



Frontline(s)

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abstract

The challenge of theorising and analysing socio-political phenomena can feel overwhelming given today's somewhat threatening *realpolitik* (9/11, US-led wars on Afghanistan, Iraq and now, perhaps, Syria) and the rapid pace with which (dis)information is received, digested and discarded. Through an act of 'literary montage' construction, and prefaced by some interpretation of my own, I offer this 'exhibit' as an attempt to highlight this sense of dislocation whilst simultaneously 'building a picture'. A specific concern is to problematise the notion of 'the frontline'. Given blatant military and economic imperialism by the US, underscored by the construction and fetishising of the rational subject under modernity and the social democratic state, I suggest that frontlines are located in any public or private space where the legitimacy of these interests and categories is questioned. Expressions of difference, including peace activism, thus become "proliferating illegitimacies"¹ and are policed as such. Against this context, the texts positioned here tell of growing realisation and fear of the coldness and instrumentalism at the heart of empire-building, of which both the horrific violence currently inflicted on Iraqi people, and the discounting and suppression of dissent to war worldwide, are part. For a global anti-capitalist/pro-justice movement that recognises trade in arms as a core constraint on human potential, reaching beyond this fear – retaining the hope of the 'politics of possibility' with which this 'movement of movements' has come to be identified – emerges as a latent and essential challenge.

"Mō'ntage *n...*(production of) composite whole from juxtaposed pieces...."²

Preface

Visit the MoveOn peace campaign's website³ and enter a world of tenaciously flickering candle flames: the candles are lit as people commit to, wait for, and try to construct peace. Click on a location on the interactive world map and find yourself transported to a constantly shifting collage of images of people – young and old, women, men and children, 'black' and 'white' – holding the flame for peace. Overlain

1 Cf. De Certeau, M. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. London: University of California Press, 96.

2 Sykes, J.B. (ed.) (1982) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 655.

3 <http://www.moveon.org/vigil/>, visited 18 March 2003.

on these images are statements from a multitude of individuals all over the world, each themselves flickering like a candle flame as they appear on the screen...

Motohiko Sato, Tokyo, Japan: "Dear Bush, do not kill them! You should [be] thinking about peaceful solution!...Please!"; Ranajit Dastidar, Chittagong, Bangladesh: "Please stop [the] Bush Administration from its belligerent move to invade and occupy Iraq..."; Anna Parker, Christchurch, New Zealand: "Please engage in your humanity and go down in history as those who were courageous enough to make a stand for peace."; Roberta Thomas, Ambler, PA, United States of America: "Please help my country avoid a terrible mistake."

"Saddam's main presidential palace, a great rampart of a building 20 storeys high, simply exploded in front of me – a cauldron of fire, a 100ft sheet of flame and a sound that had my ears singing for an hour after....Then four more cruise missiles came in....To my right, the Ministry of Armaments Procurement...coughed fire as five missiles crashed into the concrete."⁴

Images of fire – the terrifying fire that consumes and destroys, and the subtle, flickering fire that sustains. As Pinkola Estes describes, "[t]here's burning that goes with joy, and there's burning that goes with annihilation. One is the fire of transformation, the other is the fire of decimation only. It is the fire of transformation we want."⁵

Will the fires in Baghdad emerge as a positively transformative force? Or will they go down in history as signalling the actions of an inflexible imperial power at the beginning of a campaign for purification and destruction of all that obstructs its hunger for power and profit? Will the candles lit by participants of a burgeoning, diverse and increasingly global peace and justice movement come to symbolise a psycho-societal, as well as political and economic, 'system shift', the form of which will only be clarified in hindsight? To what extent does this cohere and coalesce with the questioning of what it means to be human articulated by those identifying themselves as part of the 'movement of movements' that is variously anti-global corporate capitalism, and pro-justice, democracy, autonomy and self-determination? Are we witnessing (and participating in?) the emergence of a cultural presence around the globe that *knows*⁶ that power ≠ bombs, that violence and conflict are not necessary outcomes of being human, and that diversity not homogeneity, and co-existence not domination, potentiates the resilience and evolution of all living systems?⁷ If "the purpose of accepting authority is to learn to

4 Fisk, R. 'Minute After Minute the Missiles Came, With Devastating Shrieks', *The Independent*, 22 March 2003.

5 Clarissa Pinkola Estes (1993) *Women Who Run With the Wolves: Contacting the Power of the Wild Woman*. London: Rider Books.

6 As in the gnostic and psychotherapeutic sense of self-knowledge, cf. Elaine Pagels (1979) *The Gnostic Gospels*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

7 Cf. Jantsch, E. (1980) *The Self-organizing Universe: Scientific and Human Implications of the Emerging Paradigm of Evolution*. Oxford: Pergamon Press; Kauffman, S. (1993) *The Origins of Order: Self-organization and Selection in Evolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Kauffman, S. (1995) *At Home in the Universe: The Search for Laws of Self-organisation and Complexity*. London, Penguin Books Ltd; Cilliers, P. (1998) *Complexity and Post-modernism: Understanding Complex Systems*. London: Routledge.

outgrow authority”⁸, then is this ‘culture’ outgrowing aspects of state authority that are perceived to be constraining and stultifying, not least because of their collusion in the systemic inequalities and violence perpetuated to sustain a world order of US-led corporate capitalism?⁹ And are we also witnessing a conservative backlash to this of which the attack on Iraq, and the discounting of public opinion against war (not to mention Iraqi lives), is only one part? Or, as Bunzl, following Kohr, argues, are we merely watching the inevitable “propensity to abusive aggression and war” that arises once a socio-political unit gains enough stick-wielding power to ensure immunity from retaliation¹⁰, precipitating a seemingly impossible repeating (or reversion?¹¹) of history?

Watch, read, hear the news and it is easy to absorb a discourse that recent/current events – 9/11/01, war on Afghanistan, war on Iraq – comprise the frontline of Samuel Huntington’s predicted clash of cultures between ‘the West’ and Islam.¹² But look, experience and think beyond this discourse and frontlines are everywhere. Within both west and east, they are present wherever and whenever people live – maintain lifeworlds – that are different to and resist the dysfunctional fetishising of rationality and instrumentalism comprising a state-centric and imperialist modernity. Rejecting the de/sub-humanisation of non-rational aspects of ‘being human’; embracing the contributions of emotion, creativity, psyche and spirit to subjectivity¹³; protesting a globalist *habitus* or culture¹⁴ – a common sense and practice – of ‘unity in diversity’, in contrast to a culturally and historically located, not to mention gendered and racist, universalising rationalism: these are frontlines embodied in vernacular knowledges and multifaceted experience – in the everyday life of what Negri frames as the irreducible multitude¹⁵. They exist in relation to, and in the context of, an ascendant nexus of surveillance, policing and violence, not to mention the purification of difference, the

8 Elaine Pagels (1979) *The Gnostic Gospels*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

9 Further discussion in Sullivan, S. 2001. *Danza e Diversità: Copri, Movimento ed Esperienza Nella Trance-dance dei Khoisan e nei Rave Occidentali*. (On Dance and Difference: Bodies, Movement and Experience in Khoesān Trance-dancing – Perceptions of ‘a Raver’). *Africa e Mediterraneo Cultura e Società* 37: 15-22; Sullivan, S. In prep. *Distributed Networks and the Politics of Possibility: Or Thinking Through What’s Different About Glocal Anti-capitalism*. *CSGR Working paper*. Sullivan, S. and Day, M.J.G. In prep. *The Geek Shall Inherit the Earth! IT and Software Design as Means and Models for Self-organisation*.

10 John Bunzl (Founder, Simultaneous Policy Organisation, <http://www.simpol.org>), ‘The War on Iraq in Perspective’, email 3 April 2003; Leopold Kohr (1957) *The Breakdown of Nations*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

11 Baudrillard, J. (1992) ‘Reversion of History’, http://www.simulation.dk/articles/a-reversion_of_history.html, visited 3rd April 2003, from Baudrillard, J. *L’Illusion de la fin: Ou La Greve des Evenements*, Galilee: Paris. Translated by Charles Dudas, York University, Canada. http://www.simulation.dk/articles/a-reversion_of_history.html, visited 3 April 2003

12 Huntington, S.P. (1993) ‘The Clash of Civilisations?’, *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3): 22-47; Huntington, S.P. (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

13 Cf. Wilber, K. (1995) *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution*. London: Shambhala press.

14 Cf. Bourdieu, P. (1980/1990) *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

15 Negri, A. (2002) ‘Towards an Ontological Definition of the Multitude’, *Multitudes*, 9, http://multitudes.samizdat.net/spip/article.php3?id_article=269&var_recherche=negri

imprisonment of dissenters, the self-censorship of panoptic society, that are systemic to the functioning of modernity and the social democratic state. Am I paranoid or perceptive? Depressed or suppressed? Or am I simply waking up to the closing off of possibilities for a nuanced and *human* conversation¹⁶ beyond that dictated by the arbiters of Empire¹⁷ – today embodied by the capitalist, patriarchal, unilateralist and imperialist military machine and neo-conservative ideology that is the Bush(+Blair) administration?

As I grope my way through this rapidly shifting terrain to see what, if any, patterns emerge – the closure of analysis, the certainty of ‘research findings’, feel inappropriate and unfeasible. My approach, then, is neither the hard linear logic of reason, nor some impossible and undesirable attempt at cold objectivity. Instead, I offer an exhibition of textual images – a ‘literary montage’ – as an attempt to juxtapose issues and themes that seem to me to be of immense and perhaps predictive significance. When guts literally are being spilled by the cabal of men-in-suits and uniforms that are running the world’s largest ‘democracies’ and weapons arsenals – when this is objectified and rationalised as ‘collateral damage’ – then an attempt at a subjective and anti-rationalist gut reaction seems wholly and intellectually justifiable. Thus, my methods are the tears of grief and outrage that well-up when reading some of the texts that appear here; my frustration at witnessing the closing in of a Kafkaesque state-bureaucratic web of citizen surveillance, suppression of dissent, and violence towards those who ask questions; my joy at the sense of carnival and community, and of creativity and humour – the multifaceted *humanity* – that infuses the peace and anti-capitalist/global justice protests; and my fear at seeing those batons raised and at being hemmed in by people (men mainly) who become indistinguishable as individual humans once the riot uniforms go on. I follow Böhm¹⁸ in his similar exploration, via literary montage, of the significances of the protest and policing events that took place in London on Mayday 2001: quotations minus quotation marks and myself present as ‘guest in my own text’. Space constraints and an attempt to maintain some focus have meant editing where I have felt it appropriate, and this is signalled as conventional throughout.

Frontline(s)

As the 20th century draws to a close, the United States stands as the world’s preeminent power. Having led the West to victory in the Cold War, America faces an opportunity and a challenge:...Does the United States have the resolve to shape a new century favorable to American principles and interests? We seem to have forgotten the essential elements of the Reagan Administration’s success: a military that is strong and ready to meet both present and future challenges; a foreign policy that boldly and purposefully

16 Cf. Dallmayr, F. (2001) ‘Conversation Across Boundaries: Political Theory and Global Diversity’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 30(2): 331-347.

17 E.g. Hardt, M. and A. Negri (2000) *Empire*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

18 Böhm, S.G. (2001) ‘010501’, *ephemera: critical dialogues on organization*, 1(2): 163-181.

promotes American principles abroad; and national leadership that accepts the United States' global responsibilities.¹⁹

...advanced forms of biological warfare that can “target” specific genotypes may transform biological warfare from the realm of terror to a politically useful tool.²⁰

Throughout his journal...Columbus spoke of the native Americans with...admiring awe: “They are the best people in the world and above all the gentlest – without knowledge of what is evil – nor do they murder or steal...they love their neighbors as themselves and they have the sweetest talk in the world...always laughing.”...But then, in the midst of all this...Columbus writes: “They would make fine servants. With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want.” And what did Columbus want? This is not hard to determine. In the first two weeks of his journal entries, there is one word that recurs 75 times: GOLD...He ordered the natives to find a certain amount of gold within a certain period of time. And if they did not meet their quota, their arms were hacked off....In the [first] Gulf War...[w]hen Colin Powell was asked about Iraqi casualties he said that was “really not a matter I am terribly interested in.”²¹

When two brutal regimes clash, they always need as much human cannon fodder as possible. Saddam's policy is to keep his loyal Republican Guards close to him, to protect him from the US/UK invaders...[w]hile he puts poorly-equipped conscripts as cannon fodder to face US/UK forces in the desert, and threatens them with torture of their families should they desert the frontlines. The US has a different arm-twisting technique – to dangle offers of skills training, free college education and health care in the faces of poor Americans in order to get them to sign up...The sad result is a disproportionate number of ‘people of colour’ on the US frontlines in the Gulf. During the first Gulf War, over 50 percent of front-line troops were non-white, although people of colour only make up around 10 percent of the overall population. Over 30 percent of US troops are non-white but they make up only 12 percent of officers.²²

In the summer [of 1999]...Katherine Harris who was both co-chair of Dubya's presidential campaign and Florida's secretary of state responsible for elections employed a firm of consultants with strong Republican ties, Database Technologies, to clean up the state's electoral rolls. This included removing anyone “suspected” of being an ex-felon, who cannot vote in Florida. That meant that the 31 per cent of all black

19 ‘Statement of Principles’ for the American thinktank ‘Project for the New American Century’ (PNAC), whose members include Jeb Bush (brother of President George Bush), Dick Cheney (Vice-President), Dan Quayle (former Vice-President), Donald Rumsfeld (Secretary of Defense) and Paul Wolfowitz (Deputy Secretary of Defense). <http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm>, visited 2 April 2003.

20 Donnelly, T. (principle author) (2000) *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources For a New Century*, a report of The Project for the New American Century, <http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>, 60.

21 Zinn, H. (2001) ‘Columbus and Western Civilization’, in Kick, R. (ed.) *You Are Being Lied To: The Disinformation Guide to Media Distortion, Historical Whitewashes and Cultural Myths*. New York: The Disinformation Society Ltd. 205-213, pp. 205-206, 210.

22 SchNEWS 397, 28 March 2003, <http://www.schnews.org.uk>.

men who have a past felony on their records were prevented from voting. The fact that most black Florida residents vote Democrat – 90 percent of those who were allowed to vote in 2000 voted for Al Gore – was pure coincidence.²³

US soldiers in Iraq are being asked to pray for President George W Bush. Thousands of marines have been given a pamphlet called “A Christian’s Duty,” a mini prayer book which includes a tear-out section to be mailed to the White House pledging the soldier who sends it in has been praying for Bush...The pamphlet, produced by a group called In Touch Ministries, offers a daily prayer to be made for the US president, a born-again Christian who likes to invoke his God in speeches....Monday’s reads “Pray that the President and his advisers will be strong and courageous to do what is right regardless of critics”.²⁴

B-52 Stratofortress Bombers:

Crew: Five

Load: 51 x 500 lb (227 kg) bombs, 30 cluster bombs, or 20 cruise missiles

Max speed: 650 mph (1,046 km/h)

Range: approx. 8,800 miles (14,160 km)

[Friday, 21 March] Eight American B-52 bombers took off from a UK airbase. Peace protesters wept, held placards and said they felt “sickened” as the B-52 bombers took to the skies. A small group of aircraft enthusiasts also gathered around the base as the B-52s took off.²⁵

Many Iraqis had watched as I had television film of those ominous B-52 bombers taking off from Britain only six hours earlier. Like me, they had noted the time, added three hours for Iraqi time in front of London and guessed that, at around 9pm, the terror would begin. The B-52s, almost certainly firing from outside Iraqi airspace, were dead on time.²⁶

[Tuesday, 25 March] Three people died yesterday in the farmhouse which was bombed at Dialla, including the young wife, Nahda, who was missing in the rubble. She, along with Zahra, the eight year old daughter and her aunt, Hana, were buried this morning...the couple had been married just one week...and a neighbour showed us a flouncy pink invitation to the wedding festival. Omar, the bridegroom, sat silently crying on the floor in the hospital corridor, leaning on the wall, body bent, head in his hands....Ration sacks were piled in the kitchen and there was a bowl of green beans which looked as if they were being prepared for an evening meal. Two or three of the

23 Mackenzie, S. ‘Bodgy Elections in Florida’, 8 September 2002, <http://www.crikey.com.au/politics/2002/09/08/20020908bushflorida.html>; also see Moore, M. (2002) *Stupid White Men*, London: Penguin Books.

24 ABC News Online, ‘US Soldiers in Iraq Asked to Pray for Bush’, 30 March 2003, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/s819685.htm>.

25 BBC ‘Bombers Take Off From Airbase’, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2871915.stm>, 21 March 2003, and <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/2551533.stm>, visited 9 April 2003.

26 Fisk, R. ‘Minute After Minute the Missiles Came, With Devastating Shrieks’, *The Independent*, 22 March 2003.

neighbours invited us to eat in their homes. Humbling seems too small a word for the experience of being invited to share food and hospitality, by people with so little, while crouching in the rubble of their friends' and neighbours' home which was obliterated, with several lives, by my country, only the previous day....

[Wednesday, 26 March] Another farming community in Al Doraa also reported an attack by Apache helicopters at 4pm on Saturday. Atta Jassim died when a missile hit his house. Moen, his eight-year-old son had multiple bowel and intestinal injuries from shrapnel: part of his intestine had been removed. His six-year-old brother Ali and mother Hana were also injured by shrapnel.... "Is this democracy?" the men demanded to know.... "Is this what America is bringing to Iraq?" At 9 this morning a group of caravans was hit with cluster bombs, according to the doctors. A tiny boy lay in terrible pain in the hospital, a tube draining blood from his chest, which was pierced by shrapnel...I'm not sure whether he knew yet, or could understand, that his mother was killed instantly and his five sisters and two brothers were not yet found.... Farms are not a legitimate target... You cannot bomb an area of civilian houses knowing that people in the vicinity are likely to be hurt by flying glass and shrapnel. More than that though, more than the illegality of it, this is wrong. It's desperately, horrifyingly, achingly wrong.²⁷

Traumatic experience leads us to experience our own body as 'foreign', in its spontaneous impulses to surrender and flow: if it feels vital to suppress feeling and emotional expression, then this can only be achieved by alienating ourselves from our own bodies.²⁸

This is our moment, our time to take the stage and play our part, not in a theater or a club, or our living room, but out in the open. We party people, old hippies with cobwebs on our dreams, mums and dads, global citizens. What is the way forward?... If this thing goes off, there will be nowhere to hide. Turn off the TV come and dance with your neighbours, you teachers, your law enforcement – our community – lets get to know each other while we still can. War is only one conversation, one possibility – Peace is mine! "we are the powers that be" Let us create a new conversation. "our new world order is love" There is nothing left to lose now, lets pull out all the stops and go for it. "party for peace" everyone, in every town and city in this world, 24 hours a day, taking to the streets and partying for peace – no aggro in the face of whatever – Love and respect for all including the cops who are all just caught up in it like we are.²⁹

Our humanity is stronger than all your weaponry!³⁰

27 Peace activist Jo Wilding's diary from Baghdad, 25-26 March, posted to the Mark Thomas mailing list on 28 March 2003. Also go to <http://www.bristolfoe.org.uk/wildfire/iraq/index.htm>.

28 Totton, N. (2002) 'Foreign Bodies: Recovering the History of Body Psychotherapy', in T. Staunton, (ed.) *Body Psychotherapy*. Hove: Brunner-Routledge, 7-26.

29 Description for discussion group – <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PartyforPeaceGlobal-interactive>, visited 5 April 2003. Also see <http://www.InfinitePossibility.org>.

30 Banner slogan at the stop the war protest in Brighton, 20 March 2003 (personal notes)

Well I might as well be in jail. Impotence, you'd have thought, would be the one affliction that Western Man had truly conquered. I can't check e-mail without being offered cut-price Viagra, and the phenomenal rise in web-based porn means I'm lucky – or unlucky, perhaps – to get through a day without being treated to sights that would have probably made me faint when I was 14. Mind you, I nearly fell off my chair yesterday, and I'm ashamed to admit it was the result of surfing to an X-rated picture featuring a child. But before you phone the Vice Squad, or gather a few neighbours for a lynching, I'd better explain that she wasn't being abused. Well no, that's not right – she WAS being abused. The picture purported to have been taken in Basra, on March 23 2003, and I've no reason to doubt that claim. The scene, a low pile of bodies – indistinguishable individually, just an outstretched, pale arm here or a stiff leg there. The reason you couldn't make out too much of the background was the bloke, heavily bearded and with a turban, standing in front of this impromptu mortuary. He was stooped by the weight of the young girl cradled in his arms, her head resting on his right forearm and her shattered legs dangling over his left. Her right foot was destroyed, a wreck of flesh dangling by a flap of skin and only recognisable in context. Her clothes – modern, colourful – spotted with blood and what might have been shrapnel entries. Her face was pale, eyes closed and mouth a thin line. Of course, I've seen grotesque things before. That film of the South Vietnamese general shooting that VC kid in the head. The photograph of the Iraqi soldier, burnt to death at the wheel of his vehicle on the Basra Road in Gulf War 1. And, of course, I've seen plenty of photographs of mutilated civilians, because war is never very far away when the Internet spans the globe. The thing that made this picture so different, the thing that won't go away now, was that she really could have been my daughter. Oh, sure, my daughter's maybe a year or two younger, and her hair's fairer, and, and, and. But she would have chosen comfortable, pull-on leggings just like those, and a feathery boa-like wrap just like that one. And if she'd been where this girl was, she'd be just as.. well, there's the other thing. You can't tell for sure whether the girl's still alive. It doesn't look like it, more as if the man – her father, maybe, or just a stranger – has picked her up from the pile of corpses behind him, unable to leave her there like a bright flower amongst the drab clothes and pallid flesh. But maybe she's just unconscious, as if that would make everything alright. A million people in Basra are without clean water or electricity, and the entire Country is under a ferocious attack, so what would her chances of surviving be? So, that's where I am: sitting in a room, writing to try and get the pain out. But that won't happen, because I'm completely impotent. I can't do any of the things that I so desperately want to do; I might as well be in jail. I never could have prevented her from being horrifically maimed or killed, and I can't prevent it from happening again, and again, and again. And each time, it'll be my daughter. Harry, UK, 25 March 2003.³¹

The relevance of Freud to our time is largely his insight and, to a very considerable extent, his *demonstration* that the ordinary person is a shrivelled, desiccated fragment of what a person can be. As adults, we have forgotten most of our childhood, not only its contents but its flavour; as men of the world, we hardly know of the existence of the inner world: we barely remember our dreams, and make little sense of them when we

31 Posting by Harry to Mark Thomas Mailing List, 25th March 2003. Also at <http://lettertoamerica.org/words>, and <http://www.bristolfoe.org.uk/wildfire/iraq/index.htm>.

do...Our capacity to think, except in the service of what we are dangerously deluded in supposing is our self-interest...is pitifully limited: our capacity even to see, hear, touch, taste and smell is so shrouded in veils of mystification that an intensive discipline of un-learning is necessary for *anyone* before one can begin to experience the world afresh, with innocence, truth and love...This state of affairs represents an almost unbelievable devastation of our experience.³²

The night started peacefully enough. People with candles. The usual stuff...However, turn the corner into Park Street, onto College Green, opposite the Council House, and a very different sight would have met you. A thousand-strong crowd at that stage chanting, singing and vibrating with the sound: "Stop the war!" It felt like the sight could have been an inspirational scene, something to tell your grandkids, something that stood for liberation and freedom. Until the luminous coats, like a chain of nightflies, came running from all sides around the crowd and into the throng. And not only on foot and not only on horseback, but with barking dogs and riot shields, like a bright nightmare, shouting in language that is unrepeatable. Helicopters, umpteen police vans and armed officers accompanied the protesters every way...And I also was mishandled by three officers in riot gear. I was put in an arm-lock not once, but twice...But maybe the officer who answered my purposefully inane question as I left the dwindled crowd at Hotwells Road gives a better idea of why the world has allowed this war to take place. He said: "We've had some angry drivers tonight and we can't upset them, can we? After all we're all going somewhere, whether it's right or wrong."³³

Just in case you are unclear about this war. A warmonger explains war to a peacenik:

PeaceNik: Why did you say we are we invading Iraq?

WarMonger: We are invading Iraq because it is in violation of security council resolution 1441. A country cannot be allowed to violate security council resolutions.

PN: But I thought many of our allies, including Israel & Turkey, were in violation of more security council resolutions than Iraq.

WM: It's not just about UN resolutions. The main point is that Iraq could have weapons of mass destruction, and the first sign of a smoking gun could well be a mushroom cloud over NY.

PN: Mushroom cloud? But I thought the weapons inspectors said Iraq had no nuclear weapons.

WM: Yes, but biological and chemical weapons are the issue.

PN: But I thought Iraq did not have any long range missiles for attacking us or our allies with such weapons.

WM: The risk is not Iraq directly attacking us, but rather terrorist networks that Iraq could sell the weapons to.

PN: But couldn't virtually any country sell chemical or biological materials? We sold quite a bit to Iraq in the eighties ourselves, didn't we?

32 Laing, R.D. (1967) *The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise*. London: Penguin Books, 22-23.

33 Evening Post, 'Protests in Bristol', <http://www.thisisbristol.co.uk/displayNode.jsp?nodeId=69368&command=displayContent&sourceNode=68920&contentPK=4775408>, 21 March 2003.

WM: That's ancient history. Look, Saddam Hussein is an evil man that has an undeniable track record of repressing his own people since the early eighties. He gasses his enemies. Everyone agrees that he is a power-hungry lunatic murderer. PN: We sold chemical and biological materials to a power-hungry lunatic murderer?³⁴

The multitude is a whole of singularities. On these premises we can immediately begin to trace an ontological definition of what is left of reality once the concept of the people is freed from transcendence. The way in which the concept of the people took shape within the hegemonic tradition of modernity is well known. Hobbes, Rousseau and Hegel have, each for his own part and in different ways, produced a concept of the people starting from sovereign transcendence: in those authors' minds the multitude was regarded as chaos and war. The thought of Modernity operates in a twofold manner on these grounds: on the one hand, it abstracts the multiplicity of singularities and, in a transcendental manner, unifies it in the concept of the people; on the other hand, it dissolves the whole of singularities (that constitute the multitude) into a mass of individuals. The modern theory of natural right, whether of empirical or idealist origin, is a theory of transcendence and of dissolution of the plane of immanence all the same. On the contrary, the theory of the multitude requires that the subjects speak for themselves, and that what is dealt with are unrepresentable singularities rather than individual proprietors.³⁵

Did you know...A British nuclear-powered Trident submarine is out on patrol ready, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to fire sixteen nuclear-armed missiles. Each submarine carries 48 independently-targeted nuclear warheads. Each warhead has seven times the explosive power of the first atomic bomb...[t]he atomic bomb that was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, killing 140,000 civilians. It costs us *£1.5 billion every year*.³⁶

Special stop and search powers under anti-terrorism laws are in force in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. A police spokeswoman said the powers had been introduced to enhance security around RAF Fairford [where American B-52 bomber planes are stationed]. "The order covers the counties of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire and gives police the power to stop and search persons and vehicles in order to prevent terrorism."³⁷

Schizophrenia is a diagnosis, a label applied by some people to others...[it establishes] as a social fact that the person labelled is one of Them. It is easy to forget that the process is a hypothesis, to assume that it is a fact, then to pass the judgement that it is biologically maladaptive and, as such, pathological. But social adaptation to a

34 DNA, G. 'Just In Case You Are Unclear About This War. A Warmonger Explains War to a Peacenik', <http://www.livejournal.com/users/throwingstardna/124066.html>, visited 25 March 2003.

35 Negri, A. (2002) 'Towards an Ontological Definition of the Multitude', *Multitudes*, 9, http://multitudes.samizdat.net/spip/article.php3?id_article=269&var_recherche=negri

36 <http://www.cnduk.org/welcome.htm>, visited 3 April 2003, emphasis in original.

37 BBC 'Special Powers in Two Counties', <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2837883.stm>, 10 March 2003.

dysfunctional society may be very dangerous. The perfectly adjusted bomber pilot may be a greater threat to species survival than the schizophrenic deluded that the Bomb is inside him.³⁸

In response to plans for a demonstration at Vandenberg Air Force base in central California this weekend, officials warned that anyone found trespassing would be subject to a new shoot-to-kill policy.³⁹

On Wednesday, signs were attached to the perimeter fence [at RAF/USAF Fairford] which warned: "Use of deadly force authorised".⁴⁰

Dear Pledger, As I'm sure you're aware 'Shock and Awe' has now begun...Needless to say, now is the time to redouble our efforts rather than fall into despondency and despair. Acts of nonviolent civil disobedience have been taking place around the country throughout the week: On Monday over 20 'die-ins' took place around the country, the MoD was smeared with fake blood, a vicar helped to blockade an RAF base, and 20 peaceful anti-war protestors stopped the trading at the International Petroleum Exchange in London for several hours. On Tuesday Britain's military nerve-centre at Northwood was blockaded for 25 minutes, two Oxford-based activists were arrested for trying to get into USAF Fairford to disarm one of the B52 bombers currently stationed there, and several hundred protestors took over the road outside Parliament during the vote in the Commons. On Wednesday protestors held-up Jack Straw by 1/2 an hour when they turned up and died-in outside his London residence just after 7am, Northwood was again blockaded (this time for half an hour) and thousands of school children walked out – and in one case occupied the road outside Parliament – to protest the war.... Gabriel, ARROW⁴¹

[Thursday, 27 March] London. £25,000 Anti-War Protest: 12 noon, Downing Street: Nabil Shaban, disabled actor, writer and film-maker – and star of 'Dr Who' and 'City of Joy' – will return £25,000 that his film company Sirius Pictures received from the Department for Works and Pensions in protest over the war. Shaban: 'I do not believe this Government is sincere in its [*sic*] support of the spirit behind the European Year of

38 Laing, R.D. (1967) *The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise*, London: Penguin Books, 22-23.

39 Gumbel, A. 'From the Streets of San Francisco to the Cities of Bangladesh, Millions Unite to Voice Their Protests', <http://news.independent.co.uk/world/politics/story.jsp?story=389195>, 21 March 2003.

40 BBC 'Armed Police Deployed at RAF Fairford', <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2867429.stm> 20 March 2003

41 'Resistance Roundup #1', email to those supporting ARROW's (Active Resistance to the Roots of War, http://www.j-n-v.org/ARROW_briefings.htm) Pledge of Resistance, 22 March 2003. The author of this email, Gabriel Carlyle, was one of 5 peace activists arrested for highway obstruction during a non-violent direct action blockade at Northwood military HQ on 6 April 2003. This was one of over fifteen anti war actions in the UK taking place as part of a Reclaim the Bases weekend (<http://www.reclaimthebases.org.uk/>, last visited on 9 April 2003).

Disabled People (EYDP). Instead, this Government is only really interested in supporting the “American-Anglo Year for DISABLING People.”⁴²

The second convoy (since this phase of the war against Iraq started) from Welford Munitions Dump to Fairford was halted on the A419 on its [*sic*] way to Fairford, yesterday (Mon 25th March) at about 9.50am. The blockade consisted of one car which was driven from a cross roads into the middle of the very slowly driven convoy, by our heroic driver Ambuka. Unfortunately, because of where we intercepted the convoy (on a crossroads) the bomb-laden trucks were, after 3 or 4 minutes, able to go round the blockage. Meanwhile, the Police wrestled four of the protesters, including myself to the ground. At the moment that the convoy stopped, three other activists miraculously appeared at the rear of the convoy and lay in the road, joined together with arm tubes. The police identified a car as belonging to the protesters at the rear of the convoy, when this was denied the rear window was smashed – um...this was [not] their car, so if you live on A419, near Fairford and had your car window smashed, the perpetrator were officers from the Thames Valley Police. Believe it or not, the police didn't detain us. Our car was searched under the Terrorism Act (2000) and the driver was given a producer. That was it, apart from the police stealing our car key and snapping the SIM card in our mobile. RESISTANCE MUST CONTINUE. If you're running out of motivation read Jo Wilding's Iraq Diaries.⁴³

Protesters turned out in much greater numbers than expected on Saturday for the largest demonstration against a war in progress in British history.⁴⁴

[Saturday, 22 March] The day started well, a bright March sunshine warmed us as we got onto the coaches at Euston. There were about 200 of us, including IndyMedia reporters and an independent film maker. Making good time, we received news as we approached the Fairford area that the cops were stopping and searching coaches.... We were searched one by one under Section 60 (for drugs, offensive weapons and items which might conceal our identities). Almost all our white overalls were seized... They then seized most of our helmets, shields and padding (which were designed to fend off attacks by guard dogs and batons). In an Orwellian 1984-style inversion of the truth, these obviously defensive items were classified by the cops as “offensive weapons”. Some scarves were stolen too... We were then informed... that because they had found certain items (the shields and helmets etc) they believed we intended to cause a breach of the peace at the air base, and that we would be escorted back to the motorway... Instead of being only escorted to the motorway, the cops escorted us all the way back into central London, blocking all possible exits from the motorway and refusing to let us stop at service stations for toilet breaks. Several people had to use

42 Email received from Pledge of Resistance, 25 March 2003, <http://www.peacepledge.org>.

43 ‘Eye Witness Report on Fairford Bomb Convoy Blockade (25/03/03)’ http://uk.indymedia.org:8081/front.php3?article_id=59735&group=webcast, 26 March 2003. Also see ‘Carpet Bomb Convoy Going to RAF Fairford Blockaded by Anti War Activists’, http://uk.indymedia.org:8081/front.php3?article_id=59433&group=webcast, 25 March 2003. For Jo Wilding's diaries go to <http://www.bristolfoe.org.uk/wildfire/iraq/index.htm>.

44 Vidal, J. and Branigan, T. ‘UK Sees Biggest Wartime Protest’, *The Guardian*, 24 March 2003, http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,920499,00.html

whatever containers they could find to relieve themselves. Then we heard from contacts in London that there were at least 10 vans full of riot police waiting for us at Euston...as we got to the Shepherds Bush area of west London, a lucky pause at some traffic lights allowed the vast majority of those on board the three coaches to jump off and make a run for it....Personally, I'm not going to whine about civil liberties being infringed because I don't believe they have any relevance in a terror state like Britain. We can't expect anything other than harassment, malicious arrest, surveillance and obstruction from a system that feeds off of oppression and violence....The struggle continues: determination and solidarity are our weapons!⁴⁵

[M]any commentators dismiss anarchism as utopian, formless, primitive, or otherwise incompatible with the realities of a complex society. One might, however, argue rather differently: that at every stage of history our concern must be to dismantle those forms of authority and oppression that survive from an era when they might have been justified in terms of need for security or survival or economic development, but that now contribute to – rather than alleviate – material and cultural deficit.⁴⁶

[19:50, Sunday, 23 March] London. 200 people sitting down on Park Lane near Hyde Park. Riot police moving people off central reservation. Protesters are completely surrounded, chanting “no war”. 30 police vans present. 21:00 ITV news, BBC News, Sky News....Apparently there were some people shouting a bit in London...Some of them were ‘Socialists’ There were one or two middle aged ladies who were a bit emotional. Well, what do these people expect, there's a war on after all. And there was NOTHING Precisely NOTHING. About the protests in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Menwith, Fairford or any of the other protests large OR small that took place across the country, and in Europe, America and all across the globe....That's NOTHING at all about traffic being disrupted in city centres. That's NOTHING at all about 200 people being shunted back down to London, under police escort, closing off sections of the motorway because their hats and scarves might cause serious offence. That's NOTHING at all about the Black Hawk helicopters on the fenceline at Fairford. That's NOTHING at all about the signs on fences warning that “use of lethal force has been authorised”. What's this? Ignore the peasants and they'll go away? After all, we don't need their votes, we can suspend elections until after the war. Well fuck you Blair. Fuck you Hoon. And fuck you too Straw. One way or another you are going to reap what you have sown.... As for you Bush? Well, fuck you too. One way or another you were going to have this fucking war. If you had the mental capacity to understand the damage that you've caused with ‘preemptive defensive strikes’ and your bloody murderous invasion to liberate people I'd feel sorry for you. Because at least I'd know that, at nights, you sit thinking about what you've done...Fuck you Bush. Daddies friends put you where you are, and you can bet your bottom dollar that they'll get shot of you just as easily. And I hope that from now until that final day, you see each and every mother's child that you have killed,

45 Report by A.N. Womble, http://www.wombles.org.uk/news/article_2003_03_23_3253.php, 23 March 2003.

46 Chomsky, N. (2001 (1970)) *Notes On Anarchism*. London: Active Distribution.

maimed or scarred and that you feel every last bit of suffering you have caused. Fuck you Bush. Fuck YOU.⁴⁷

[Friday, 28 March] Baghdad. Two British soldiers lie dead on a Basra roadway, a small Iraqi girl – victim of a US/UK airstrike – is brought to hospital with her intestines spilling out of her stomach, a terribly wounded woman screams in agony as doctors try to take off her black dress. The short sequence of the dead British soldiers for the public showing of which Tony Blair expressed such horror yesterday – is little different from dozens of similar clips of dead Iraqi soldiers shown on British television over the past 12 years, pictures which never drew any expressions of condemnation from the British prime minister.⁴⁸

Banned on Wall Street and wiped off the Internet, Arab news channel al-Jazeera defended its controversial coverage of the Iraq war on Wednesday and demanded the United States come to its aid in the name of a free press.⁴⁹

The spectacle is the existing order's uninterrupted discourse about itself, its laudatory monologue. It is the self-portrait of power in the epoch of its totalitarian management of the conditions of existence. The fetishistic, purely objective appearance of spectacular relations conceals the fact that they are relations among men (*sic*) and classes.⁵⁰

Peace activists are currently imprisoned for their anti-war actions and likely will remain so for the duration of the war. We're sure that they would appreciate postcards of support:

- Margaret Jones and Paul Miller. Disabled thirty support vehicles which service, refuel, and load bombs onto US B-52 bombers. Contact David Mackenzie on 0870 458 3117. Send cards to: Margaret Jones, KV5877, HMP Holloway, 1X Parkhurst Road, Holloway, London N7 ONU & Paul Miller, JT5092, HMP Gloucester, Barrack Square, Gloucester, GL1 2JN.
- Toby Olditch and Phillip Pritchard. Attempted to disarm a B-52 bomber. Contact 01865 423 200. Send cards to: Toby Olditch/ Phil Pritchard, HMP Gloucester, Barrack Square, Gloucester GL1 2JN.
- Ulla Roder. Caused an estimated £25 million worth of damage to a Tornado jet. Contact Jane Tallents 0845 458 8367. Send cards to: Ulla Roder, HMP Cornton Vale, Cortnon Road, Stirling, FK9 5NY.
- Angie Zelter. Trespassing onto a US air force base near nuclear capable F-15 Strike Eagle aircraft. Contact Davida on 01508 550 446. Send cards to: Angie Zelter, HR4725, HMP Highpoint, Stradishall, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8

47 Posting from Ken to the Mark Thomas mailing list, 23 March 2003.

48 Robert Fisk, 'Unedited Videotape Is Raw, Painful – and Devastating', *The Independent*, 28 Mar03.

49 Merissa Marr (European Media Correspondent), 'Al-Jazeera Calls on U.S. to Ensure Free Press', LONDON (Reuters), 26 March 2003.

50 Debord, G. (1967/1977) *The Society of the Spectacle*. London: Rebel Press/Dark Star.

9YG.⁵¹

Imagine a country where...

- The government can outlaw an organisation without proving a case against it in court, criminalising not only membership of the organisation but also public protest in support of the organisation and where even wearing clothing making the authorities suspicious you may be a member or supporter of the organisation could be enough to send you to jail.
- Where the right to peaceful protest has been so severely undermined as to not exist, legally speaking, at all.
- Where the legal definition of terrorism covers such acts of civil disobedience as tearing up genetically modified crops or organising a mass emailing of an organisation.
- The government has the legal power to intercept and read all your electronic communications whether or not you're under suspicion for a crime.
- For various crimes, the defendant has to prove his innocence.
- Where people can be banned from travelling without having been convicted of any crime.
- If you're arrested for a crime you may be denied access to a solicitor and denied the right to notify someone of your arrest for upto 48 hours, and may be held without charge for up to a week.
- Where your silence whilst being questioned or whilst in court may be used against you.
- Where although there are laws to protect your human rights, they cannot override legislation enacted by the national parliament.

You've just imagined Britain in 2001.⁵²

Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume, is to do at any time what I think right...Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice.⁵³

Functionalism, or the assumption that society should be understood in terms of its reproduction, inevitably imposes a closure upon thought. In Marxist functionalism, the

51 'Resistance Roundup #1', email to those supporting ARROW's (Active Resistance to the Roots of War, http://www.j-n-v.org/ARROW_briefings.htm) Pledge of Resistance, 22 March 2003.

52 Hammerton, J. 'It's a Free Country Isn't It?' http://www.ukpoliticsmisc.org.uk/usenet_evidence/a_free_country.htm, visited 3 April 2003. For more information see, for example: the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1994/Ukpga_19940033_en_1.htm; the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, <http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000023.htm> plus commentary by Naughton, J. 'The Three Minute Guide to RIP', The Observer, 12 March 2000, <http://www.stand.org.uk/commentary.php3>; the Terrorism Act 2000, <http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000011.htm>; the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, <http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2001/20010024.htm>.

53 Thoreau, H.D. (1993 (1949)) *Civil Disobedience and Other Essays*. New York: Dover Publications.

possibility of a different type of society is not excluded, but it is relegated to a different sphere, to a future. Capitalism is a closed system *until* – until the great moment of revolutionary change comes. Consequently, social activity is interpreted within the bounds imposed by this closure...Categories are understood as closed categories rather than as categories bursting with the explosive force of their own contradictions...Even more damaging, the theoretical subordination of subjectivity leads to the political subordination of the subject to the objective course of history and to those who claim to have a privileged understanding of that course. To be blind to fetishism is to take fetishised categories at face value...Nowhere has this been more disastrous...than in the assumption that the state could be seen as the centre point of social power... Certainty can only be on the other side, the side of domination. Our struggle is inherently and profoundly uncertain. This is because certainty is conceivable only on the basis of the reification of social relations...non-fetishised, self-determining social relations would not be law-bound. Revolutionary change cannot possibly be conceived as following a path of certainty, because certainty is the very negation of revolutionary change. Our struggle is against reification and therefore against certainty...Revolutionary politics (or better, anti-politics) is the explicit affirmation in all its infinite richness of all that which is denied...Dignity is the self-assertion of all those who are repressed and of that which is repressed, the affirmation of power-to in all its multiplicity and in all its unity.⁵⁴

Percentage of Americans who currently support this war: 72%

Percentage of Americans who believe Iraq attacked the World Trade Center: 51%

Percentage of Americans who cannot locate Iraq on a world map: 65%⁵⁵

I hereby transmit to the Congress proposed legislation to create a new Cabinet Department of Homeland Security...Our Nation faces a new and changing threat unlike any we have faced before – the global threat of terrorism...I propose the most extensive reorganization of the Federal Government since the 1940s by creating a new Department of Homeland Security. For the first time we would have a single Department whose primary mission is to secure our homeland...The Department of Homeland Security would make Americans safer because for the first time we would have one department dedicated to securing the homeland. One department would secure our borders, transportation sector, ports, and critical infrastructure. One department would analyze homeland security intelligence from multiple sources, synthesize it with a comprehensive assessment of America's vulnerabilities, and take action to secure our highest risk facilities and systems. One department would coordinate communications with State and local governments, private industry, and the American people about threats and preparedness. One department would coordinate our efforts to secure the American people against bioterrorism and other weapons of mass destruction. One

54 Holloway, J. (2002) *Change the World Without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today*. London: Pluto Press.

55 <http://www.iraqometer.com/About.html>, visited 5 April 2003.

department would help train and equip our first responders. One department would manage Federal emergency response activities.⁵⁶

Much of the discussion of the detainees in Guantanamo Bay has focused on the question of the status of these individuals under international humanitarian law; most commentators insist...that in any case international human rights law applies to the treatment of the detainees by the US...this latter assertion is...contested by the US government, which argues that since Guantanamo Bay, although administered by the US, is not US territory, the obligations of the US under international rights law are not in play relative to its treatment of the detainees...Can a state avoid its international obligations by locating detention facilities outside its own territory?⁵⁷

Yesterday, the Bush administration asserted sweeping new police powers over the American people. In a legal brief filed with a federal appellate court, the Department of Justice asserted that Yaser Esam Hamdi, who is an American citizen, can be held incommunicado on a military installation as an "enemy combatant."...Timothy Lynch, director of the Cato Institute's Project on Criminal Justice had the following comments on the issue: "The bottom line is that President Bush and Attorney General Ashcroft are attempting to suspend the 'Great Writ' of habeas corpus, which allows Americans to get into a court of law to challenge the legality of their arrest and to have their liberty restored if the court agrees that the arrest was unlawful. Without judicial review, the police can arrest people without warrants and jail people without trials. "The controversial 'military order' that Bush issued last November has, in effect, now been extended to American citizens--and the writ of habeas corpus is now under assault. President Bush seems to believe that his commander-in-chief power gives him the authority to ignore every other part of the Constitution when he deems it necessary...the judiciary should resist this power grab."⁵⁸

The EFF⁵⁹ is pleased that at least some of the more severe changes in the surveillance of U.S. persons contained in the USAPA⁶⁰ will expire on December 31, 2005 unless renewed by Congress. We are concerned, however, that there is no way for Congress to review how several of these key provisions have been implemented, since there is no reporting requirement to Congress about them and no requirements of reporting even to a judge about several others. Without the necessary information about how these broad new powers have been used, Congress will be unable to evaluate whether they have

56 President Bush, Message to the Congress of the United States, 18 June 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020618-5.html>; For more information go to <http://www.whitehouse.gov/deptofhomeland>.

57 Wilde, R. (2003) 'The Detainees in Guantanamo Bay and the Concept of Jurisdiction in International Human Rights Law, paper presented at conference on 'September 11: A turning Point in International and Domestic Law?' 21-22 March 2003, School of Legal Studies, University of Sussex.

58 The Cato Institute, 'Bush And Ashcroft Assail Habeas Corpus, Scholar Says', 20 June 2002, <http://www.cato.org/new/06-02/06-20-02r.html>.

59 Electronic Frontier Foundation, <http://www.eff.org/>

60 i.e. the USA PATRIOT (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) Act of 2001, http://www.eff.org/Privacy/Surveillance/Terrorism_militias/20020925_patriot_act.html.

been needed and how they have been used in order to make an informed decision about whether and how they should continue or whether they should be allowed to expire without renewal.⁶¹

Seven Iraqi families filed a lawsuit in Belgium Tuesday against ex-US president George Bush and three other US leaders for alleged crimes during the first Gulf War in 1991...The lawsuit cites George Bush, the father of the current president, Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell and retired US Army General Norman Schwarzkopf, who led operation Desert Storm against Baghdad...Cheney was US defence secretary at the time of the first Gulf War, while Powell was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff...The action was brought under Belgium's "universal competence" law, which allows legal proceedings against people accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide, regardless of their nationality or location. The families who brought the action are either victims or relatives of victims of US bombing of a civilian shelter in Baghdad that killed 403 people on February 13, 1991.⁶²

US corporations look set to single-handedly rebuild the health, education, transport and political systems of Iraq – with the UN and international aid agencies not getting a sniff of the £60 billion worth of contracts being dished out by the US government. As fat corporate cats lick their lips at the money to be made from building airports and modernising Iraqi telecommunications and oil wells, SchNEWS can reveal that this is indeed a war of liberation – liberating Iraq's resources from Iraqis and handing them over to caring US companies. And what do you know – the reconstruction of Iraq will be awarded to a coalition of Bush's closest cronies! Overseeing rebuilding and humanitarian relief (if Bush has his way) will be Jay Garner, a retired US general who is, incidentally, the president of an arms company! Garner, a firm supporter of the Israeli military, has spent the last few years building weapons systems now being used in the Iraq war. How handy! And then there's Halliburton, the firm who'll get the job of putting out oil fires and making emergency repairs to Iraq's oil infrastructure, who oddly enough used to be run by US vice-president Dick Cheney. Cheney was chief executive of Halliburton until three years ago and still receives up to a million dollars a year from them. Union-busters Stevedoring Services of America have been handed the \$4.8 million contract to run the port of Umm Qasr, while bidders for other contracts include Fluor, whose board includes a former director of the National Security Agency and deputy director of the CIA, and the Bechtel Group, whose boardroom boasts a former secretary of state and a former defence secretary! But where is all this money coming from, one may well ask? After being bombed back to the Stone Age by the non-coalition US forces, Iraq certainly won't be able to cough up the money to pay the non-coalition US companies for its reconstruction. But here's the most beautiful part of all – it's the very people who Bush refuses to give a decent healthcare and education system to (i.e. the US taxpayer) that will line his mates' pockets. A significant chunk of the money being paid to US firms to rebuild Iraq was made available by the Iraq war bill,

61 Electronic Frontier Foundation, 'EFF Analysis of USA PATRIOT Act (Oct. 31, 2001), www.eff.org/Privacy/Surveillance/Terrorism_militias/20011031_eff_usa_patriot_analysis.html, visited 9 April 2003.

62 Siuberski, P. 'Iraqis Sue Elder Bush Over First Gulf War', <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=4721>, 18 March 2003.

passed by Congress and giving Bush a \$75 billion budget to wage war with taxpayers' money. [And last week Richard] Perle decided to leave after revelations of a fairly huge conflict of interest – he is in line to receive \$600,000 from bankrupt telecommunications company Global Crossing for helping it to 'overcome Defence Department resistance' to its proposed sale to a foreign company. The person he is being paid for persuading is none other than his old pal and a man he regularly advises, Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld.⁶³

America is a special case...everything important that has happened or is happening takes the route of the American rhizome: the beatniks, the underground, bands and gangs...directions in America are different: the search for arborescence and the return to the Old World occur in the East. But there is the rhizomatic West with its Indians without ancestry, its ever-receding limit, its shifting and displaced frontiers...America reversed the directions: it put its Orient in the West, as if it were precisely in America that the earth came full circle; its West is the edge of the East. (India is not the intermediary between the Occident and the Orient...America is the pivot point and mechanism of reversal.)⁶⁴

The 70th anniversary wasn't noticed in the United States, and was barely reported in the corporate media. But the Germans remembered well that fateful day seventy years ago – February 27, 1933⁶⁵. They commemorated the anniversary by joining in demonstrations for peace that mobilized citizens all across the world. It started when the government, in the midst of a worldwide economic crisis, received reports of an imminent terrorist attack...But the warnings of investigators were ignored at the highest levels, in part because the government was distracted; the man who claimed to be the nation's leader had not been elected by a majority vote and the majority of citizens claimed he had no right to the powers he coveted. He was a simpleton, some said, a cartoon character of a man⁶⁶...When an aide brought him word that the nation's most prestigious building was ablaze, he...rushed to the scene and called a press conference... "This fire," he said, his voice trembling with emotion, "is the beginning." He used the occasion...to declare an all-out war on terrorism and its ideological sponsors, a people, he said, who traced their origins to the Middle East and found motivation for their evil deeds in their religion. Two weeks later, the first detention center for terrorists was built in Oranienberg to hold the first suspected allies of the infamous terrorist. In a national outburst of patriotism, the leader's flag was everywhere, even printed large in newspapers suitable for window display. Within four weeks of the terrorist attack, the nation's now-popular leader had pushed through legislation – in the name of combating terrorism and fighting the

63 SchNEWS, 'Perles of Wisdom', 399, 4 April 2003, <http://www.schnews.org.uk/archive/news399.htm>; also, Henriques, D.B

64 Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1980/1988) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, vol. 2. London: The Athlone Press, 19.

65 'February 27, 2003, was the 70th anniversary of Dutch terrorist Marinus van der Lubbe's successful firebombing of the German Parliament (Reichstag) building', Hartmann, T. 'When Democracy Failed: the Warnings of History', http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Democracy_America/WhenDemocracyFailed.html, 16 March 2003.

66 Cf. <http://www.drparsons.fsnet.co.uk/georg.html>.

philosophy he said spawned it – that suspended constitutional guarantees of free speech, privacy, and habeas corpus. Police could now intercept mail and wiretap phones; suspected terrorists could be imprisoned without specific charges and without access to their lawyers; police could sneak into people’s homes without warrants if the cases involved terrorism. To get his patriotic “Decree on the Protection of People and State” passed over the objections of concerned legislators and civil libertarians, he agreed to put a 4-year sunset provision on it: if the national emergency provoked by the terrorist attack was over by then, the freedoms and rights would be returned to the people, and the police agencies would be re-restrained.... Immediately after passage of the anti-terrorism act, his federal police agencies stepped up their program of arresting suspicious persons and holding them without access to lawyers or courts...Citizens who protested the leader in public – and there were many – quickly found themselves confronting the newly empowered police’s batons, gas, and jail cells, or fenced off in protest zones safely out of earshot of the leader’s public speeches... Within the first months after that terrorist attack, at the suggestion of a political advisor, he brought a formerly obscure word into common usage. He wanted to stir a “racial pride” among his countrymen, so, instead of referring to the nation by its name, he began to refer to it as “The Homeland,”... Playing on this new nationalism, and exploiting a disagreement with the French over his increasing militarism, he argued that any international body that didn’t act first and foremost in the best interest of his own nation was neither relevant nor useful. He thus withdrew his country from the League Of Nations in October, 1933, and then negotiated a separate naval armaments agreement with Anthony Eden of The United Kingdom to create a worldwide military ruling elite. His propaganda minister orchestrated a campaign to ensure the people that he was a deeply religious man and that his motivations were rooted in Christianity...Every man in his rapidly growing army wore a belt buckle that declared “Gott Mit Uns” – God Is With Us – and most of them fervently believed it was true. Within a year of the terrorist attack, the nation’s leader determined that the various local police and federal agencies around the nation were lacking the clear communication and overall coordinated administration necessary to deal with the terrorist threat facing the nation, particularly those citizens who were of Middle Eastern ancestry and thus probably terrorist and communist sympathizers, and various troublesome “intellectuals” and “liberals.” He proposed a single new national agency to protect the security of the homeland, consolidating the actions of dozens of previously independent police, border, and investigative agencies under a single leader.... To consolidate his power, he concluded that government alone wasn’t enough. He reached out to industry and forged an alliance, bringing former executives of the nation’s largest corporations into high government positions...He built powerful alliances with industry; one corporate ally got the lucrative contract worth millions to build the first large-scale detention center for enemies of the state. Soon more would follow. Industry flourished. But after an interval of peace following the terrorist attack, voices of dissent again arose within and without the government...He needed a diversion, something to direct people away from the corporate cronyism being exposed in his own government, questions of his possibly illegitimate rise to power, and the oft-voiced concerns of civil libertarians about the people being held in detention without due process or access to attorneys or family. With his number two man – a master at manipulating the media – he began a campaign to convince the people of the nation that a small, limited war was necessary. Another nation was harboring many of the suspicious Middle Eastern people, and even though

its connection with the terrorist who had set afire the nation's most important building was tenuous at best, it held resources their nation badly needed if they were to have room to live and maintain their prosperity. He called a press conference and publicly delivered an ultimatum to the leader of the other nation, provoking an international uproar. He claimed the right to strike preemptively in self-defense, and nations across Europe – at first – denounced him for it, pointing out that it was a doctrine only claimed in the past by nations seeking worldwide empire...It took a few months, and intense international debate and lobbying with European nations, but, after he personally met with the leader of the United Kingdom, finally a deal was struck. After the military action began, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain told the nervous British people that giving in to this leader's new first-strike doctrine would bring "peace for our time." Thus Hitler annexed Austria in a lightning move, riding a wave of popular support as leaders so often do in times of war. The Austrian government was unseated and replaced by a new leadership friendly to Germany, and German corporations began to take over Austrian resources. In a speech responding to critics of the invasion, Hitler said, "Certain foreign newspapers have said that we fell on Austria with brutal methods...but when I crossed the former frontier there met me such a stream of love as I have never experienced. Not as tyrants have we come, but as liberators." To deal with those who dissented from his policies, at the advice of his politically savvy advisors, he and his handmaidens in the press began a campaign to equate him and his policies with patriotism and the nation itself...In times of war, they said, there could be only "one people, one nation, and one commander-in-chief" ("Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Fuhrer"), and so his advocates in the media began a nationwide campaign charging that critics of his policies were attacking the nation itself. Those questioning him were labeled "anti-German" or "not good Germans," and it was suggested they were aiding the enemies of the state by failing in the patriotic necessity of supporting the nation's valiant men in uniform... Nonetheless, once the "small war" annexation of Austria was successfully and quickly completed, and peace returned, voices of opposition were again raised in the Homeland. The almost-daily release of news bulletins about the dangers of terrorist communist cells wasn't enough to rouse the populace and totally suppress dissent. A full-out war was necessary to divert public attention from the growing rumbles within the country about disappearing dissidents; violence against liberals,...; and the epidemic of crony capitalism that was producing empires of wealth in the corporate sector but threatening the middle class's way of life. A year later, to the week, Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia; the nation was now fully at war, and all internal dissent was suppressed in the name of national security.⁶⁷

Frodo has failed: Bush has the ring⁶⁸

I am finally ready to admit what for months I have kept hidden: I am terrified. I am more scared than I have ever been in my adult life. For weeks now I have felt a new kind of free-floating terror at what has been unfolding, as the Bush administration has

67 Hartmann, T. 'When Democracy Failed: the Warnings of History', http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Democracy_America/WhenDemocracyFailed.html, 16 March 2003 (permission is granted for reprint in print, email, blog, or web media so long as this credit is attached).

68 Slogan on a placard at the stop the war protest in Brighton, 20 March 2003 (personal notes).

made it clear that nothing would derail its mad rush to war.... This fear I feel is not just of power-run-amok but of an empire with the most destructive military capacity that has ever existed – an empire with thermobaric bombs and cruise missiles, cluster bombs and nuclear “bunker busters.” No matter how hard the government works to try to keep us from seeing the results of those weapons – and no matter how much the news media cooperate in that project – we understand how many civilians could die under the onslaught of these horrific weapons. They can censor the pictures, but not our imaginations. This fear I feel is not just of the unchecked power of the United States but of the fact that Bush and his advisers seem to think they understand their own power and can control it. It is the arrogance of virtually unlimited power married to lifelong privilege. It is hubris, and in a nuclear world there is no sin that is potentially more deadly. This is the fear that I feel, that I think so many of us feel. The Bush administration wants us to be afraid, but remain quiet about it. Our power will come not from denying the fear but in confronting, and overcoming, it. So, we must speak of it, not to scare others but to bring us closer together. Our only hope against the fear is in each other, in our organizing, in our resistance. And if we can confront our fears, we can confront this empire...⁶⁹

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.⁷⁰

Emotion is the chief source of all becoming conscious. There can be no transforming of darkness into light and of apathy into movement without emotion.⁷¹

the author

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69 Jensen, R. Confronting Our Fears So We Can Confront the Empire, http://www.nthposition.com/politics_jensen12.html, visited 1 April 2003.

70 Shakespeare, W. (c. 1606-1607) *Macbeth* (V, v, 19), <http://www.allshakespeare.com/quotes.php?id=258>, visited 10 April 2003.

71 Jung, C.G. quoted in Judith, A. (1996) *Eastern Body, Western Mind: Psychology and the Chakra System as a Path to the Self*. Berkeley: Celestial Arts Publishing, 115.