

Ballistic Helmet



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From the Editors

These days are treacherous times. It's been said before, for sure.

But the propaganda-levels continue to peak. The requirements for "Patriotism" and allegiance never ease. The emphasis of corporate and state security over life and freedom never ends. The consolidation of media, speech and dialogue only expand. The voices defending conquest seem ever louder, belligerent and baseless.

The word "unprecedented" comes to mind. Things seem unnatural and out of the ordinary, and not at all the way we like it.

But this week's problems weren't any different from last week, nor a century ago. If you agree—that problems do exist and they have existed for some time—then you'll agree that past solutions didn't work and won't work again, no matter how noble. Those who cling to failed formulas of history run the risk of making the same mistakes.

The tools of history and theory make for good weapons, but they nor any other ideas can absolutely provide a formula for liberation.

Rather than repeating the mistaken social formulas of history, there must be a new engagement in changing the world in new ways. We need ways based on analysis of current events and the successes and failures of history.

But not alone. Contemplating life alone in an irrational society can prove dangerous (but you've got your helmet). And we should do our best to not sit back and watch time go by without taking action.

That's why in a time of crisis like we are in today we must demand space for dialogue and act to create dialogue. Only by creating a renaissance of ideas will the possibilities for action open. In times past, the unhindered and creative quest for knowledge provided the most climactic moments in history. This is the surest thing I've found in history. And this is what I enjoy about this publication.

It's not just the organizational, technical and material aspects of this zine—as pivotal as they are—that make this exchange possible. It is the individuals who

are committed to creating a culture of freedom that make it so.

I, for one, hope that this is what continues to be found in the pages of this zine. We need uncompromising inquires and experiments with the world and history we live in.

Similarly, this zine is a small piece of a larger puzzle of organizations committed to a social discussion, creating change and having a little fun. Thanks to the Internet, we now have a dialogue that has never before been seen in history. The continuing inclusion of articles from very respected sources is confirmation of this two-way network. We are a part of it. Have some pride.

In an unorthodox (but intended) manner, the U.S.-Elite crossword puzzle should drive these points home to the reader as it did for the puzzle's creator:

Do not tackle the world you live in alone. The elite do not do it. Why should we?

aaron

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Brief News

The Spirit of the “Dream” Continues

The work of the slain civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was alive and well this passing 75th anniversary of King’s birthday. The Associated Press reported that hundreds protested President Bush’s visit to the Atlanta grave of “ML”. The protesters were kept behind barricades away from the President. Two arrests were made.

“Sorry, here’s your 6-mill’ back.”

The New York Times reports that the Halliburton Company, whose former chairman was Vice President Dick Cheney, acknowledged that it had paid back \$6.3 million to the U.S. government, admitting that at least one employee had participated in a kickback deal with a Kuwaiti company. The Pentagon inspector general is still investigating accusations that the Halliburton subsidiary, Kellogg Brown & Root, over-charged the Army Corps of Engineers by \$61 million for gasoline imported into Iraq from Kuwait.

CBS Rejects MoveOn and PETA Super Bowl Television Advertisements

In a bold move, CBS rejected Super Bowl ads from MoveOn and PETA. From reports from AdAge.com and Moveon.org, the ads are being deemed as controversial, political, or “issue-oriented”. The MoveOn ad follows federal regulations by not endorsing a political candidate. The PETA ad shows two half-clothed women snuggling up to a meat-eating pizza delivery man, then linking meat to impotence. Last year, CBS aired a White House ad linking drugs to terrorism. Democracy Now! reports that provisions in the U.S. omnibus spending bill, currently in the Senate, eases limits on television station ownership, increasing the national television network cap from 35 percent to 39 percent. The move significantly aids Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation which owns the Fox network and Viacom which owns the CBS network.

I Want My WMD

In President Bush’s State of the Union address, the accusations of Iraq’s military weapons of mass destruction saw a decrease from “thousands”, in last year’s address, to “dozens” this year. Former U.S. weapons inspector, David Kay, declared that “the weapons do not exist”, in a recent National Public Radio interview. The Associate Press reported that Kay resigned on January 23, after frustrations of resources being shifted from the search for weapons stockpiles to counterterrorism and troop protection in Iraq. CIA Director George Tenet replaced Kay with Charles Duelfer, an inspector for the United Nations of seven years.

Economics of Wildlife

Good wildlife yields good money, according to a study recently by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). In 2001, some 66 million Americans spent more than \$38 billion watching, photographing and feeding wildlife. Spending on gear, lodging and other items generated another \$95.8 billion in industrial output, resulting in more than 1 million full and part time jobs as well as more than \$6 billion in state and federal taxes. Another recent FWS study concluded that 46 million bird watchers spent \$32 billion in 2001 on their sport, producing \$85 billion in overall economic output and \$13 billion in federal and state income taxes while supporting more than 863,000 jobs. California, New York and Pennsylvania had the most birders, but Montana, Vermont and Wisconsin led the nation in birding participation rates as a percentage of total state population. (source: NWF)

World Economic Forum - Davos

The Associated Press reported that the 1,500 most influential political and corporate world leaders gathered in Davos, Switzerland for the World Economic Forum (WEF). Over 2,000 protesters attempted to block the annual meeting, some able to block highway access from the Zurich airport, miles from the event. Local authorities allowed the meeting to otherwise run smoothly.

World Social Forum - India

The BBC reported over 100,000 thousand people from over 100 countries gathering to celebrate and organize for social justice in Mumbai, India in January. This represents the fourth meeting of the World Social Form (WSF), the antithesis to the World Economic Forum (WEF) held in Davos, Switzerland. Notable speakers included writer Arundhati Roy and Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz.

Arundhati Roy, asked the estimated 70,000 people from over 100 countries and all parts of India who attended the parallel forum, Mumbai Resistance (MR) 2004, "It is not enough any longer to talk about resistance," but instead, "must turn our gaze on Iraq because it is the culmination of neo-liberalism and imperialism." Continuing Roy said, "We must not just support resistance in Iraq but we must become the resistance."

She suggested that the WSF and MR 2004 jointly select two American companies, prepare a list of their offices around the world, and "shut them down". She said that doing this was "a question of bringing our collective wisdom to one particular project."

"It's a question of the desire to win."

"The Project For The New American Century' seeks to perpetuate inequity and establish American hegemony at any price, even if it's apocalyptic. The World Social Forum demands justice and survival."

"For these reasons, we must consider ourselves at war."

UN Relief Agency Condemns Israeli Wall

The United Nations's Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine refugees condemned Israel's "security fence" in the West Bank on January 22, 2004. When completed the 10- to 26- foot tall concrete wall between Israel and Palestine will be 450 miles long and will have cost \$1.6 billion (US). It is 5 times larger than the Berlin Wall and the second artificial structure clearly visible from space. (sources: UN, AP, Counterpunch)

A "New York Summer"

The Independent Media Center reports that while President George W. Bush rallied the Right in his State of the Union address, local activists in New York City

were planning actions to oppose the Republican National Convention to be held from August 30 to September 2nd at the Madison Square Garden. Involved organizations include Food not Bombs foodnotbombs.net, School of Americas Watch (SOAW) soaw.org, United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) unitedforpeace.org.

After using Ground Zero as a backdrop to attack civil liberties at home and to launch wars abroad, Bush now wants to use New York to launch his re-election campaign (the convention dates were moved unusual close to the anniversary of September 11th). The opposition events leading to the convention are titled "100 Days of Democracy in Action" and hope to raise questions about and give alternatives to electoral politics. More information at <http://www.nycsummer.org/> and <http://www.rncnotwelcome.org/>.

Tom Hurndall Died - Murder Charges?

According to Palestinian NGO press releases, the Israeli sniper who shot International Solidarity Movement (ISM) activist Tom Hurndall in the Palestinian Occupied Territories has been arrested. The Israeli Army leadership has now admitted that its initial accusations of Tom being armoured and in camouflage, as well as its claim that the soldier was returning Palestinian fire, were fabrications.

This news from Israel came as Tom Hurndall passed away in a hospital after being on life support in England since he was shot in April of 2003.

Indymedia Print Edition

The Independent Media Center print collective (imc-print) has announced a tentative publication date of 3 February for the first official print edition of global Indymedia. Those involved hope the forthcoming paper "is both easy to print and distribute as a means of communicating news, features and images to those without access to or knowledge of Indymedia on the Internet." Information for readers and volunteers about the publication and the monumental task of distribution is available at: <http://print.indymedia.org/>.

500 U.S. Dead in Iraq

President Bush has not attended a single funeral of a U.S. soldier killed in Iraq. Returning coffins from Iraq

have also been disallowed from being photographed. A result of a recent change in Pentagon policy. As of January 18, 2004, at least 500 U.S. soldiers have lost their life in Iraq, 362 after May 1 when President Bush had declared victory and the end of combat operations. Related figures from the U.S. Defense Department were a staggering 2,497 U.S. combat casualties, with no numbers for Iraqi casualties. Iraqi deaths, including civilians, resulting from the invasion and occupation are estimated over 10,000.

CIA Warns of Iraq Civil War

Knight-Ridder news reported that following Bush's State of the Union address this week, CIA officers warned the White House of the potential for civil war in Iraq. They spoke on the condition of anonymity due to security concerns and imaginably to prevent retaliation by the White House. The concerns for civil war stem from conflicts between Iraq's ethnic groups the Kurds, Sunni and Sh'iite over questions about the U.S. occupation, possibilities for democratic

self-determination, and demands for ethnic autonomy. The CIA warning was not offered "in writing", but such concerns are said to be deeply held in the U.S. government, including the State Department and National Security Council.

National Organized Resistance Conference

The seventh annual National Organized Resistance Conference (NCOR) a—"space for radical discourse and collective empowerment"—took place the weekend of January 24 and 25, 2004. The event is held and organized by students at American University in Washington, DC. Besides a networking opportunity for the hundreds of activists who made the event, sessions included discussions on "Politically Motivated Property Destruction", "Super Memes: Inventing Irresistible Ideas", disability rights, gender identity, Hip-hop and DIY activism, and "I'm Anti-Authoritarian and I Don't Vote (or Should I?)".

NCOR's web site is: www.organizedresistance.org.



Email from Palestine: Two Vermont Organic Farmers



S'ra Desantis and Hilary Martin, *International Solidarity Movement*
<http://www.palsolidarity.org/>

S'ra Desantis and Hilary Martin are community (and now inter-hemisphere) organizers and farm with the Digger's Mirth Collective of Burlington, Vermont.

Subject: greetings from sra and hilary

Date: January 14-16, 2004

Friends and Family,

We are writing from Palestine, the land of olives and abundant hospitality. Not to mention falafel and hummus. (Thank goodness we heeded Jon Bauer's advice to stop all consumption of falafel and hummus two weeks ago!)

Finding the time to write has been a bit difficult but finally here we are. Thanks for all of your messages of support, and sorry if we have not been able to respond to all of them. We have been busy orienting ourselves to the Holy Land, visiting with farmers, receiving a training from the International Solidarity Movement (ISM). We've been here only a week and are full of information, and have enough to do and learn to last a year! Tomorrow S'ra is conducting a facilitation training for ISM coordinators, and following that we will join the ISM for a week in a village affected by the wall. Stay tuned for more from us!!

We have written this letter together. Please feel free to share our letters as you wish. In these e-mails, we will try our best to share with you that which we have seen, felt, and heard. We are not Palestinians, so we cannot speak for Palestinians, only as observers who come from a place of privilege. When we write "Palestine," it is in itself a political assertion. Some people deny the existence of Palestine. After touching the olive trees that were planted by Palestinians over four generations ago, we know Palestine exists.

We have just come from Tulkarm, a city in the West Bank that borders Israel. In the taxi, a woman pointed out the two refugee camps that lie on the outskirts of the city. We later learned that the Israeli military was at that moment raiding the camp, looking for wanted men. Palestinian men were arrested, women and children were blocked inside, another building was burned inside the camp. Curfew was enforced, keeping people locked in-

side wherever they were, without food, or access to the rest of their families.

Two homes inside the camp have since been demolished. We have heard these reports from internationals that were inside the camp with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM). Because we did not yet have the proper training, we did not enter the camp. We would rather not explain things that we do not witness ourselves; we thought we would include it here to impress upon you all the instability in Palestine.

From the stories that we have heard so far, any semblance of normality can be shattered at any time. If you are interested in learning more about the work of the ISM, you can visit their web site to learn about joining their list serve (the web site itself is not always updated): www.palsolidarity.org

We had the pleasure of staying with an active farmer, organizer, and father who bears an amazing resemblance to Emiliano Zapata, minus the sombrero. (He seemed pleased at our observation.) We will call him Mohammed. After eloquently explaining the situation of agriculture in Tulkarm, he took us to visit his own farm. As we approached his fields, the "security fence" loomed in front of us. The farm was cut in half by the construction of the wall and again in half by six rolls of razor wire that soldiers laid on the main farm road. As we walked on the farm, we saw trenches dug by Israeli soldiers, the remains of four irrigation lines that were vandalized by soldiers, and the ominous 25-foot wall. As we started to take pictures, Mohammed nervously asked us to refrain from photography and pointing, calling attention to the cameras mounted on top of the wall. We were not sure if soldiers were in the watchtowers, but if they were, Mohammed said they would arrive to interrogate us within minutes. Soldiers have visited their farm several times and threatened to kill them, telling them the land was not theirs, even though for generations his family has nurtured this land. Considering this situation

we are amazed at his courage for cutting through the razor wire to have access to his own crops.

This family has witnessed this kind of oppression for years. In 1986, an Israeli factory relocated to land bordering Mohammed's farm. This factory, incidentally, was court ordered to close in Israel because Israeli citizens complained of pollution: Justice prevailed for the Israelis. Mohammed and his neighbors complained when their vegetables and fruit trees died. Later, it was explained that an effluent filter had broken, but they received no compensation and their legal steps were ignored. Together, farmers in Tulkarm sent soil to be tested to a soil lab in Israel, but after accepting payment, the lab refused to provide the results. These days, the factory continues operations, polluting the land, air, and water. We met another farmer, whose land directly borders the factory. He, his wife, and five of his six children all suffer from asthma. They no longer grow on their land; they do not trust that the black dust that settles on their crops is safe. The appeals that the Tulkarm farmers have made to the Israeli government for regulations and compensation have been fruitless; in fact, they have resulted in harassment from the factory. Mohammed re-enacted for us the scene of his attempted assassination—he accidentally dodged two bullets that came from behind the factory wall when he moved to flick his cigarette. Apparently he was too persistent in his attempts to organize with his neighbors (including Israelis in a nearby village) to apply pressure on the factory.

That night, with Mohammed's family, we watched his videotape documenting Israeli soldiers completely bulldozing their fields in 1996. It was unbelievable—watching the bucket scrape off the topsoil, the vegetables, and the fruit trees—all while the family and their friends scrambled to glean what they could in the minutes before everything was buried. As farmers, we could not imagine living through this kind of violence—to watch all of our labor, our love, and connection to the land disappear. Of course, Mohammed and his family have since re-cultivated that land. It is amazing how beautiful their farm is, despite all the destruction. We found his wife and son in the fields, harvesting cucumbers, lettuce, sage, and tomatoes—vegetables we would later enjoy for dinner. All that remains of the bulldozer's destruction is trenches that border the fields. When the family asked the soldiers what they had done to deserve this, the soldiers said "for no reason." Seven years later,

the wall was constructed on this same field.

Since the beginning of this Intifada, checkpoints around the West Bank have increasingly restricted the free movement of Palestinians and their goods. Now, in areas that are surrounded by the apartheid wall, most farmers are unable to transport agricultural products. The access to markets beyond their own villages has been almost completely lost. Due to flooded local markets, the prices farmers receive have decreased dramatically.

Many Palestinians have asked us this question: "If the wall is supposed to secure Israelis from Palestinians, then why is it separating us from our own people and land?" The construction of the wall has cut deeply into Palestinian territory, confiscating farmland. One farmer we interviewed outside of Tulkarm had 5000 olive trees that have been in his family for longer than his father could remember. These trees have provided the economic livelihood for his extended family (22 individual families, 130 people). To clear land for the wall, 3000 trees were demolished and the remaining 2000 trees lie on the opposite side of the wall. To be able to harvest his olives, he must first receive permission from the Israeli government. Then he must walk five kilometers to the gate in the wall and then five kilometers back to the trees, even though the trees are only a few meters from his house. No vehicles are allowed entry, so they can only transport what they and their donkeys can carry. This year, for the first time, the family bought olive oil, as olives rotted on their own trees.

Constraints to farming in Palestine increase every day with the confiscation of land, destruction of infrastructure, loss of markets, and destruction of crops. Organizations, both non-governmental and grassroots, struggle to help farmers meet their needs and survive. Not only do they face all of the challenges that we have described, but they are also targeted by the Israeli military simply for helping farmers gain access to infrastructural needs.

For example, in the invasion of Ramallah in 2002, Ma'an Development Center, a non-governmental organization (NGO) working on sustainable development, had their offices raided, computers and printers shot, windows broken, and files destroyed. A year earlier, a center of theirs in Mad'ha that included the largest indigenous seed bank in the West Bank was completely destroyed. In addition to pressure from Israel, Palestinian organizations are losing vital funding due to the

“war on terror.” At the end of 2002, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) began suspending funding for NGOs that support “terrorist organizations.” Most Palestinian NGOs, such as Ma’an, who does not support terrorism, are now refusing USAID funds, because the unstated implications will completely restrict organizations from funding anyone involved, including non-violently, in the struggle against the occupation. In Ma’an’s case, this means \$1.2 to 1.5 million (US) lost annually. If you would like to hear the full interview with Sami Hedr, the founder of the Ma’an Development Center, it will be posted with our reports at www.vtjp.org

Together with Jon Bauer, we have been asking people their opinions about the current state of the Intifada. When talking to Mohammed, he expressed to us his disappointment about the popularity of Hamas and other organizations that encourage suicide bombings. For a peaceful organizer like Mohammed, this is a mistake. As he was explaining this to us, his 16-year old daughter interrupted, asserting that she supports Hamas. The debate that ensued was heated, and even humorous, but to us it was the most poignant moment of our visit. Mohammed’s daughter asked her father how he can believe in peace—after the wall tore through their community, his land and equipment was destroyed, his nephew killed, Mohammed himself was almost assassinated several times, and on and on—how can he possibly believe in peace? The loss of hope in any kind of peace is echoed by so many Palestinians. Especially, and most tragically, by young Palestinians who have known nothing but war and occupation. To hear this young, beautiful, intelligent girl, who wants to study journalism in France, emphatically describe suicide bombing as the only choice

for Palestinians is heartbreaking. We pressed her for her opinions about Hamas as a whole—specifically what kind of future she saw Hamas bringing to Palestine. At this, she admitted that she did not support Hamas’ conservative beliefs, especially those regarding women.

More and more Palestinians are turning to right-wing organizations simply because the word “peace” has lost its true definition and has been co-opted to mean compliance with Israeli Occupation. The Palestinians have participated in non-violent resistance since the beginning of the occupation, especially in the first Intifada, but they are tired. Many Palestinians are losing their faith in these tactics, and they are turning to armed struggle. The more isolated Palestinians feel, the less options they have. This is why it is so vital that the international community stand with Palestinians, or as the slogan goes, that we globalize the Intifada (literally the “shake off,” referring to Israeli Occupation). One of the questions we are looking to explore further is how the Intifada can be a popular movement that reaches beyond suicide bombing, a movement that can truly liberate the oppressed and the oppressor, (for one cannot be liberated without the other), and a movement that can be a global struggle.

We feel honored to be here. Thank you to everyone who is supporting us from home, and know that we are doing our best to communicate your support to the people that we meet. We have promised the Palestinians we have met that we will carry their stories to the United States, and that hopefully we can all help to bring down the wall and to end this immoral occupation.

Amongst the olives,
In love and solidarity,
Hilary and S’ra

Unacceptable to be evenhanded? That’s like saying it’s unacceptable for the U.S. to be reasonable and fair. I think the comment that it is unacceptable for the U.S. to be ‘evenhanded’ is unacceptable on these fundamental issues of evenhandedness. – from the heads list

Iraq's Right to Resist: Outside the Spectacle



M. Junaid Alam, *Left Hook*
<http://www.lefthook.org/>

*If you prick us do we not bleed?
 If you tickle us do we not laugh?
 If you poison us do we not die?
 And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?
 -Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice, III:1*

Waging war is a peculiar American pastime: its appeal does not diminish as corpses multiply. Quite the contrary—each new round of this gruesome spectacle is greeted with the greatest fervor by the elites, the loudest applause from the intellectuals, and the proudest swag-ger of the patriots. No effort is spared in hammering into the public consciousness two absolute Truths about the contenders in this sordid spectacle: America is absolutely good, and the Enemy absolutely evil. America, preaches an appropriate (and appropriately paid) representative of Capital, is the savior of the world, the benevolent exporter of democracy, the deliverer of freedom; The Enemy, whatever small, poor, far-away and relatively defenseless nation it may be, is savage, senseless, a direct and immediate threat to American interests which must be destroyed.

The rhetoric demanding the need for war—real, manly, action—puffs up the audience with false pride, whetting its appetite for blood, mayhem and destruction. Not against our side, of course: not against Uncle Sam, its thousands of armed, armored, killing machines and the larger machines those thousands will wield to kill and destroy. Seating for those who are (supposedly) cheering on the Enemy is arranged only at torture camps and graveyards elsewhere. The partisan home crowd directs its fury, fear, and hatred at the beaten and broken creature cowering below—today, Iraq. Dragged into the arena from a dungeon decorated with the skeletons of Indians, Filipinos and Vietnamese, our latest hapless victim wondered what stories the soothsayers would narrate to drown out its shrieks and cries.

Today we Americans know who the soothsayers are and what stories were told. We know because many of us were heeding them as thousands of Iraqis were snuffed out of existence by cruise missiles and cluster bombs with less notice than a quick turn of the page.

And what fantastic fairy tales they were. A country bombed and pulverized by our last assault upon it, strangled by our suffocating sanctions, possessing rust-ing weapons two, three, generations old, holding one-tenth our population and having one-thirty-seventh of our per-capita GDP, was said to represent a serious and imminent danger to our well-being. Is America so weak? Not one intelligence agency in the West found a shred of evidence to prove links to al-Qaeda or September 11th, bin Laden had called for Hussein's head and, finally, the President admitted there was no link between Hussein's regime and September 11th—but nonetheless Iraq was declared to have supported al-Qaeda and played some shadowy role in that attack. UN inspectors under Ritter said Iraq no longer had weapons of mass destruction, more UN inspectors under Blix found none, and US agents under Kay have come up empty-handed—yet Iraq, we are told, still must have possessed dangerous weapons.

By and large the public swallowed these fantastic and unbelievable concoctions. The lies served their purpose, for the deed was done. Our side had won, and America's neo-conservative war-makers had carried out America's task as outlined by their leading intellectual, Michael Ledeen: "Every 10 years or so, the United States needs to pick up some small crappy little country and throw it against the wall, just to show the world we mean busi-

ness.”

But a problem emerged: Iraq got back on its feet. Granted, the odious regime was overthrown, but the vast numbers of Iraqis, not benefiting from our propaganda apparatus, knew they were neither Hussein clones nor American pawns. Though our free media tried to cuff them in Manichean chains, the Iraqi masses were what our media mouthpieces never allowed them to be: human beings. Stirred into anger and resentment against the American occupation and all the chaos and injustice that marked its presence, they began to fight back.

As Iraqi resistance intensifies, it has become better organized, more deadly, more daring, and more numerous. US troops fall prey more and more to hit-and-run attacks on convoys, coordinated machine-gun and rocket-propelled-grenade fire, improvised roadside explosives, and suicide attacks. Important and prominent symbols of the occupation, including police stations, other foreign troops, hotels catering to occupation authorities, even UN buildings, have quickly become targets. Missiles have brought down a series of helicopters and struck planes, illustrating an advanced development of resistance capabilities. Rockets, wheeled around on donkey carts, now strike at the most 'secure' symbols and residencies of American imperialism in Iraq.

In this qualitatively new situation, a routine exercise of American chauvinism—state terrorism followed by the usual unfulfilled promises about patching up the victim nation—has turned into a total nightmare. The well-orchestrated and planned-out event, replete with 'Shock and Awe' fireworks, pronouncements about freeing Iraqis, and staged destruction of Saddam statues, has fallen apart.

This decisive development demands an understanding of an occupied people's right to resist the occupier of their country, for the insurgency has been the main trigger for a renewed anti-war movement. While the anti-war protests and actions carried out prior to the invasion were inspiring, the movement lacked the political and theoretical coherency to survive the likely possibility that war would be carried out. Once the bombs started falling on Baghdad the movement dissipated. It must also be admitted that prior to the invasion, the majority of Americans supported war. In no other country did a majority of the populace support the war—except Israel.

There is nothing surprising in this. Former Special Forces officer and member of Bring Them Home Now

Stan Goff explained clearly in an interview with Derek Seidman at Left Hook: “The vast majority of people are not motivated by abstractions. They are motivated by what they can feel on their skin. The entry point for this movement into the consciousness of new people is not through morality. . . The freshest stratum in any movement are those who are there through trauma and fear. Soldiers getting killed is a very serious thing, because these are our families.”

It is the emergence of resistance on the ground from Iraqis themselves which lifted the veil of lies from the war for many Americans. Were it not for the daily casualties and attacks inflicted upon U.S. troops in Iraq, it is doubtful that the recent uproar about the falsity of war claims and the merits of the occupation itself would be so loud and widespread at home now.

This blunt truth is stated not to sermonize about the American public's relative indifference to the consequences of war unless 'our side' is affected, nor to pander to the idea that US soldiers' deaths is the main reason for us to end the occupation. Rather, the point is to soberly recognize the starting point of criticism of the war in Iraq for most Americans so that we can extend and enrich anti-war awareness more effectively. It would be politically unwise, for instance, to lecture about the historical record of atrocities and duplicities carried out in imperialist ventures without conscious reference to the attacks on US troops, just as it would be dangerous to latch onto this least-common-denominator of consciousness, using the death of soldiers to replace other very real reasons for why we must withdraw from Iraq immediately. The point, in a word, is neither to separate nor to substitute, but to connect.

For the intensification of guerrilla warfare, with all its sensational drama and deadliness, is only the most obvious and eye-catching aspect of the war. The true depth and dimension of hostility to the U.S. occupation extends far beyond this or that rocket attack. It speaks to the hostility of the entire Arab world to America's overall imperial project and its history of dominating and humiliating Arabs, either directly or through its local pit-bull, Israel. To appreciate and emphasize the full context of the war and its brutal impact on American lives not only in Iraq but here—and then not only to American lives but to all lives—is a crucial and necessary step for the anti-war movement.

The dangers of not doing so are patently obvious. Already many supposedly anti-war 'radicals' have

jumped on the 'Anybody But Bush' bandwagon, throwing in their support for Democrats like Dean or Clark. To oppose the war yet support these candidates may seem contradictory, but a superficial opposition to war is entirely compatible with such decisions. For those who oppose the war as a matter of style may be impressed by anti-war rhetoric even if mouthed by one who has declared support for sending more troops (Dean), and those whose concerns are limited to troop casualties may feel more comfortable with a former general at the helm (Clark).

Some on the Left offer generous advice on how to make the occupation more effective tactically, while others wonder aloud if leaving Iraq would be an 'abandonment' of an 'unfinished job', as if by his deed of murder a murderer is historically fitted to follow up by playing carpenter.

This kind of approach is flawed to the core. We are still in the arena, still part of the spectacle, cheering on the brutalization of another country, only with different slogans, temporarily running to the concession stand until 'our side' is winning again, whispering advice to Uncle Sam on the way. What must be soundly condemned and opposed is the spectacle itself, the debasement and killing of the racial Other in which we ourselves are debased, and—yes—sometimes even killed.

Failure to adopt this principle leads into an abyss of endless lies and falsifications. Deep in this abyss already are top American officials of all branches, who, immersed in their state of self-delusion, rail against the presence of 'foreign fighters' in a country where they sent 150,000 American troops, praise the preciousness of democracy while propping up puppet councils, and decry resistance as 'terrorism' because their newest effort to terrorize the Arabs is meeting real opposition.

Standing outside the spectacle requires one to rub out from one's eyes the flash of the arena's stage lights and propagandistic pyrotechnics. Through ritualized demonization of Saddam and pious denunciations of his misdeeds, the media junta convinced many the purpose of the war was to remove a tyrant. That America once financed and installed the tyrant—indeed many tyrants—

was declared irrelevant. But now that he has been captured and whisked away for 'interrogation' elsewhere, the boogey-man excuse for staying in Iraq has unraveled completely. Still, reckoned the faithful, America after all was America, and after invading and taking over Iraq, would generously disseminate its superior values and institutions, like free-market democracy, rule of law, freedom of expression, and McNuggets. White Man's Burden was back on the agenda; Civilization would extend its white hand to reach out to the backward natives.

Reach out it did, dagger as always concealed in the cuff. The occupation has utterly failed in bringing about the most basic improvements to the lives of ordinary Iraqis. More Iraqis now than ever face increasing hardship and misery on all fronts: insecurity, unemployment, intermittent and broken basic services, and a farcical puppet government. The mainstream press carries out daily reports recording the myriad failures of black-booted Bremer's bureaucracy to win 'hearts and minds' in Iraq, from the lack of electricity and jobs to curfews and random house raids.

But to even begin an honest appraisal of our disastrous foreign occupation, one must first stand outside of the spectacle, outside of that artificial arena which pits man against man, nation against nation, race against race. Freedom, dignity, and a desire not be dominated by a foreign power or controlled by an outside force: these are the driving impulses of the vast majority of Iraqi fighters and their sympathizers in the local population—indeed, the driving impulses of people everywhere.

Recognition of this basic truth is the foundation of all future anti-war progress. For any number of chauvinist justifications to strangle Iraq—and no small number have already been aired and accepted—can sound sweet to an ear that is deaf to the inherent right of a people to fight for their own independence.

M. Junaid Alam, 20, is co-editor and web technician of Left Hook. Left Hook is a "journal by and for American youth on the radical left," and is available on the web at <http://www.lefthook.org/>

i, for one, am astonished that something like this might develop. from where would such a crazy thought develop? surely not in my plans. surely. – from the heads list

NAFTA and Remittances



Yves Engler, *ZNet*

<http://www.zmag.org/sustainers/content/2004-01/20engler.cfm>

As President Fox plays host to President Bush this weekend, one wonders if the two leaders have any honest, frank discussions. If they did, here is how a conversation about the 10th anniversary of NAFTA might go:

“So George, did you know that when NAFTA was signed there were 2.4 million undocumented Mexicans in the U.S., yet now that number has more than doubled to 4.81 million.¹ The total number of Mexican-born people in the U.S. also doubled to about 9 million from 1990 to 2000.²”

“That’s true Vicente, because your hard-working people were attracted by all the wonderful jobs we created in the late 1990s.”

“But then George how do you explain that as the U.S economy shed millions of jobs in 2001 and 2002, these two years were the biggest ever for illegal migration with more than 600, 000 Mexicans going north in 2002 alone?³”

“We’re trying to stop them illegals, Vicente. Since the implementation of Operation Gatekeeper the number of U.S. border patrol agents has jumped from just over 3000 in 1993 to some 9000 in 2002.⁴ Heck, we even built a huge fence all across southern California.”

“I know George, but that only forced migrants into the Arizona desert. This year during the hot summer months about 200 people died trying to cross it⁵. Some say it is the worst border in the western world and the deadliest across land anywhere. And another thing, your increased clampdown has made it even more profitable for the so-called ‘coyotes’ who help migrants across the border. The money available in the ‘coyote’ trade has spurred an increasingly violent network of organized

crime that has some comparing the border control situation to the futile war on drugs.”

“Well Vicente, I’m not sure what to say, except that this whole NAFTA thing hasn’t worked so well for us either.”

Then President Bush could go on to tell his Mexican counterpart that in the early 1990s, 10 years after Mexico’s 1982 peso devaluation and the beginning of the country’s neoliberal economic restructuring, the flow of “illegal” migrants had become a political issue in the U.S.

So, before Mexico entered NAFTA proponents of the accord proclaimed that its growth inducing properties would curb the flow of northbound migration. The argument put forth was that NAFTA would boost Mexican growth, which would create jobs and with more jobs Mexicans wouldn’t need to seek work in the U.S. The logic seems reasonable so long as NAFTA creates jobs. What happened?

NAFTA did create hundreds of thousands of (Maquiladora) jobs, mostly in the north of the country. By 2000 some 700 000 Maquiladora jobs were the result of NAFTA.⁶ Yet by 2003 300,000 of those jobs had disappeared due to the downturn in the U.S economy and more importantly Chinese competition.⁷

Mexican workers, it seems, believe that “development” means they should expect steadily improving wages. Yet, with China’s ascent to the WTO in 2001 international capital, which underpins the Maquiladora sector, had other ideas. The capitalists reckoned that Chinese workers could be paid a third the rate of a Maquiladora worker (50 cents per hour compared with a \$1.47 hourly average⁸). So they moved shop.

¹New York Times, December 27 2003

²Globe and Mail, January 3 2004

³Wall Street Journal, October 10 2003

⁴Wall Street Journal, October 10 2003

⁵Globe and Mail, September 20 2003

⁶New York Times, December 27 2003

⁷New York Times, December 27 2003

⁸La Presse, January 12 2003

But why have so many Mexicans migrated? If my experiences with “illegals” are of any indication certainly not for an adventure. The fifty-year old man I sat next to on a flight from Mexico City to Tijuana wasn’t looking forward to being away from his family or sneaking across the border. Here in Montreal my university’s night cleaners have told me they would prefer to be with their families.

And the countless numbers of ex migrants I met across Mexico said the same thing; Mexico was home but their livelihood was up north. Mexicans, it seems, are like most people in the world. They like to travel, maybe work a short-term low paying job in a foreign city for a while or study abroad, but by and large, they want to spend their lives close to their family and where they grew up.

The reasons for migration then probably lie in the effects NAFTA and its economic liberalization agenda have had on the country’s economic situation.

Let’s be clear NAFTA has benefited some. Mexico has had a major increase in billionaires. Some corporate agri-business has done well. Large segments of the country’s business elite and professional classes have got a cut. And certainly a few multi-nationals aren’t complaining. Unfortunately, most Mexicans aren’t members of these sectors of society.

The agricultural sector, especially small farmers have been devastated by a flood of subsidized U.S. exports and reductions in their own subsidies. The French paper *Liberation* reported that during NAFTA’s first decade some 2.5 million Mexican farmers were driven from their land⁹.

And for naïve city folk like myself who might see farm work as un-enjoyable it is not just a matter of Mexicans wanting to get off the farm. In the 10 years between 1989 and 1998 the percentage of U.S. farm workers, mostly Mexicans, without legal working documents increased from less than 10 percent of the farm worker population to over 50 percent.¹⁰

And undocumented farm workers precarious nature has been beneficial to U.S. agri-business (The source of the products undermining small farmers in Mexico).

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, “hourly wages in the fields fell from \$6.98 in 1989 to \$6.18 in 1998, in constant 1998 dollars.”¹¹

Outside of the agricultural sector, NAFTA’s not been as bad, but certainly not great. The *Financial Times* reports that, “better paying manufacturing jobs that support entire families are fewer now than when the [NAFTA] agreement was signed.”¹² According to the *USA Today* “since the accord took effect, real wages for Mexican Manufacturing workers have dropped 13.5 percent”¹³ These numbers don’t paint a very pretty picture, especially since in all likelihood the situation will further deteriorate with China’s ascent to the WTO.

Mexico’s economy isn’t in a total free-fall though, which is a testament to an ability to do what neoliberals love most: export? The only thing is that in Mexico’s case it is not the exportation of products or materials we’re talking about but rather people. Money sent home (remittances) from the U.S. has surpassed tourism and foreign direct investment as the second biggest source of foreign currency to the country after the oil sector. Over 1 billion a month was being remitted in the first half of 2003, nearly 302002.¹⁴

To put this number into perspective lets add the likely combined wages of all 700,000 Maquiladora jobs created during the first seven years of NAFTA.

Assuming 700,000 workers work 50 hours a week for 52 weeks a year at \$1.47 per hour the total amount brought into the Mexican economy is \$2.68 billion.

That’s about the amount remittances increased between 2002 and 2003 though remittances are of much greater short-term economic value. Unlike the Maquiladora sector, the Mexican government doesn’t need to put large amounts of money into attracting remittances. Where the Maquiladoras expect the government to build roads and other infrastructure (and tax credits), all migrants can hope for is an I.D card. So, in the short-term the economy gains more per dollar of remittances than it does per Maquiladora dollar.

Victor Hanson a Professor at Cal State Fresno argues that “Mexico . . . stays afloat by exporting human capital [remittances]. If you shut that border down, in

⁹Liberation, January 1 2004

¹⁰Wall Street Journal, October 10 2003

¹¹Wall Street Journal, October 10 2003

¹²Financial Times, July 1 2003

¹³USA Today, December 31 2003

¹⁴Financial Times, September 19 2003

five years you'd have a revolution, because Mexico can't meet the aspirations of its own people."¹⁵ And you can bet Mexican politicians understand this fact. The LA Times reports that, "the migrants who come north used to be regarded as sell-outs or deserters in Mexican society. Now, they are heroes praised by Mexican president Vicente Fox for the money they inject into that faltering economy."¹⁶

After a decade of NAFTA the remittances from increased economic migration, which NAFTA was supposed to curb, is what's keeping the Mexican economy afloat. "So George can we talk about re-working that agreement."



¹⁵LA Times, July 20 2003

¹⁶LA Times, July 20 2003

The U.S.-World Elite Crossword Puzzle



Aaron Hawley, *Ballistic Helmet*
<http://ballistichelmet.org/>

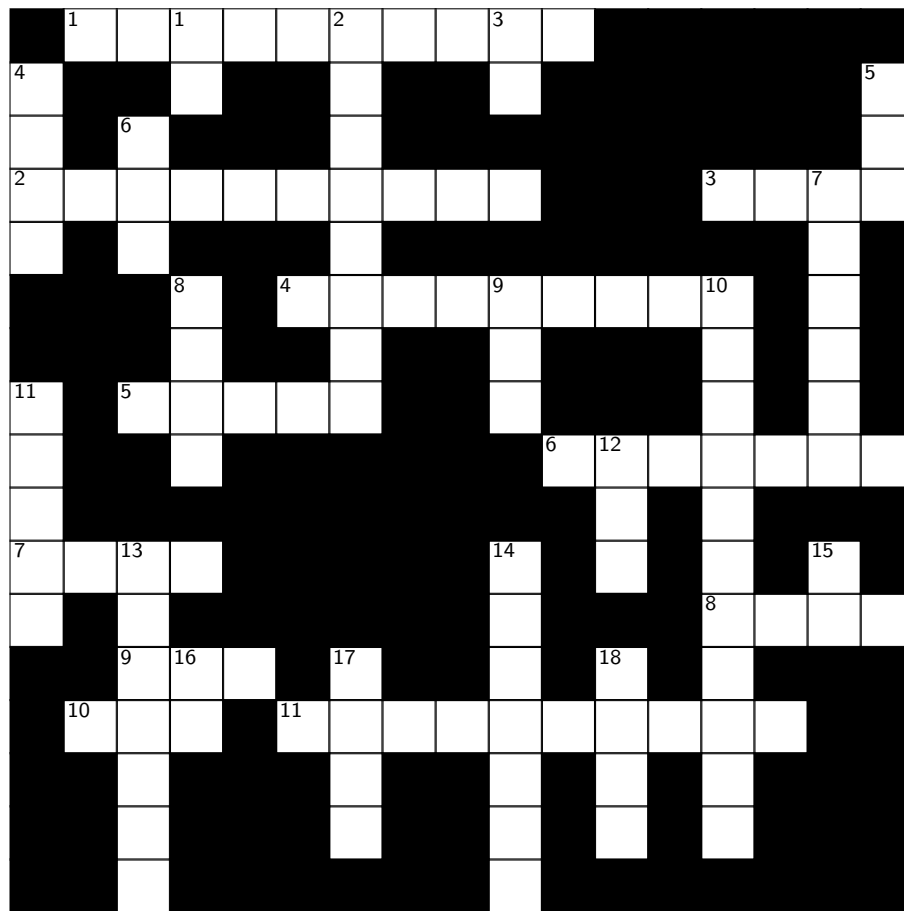
Directions: You didn't elect them, you never heard of them, and you don't know how to spell any of their names, or organizations, but you're about to do a crossword puzzle of them. The solution will be available in next week's issue of Ballistic Helmet.

Across.

1. Undergrads with global ambitions should seek out their campus's _____ and _____ chapter.
2. Commission founded in 1973 to run Japan, Europe, North America., Bush 41 renewed membership, Silly Willy currently non-member, AFL-CIO members.
3. "Libertarian" institute organized and funded by the Koch family petroleum riches.
4. I found that bombing Cambodia was the "ultimate aphrodisiac."
5. The lid blew open over accounting fraud on us, a multinational powerhouse in energies, finance and White House connections.
6. I died 8 years ago (1996) at age 83, but my life saw work at GE, Chevron, Caterpillar, Boeing, the Defense Department, and I have trusteeed Hoover and AEI, and was a member of the Trilateral Commission, the Business Roundtable, President's Council of Advisors, and the company I co-founded recently advertised nanotechnology on television in 2004 even though it doesn't sell it.
7. We're the latest hiccup in U.S. empire.
8. U.S. federal government bank backing expansion and plundering since 1934. Abbreviation.
9. We're the first hiccup in U.S. empire.
10. Billionaires only. "See you in Davos." Acronym.
11. The Business _____ is a lobbying group for CEOs founded in 1972.
4. Soviets gone but this bulldog still biting in Europe.
5. "Free trade" with trade rules since 1995.
6. Selling drugs, trading arms, inciting coups and gathering intelligence since 1947.
7. I am the cable news powerhouse, land holder, and bailer of the UN when I get a chance.
8. "Research and Development" for WWII bombings, now an "independent" corporation.
9. "Structurally adjusting" one state at a time since 1944.
10. We've been oil tycoons, finance capitalists, Trilateral Commission founders, and horrible presidential candidates.
11. I built the largest media company the world has ever seen—merging Time, Warner, Turner, AOL and maybe AT&T—all in the name of "free speech".
12. Building strategies for global capitalism since 1943. Acronym.
13. We're an international human rights organization that refuses to take a side in wars but our work fuel "humanitarian wars."
14. I am the "news corporation" who detest monarchies but hope to give my son the company reins.
15. Acronym for 13 Down.
16. International 2-letter country code for the CIA-backed Mujahideen stomping grounds back in the 80s.
17. I said, "Take away the capitalist and you will sweep war from the earth." Ironic.
18. I closed the last of my Levi plants, in between my meetings at the Bay Area Council, Trilateral Commission, Council on Foreign Relations, Business Roundtable, and the Hoover Institute.

Down.

1. Security "Counciling" since 1945. Acronym.
2. At this California Grove the international club, of the same name, meets for the "Greatest Men's Party on Earth".
3. The passive-aggressive enemy of the U.S. Acronym.



Solution to Last Week's Semi-fictional Logic Puzzle: "Find the Republican!"

Erik and Jon each read two issues, both of which include #1. therefore, the only possible combination in which each issue is read by exactly three people, no person having read the same combination of issues, is: #2 / #3 / #1 & #2 / #1 & #3 / #1, #2 & #3. the person who read #1 & #3 liked the yellow cover (can't be Robbie, fewer issues than the one who will move to Canada, no person having a preference for an issue they haven't read), therefore making the one who will move to Canada #1, #2 & #3. Erik, who read exactly two issues and liked the rants, must then have read #1 & #2, making Jon the one who liked the yellow cover. The blue cover must then have been admired by the one who read #1, #2 & #3 (no person having a preference for an issue they haven't read), leaving the gray cover to the person who read #2 (same reason) and graphic design to the person who read #3. Cheyanne couldn't have read all three issues (she read fewer

than John) and didn't read #3, so she read #2. John therefore read #1, #2 & #3 and Robbie read #3. Jon will join the peace corps if W. is reelected (he won't commit suicide, become a terrorist or jump for joy (because he liked the yellow cover)), Robbie will commit suicide (he's the only remaining person who didn't read #2), Erik will jump for joy (Cheyanne liked the gray cover) and Cheyanne will become a terrorist.

name	back issues read	initial attraction	if W. reelected
Cheyanne	#2	gray cover	become a terrorist
Robbie	#3	graphic design	commit suicide
John	#1, #2 & #3	blue cover	move to Canada
Erik	#1 & #2	rants	jump for joy
Jon	#1 & #3	yellow cover	join Peace Corps

Now I understand why Bush is proposing the Moon to Mars mission... to control the destiny of the entire Earth... These people are scarier than I ever imagined.
– from the heads list

Rants

Post anonymously at <http://ballistichelmet.org/rant/>

when i go shopping...

Sunday, January 25th, 2004 5:08:22pm

i buy things in fives.

hot toasters

Sunday, March 9th, 2003 12:37:27pm

there was a piece on one of those morning talk shows about which toasters are the best. it's a fucking toaster.

witness this, asshole

Saturday, February 1st, 2003 6:12:20pm

After watching CNN interview witnesses from the Columbia crash i discovered that witnesses are idiots. One person claimed that there was a close call between a plane and the shuttle—even though it was flying at 200,000 feet. God bless America, i thought. All you need in America is some angry hounds, a police scanner, and a story to tell. I saw it with my own eyes even if they were blinded by the extreme excitement of some damned good live entertainment. Of course, it wasn't 'live' for me, in the sense that i had to watch it on tv. I also don't have a police scanner or any hounds, but i do have ron downstairs—that's enough. The only thing worth watching on the tube is a 'domestic event', as the White House calls it. So, now i have to stand the news reports of this 'national tragedy'. Why do i have to value these people's lives over others. I'm sure someone got bombed on this day—what about those people? Why can i say i want 'joe' to die, but i can't say i want the president to die? Where is the value and justice in that? Here is a question, can i say i'd rather have the president die than my friend joe? Well anyway, this rant was only supposed to be about eye witnesses, but i should also let you know that eggs and toast is not a meal that goes particularly well with a 'domestic event'. Really, eggs and toast is a meal that fits well with natural disasters.

free advice

Monday, January 12th, 2004 10:08:16am

Female eye for the straight guy:
if you ever want to touch a "boobie," please refrain from the following haircut:
all shaved except on top, which is pulled into a limpid ponytail. YUCK!
Instant girl repellent.

something like imagination

Monday, November 4th, 2002 2:26:13am

when i was a kid i use to have an imagination
and i use to look at things and think
thats stupid
why is it like that
and not like this

and everything made so much sense to be different
and no one listens

but now
i look at things and i think
that seems ok

why bother
i dont see anything to be different
i cant

i tried today
but my brain got hurt
like salt

oldpeople

Friday, December 27th, 2002 10:13:32pm

hi i am an old people

**You can give me a check, made out to me, and I will
put [it] in our fund. . . . Like I said though, I'm not
management. – from the heads list**