. The ARA Network published some info about what was happening in Toledo and prisoner support. However, our efforts to show solidarity with the community in its legal battles were minimal. Our activity was devoted to hounding the NSM across the US, without building a solid relationship with those arrested in Toledo.

There were never jail or courthouse solidarity actions for the arrested community members. There was no attempt by the left to make contact with community members before they were to appear in court. The last news from Toledo ARA had been that all felonies had been reduced to misdemeanors and many charges had been dropped all together, but this wasn't the case. Most shocking among the convictions were those of a 17-year-old boy who was sentenced to 8 years in prison after being tried as an adult, and of a wife and mother who received 5 years in prison. In contrast, none of the outside white activists served time. Four Chicago anti-fascists won a lawsuit against the city of Toledo in which all their charges were dropped.

In the midst of this Toledo ARA left the Network, supposedly to become an anarchist organization with a more general program focused on local issues. They dubbed themselves the "October 15<sup>th</sup> Anarchist Collective" in reference to the Toledo Uprising. They circulated several public statements referring to their role in the Toledo riots, including this self-description: *"The group evolved out of Toledo ARA, which was integral in organizing the resistance to an October 2005 neo-Nazi rally in a North Toledo neighborhood, which erupted into the historic October 15th*

*Uprising, from which the group derives its name."*

But defense of those arrested was not on their operative agenda. The same is true for the "Type A" Anarchist Collective, who called for a Midwest anarchist gathering – but the plight of the North Toledo community was not on the agenda.

Recently the ARA Network decided that, having no direct contacts with the community, we needed to become more involved with local community activists. We discovered there were still upcoming court proceedings yet. The first, in August, had very late notice. We were able to contact the "October 15<sup>th</sup>" collective, and notify them. They committed to hold an impromptu demonstration of courthouse solidarity, but didn't. From that point on their activities were unknown. ARA concluded that it would have to do what it could to organize from the outside. Contacting several other groups including the ISO chapter in Toledo got disappointing results. Despite reminding ISO that both they and ARA bore obligations to this community, they refused to participate, citing a lack of an ongoing campaign. They had no interest in being part of organizing something themselves, despite their revolutionary rhetoric.

There's been insufficient contact with the North Toledo community since October 15, 2005, and insufficient solidarity. This despite the fact that Toledo's left is capable of organizing demos against Nazis, against the war, and for immigrant rights. This is despite the fact that it has organized a variety of fund-raisers that didn't relate to the rebellion in their back yard. There is a well-funded ISO chapter and an active anarchist community, which has used the name and the memory of North Toledo's victory against fascism and police repression to promote itself. Yet in the year since the uprising, these groups have, for the most part, proven to be hypocrites marred by their own privilege and opportunism. Amid a spontaneous anti-racist rebellion against fascism and state repression in a largely African American, working class, mixed income community, these groups have continued to prioritize strategies geared towards self-promotion, restricting themselves to their elite debating societies.



The left needs to re-assess itself. It needs to critically confront the priorities that have prevented it from creating a more successful synthesis of theoretical aspirations with

meaningful practice. The Anti-Racist Action Network, for example, needs to take a critical look at why on two separate occasions it was able to mobilize significant outside support to oppose the Nazis in Toledo, but was not prepared to mobilize equal support for the community during the backlash. ARA was caught largely unprepared by the events of October 15. Throughout the year, the Network and its regional chapters continued to mount campaigns against white supremacist groups. A proactive show of solidarity with the people of North Toledo would've been more beneficial.

The Toledo experience has demonstrated that the left needs to examine the effects of privileges relating to skin color, class, and being officially connected parts of the activist community. No established outside leftist has had to serve time. Furthermore, solidarity events have been organized - in Toledo - not for the actual, legally embattled anti-fascist residents of this city, but for the outside Chicago activists. This reality deserves a great deal of scrutiny. It's necessary and appropriate to acknowledge The Books 4 Prisoners Crew for organizing solidarity letter writing campaigns to the imprisoned North Toledo community anti-fascists, and for early public criticism of left complacency.

Despite the many failures since the Uprising, all is not lost. There's still time to organize effective solidarity. ARA feels that all organizations of the left in the northeast, ARA included, owe an apology to the people of North Toledo. To be consistent, we must adapt to more effectively synthesize theory and practice. Furthermore, we must prioritize our activities to see that incidents like the Toledo Uprising take precedence over our usual business. We must work together as much as possible to build a democratic movement for social justice, equality, and freedom. This movement must include the voice of any community seeking to solve its problems in the spirit of our shared ideals. In light of our own previous shortcomings and failures in supporting the residents of North Toledo, the Anti-Racist Action Network has recently formed a Toledo Solidarity Working Group to address the current situation and begin providing support from outside. We feel it is necessary for other groups that had roles in the October 15 Uprising, or have places and stakes in the Toledo radical community, to take similar steps toward reconciling our collective rhetoric with our actions, and to help overcome our collective failures to this point.

The city of Toledo understood very well the potentially dynamic situation that would be presented were the North Toledo community able to build a long-term relationship with outside, radical, social welfare, oriented organizations. As a movement we must see to it that their current sighs of relief are premature. It is time we make it a priority to stand in solidarity with the anti-fascist residents of North Toledo!



# REVISIONING JOHN BROWN: "HIS TRUTH IS MARCHING ON"

by Mumia Abu Jamal (Prepared for a discussion at Carnegie-Mellon, Pittsburgh, Oct. 2, 2006)



John Brown poses difficult and undeniable problems for us. For some like Staughton Lynd his violence and his authoritarian nature, indeed his profoundly disturbing certainty of his mission ordained by god, makes him a troubling model for the challenges of our hour. This is especially so, for many of us who feel the urgent need for Black and White social movements providing the energy for true social change. At the cross roads stands the shade of John Brown who blocks the way forward unless and until we can make peace with the ghost of this uniquely American warrior. That is because we have tended to remember Brown, if at all, as this God intoxicated mad man. In our minds his eyes flash lightning and his white beard flows with his rage, his teeth barred

with malevolence. For if he is indeed mad then he may be safely jettisoned to the netherworld of otherness; for we are sane. John Brown was mad.

But are we not selective in our revulsion at needless violence? In Washington DC the imperial capital, there stands a statue — patina green with time — honoring none other than Nathan Bedford Forrest. As a confederate general in the civil war he staged the infamous Fort Pillow massacre on April 13, 1864, where mostly Black union soldiers were murdered in cold blood, after their surrender. Moreover Forrest became a leading force in the post war US terrorist group known as the Ku Klux Klan. Yet there his statue stands to this very day on honored ground. Why one wonders should we bring up Forrest when discussion Brown? What could this possibly mean when thinking of Blacks and Whites working together to build a social change movement?

If we are honest then we must recognize that the common nexus is violence, but that is not all. The central theme is race. General Nathan Bedford Forrest fought both during and after the Civil War for White Nationalism and Black subordination. He fought for the freedom to enslave others. John Brown fought both in Kansas and in Harpers Ferry against slavery and for Black freedom. Only in a nation deeply committed to white nationalism and white supremacy would Forrest have statues built to his memory enshrined in the national capital no less, and Brown be remembered—if at all—as a madman. It is only in this context that Brown's immense contribution can be discussed, for to do otherwise is to speak of him and of violence in a vacuum.

Staughton Lynd straightforwardly addressed the John Brown of Pottawatomie Kansas and his group's slaughter of five pro slavery men

contemplate freedom and slavery. In a call that reflects its foresight, it called for sexual equality; a remarkable achievement considering it was written and voted for in 1858.

In his words expressed in the declaration of liberty Brown observed that "slavery from its earliest inception was none other than a most barbarous unprovoked and unjustifiable war of one portion of its citizens upon another portion" unquote. This constitution was a declaration of war between two irreconcilable sides, slavery and freedom. John Brown chose freedom. Nor did he speak of something that would be alien in Black hearts; none other than Frederick Douglas eight years before the Chatham convention described enslaved captives as "prisoners of war in an enemy's country, of a war too that is unrivaled for its injustice, cruelty and meanness." Douglass unabashedly called for war against the slavery system and even after the civil war began he was a persistent and unrelenting critic of Lincoln for his failure to call for Black troops.

And what of Lincoln? Lincoln, the man honored today as the great emancipator, derided Brown and took pains to distance himself and his party from Brown's efforts. In a speech at the Cooper Institute in New York City on February 1860. Lincoln argued:

"You charge that we stir up insurrection among your slaves. We deny it. And what is your proof? Harpers Ferry. John Brown. John Brown was no republican and you have failed to implicate a single a republican in his Harpers Ferry enterprise." Lincoln went on to compare Brown to lunatics and regicides, drawing from glaring flawed examples abroad. Lincoln argued:

"John Brown's effort was peculiar — it was not a slave insurrection, it was an attempt by white

different history than the professionals. For one thing he was there. And barely escaped with his life. For another he was a revolutionary who knew the principals. He argues that Harpers Ferry could have had a completely different ending for those men and the nation had Brown been less solicitous of his hostages. Anderson wrote "that hundreds of slaves were ready and would have joined in the work had Captain Brown's sympathies not been aroused in favor of the families of his prisoners, and that a very different result would have been seen in consequence there is no question. There was abundant opportunity for him and the party to leave a place in which they held entire sway and possession before the arrival of the troops. [S]o cowardly were the slave holders proper that from Colonel Lewis Washington the descendant of the father of his country (General George Washington) they were easily taken prisoners. They had not pluck enough to fight nor to use the well loaded arms in their possession. But were concerned rather in keeping a whole skin by parlaying or by spilling cowardly tears to excite pity, as did Colonel Washington and in that way escape merited punishment. No, the conduct of the slaves was beyond all praise, and could our brave old captain have steeled his heart against the entreaties of his captives or shut up the fountains of his sympathies against their families, could he for the moment have forgotten them in the selfish thought of his own friends and kindred, or by adhering to the original plan, have left the place and thus looked forward to the prospective freedom of the slaves, hundreds ready and waiting would have been armed before 24 hours had elapsed." — Osborn Anderson, as one of the Black and White revolutionaries who tried to seize Harpers Ferry and thus fully cognizant of the failures of that effort, yet also saw the national impact of Brown's work as setting the light to the fuse that would blast slavery into the



in May 1856. We should note, however, that Brown and his boys were part of a war in bleeding Kansas, a war to determine whether the territory would become a free state, or a slave state. And that violence, indeed horrific violence, was rampant on both sides. And the pro slavery side was winning. By using ruthless racist violence, terrorism and fear Kansas was tilting toward being a pro slavery state. Then came John Brown. Of Pottawatomie *Workers World* writer Shelly Ettinger recently wrote "At Pottawatomie on the night of May 24-25, 1856, John Brown led an armed band in a lightning raid against an encampment where he knew he'd find several of the worst of the Border Ruffians who were terrorizing the territory. When Brown and company rode off, they left the dead bodies of five racist thugs. The criminals Brown and his band killed had been responsible for many assaults and murders; they were also known for capturing Native women and forcing them into prostitution and sexually assaulting Free State women." [Workers World, September 14, 2006] Pottawatomie changed the temper of the times. Kansas was still bleeding Kansas, but it was not only anti-slavery blood that flowed.

It is not about violence. It is about on which side the violence was utilized. Violence in support of slavery was invisible. Violence in support of freedom was horrible. Speaking of slavery what was that but violence? It was violence made acceptable and invisible by the verbal violence of the law. The John Brown who worked for several months writing the Chatham constitution knew this. And in the preamble to that document made it abundantly clear what he thought of slavery. A position by the way that was agreed to by the scores of Black men who met with him at the Chatham convention in Canada.

men to get up a revolt among slaves in which the slaves refused to participate. In fact it was so absurd that the slaves with all their ignorance saw plainly enough that it would not succeed. That affair in its philosophy corresponds with the many attempts related in history of the assassination of kings and emperors. An enthusiast broods over the oppression of a people till he fancies himself commissioned by heaven to liberate. He ventures the attempt which ends in little else than his own execution. Orsini's attempt on Louis Napoleon and John Brown's attempt at Harpers Ferry were in their philosophy precisely the same." — That was Abraham Lincoln.

Two years before his Cooper Institute speech in September 1858, Lincoln would exclaim, "I do not suppose that the most peaceful ultimate extinction [of slavery] would occur in less than a hundred years at the least." As the famed Black historian Lerone Bennet has written if Lincoln had had his way: Oprah Winfrey, Martin Luther King jr., Jesse Jackson Sr., Lena Horn, Booker T Washington, Thurgood Marshall, Duke Ellington, Muhammad Ali, Jessie Owens, Louie Armstrong, WC Handy, Hank Aaron, Maya Angelou, Debbie Allen, Benjamin Quarles, Josephine Baker, Mary McCloud Bethune, Ralph Bunch, Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, Leontyne Price, Bessie Smith, Walter White, Madame CJ Walker, Maxine Waters, Count Basie, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ida B Wells-Barnett, Richard Wright, Alex Haley, and even Clarence Thomas, would have been born in slavery.

John Brown changed that. His sole surviving comrade Osborn Anderson in his remarkable book "A Voice from Harpers Ferry" writes a far

trash can of history.

In Anderson's words published in 1859, "As it was even the noble old man's mistakes were productive of great good. The fact of which the future historian will record without the embarrassment attending its present narration. John Brown did not only capture and hold Harpers Ferry for 20 hours, but he held the whole south, he captured President Buchanan and his cabinet, convulsed the whole country, killed Governor Wise and dug the mine and laid the train which will eventually dissolve the union between freedom and slavery, the rebound reveals the truth, so let it be." Two years after Anderson's words were on the page, uniformed men were marching with John Brown's name on their lips as the Civil War dissolved the union between freedom and slavery.

If we go into any Black neighborhood today whether north south, Midwest or west, and asked the question which three white men are most admired I would wager that most would answer with perhaps the following 1) Jesus, 2) John F. Kennedy, and 3) John Brown. I grew up in a project home where my mother had a painting of a blue eyed Jesus next to a photo of John F. Kennedy on the living room wall. Only after his 1968 assassination did the face of Martin Luther King Jr. get placed in the middle. The point is that in Black memory John Brown holds a treasured place. His example, his sacrifice, and yes, his fight against slavery, made him a name that would not be forgotten. That is because blacks know almost instinctively that whites who would put their lives on the line for Blacks are rare creatures. Yet whites try their damndest to forget him, remember "he's crazy."

How we reconcile his memory and his meaning for America will go a long way toward determining, whether, how and indeed if we work together to try to go about social change.

Comes down to something that is also incredibly rare and that is trust. During the 60's as Staughton Lynd remembers, Blacks in SNCC or the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, urged their white members to leave for a few years while both Blacks and Whites "got it together." As he notes those few years turned into decades and don't seem any closer even as we open a new century. Later in the 60's and early 70's a group tried to aspire to John Brown's high standard: the SDS or the students for a democratic society. As a member of the formation has recently noted, it broke from within chiefly because of the toxin of white supremacy. David Gilbert, writing of the split informs us, "SDS split apart along the basic fault line of the US bedrock of white supremacy. Between the desire for a potential majority base among white Americans and the urgent need for militant solidarity with Black and other third world struggles, one side, invoking a Eurocentric Marxism, said that the "revolution was about the working class," and used that as a left cover for retreat from fighting alongside Vietnam and the Panthers, claiming all nationalism is reactionary. The other side inspired by Marxist-led third world struggles rightly saw solidarity with national liberation as a priority for any revolutionary movement worthy of that name. However we wrongly abandoned efforts to organize significant numbers of white people, which also limited our base for anti-racist activism." "That is

from No Surrender — writings from an anti-imperialist, David Gilbert. The children who claim John Brown's paternity could not measure up to the man. As long whites can opt out of a true revolutionary movement and the state will provide every opportunity, then they will do so, especially when the forces of repression ratchet up the pressure. In the MOVE organization when the conflict between the state and the organization hardened we saw whites and other races peel away from the movement, leaving its mostly Black core. When the going gets rough, Whites get going, it seems.

That was the meaning and intent of the killing of a white housewife from Detroit named Viola Liuzzo slain by the Klan in Alabama but also defamed by the FBI for the capital crime of being like John Brown, a nigger lover. In a white supremacist state there is no greater crime than a white national can commit. Consider if you will the main offense for which John Brown was convicted, sentenced and executed for "treason" — this for a man who fought successfully for the inclusion of an article in the 1858 Chatham Constitution over objection which forbade any attempt to overthrow any state or the federal government. Brown in defense of article 46 argued "the old flag is good enough for me; under it freedom was won from the tyrants of the old world for white men, now I intend to make it do duty for Black men. By so doing he betrayed whiteness and earned the moniker 'mad'"

John Brown certainly lacked a democratic sense — one that is virtually always lacking in a military structure. He was also a man drunk with a certainty of his mission from god. Yet so too was Martin Luther King. Staughton Lynd's Zapatista visions, does give us valuable insight into another way of living in the world. It is refreshing such democracy as practiced not by the people so much as so called leaders; we see such things so rarely today. We can all learn from the struggles in the south, from Latin America, where we find indigenous led and women led formations that are deeply rooted in the community. The ghost of John Brown stands between us even after one hundred and fifty years. How we remember him, and indeed —if—we remember him has impact on what future we will have. Was he mad? Or was he inspired by the burning fire of freedom? How we answer that question will determine whether he will go in peace or continue to haunt us into our future.

From death row, this is Mumia Abu Jamal.



# REVOLUTION AT OUR DOORSTEP

As TTT was going to press, Mexican federal troops invaded Oaxaca, on the heels of another massacre, including the killing of Indy Media reporter Brad Will. Troops stormed the barricades and residents retreated from the Zocalo. This repression will not deter the uprising of the Mexican people. What's more, that upsurge will not be contained behind the militarily imposed border, even with a 700-mile fence. Revolutionary forces in Mexico have begun to discuss the fact that the Mexican people and their revolutionary process extends across the border to the territory and people carved out of Mexico by the US empire. And the lessons of Mexico's grassroots popular opposition are being discussed and internalized among Mexican and other people inside the US. We are printing here several pieces conveying the urgency and vibrancy of that movement, including the last dispatch of martyred photojournalist and activist Brad Will. Activists from CIPO-RFM, APPO and the teacher's union are coming to the US in Nov-Dec. For more information, contact ARA-LA.—Editor.

Hola tod@s,

I spent the last 15 minutes looking for an article that would briefly, but fully, describe the situation here in Oaxaca. I couldn't find one! That says a lot about the state of the media, including the independent media. (The latter of which, actually, is flourishing here in Oaxaca city -- we have Radio Planton, that is, the radio station of the city occupation, on all the time, at least when the radio works -- and people have taken over several radio stations, television stations, etc., in the last month. Some have been given back, some haven't.)

But there also exists a more general problem about how, or if, the written word can describe the ..... revolution, i guess ..... that's happening here in Oaxaca. I can't attempt to do so now. There are no cops, and no politicians, and little state activity, and everything in the area is tough, but fine. I'm writing to say that I'm thinking about Providence a lot, and what kinds of forces are stopping people in other parts of the world from doing exactly what people in Oaxaca City (and elsewhere in Oaxaca) are doing as I write: kicking out the police and politicians, setting up and mobilizing networks of people to create and maintain a mass occupation of cities and towns, creating their own security forces, staying at the barricades all night, despite being shot at by paramilitaries, and coordinating everything with popular assemblies.

The result: two wounded (on our side), several beaten (on our side), and two kidnapped (first quickly beaten, then shoved into cars). The battle took maybe 1 minute. After we had occupied the hotel, we had decided (democratically, assembly-style, because that's how most things are decided in this leaderless movement) to kick out the guests and close up the hotel. It was then that someone several yards from me saw the politicians and their paramilitaries try to escape from a side door. We gave chase. And that's when they started shooting. Some, perhaps more familiar with the pinging and whizzing of bullets around them (or perhaps simply a lot braver than I), stayed near or took cover right there. Most of us, including me, ran the other way and took cover when the bullets started coming.

I'm staying with the group CIPO-RFM here in Oaxaca City, and one of the Magonistas wrote something recently that provides a little more information, even if it doesn't really carry the sense of radical effervescence that seems so palpable here. There's also much, much, MUCH I don't understand. Neighborhood assemblies have been constructing and coordinating barricades in their neighborhoods and towns throughout the state. I've been to a couple of the main APPO (Popular People's Assembly of Oaxaca, the "coalition," you might call it, that is the heart of this popular rebellion) as an IWW delegate, and the breadth of the democratic spirit here is incredible. Many APPO folks, on strike and at the occupations and barricades, and many many many Oaxacans, are going hungry. It's been almost 4 months now. They need money down here, and direct action up in the US.

Abrazos combativos, Eric

The Politics of Violence in Oaxaca  
by Raul Gatica, Writing for CIPO-Van from Exile in Vancouver, Canada

Hard times lie in store: That seems to be the message of the mobilization of the army in strategic points of the country; the creation of military units specially trained to deal with social protests and detain their leaders; the state of siege in a part of the capital during Vicente Fox's last presidential report; the assassination of members of the police by drug-traffickers and a general increase in criminal activity; and finally the deliberate lack of attention to national problems that range from growing poverty to the loss of employment opportunities and increasing levels of migration. Parallel to the electoral fraud on the federal level, the state of Oaxaca is experiencing a growth of aggression against those Oaxacans who, tired of the tyranny of state governor Ulises Ruiz Ortis, have organized themselves into the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO).

That aggression is carried out by paramilitary groups who consist of common criminals, illegally taken from the prisons for that purpose, as well as members of the police force.

The conflict didn't begin with the government's attempt of June 14 to remove the striking



teachers of 22nd section of the teachers' union SNTE-CNTE from the central square of the city of Oaxaca where they were protesting, but it was brought to a head by it. Its historical antecedents go back as far as the tradition of resistance of the indigenous communities. In the more recent past, it follows the expulsion from the central square of the Union of State Service Workers on June 12, 2003, and of protesters from the Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca "Ricardo Flores Magón" (CIPO) on September 14 and again on December 23 2004. Governor Ulises Ruiz was imposed in a contested election process; and aggression ensued against various other organizations of civil society, who all have their share of members that are held as political prisoners or, in the case of the author of this article, were forced into political exile.

But the formation of the APPO and its attempts at creating autonomous institutions through non-violent direct action go, without doubt, much beyond the partisan demands of some social organizations and unions. Against the peaceful efforts of the APPO to form citizen councils, take over radio stations, form voluntary self-defense groups, put up alternative markets, occupy buildings in order to restore them and put them at the service of the community, and put up barricades in order to stop the police from committing further aggression, the government responds with a dirty war. It's designed to generate terror and discourage the participation

of the population. Its aim is to isolate nuclei of organization in order to stop the movement by means of repression.

The announcements of the state government concerning the social movement fit into its general strategy of a dirty war. In spite of the fact that all the killed and the wounded in this conflict are on the side of the APPO, that members of the movement, in contrast to those of the paramilitary forces, do not mask their faces, and that all of their actions. From demonstrations by children with flowers, to processions which celebrate Christian church services, to songs and dances - do not overstep the limits of the law and the constitution, the government maintains that it is the APPO who acts as an urban guerrilla force. In fact, an explosion of violence has so far been prevented only by the calm attitude of the APPO, which after its last mass-march of protest has begun to unilaterally take steps to diffuse the tension. At the same time, authorities have elegantly described their paramilitary operations as "road cleaning operations," although everybody else in Oaxaca has been forced by events to speak of the paramilitaries as the "convoy of death." Those events include the armed invasion of radio and TV stations and of the office of the newspaper Noticias, the beating up of journalists, the damage done to shops, and the creation of general terror through the assassination of Jose Colmenares, Lorenzo San Pablo Cervantes and Gonzalo Cisneros Gautier.

Brad Will's last email dispatch ... early dawn, Oct. 16

Yesterday I went for a walk with the good people of Oaxaca -- was walking all day really -- in the afternoon they showed me where the bullets hit the wall -- they numbered the

ones they could reach -- it reminded me of the doorway of Amadou Diallo's home -- but here the graffiti was there before the shooting began -- one bullet they didn't number was still in his head -- he was 41 years old -- Alejandro Garcia Hernandez -- at the neighborhood barricade every night -- that night he came out to join his wife and sons to let an ambulance through - then a pickup tried to follow -- he took their bullet when he told them they could not pass -- they never did -- these military men in civilian dress shot their way out of there a young man who wanted to only be called Marco was with them when the shooting happened -- a bullet passed through his shoulder -- he was clearly in shock when we met -- 19 years old -- said he hadn't told his parents yet -- said he had been at the barricade every night - said he was going back as soon as the wound closed -- absolutely

just days before there was a delegation of senators visiting to determine the ungovernability of the state -- they got a taste -- the call went out to shut down the rest of the government -- dozens went walking out of the zocalo city center with big sticks and a box full of spray paint -- they took control of 3 city buses and went around the city all morning visiting local government buildings and informing them that that they were closed -- and we appreciate your voluntary cooperation -- and they filed out perturbed but still getting paid -- shut -- as they pulled away from the last stop 3 gunmen came



out and started shooting -- 2 buses had already pulled away -- mayhem -- 10 minute battle with stones and slingshots and screaming -- one head wound -- another through the leg -- made their way to the hospital while the fighting continued -- shout out on the radio and people came from all parts -- the gunmen were around the side of the building -- they got away -- they were inside -- no one sure -- watchful -- undercover police were reported lurking around the hospital and folks went running to stand watch over the wounded what can you say about this movement -- this revolutionary moment -- you know it is building, growing, shaping -- you can feel it -- trying desperately for a direct democracy -- in November APPO will have a state wide conference for the formation of a state wide asamblea estatal del pueblo de Oaxaca (AEPPO) -- now there are 11 of 33 states in Mexico that have declared formation of asamblea populares like APPO -- and on the other side in the USA a few -- the marines have returned to sea even though the federal police who ravaged Atenco remain close by -- the new encampment in Mexico has begun a hunger strike -- the senate can expel URO -- what's next nobody's sure -- it is a point of light pressed through glass -- ready to burn or show the way -- it is clear that this is more than a strike, more than expulsion of a governor, more than a blockade, more than a coalition of fragments -- it is a genuine people's revolt -- and after decades of PRI rule by bribe, fraud, and bullet the people are tired -- they call him the tyrant -- they talk of destroying this authoritarianism -- you cannot mistake the whisper of the Lancandon jungle in the streets -- in every street corner deciding together to hold -- you see it their faces -- indigenous, women, children -- so brave -- watchful at night -- proud and resolute went walking back from Alejandro's barricade with a group of supporters who came from an outlying district a half hour away -- went walking with angry folk on their way to the morgue -- went inside and saw him -- haven't seen too many bodies in my life -- eats you up -- a stack of nameless corpses in the corner -- about the number who had died -- no refrigeration -- the smell -- they had to open his skull to pull the bullet out -- walked back with him and his people and now Alejandro waits in the zocalo -- like the others at their plantones -- he's waiting for an impasse, a change, an exit, a way forward, a way out, a solution -- waiting for the earth to shift and open -- waiting for November when he can sit with his loved ones on the day of the dead and share food and drink and a song -- waiting for the plaza to turn itself over to him and burst -- he will only wait until morning but tonight he is waiting for the governor and his lot to never come back -- one more death -- one more martyr in a dirty war -- one more time to cry and hurt -- one more time to know power and its ugly head -- one more bullet cracks the night -- one more night at the barricades -- some keep the fires -- others curl up and sleep -- but all of them are with him as he rests one last night at his watch.



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