

CEASE FIRE

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EDITORIAL

Hisham Yezza

The world Peace Movement is once again facing a crucial crossroad in its fascinating and phenomenal evolution over the past two years. Many have gleefully predicted a rather quick death after the war on Irak was launched and hastily declared "over" by an absurdly pompous president. However, the situation in Irak today has unfortunately more than vindicated the concerns and warnings repeatedly issued by the anti-war movement. Peace in Irak is nowhere to be seen, at least not for the thousands of Irakis who are living in fear and uncertainty and resentment at the failure of the US invader/occupier to live up to its pre-war promises of a quickly restored prosperous democracy. The peace movement has a duty to engage in a serious effort to help Irakis regain control of their destiny, Saddam's departure was welcomed by many Irakis and rightly so but the evils of one regime should not translate into a carte-blanche to any future administration to do what it pleases while hiding under an "At Least We're Not Saddam" Banner. Anyone who is serious about helping restore peace and prosperity in Irak and the wider region should help all efforts to make sure Tony Blair never forgets that he has dismally failed to follow-up on his grandiose, cringingly self-righteous pre-war lectures about "doing the right thing". We have the power to make this government work seriously on the reconstruction of Irak, not as a business venture (as the Texan oil-cowboys in the white house seem to see it) but as a deeply humanist and quite overdue duty (after decades of supporting Saddam and then the criminal sanctions) towards a people wronged for way too long.

Choke on it monkey boy!

A personal account of the Nov 20th march

Dan Robertson

The day started as we dragged ourselves out of bed in time to make it to the Portland steps by 8am. A small crowd was already there including Richard, our president and eager activist, (there at 7.30 apparently). People flocked round to buy the remaining tickets for a chance to confront Bush/cheap day return to London, (whatever you prefer). What had been a perfectly well organised affair immediately descended into chaos the moment three partly filled coaches arrived, and we had to split people between them all. For once we were well organised, only for Stop the War to scupper the well-laid plans!

After the grumbling had died down and everyone had found a space I found myself commandeered into helping someone home-make his placard out of hastily cut out letters. "ONLY 1 BUSH TO TRUST" with a cannabis leaf in green as its centrepiece. The mood was generally pretty good, in spite of us taking a large part of the bus up with a heavy wooden placard that occasionally whacked people in the head. This only served to stoke our anger and whip us into a frenzy of crazed anti-Bushism. Or something. Tina and I attempted to sell our moody, sleep-deprived coach-mates some of our painstakingly baked Bush pretzels. Not even the timelessly brilliant Bush quotes attached could persuade them.

We arrived early (that could have been an extra hour in bed!!!) as a student protest was kicking off in UCL. The neo-classical statues had been furnished with ist Worker flags, anti-Bush slogans plastered across the courtyard, and the centrepiece was a bright pink "Peace Tank". And they say student activism is dead!!! Richard hastily commandeered a placard to advertise the aforementioned pretzels, rather than have to endure the embarrassment of actually asking people to buy them. Nice work

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At one o'clock we all swarmed out of the gates into Gower St, holding up the traffic and dancing mockingly around the assembled police. They'd obviously been instructed by Ken Livingston not to bother us and were disappointingly open-minded. Some even seemed to be enjoying themselves. Can't get the staff these days. Sirens were blaring, placards were thrust aloft and as we ran down to the start of the march at Malet St, we even sold a pretzel.

In the heart of the march itself the spliff smoke hung heavy in the air, and all manner of activists and voodoo style models of Bush paraded by. The inventiveness of slogans and contraptions was fairly good. One placard read "I'm not even supposed to be here" and "just popped out for a bottle of milk". Such powerful political statements only fuelled our righteous fire. A samba band joined the fray, and got the crowd moving. They were accompanied by chant-leaders with megaphones reeling out a mix of timeless protest classics and Italian ones from Genoa. In the midst of the melee we spotted a guy carrying a placard of Bush eating a pretzel and the phrase "choke on it monkey boy". This guy would surely appreciate our offer of NSPM pretzels? He looked at us like we were war criminals.

Several hours into the march. Having crossed Thames, Moving away from Trafalgar Sq. Who the hell designed this tortuous snaking route? Are they leading us well out of the city so they can target us with laser-guided bombs? Stopped for the loo at a grimy-looking Ladbroke's and, much to our delight, were besieged by young girls wanting to buy our pretzels! It was surely "a sign". Finally, crossed back to Westminster and parliament. The mood was good and the police were incredibly numerous. In spite of cannabis-banner-man's attempts to get policemen to smile, they refused to charge headlong into the crowd

wielding mace and batons. Turned into Whitehall and the end was in sight, but the pace slowed as thousands upon thousands attempted to make their way to the finish. A chorus of boos and jeers went up as we marched past Downing St and everyone displayed their disgust.

In fact, we never made it to Trafalgar Sq. The buses had been diverted to Millbank Tower and we had to make a massive detour around the 'sterile zone' imposed on Westminster. Security had been massively disproportionate and at the taxpayer's expense of course. Nonetheless, Farouk had taken footage of the toppling of the Bush statue which we watched contentedly on the way back. It seemed like some kind of retribution had been enacted on the chimp in the palace, and we held that poignant thought as we munched pretzels on the darkened highway home.

Creative Thinking Can Stop Bush!

Laura Teague

Whilst it was imperative that we got out on the streets to protest against George Bush's state visit to the UK, we must also ensure that we stretch our imaginations beyond the confines of the current system and towards a more inclusive, more creative, worldview. Rather than simply churning out more anti-war rhetoric to hurl back at Bush and Blair's pro-war propaganda, we need to think around these rigid and unhelpful positions that only serve to perpetuate the tensions between different political groups rather than providing any resolutions.

Let us not play the Bush/ Blair administration at its own game. Peace can never be brought about if we adopt the same dogmatic, inflexible approach of the pro-war lobbyists. Boundaries between races, classes and genders must be broken down. It is only through identification with others,

by finding common ground, that we can begin to conceive a world without conflict. This may seem so obvious a point that it goes without saying but I emphasise it because *does* need some further consideration.

Bush and Blair find justification for their unjustifiable military action in people's fear of 'terrorist attacks' and such like. When we really cease to fear 'the other'; to perceive the similarities between ourselves and people with whom we seem to have nothing in common, our opposition to war is at its most effective. Indeed, such a situation would render war completely impossible. Our own passivity makes the voice of our governments so powerful and allows them to drown out the many voices that make up our world. It is all too easy to touch our caps to the idea of increased cultural understanding without actually changing our behaviour. Phrases such as 'cultural diversity' and 'increased cultural awareness' have been banded about by the liberal left and have come to sound a bit hollow. Yet the peace movement is pointless unless we actively work to dismantle barriers of class, gender, politics and race, as well as culture.

So rather than simply shouting back at Bush and Blair we need to rethink our attitudes and create a dynamic flow of ideas between us that will allow many voices to be heard equally. By thinking creatively beyond the divisive categories that separate us from one another, we can, ultimately, resist the arrogant assumptions of superiority that lead to war.

**JOIN THE PEACE MOVEMENT
TODAY! SEND AN EMAIL TO:
SUNSPM@su.nottingham.ac.uk**

What big teeth you have Dubya!!

Dan Robertson

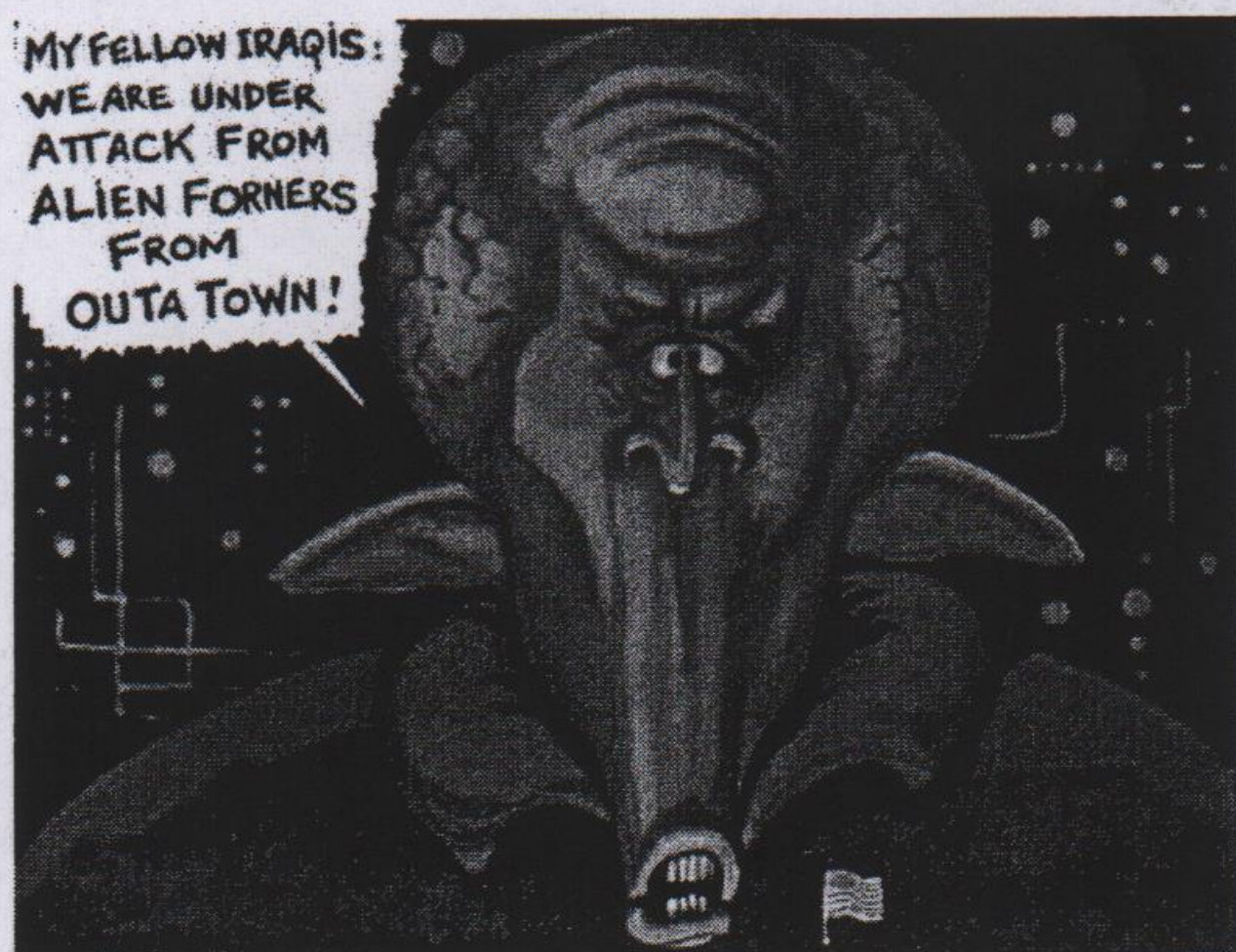
With current events in the world the way they are, it is sometimes hard for me to understand the political apathy that I encounter in the majority of people. When the world's only superpower is intent on making the super-rich into the mega-rich at the expense of everyone else, it seems astonishing that there are still people unwilling to resist the situation. The US administration's rapacious predatory instinct can be seen both at home, in the total destruction of basic social services, and abroad, in the preparation for asset stripping in Iraq. These factors will certainly lead to major conflicts in the future as people resist their economic slavery and poverty. Far better to work to stop the rot now before it devours us.

In this environment there is only one sensible option for ordinary citizens of the world. To turn off the TV, get out on the streets and protest. To make a conscious decision not to support the regressive and predatory policies that are currently imposed on us and other nations. After all, without our support our governments find it much harder to act. Without our support they are nothing. There are plenty of ways in which we can protest - by increasing awareness about the social and economic causes of war, by boycotting companies and bodies that contribute to global inequality, and by showing George Bush what we think in London next week.

What are the alternatives? I see the destiny of the politically apathetic as similar to that of Little Red Riding Hood in the fairy tale. Like the innocent girl they will be lured into the ideas of corrupt politicians and journalists, the wolves clothed in illusions of honesty and truth. They will be devoured by the system. In

reality there is no happy ending to this story, no heroic woodcutter exists to save these poor souls. Stand up and speak out before it's too late.

No Bush Please! We're British



Farouk Azam

George Bush's 'Crusade' (a word he used on 13/11/01) rolled into London on the 19th November. Well...not quite rolled more like steam rolled. It seems the UK has a proud history of allowing arrogant and cruel leaders onto its shores. We 'harboured' terrorists like Pinochet in 1998. He came to power in 1973 in Chile, in one of bloodiest events in Central America. More than 3,000 were killed in the September military onslaught. And who supported this bloodshed? Yes, you're right...the USA (damn you guys are so good)

When Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited Britain in 1999, 'unusual' Policing arrested protestors. When President Jiang rode up the Mall, protestors were prevented from holding up banners and Tibetan flags and told demonstrations were banned in a royal park.

'Hundreds of thousands of people continue to be detained in violation of their fundamental human rights across the country, death sentences and executions continue to be imposed after unfair

trials, torture and ill-treatment remain widespread and systemic, and freedom of expression and information continue to be severely curtailed.'

[Sources: www.amnesty.org/campaign

So much for the 'Democracy', and 'Freedom' that we went to War for!

So what's the fuss with Bush? Surely he has helped to rid the world of terrorism, and made it freer? I will use two examples, Iraq and the almost forgotten Guantanamo Bay (GB) in Cuba. Amnesty International in their report 'USA- The threat of a Bad example' (August 2003), point out that in the US Naval base GB people are 'hooded, blindfolded, handcuffed and Shackled (p9). Those interrogated include children and the elderly. In April 2003 the US authorities revealed that Children as young as 13 were among foreign national held at Guantanamo' (p21). Detention without trial or charge, without appropriate legal representation, all this is against International Law.

And what of Iraq? Surely they are grateful for what we did? A leaked CIA report, commissioned by the CIA Director George Tenet, says that insurgency was gaining ground among the Iraqi population, and already in tens of thousands. There should be no mistake; the Iraqi people don't want us there. According to the CIA report these are NOT Saddam loyalists. It seems that as each day goes by the reasons we were given for the war were lies. In fact the War is not over. Air strikes are still taking place.

The body bags are mounting, on all sides. This bloodshed was caused by one man's decision for War. He has a lot of blood on his hands. Steam Roll his hands! Now there's a thought.