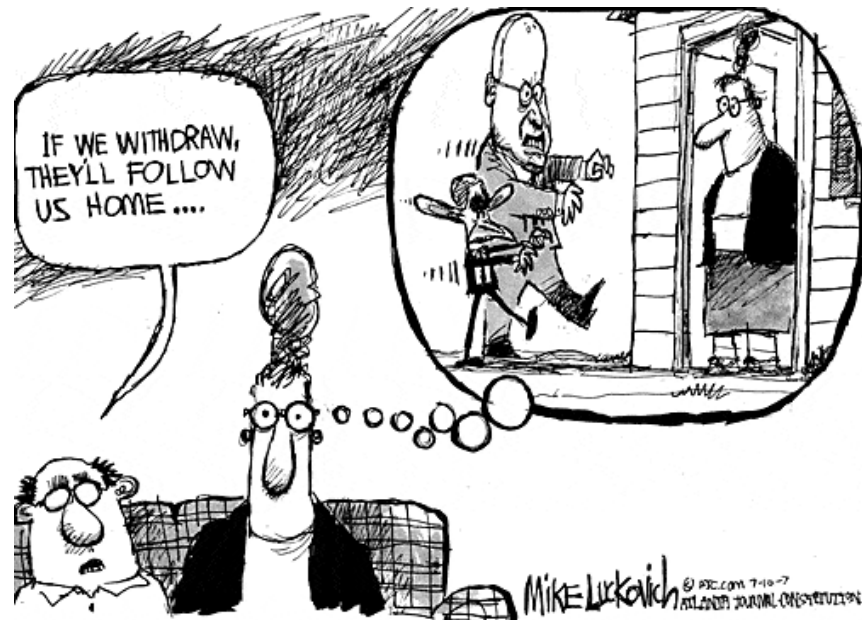


GI SPECIAL 5G13:



Action At The USS Kitty Hawk:

**“Two Soldiers In Full Uniform ...
Let Us Put Leaflets Between All
The Boxes Of Pizza”**

**“The Young Man With His Arms Full
Of Bottles Of Sprite Told Us To Put
The Anti-War DVDs In His Pockets
While He Told Us That His Brother
Was Killed In Iraq”**

July 11, 2007 Sydney, Australia: Stop The War Coalition Communiqué, via Max Watts,

From: Jean Parker

During the recent visit of the US aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk, Stop the War Coalition activists held two anti-war protests. Under the gargantuan shadow of the Kitty Hawk activists handed out anti-war material, held a banner calling for the end of the Iraqi occupation, and spoke out for the withdrawal of Australian and American troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

We had material targeted toward US service people, and the inspiring thing was how receptive the young sailors were as they made their way off the ship.

We distributed around 40 DVDs - The Ground Truth (about Iraq) and Sir No Sir! (a documentary about the success of resistance against the Vietnam war from within the military). Our leaflets gave statistics about the growing number of active duty soldiers who have signed the "Appeal for Redress from the War in Iraq", and gave contact details for the growing membership of Iraqi Vets Against The War.

All the sailors were sympathetic and keen to listen, if not to talk. They seemed all too aware of the growing anti-war movement in the US, if not within the armed forces.

The interaction which seemed to best symbolise the servicemen's attitude to anti-war protestors was two soldiers in full uniform who talked to us while being loaded up with a huge delivery of pizzas and drinks.

They let us put leaflets between all the boxes of pizza, and the young man with his arms full of bottles of sprite told us to put the anti-war DVDs in his pockets while he told us that his brother was killed in Iraq.

As the Kitty Hawk sails into the sunset on its return to Guam, or some other horrific Pacific US base, its satisfying to think that its now loaded up with anti-war propaganda, and contact details for Iraqi Vets Against the War.

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

IED Kills U.S. Soldier Near Baghdad

July 15, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070715-10

LSA Anaconda, Iraq – A 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Soldier was killed July 14 as a result of injuries sustained from an improvised explosive device which detonated near his vehicle while conducting a combat logistics patrol near Baghdad.

U.S. Soldier Killed In Ninewa

July 15, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070716-02

TIKRIT, Iraq – One Task Force Lightning Soldier died as a result of injuries sustained from an explosion while conducting operations in Ninewa Province, Sunday.

Two Mercenaries Killed In Iraq, Two Wounded

15 July 2007 AAP

Two Australian security contractors have been killed and another injured in an explosion in Iraq.

He and the injured Australian were taken to Ibn Sina Hospital inside Baghdad's heavily protected Green Zone.

A spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) said the two, aged 38 and 34, both from Queensland, were killed when the vehicle carrying them was hit by an explosive device.

They also reported a Filipino man, also working for BLP international, was injured in the attack. Another 38-year-old Queensland man was injured in the attack, which occurred about 8km south-east of Baghdad just before 8am (AEST) Sunday, the spokesman said.

“He is currently in a stable condition and his injuries have been described as non-life-threatening,” the spokesman told AAP.

The three men worked for BLP International, a private company based in the United Arab Emirates which provides protective security services.

Sky News reported the dead men were former police officers.

Sky News said BLP International was a key provider of police training in Iraq and many former Australian police officers worked for the company.

**REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



BAQUBA, Iraq, June 25: The soldiers call the routine procedure of exploding the bombs they discover in houses, or beside or beneath roads “controlled dets.” Scott Nelson/World Picture Network, for the New York Times

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

***Afghan Occupation In The Shitter:
British “Most Senior Generals” Say
Invaders “Facing A Catastrophic
Failure”***

**“There Is A Very Short Shelf Life For An
Occupation Force”**

July 15, 2007 Nicholas Watt and Ned Temko, The Observer

Britain's most senior generals have issued a blunt warning to Downing Street that the military campaign in Afghanistan is facing a catastrophic failure, a development that could lead to an Islamist government seizing power in neighbouring Pakistan.

Lord Inge, the former chief of the defence staff, highlighted their fears in public last week when he warned of a 'strategic failure' in Afghanistan.

The Observer understands that Inge was speaking with the direct authority of the general staff when he made an intervention in a House of Lords debate.

'The situation in Afghanistan is much worse than many people recognise,' Inge told peers.

'We need to face up to that issue, the consequence of strategic failure in Afghanistan and what that would mean for NATO...

"We need to recognise that the situation - in my view, and I have recently been in Afghanistan - is much, much more serious than people want to recognise.'

One source, who is familiar with the fears of the senior officers, told The Observer: 'If you talk privately to the generals they are very very worried.

"You heard it in Inge's speech.

'Inge said we are failing and remember Inge speaks for the generals.'

[Lord] Ashdown warned: 'Unless we put this right, unless we have a unitary system of command, we are going to lose.

"The battle for this is the battle of public opinion. The polls are slipping.

"Once they go on the slide it is almost impossible to win it back. You can only do it with the support of the local population.

'There is a very short shelf life for an occupation force. Once that begins to shift against you it is very very difficult to turn it round.'

Adam Holloway, a Tory member of the committee who is a former Grenadier Guards officer, said: 'We are getting to the point where it will be irretrievable.

"That's where we are now. We are in danger of a second strategic failure (after Iraq), which we cannot afford.'

TROOP NEWS

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



U.S. Army Spc. Andre Craig, Jr.'s casket as it is taken from Immanuel Missionary Baptist Church, in New Haven, Conn., July 6, 2007 after his funeral service. Craig, 24, was killed in Iraq Monday, June 27, 2007, when the vehicle he was riding in was hit by an IED. (AP Photo/Bob Child)

***And Now, The Words That Should
Keep Bush Screaming In The Night:
“15 Active Duty IVAW Members From
Ft Drum....”***



[But the clueless, stupid motherfucker wouldn't get it if somebody shoved it up his ass with a sharp stick... T]

From: Citizen Soldier
To: GI Special
Sent: July 11, 2007
Subject: Update from the "Different Drummer."

Friends,

We have two new developments to report.

First, the Ft Drum command has withdrawn its initial plan to give Sp/4 Eugene Cherry an "Other than Honorable" discharge, in lieu of court martial. Instead, it now plans to give him a "General, Under Honorable conditions" This represents a further victory for our struggle in support of Eugene and all GIs who suffer from war induced PTSD!

We think that the command made this change because their original plan to give Eugene a OTH discharge would have barred him from access to VA mental health care. If their initial goal was to appear compassionate toward a GI suffering from PTSD, this was not the way to do it! Whatever the command's ultimate reason, Eugene fully deserves the better discharge!

Second, the IVAW [Iraq Veterans Against The War] Tour Picnic on Sunday in Watertown's Thompson Park was a big success.

About 15 active duty IVAW members from Ft Drum were joined by a about 75 peace civilian peace activists from Watertown, Syracuse and Ithaca for a very festive social event.

Except for the huge gulls who swooped down every so often to snatch hot dogs off the picnic tables, everything went very well.

The IVAW members each spoke, giving brief accounts of their political evolution and also sharing some hilarious accounts of military incompetence which they'd witnessed as soldiers.

Even the initially-dark sky cleared off, leaving us with a blessedly sunny afternoon. The park, which was designed by Frederick Olmsted (of Central Park fame) looks out from a hill onto the town of Watertown through a sea of trees and is quite lovely.

The event was capped off by a evening party with two bands at the Different Drummer. Everyone involved agreed that it was a spirit lifting event.

Next day, the Watertown Daily Times ran a front page story with a color photo of the picnic and the IVAW tour bus.

If you were able to attend, thank you and if you weren't, you missed an inspiring event.

Please try to join us next time.

Best,
Tod Ensign, Dir.,
Citizen Soldier

Troops Invited:

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

**Organizers Visit Camp Ederle With
“Bags Stuffed With Flyers On The
Appeal For Redress”
“We Strolled Up And Down The Main
Street Handing Out The Small But
Information Packed GI Rights Cards”**

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

Deciding it best to first to find places to simply leave the flyers and cards, we hit the restrooms at the bowling alley and the Veneto Club, as well as the video games and slot machines.

July 7th, 2007 by Stephanie Westbrook, Dissidentvoice.org [Excerpts]

When it was announced that the U.S. army base at Camp Ederle would once again open its doors to the public for the annual 4th of July festivities, the people of Vicenza, Italy, who have been working to stop the construction of yet another U.S. military base in their historic city, decided to organize their own “Independence Day” celebrations. And as U.S. citizens residing in Italy, we knew this was one event we did not want to miss.

We also wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to visit the existing base of Camp Ederle, but with more than hot dogs and frisbies on our minds.

We arrived at the security checkpoint wondering if our bags stuffed with flyers on the Appeal for Redress a petition started by active duty service members calling for the immediate withdrawal from Iraq, and cards on the GI Rights Hotline, which

offers counseling on everything from discharges and conscientious objector status to sexual harassment, would make it through.

After a short line and a casual check of our bags, we were in.

Only a small portion of the sprawling base was open to the public, including the area around the football and baseball fields where the main festivities were being held.

The Military Police were out in force, as were Italian Carabinieri.

Deciding it best to first to find places to simply leave the flyers and cards, we hit the restrooms at the bowling alley and the Veneto Club, as well as the video games and slot machines.

We strolled up and down the main street handing out the small but information packed GI Rights cards, carefully designed by someone who knows the importance of being discreet on a military base.

Everyone we encountered took them with interest.

All Charges Against Iraq Veterans Against The War Dropped For Ft. Benning Incident

[Thanks to Marco F., Veteran and member of The Military Project, who sent this in. He writes: Yippie!]

Jul. 14, 2007 BY ALAN RIQUELMY, Ledger-Enquirer & July 15, 2007 The Associated Press

Three men accused of criminal trespass July 1 when they stepped onto Fort Benning had the counts against them dropped Friday after the government filed a motion to dismiss the charges.

Liam Madden and Nathan Lewis, both 24, were taken into custody by military police for stepping onto federal property on Fort Benning Road, said post spokeswoman Monica Manganaro. Adam Kokesh was charged with the same offense 30 minutes after Madden and Lewis.

Members of Iraq Veterans Against the War, Madden and Lewis were near the post on a bus tour protesting military bases around the country and speaking to soldiers.

Manganaro said the protesters were given a verbal warning not to come onto the property.

“Upon consideration of the government's motion, the court is satisfied that there exists reasonable cause to believe that the case against this defendant should not be pursued, and that the ends of justice would not be served by doing so,” a Friday order from U.S. Magistrate G. Mallon Faircloth states.

Michael Blake, 24, also of IVAW, said his fellow members didn't intentionally break the law. Instead, they crossed a line that wasn't clearly marked while trying to ask a guard if they could come onto the base, he said.

Criminal charges have been dropped against three men who were arrested after stepping onto Fort Benning during an anti-war protest there early this month.

Liam Madden and Nate Lewis, both 24, and Adam Kokesh were arrested by military police for criminal trespass shortly after they stepped onto base property during a bus tour protesting the war in Iraq.

Madden and Lewis are members of the group Iraq Veterans Against the War and were traveling with six other veterans.

A spokesman for the group said the men did not mean to break the law and had accidentally crossed a property line that wasn't clearly marked while trying to ask a guard if they could come onto the base.

Government attorneys filed a motion to dismiss the charges this week.

“Upon consideration of the government's motion, the court is satisfied that there exists reasonable cause to believe that the case against this defendant should not be pursued, and that the ends of justice would not be served by doing so,” U.S. Magistrate G. Mallon Faircloth said in a Friday order.

Guess What [Big Surprise]

Pollingreport.com: Newsweek Poll conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International. July 11-12, 2007. N=1,003 adults nationwide.

“Now thinking about the situation in Iraq: From what you've seen or heard in the news, overall, do you think President Bush's 'surge' plan increasing U.S. troops in Iraq has been a success or a failure?”

	Success	Failure	Unsure
	%	%	%
ALL adults	22	64	14
Republicans	47	31	22
Democrats	7	84	9
Independents	21	66	13

“Which of the following four choices comes closest to your view about what the U.S. should do in Iraq? Begin an immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops in Iraq. OR, Start withdrawing troops by the fall, with all troops out by next spring. OR, Leave a substantial number of troops in Iraq, but have them fall back to their bases and concentrate on training Iraqis and targeting Al Qaeda in Iraq leaders. OR, Make no cutbacks in U.S. troops.”

	Immediate Withdrawal	Out by Next Spring	Fall Back to Their Bases	Make No Cutbacks	Unsure
	%	%	%	%	%
7/11-12/07	19	24	40	13	4

“Whatever you think is the best course for the U.S. in Iraq, are you willing to give President Bush nine more months before any cutbacks in U.S. troop levels are made, or not?”

	Yes	No	Unsure
	%	%	%
7/11-12/07	41	54	5

“If U.S. troop levels in Iraq are cut back from the current 160,000 to about 60,000, for how long would you support keeping such a U.S. military presence in Iraq: one year or less, up to two years, up to five years, or 10 years or more?”

	One Year Or Less	Up to Two Years	Up to Five Years	10 Years Or More	Unsure
	%	%	%	%	%
7/11-12/07	53	19	8	10	10

“Do you think U.S. forces should stay in Iraq until Iraqi troops are ready to defend themselves, or that Iraqi readiness should NOT be a condition for the timing of a U.S. troop withdrawal?”

	Stay Until Ready	Shouldn't Be a Condition	Unsure
	%	%	%
7/11-12/07	37	55	8

**After Freedom Hating Minnesota
“Loon” Bans Vets For Peace From
July 4 Parade, The Town’s Citizens
Condemn The Action 206 To 98:**

“Shame On You”



“How could you deny a float permit to the Veterans for Peace?” one reader said in an opinion piece in the Mesabi Daily News. “These are war veterans who fought for this country to uphold the freedoms we cherish. One of these freedoms is free speech. ... Shame on you.”

July 03, 2007 By Richard Meryhew, Star Tribune

When Peter Edmunds and some friends decided to build a float to protest the war in Iraq, they did so thinking it would be a better way of promoting their perspective than by standing on street corners in small Minnesota cities with a few homemade signs.

But the float Edmunds and his Veterans for Peace colleagues are taking to parades this summer across the Iron Range is doing more than delivering an antiwar message.

It's creating a stir. Big time.

Two weeks ago parade directors in Virginia banned the float from the Land of the Loon Festival, saying its “NO MORE WAR” message and accompanying tally of U.S. fatalities was too political.

Similar concerns were raised in Biwabik, Gilbert and Aurora.

Although no other town has rejected the float, communities across northern Minnesota and Wisconsin are abuzz.

“It's creating a discussion that we're very pleased is going on,” said the 68-year-old Edmunds, a Navy veteran and retired owner of a construction business who lives in Solon Springs, Wis., and is a member of the Duluth chapter of Veterans for Peace. “It's just healthy. There's too much of this not talking about the war.”

The flatbed-trailer float, which has appeared in more than a dozen parades over the past two years, carries a two-sided billboard that reads “For Children, For Veterans, For Mothers, For the Planet, NO MORE WAR.” The truck pulling the trailer carries a sign with up-to-date U.S. casualty figures in large, black numerals and the words, “How many more must die before we say enough?”

Deanna Mickelson, a parade director in Biwabik, said some veterans and mothers who have lost sons in Iraq have told her that they “are just mortified by the float,” as well as by some of the signs held by Veterans for Peace members. Among the more offensive signs, she said, is one that reads “Our troops -- misused abused.”

But those who created the float say it is important to call attention to the cost of war.

“When you think about war, how can you not think about the people who died?” said Karen Olsen, a Veterans for Peace member in Mountain Iron. “It goes kind of hand in hand.”

In Aurora, Mayor Bill Ojala, a World War II veteran and a Veterans for Peace member, said as long as public money is involved in today's parade, “in no way are we going to trample on anybody's right to freedom of expression.

“The Fourth is always a robust celebration of democracy and we're going to keep it that way,” added Ojala, 82, a longtime critic of the war who plans to march with the float.

Until recently, Edmunds said that reaction has been subdued.

“Universally, it stops conversation,” he said. “It's eerie. You'll hear all this chatter, and then the float will come by and people stop talking. Whether they are for or against it you don't know.

“We had a few thumbs down or a finger up along the way, but most of the people, if they had a reaction, the reaction was positive.”

That changed last month when organizers of parades in Virginia and Hayward, Wis., told Veterans for Peace the float was not welcome.

Timing was the issue in Hayward -- parade organizers were honoring an injured veteran returning from Iraq.

In Virginia last month, the issue was more political.

“Our bylaws clearly state we do not have any political solicitation in our parade,” said Barb Fivecoate, a Land of the Loon spokeswoman.

“Our festival is a family festival and we want to keep it upbeat and a happy day and a happy weekend for everybody.”

Olsen said that explanation came only after Veterans for Peace was told the float scared children at another parade the week before. She said she was later told that the float also offended local VFW members.

Finally, “We were just told 'No, you are not welcome. Just leave,' “Olsen said.

At one point, Edmunds said, a parade director threatened to call police.

Olsen said the group contacted the American Civil Liberties Union, which said that directors could keep the group from participating since the parade was privately run.

Within days, however, parade organizers were being second-guessed.

“How could you deny a float permit to the Veterans for Peace?” one reader said in an opinion piece in the Mesabi Daily News.

“These are war veterans who fought for this country to uphold the freedoms we cherish. One of these freedoms is free speech. ... Shame on you.”

More recently, a Daily News online survey asked readers if they thought the committee “made the right decision” in banning the float.

As of late Tuesday afternoon, public opinion was 206-98 against that decision in the unscientific poll.

Edmunds, meanwhile, said he has been pleasantly surprised by all the fuss. He said he and his colleagues recently received an invitation to participate in a parade in Bovey, Minn. And on Monday, a radio DJ in Texas called him for an on-air interview after hearing the story on national news.

“This is a public relations perfect storm,” Edmunds said. “It’s crazy in a way. But I think we’ve hit the right time and we’ve created a discussion.

“Democracy is a discussion and discussions are messy. But that’s how we make decisions.”

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

14 Jul 2007 Reuters & By STEPHEN FARRELL, New York Times & Jul 15, 2007 Deutsche Presse-Agentur & Reuters

A policeman was killed in a drive by shooting in front of his home in the southern city of Kut, police said.

Former Deputy Iraqi Prime Minister Ahmed Chalabi survived an assassination attempt in Madaen, 45 km south of Baghdad, a Chalabi aide said.

A senior Iraqi civil servant was killed in a drive by shooting in the northern Baghdad district of Shaab, Iraqi police said.

The Iraqi Army also confirmed that a roadside bomb had killed a senior officer, Col. Abdul-Kareem Hameed, and three of his guards near Muqdadiya.

Roadside bomb detonated near the vehicle convoy of politician Adnan al-Dulaimi in Baghdad but no one hurt, his office said.

An Iraqi policeman was killed and another wounded when their patrol in Tal Afar was ambushed, police said.

A truck driver was killed by a roadside bomb targeting his petrol tanker near the oil refinery of Baiji, north of Baghdad, police said.

One Iraqi policeman killed and another wounded by a roadside bomb in the northern city of Mosul, police said.

Guerrillas killed four policemen in the southern city of Nassiriya, police said.

Twenty-four Iranians being held in an Iraqi prison near the border with Iran succeeded in escaping Saturday night, the independent news agency Voices of Iraq (VOI) reported Sunday.

VOI cited a security source in Wasit province, 180 kilometres south-east of Baghdad, as reporting the prison escape, and said that police had managed to recapture four of them.

The source, who declined to be identified, told VOI the 24 Iranians had broken through the prison's main gate to make their escape.

The report said a search for the escaped prisoners was underway and a state of siege declared in the area of Badra, 80 kilometres east of the Wasit capital of Kut.

Badra lies on the border with Iran. The Iranian escapees were all being held for allegedly having entered the country illegally.



A fuel tanker that was part of a British convoy burns after it came under attack in the southern Iraqi city of Basra. (AFP/Essam Al-Sudani)

OCCUPATION REPORT

60% Of Iraqis Want U.S. Troops Dead: Big Surprise



Iraqi children pickup belongings after a home invasion by foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. in Baghdad's Sadr City May 23, 2007. REUTERS/Kareem Raheem

61% of Iraqis say they approve of attacks on U.S.-led forces in their country, up from 47 percent in January. A solid majority of Shiite and Sunni Arabs approved of the attacks, according to the poll. 9/27/2006 By BARRY SCHWEID, AP & Program on International Policy Attitudes

[Iraqis feel about U.S. troops trampling them in the dirt the same way Americans felt about British troops trampling them in the dirt in 1776. They are right to resist. T]

OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION

BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

**U.S.: IRANIAN ARMS END UP IN SHIA
MILITIA HANDS, KILLING AMERICANS;
TURKEY: US ARMS END UP IN KURD
HANDS, KILLING TURKS**

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in with the headline.]

July 11, 2007 By DESMOND BUTLER Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Turkey's ambassador to Washington said Wednesday that U.S. weapons have been turning up in the hands of Kurdish guerrillas staging attacks in Turkey.

Nabi Sensoy said that the United States is not doing enough to influence Kurdish politicians in key positions in the Iraqi government to crack down on the Kurdistan Workers Party or PKK, which has been fighting for an independent Kurdistan within Turkey for decades.

He said that Turkey has been pressing the United States to ensure that U.S. weapons supplied to Kurdish forces within the Iraqi army are not funneled to the PKK.

He did not suggest that the U.S. has been supplying the PKK directly. But he accused Kurdish members of the Iraqi government of allowing the group to operate in northern Iraq and to stage cross-border attacks into Turkey.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

**“These Acts Were Carried Out By
Jews In The Name Of Jews
Everywhere. I Saw These Acts As A
Betrayal Of The Judaism I Had
Learned About”**



Peaceful protesters hold weekly vigils in front of Ann Arbor's Beth Israel Congregation. (Henry Herskovitz)

11 July 2007 Paul Abowd, The Electronic Intifada [Excerpts]

Henry Herskovitz grew up in Pittsburgh as Israel planted its flag of independence in Palestine. Raised to revere Zionism as he did the Israelites of old, Henry heard little of the catastrophe buried beneath the budding Jewish state.

Though he “drank the kool-aid for years,” Henry has been making up for lost time.

It was the mid-'80s, on the steps of Temple Beth Israel in Ann Arbor, when a fellow congregant told him that Israel had the fourth mightiest air force in the world. He went home, looked into it, and began a journey that would bring him back to the synagogue under different circumstances.

In 2002, Henry came face to face with life under occupation in Palestine.

A vast colonial infrastructure had encroached upon Palestinians for decades, through conquest and treaty alike.

Though desperation and poverty were pervasive, Henry was struck by the love he received: “It was at the Balata refugee camp, in the midst of about four of five Palestinian men.

“I revealed my Judaism to them and was welcomed instantly as a friend in Palestine. This was a story that the Jewish community back at home needed to hear.”

So he went back to the synagogue but all three Ann Arbor temples refused him a forum. As the door of Beth Israel shut behind him, Henry found himself once again on those steps where he came to re-evaluate the Israeli military.

Neither Henry's family nor his synagogue had raised Israel's sordid past with him.

“That's a personal drive for me. If you tell me 'A' and it turns out 'B,' I'm pretty mad. And if I find out later that you knew it was 'B,' now I'm in the opposite camp, and I'm really upset,” he says.

Soon after his unsuccessful visit with the Ann Arbor rabbis, he went back to Beth Israel again, but this time he stayed outside.

Nearly each Saturday morning for the past three years, Henry has pulled on his starched shirt and knotted his tie. As congregants assemble to pray, he has stood in silent vigil outside Beth Israel. The Jewish Witnesses for Peace and Friends (JWPF) formed when others joined him in a common cause: to rescue Judaism from Zionism.

Not surprisingly, theirs is a message many prefer to avoid.

Jeffery Bernstein, a board member at Beth Israel, insists that the synagogue will not interact with the group: “The objectionable nature of their method interferes with any attempt to rationally discuss their message.” Meanwhile, the Jewish Witnesses have generated press and compelled Rabbi Dobrusin of Beth Israel to engage them.

Henry explains, “The Rabbi published a letter in January in the Ann Arbor News, after he had sworn to ignore us.”

Even negative reactions present an opportunity for the JWFP to raise the issue in Ann Arbor. Henry adds, “Many people publish letters critical of the vigils. They don't address the issues, but it allows us to rebut and bring up the issues, and 60,000 people read it.” Though initially focused on engaging the synagogue, the Witnesses now connect their movement to the entire community.

Bernstein views the actions of the Jewish Witnesses as “morally wrong.” This served as his stock response to the author's various attempts to discuss more substantial issues surrounding the conflict.

He argues that, as a place of prayer and worship, the synagogue is the wrong place for dissent: “Injecting political protest into this setting and harassing the people who come here is wrong.”

Meanwhile, Beth Israel mobilizes support for Israeli policy.

Though religious communities form around cultural solidarities, these affiliations are not precluded from embodying the political, especially when the collection basket goes around.

Because the Israeli flag flies outside, and tithes are offered to the IDF [The Zionist Occupation Army] inside, Henry insists that the synagogue is fair game for protest.

“When you have taken a faith, Judaism, and instead of praying to God, now you're praying to Israel, something is wrong,” he says. Even so, most people at Beth Israel remain outraged. Common etiquette just doesn't allow this sort of behavior in front of religious sites.

But the dozen or so people holding weekly vigil challenge the purveyors of conventional wisdom, whether Emily Post or Theodore Herzl.

Agitation is the necessary catalyst for changing destructive paradigms, particularly those most firmly entrenched in popular discourse. At a recent forum at the public library, Sol Metz, a member of the JWPF spoke about the importance of protest, even outside religious institutions: “When I was very young there was a priest in Royal Oak, a well-known anti-Semite. I think it's shameful that there was not a vigil outside his church.”

Though the group has non-Jewish members, a large proportion of the Witnesses seek to un-align their religion with an exclusionary colonial state.

Mr. Metz's voice shook while describing his 2002 visit to Palestine, where he witnessed a home demolition at the hands of the IDF: “These acts were carried out by Jews in the name of Jews everywhere. I saw these acts as a betrayal of the Judaism I had learned about.

“I came to believe that criticism of Israel was my duty as a Jew.”

An increasingly vocal contingent of anti-Zionist American Jews rejects the assumption that Israel is part-and-parcel of their religious identity.

But this is nothing new. From its inception, Zionist theory faced intense opposition from within the Diaspora, though today many Jewish-American organizations lobby incessantly to collapse these two distinct belief systems into one.

The Jewish Witnesses actively distinguish Judaism from a state project with blood on its hands, lest Israeli crimes degrade the integrity of their spiritual traditions.

The vigil might not be pretty, but neither are the policies against which it stands.

Non-Jews, and Jews of Arab descent, live in Israel as second-class citizens, or under military occupation in Palestinian “Bantustans.”

Denial remains a valuable rhetorical tool for Zionist apologists, and not merely in the realm of punditry inhabited by David Horowitz and Daniel Pipes.

Along the Democratic Party's ideological spectrum, public officials ignore or distort the realities of Zionist occupation and apartheid. Instead of reprimanding Israel for four decades of occupation, the US Senate and House recently passed a bi-partisan resolution, “commend(ing) Israel for its administration of the undivided city of Jerusalem

for the past forty years, during which Israel has respected the rights of all religious groups.”

This dominant narrative makes false claims to the rights of non-Jews in Israel/Palestine and emboldens Israel in its removal and marginalization of indigenous communities.

And so the Witnesses hold vigil as Americans too, protesting not only mindless Congressional pandering but also America's multi-billion dollar connection to the occupation.

Though the vigils are unpopular at Beth Israel, Henry maintains that the synagogue has a role to play: “If they want us to stop, they can influence my choice to leave. But you don't end a strike and then negotiate.”

For one, the synagogue could state their public support for Palestinian human rights. This is highly unlikely, as most congregants won't even speak to the Witnesses.

Though he is open to suggestions as to the correct tactics, Herskovitz is a steadfast believer in grassroots mobilization: “The world had to apply pressure to White South Africa, had to criticize the Dutch Reform Church to end apartheid. And so we have to do it too.”



“Palestinian Citizens Of Israel Live Under An Arbitrary And Brutal Police State”

“They Experience Nothing Of The Mythical Israeli Democracy”



ISRAELI POLICE STATE: So-called Israeli democracy keeps tight control over Palestinians in the occupied territories. Here a border policeman argues with Palestinians at the main checkpoint between outside Bethlehem denying them entrance to the holy city of Jerusalem to celebrate the Islamic holiday of Leilat al-Qadr, 18 October 2006. (Magnus Johansson/MaanImages)

[Thanks to Max Watts, who sent this in.]

They can and do disappear in the middle of the night. They are blindfolded, cuffed, beaten, humiliated, taken to unknown locations with no information given to them or their families, tortured physically and psychologically and incarcerated indefinitely, often without charges and regardless of whether they are guilty of anything.

9 July 2007 Avigail Abarbanel, The Electronic Intifada

On Friday, 8 June 2007, my husband Ian flew to Israel. He is in fact on his way to an IT conference in Vienna, but we thought that it would be nice for him to make a short three-

day detour to Tel-Aviv to visit my brother and his family and in particular meet my seven and five year old nieces for the first time.

At Ben-Gurion airport Ian's Australian passport was confiscated with no explanation.

He was taken to a small interrogation room and had to endure an intimidating questioning about non-existent Saudi and Lebanese visas in his passport.

He was interrogated by a tough-looking uniformed female police officer while a non-uniformed agent watched. The officer asked him why he had Saudi and Lebanese visas.

When he responded that this could not be his passport because he does not have such visas, she proceeded to ask him for the names of his father and grandfather.

Despite the fact that Ian answered the question the first time, she repeated it three more times. By that stage Ian realized that they were trying to intimidate him and although he did feel some fear, he pointed out that she asked the same question several times and that he had already answered it.

After about 25 minutes of this, Ian was finally released with no explanation and a feeble apology about delaying him.

As a former Israeli citizen with military training I am familiar with the psychological tactics used by the Israeli Border Patrol (MAGAV) and by the military.

They deliberately try to intimidate their victim and keep him (or her) in a state of uncertainty -- about what is going on, what it's all about, where his papers are. They know that foreign nationals would feel profoundly insecure without their passports and that uncertainty would lead to fear and stress in most people.

They also know that most people's confidence would falter under such conditions and if there is anything to divulge, it is more likely come out then.

Israeli officers are trained to watch body language, micro-expressions, perspiration, anything. The questions themselves are often just a pretext to induce stress so that they can watch their victim carefully to see if he has any secrets.

They had Ian's passport. They knew well that there were no such visas in it. (And you have to wonder: what if there were? What would have happened to him then? Australian citizens are free to visit any country they wish. But it appears that in Israel having the "wrong" visas in your passport turns you into a suspect. Of course we will never know whether the story about the visas was the real reason for his short detention.)

Israel and its apologists repeatedly portray Israel as "the only democracy in the Middle East," a uniquely democratic regime in a non-democratic region. Somehow this is supposed to make us feel more sympathetic and justify our support of it.

But Israeli democracy is a myth.

In my 27 years there I belonged to the Israeli mainstream. I was Jewish, Israeli-born and secular. I was an ordinary citizen who completed her military service, the quintessential Israeli, not involved in politics or activism of any kind. I minded my own business, worried about money, work, study, my own little life. I wasn't a "trouble-maker" by any stretch of the imagination. Anyone who met me back then, would have assumed that I agreed with the prevailing Israeli ideology. And frankly, they would have been right.

Although Israeli daily life could be frustrating, particularly dealing with the bureaucracy, we felt safe in the knowledge that annoying as they might be, our authorities would never turn against us. In fact, the thought wouldn't even occur to us.

Because I was a member of this comfortable center of Israeli society, I was also ignorant of what Israel was capable of, and of what it could mean to not belong.

My first ever taste of this as yet unfamiliar "status" came around 17 years ago, when my ex-husband (also an Israeli) and I were planning to migrate to Australia, and were in the last stages of receiving our permanent residency.

My ex, an engineer and a Captain in the army about to finish his contract, was told suddenly one afternoon, without explanation that he was to report to a certain location to have a little "chat" with someone from the Military Police.

Our plans to leave Israel were no secret. Leaving Israel is not a crime, and Australia was not on the list of countries that Israeli officers involved in secret military projects were prohibited from visiting or living in after the end of their service (yes, such a list exists).

In any case, there was no reason for my ex-husband to suspect that this "chat" had anything to do with our plans.

He was taken to a small room and instructed to sit on a chair in the middle of the room.

He was circled by a female Military Police sergeant who began by saying, "We found out that you are planning to migrate to Australia," to which he replied "So? It's not a secret."

She responded aggressively that he was to shut up, and that she was asking the questions.

She then proceeded to ask "Why are you leaving?" and, "Does your wife know that you are planning to leave?"

Apparently the military found out about our plans from the police, while we were in the process of obtaining clearance for Australian Immigration. They would have known that both of us were involved.

The questions were clearly not intended to be engaged with at face value.

Initially, my ex started to respond to the point, but when he realized the absurdity of the situation he became annoyed.

He then told the sergeant that he did not see the point of the conversation and unless she was accusing him of something, he was leaving.

When she responded aggressively again, he stood up, reminded her that he was a Captain and she a Sergeant, and left the room.

In the absence of any information about this incident, we concluded that this was an attempt to intimidate us out of leaving Israel. Of course it relied entirely on psychology because the military had neither reason nor a legal way of stopping us.

Up until the army found out that we were leaving, my husband as a career officer and myself as the "wife of," were treated with great respect in Israeli society and in the military. We didn't just belong, we had an honored place.

The choice of a female sergeant was meant to humiliate him (I mean no offense to females but this is the culture in the Israeli military).

Whoever dreamed up this intimidation attempt wanted to show my ex that his rank and status meant little if he was choosing the "wrong" path.

We were angry but mostly shocked that he could be treated like this just because we wanted to leave Israel.

It's one thing to encounter the disapproval of friends and relatives in ordinary conversations. It's quite another to be the subject of a menacing questioning by the MP.

Our decision to leave apparently placed us in a new position in society, outside that comfortable mainstream. When we finally left at the end of '91 we did so with a bitter taste in our mouths having seen a glimpse of an Israel we didn't know.

Ask any Palestinian and they will tell you much worse stories -- frankly, there is no comparison.

Palestinians cannot help but be seen as outsiders, whether they are citizens of Israel or whether they are refugees in the Occupied Territories, whether they are children or adults, male or female.

All Palestinians live under constant military and police surveillance.

They experience nothing of the mythical Israeli democracy.

"Israeli democracy" is something reserved only for the privileged and mostly ignorant elite, of which I was also a member, until I decided to leave.

Palestinian citizens of Israel live under an arbitrary and brutal police state.

Their dealings with Israeli bureaucracy are not just frustrating but can be outright dangerous.

The Palestinians in the Occupied Territories live under a Pinochet-like regime.

They can and do disappear in the middle of the night.

They are blindfolded, cuffed, beaten, humiliated, taken to unknown locations with no information given to them or their families, tortured physically and psychologically and incarcerated indefinitely, often without charges and regardless of whether they are guilty of anything.

It is arbitrary and it can happen to anyone.

This is a far worse version of the two incidents I described above but the basic principles are the same.

In a regime like that you don't have to actually do anything wrong to receive this treatment.

This is because it is not only designed to catch people who break the law, it is designed to be a kind of a warning, a hinted threat.

It's there to flaunt state power, show people how small and weak they are compared with the mighty state, and offer a taste of what would happen to them if they even think to go against it.

In the case of the Palestinians such tactics are also designed to make daily life unbearable in order to break their spirit and intimidate them into leaving.

After all, what Israel really wants is all the land but without the people, something that so many in the West still refuse to recognize.

Israel is not a nice country.

It is a powerful police state founded on pathological paranoia with only a veneer of civility, carefully crafted and maintained for the consumption of those who still believe in the myth of Israeli democracy.

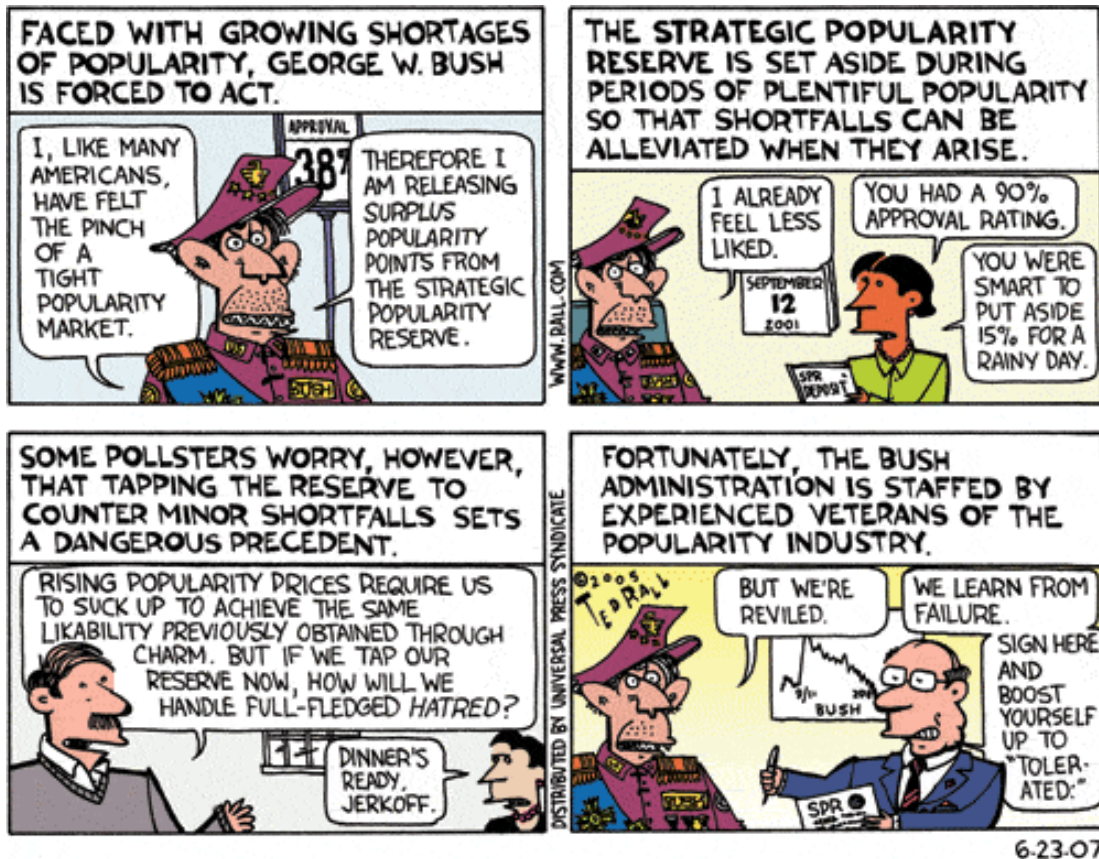
Mainstream Israelis live in a fictional bubble that separates them from reality. If there is a democracy there, only this select group enjoys it -- just like the conformist white population in old South Africa.

Supporting Israel now is the same as claiming that South Africa under apartheid was an acceptable democracy.

It also means abandoning the Palestinians, just like the world abandoned black South Africans (and white dissidents) for 45 long years.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS

“Patients May Simply Deserve Only The Amount Of Care They Can Afford”

July 12, 2007 By Barbara Ehrenreich, Huffingtonpost.com

It's always nice to see the President take a principled stand on something. The man formerly known as "43," and now perhaps better named "29" for his record-breaking approval rating, is promising to battle any expansion of government health insurance for children -- and not because he hates children or refuses to cough up the funds.

No, this is a battle over principle: private health care vs. government-provided health care. Speaking in Cleveland this week, Bush boldly asserted:

"I strongly object to the government providing incentives for people to leave private medicine, private health care to the public sector. And I think it's wrong and I think it's a mistake. And therefore, I will resist Congress's attempt ... to federalize medicine...In my judgment that would be -- it would lead to not better medicine, but worse medicine. It would lead to not more innovation, but less innovation." **[Presidents and Members Of Congress get all the health care they want, at taxpayer expense. How about cutting off every fucking penny of that, right now? T]**

Now you don't have to have seen SiCKO to know that if there is one area of human endeavor where private enterprise doesn't work, it's health care. Consider the private, profit-making, insurance industry that Bush is so determined to defend.

What "innovations" has it produced? The deductible, the co-pay, and the pre-existing condition are the only ones that leap to mind. In general, the great accomplishment of the private health insurance industry has been to overturn the very meaning of "insurance," which is risk-sharing:

We all put in some money, though only some of us will need to draw on the common pool by using expensive health care.

And the insurance companies have overturned it by refusing to insure the people who need care the most -- those who are already, or are likely to become, sick.

I once tried to explain to a Norwegian woman why it was so hard for me to find health insurance. I'd had breast cancer, I told her, and she looked at me blankly. "But then you really need insurance, right?" Of course, and that's why I couldn't have it.

This is not because health insurance executives are meaner than other people, although I do not rule that out. It's just that they're running a business, the purpose of which is not to make people healthy, but to make money, and they do very well at that.

Once, many years ago, I complained to the left-wing economist Paul Sweezy that America had no real health system. "We have a system all right," he responded, "it's just a system for doing something else." A system, as he might have put it today, for extracting money from the vulnerable and putting it into the pockets of the rich.

But let's not just pick on the insurance companies, though I wouldn't mind doing that -- with a specially designed sharp instrument, over a period of years.

Sunday's Los Angeles Times featured a particularly lurid case of medical profiteering in the form of one Dr. Prem Reddy, who owns eight hospitals in Southern California.

I do not begrudge any physician a comfortable lifestyle -- good doctoring is hard work -- but Dr. Reddy dwells in a 15,000 square foot mansion featuring gold-plated toilets and keeps a second home, valued at more than \$9 million, in Beverly Hills, as well as a \$1.4 million helicopter for commuting.

The secret behind his \$300 million fortune?

For one thing, he rejects the standard hospital practice of making contracts with insurance companies because he feels that these contracts unduly limit his reimbursements. In addition, he's suspended much-needed services such as chemotherapy, a birthing center and mental health care as insufficiently profitable. And his hospitals are infamous for refusing to treat uninsured patients, like a patient with kidney failure and a 16-month-old baby with a burn.

But Dr. Reddy -- who is, incidentally a high-powered Republican donor -- has a principled reason for his piratical practices.

“Patients,” the Los Angeles Times reports him saying, “may simply deserve only the amount of care they can afford.” He dismisses as “an entitlement mentality” the idea that everyone should be getting the same high quality health care.

This is Bush's vaunted principle of “private medicine” at its nastiest: You don't get what you need, only what you can pay for.

If government insurance for children (S-CHIP) isn't expanded to all the families that need it, there is no question but that some children will die -- painfully perhaps and certainly unnecessarily.

But at least they will have died for a principle.

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