

Propaganda war hides a social battle among rulers

Guest commentary

Every day, the media and the spokespeople for the Bush administration bombard us with warnings and threats, new claims about the supposed lies and deceptions of the Iraqi regime or of potential attacks by al-Qaida, or by other nameless and shadowy terrorist bands. It is a propaganda war that resembles nothing so much as a mass media version of the tale of the boy who cried wolf. And the target of this war is not so much Iraq or the shadowy bands of terrorists — as it is ourselves.

This propaganda war itself hides another war, one that has been go-

ing on for a long, long time. I am talking about the social war of the rulers of this social order against all of us, a war that does not kill quickly, but slowly and gradually, draining the life from us to feed their wealth and power.

It is ironic that the reason the United States gave for attacking Iraq is their alleged programs for producing weapons of mass destruction — chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. The irony lies not only in the facts that U.S. policies in the 1980s were what permitted Iraq to begin such programs, nor merely in the fact that the United States itself has its share of such weapons.

The real irony is that while the U.S. government and the media

feed us their tales of terror, we are daily under attack from the chemical, biological and nuclear wastes of military, industrial and "post-industrial" enterprises that are slowly poisoning us and our environment. The needs of the rulers of this order to constantly expand their wealth and power are the source of these attacks, and it is nothing less than an ongoing social war.

With the war on terror, the rulers of this world expanded their war against us, the exploited of this world. They created new laws and institutions that serve no other purpose than to stifle dissent. They have carried out a psychological war of terror to frighten us into accepting this extension of

police powers against us, this criminalization of all revolt.

They have done their best to make us feel helpless in the face of a terrifying world, and willing to accept their "protection" that is really suppression.

The attack against Iraq is simply an intensification of this ongoing war. It is necessary to oppose this intensification. A people who have been suffering horribly for over a decade because of sanctions will have further suffering poured upon them, not just from bombs and guns, but also from the environmental devastation caused by military action.

But it is not enough to oppose

this particular war in favor of a "peaceful resolution," because a "peaceful resolution" offered by those who rule us will simply be a continuation of existence as usual, of the social order that impoverishes our lives and poisons us. Thus, we need to reject both their war and their peace, and instead create an insurrection aimed at the destruction of the state, capital and the poisonous technological apparatus through which they impose their rule.

Anything less will mean an ongoing cycle of war, repression and police action.

Steven Gider is a Eugene resident who works with the Break The Chains Collective.

Protesters must face reality in war times

Guest commentary

I wish it could be better understood that people do not "want" to go to war. In a perfect world there would be no such concept as war. Surprise! We do not live in a perfect world, and thinking that we can achieve that perfection is about as real as an Oscar nomination for Steve Gutenberg.

I cannot begin to explain how angered I was to return to my home in San Francisco for spring break to witness the destruction and chaos caused by protesters in response to our nation's decision to eradicate a frightening leader and regime of an extremely volatile country.

First off, the only aspect that is more idiotic than disgruntled protesting in the first place is protesting something that is already in effect, especially a declared war. Though I may have not agreed with the numerous protests that preceded the war, at least the individuals involved with those demonstrations were trying to prevent something from happening. Though there are more productive, effective and ef-

ficient ways that should have been explored more vigorously, at least the pre-war protesters had somewhat of a glimpse of reality in their actions. However, when I saw the number of extremists protesting days and days after the coalition forces entered Iraq, I was disgusted and disappointed to see how many unrealistic and ignorant people there are in this country.

Because of the crazed protests in San Francisco, police were working an unbudgeted \$1 million in overtime daily, retailers were losing thousands of dollars due to hesitant shoppers, and traffic congestion was causing millions of hard working Americans to lose precious time with families and personal interests as well as wasting high-priced petroleum. And all of this in San Francisco alone! Protesters, what the hell are you trying to accomplish?

Call me conservative, but I do not believe that the "Yoga for Peace" demonstration — clouded with tie-dyed shirts, dreadlocks and pot smoke — that closed off downtown San Francisco's economically important Market Street is going to convince our country's

administration to withdraw our troops from Iraq. All that these overzealous protesters are achieving is instability and economic disaster for a country already in an unfortunate recession.

I praise protesters for the motivation that they exhibit. I believe it is important to be passionate in life and that people should work and fight diligently for what they believe in; however, there is idealism, and there is realism. If you want to evoke change or make a difference, try doing something productive, not destructive. Raise money to aid in relief and support for the Iraqi people, start a letter campaign, create a petition, or throw on a suit and tie and set up a meeting with your local politician! Try working with the system — you might be surprised.

We are at war whether we like it or not, so we may as well deal with it in an appropriate, productive and dignified fashion. No one wants to go to war, but sometimes there is no other choice — and this is one of those times. Love your country, and be proud and thankful that you live here.

Patrick J. Gilligan is a junior English major.

Peace movement gives value to human life

Guest commentary

Regarding Salena De La Cruz's column on March 31 ("Majority support," ODE), it is difficult to imagine that the issue of supporting the troops is as simple as she explains. Like many people, De La Cruz seems to think that the peace movement is opposed to the troops as individuals. Do people really believe that we have no compassion for our military personnel as mothers, fathers and fellow human beings?

The peace movement is focused on a value for human life, and it is the destruction of war that we oppose. Our president has led the troops into battle where the "sacrifice" of lives is inevitable and unnecessary. We support our troops by calling for their prompt return.

A government that supports and cares for the lives of its troops would have sought every peaceful solution possible before it declared war. This did not happen. As a nation, we were rushed into violent action, and now we have been labeled violent and aggressive bullies by much of the global com-

munity. Despite our own history of mass destruction, we have pointed the finger of immorality at a leader of an already war-torn and suffering people.

I am saddened by the loss of lives and the growing anti-American sentiment. This war has supplied us with more enemies than we Americans care to admit, and my concern is for violent responses to our "American aggression."

It's funny how they say the troops are fighting for my freedom and security, but as the war goes on, I feel less secure with how the world views us as a nation.

As the fighting continues, I hope the Emerald enlarges its scope of stories concerning the war. It would be even more informative to see stories about the state of a world that grows to distrust and disrespect our nation each day that the war continues.

If you document flag-waving patriotism, please also document the peace movement's patriotism. We too, love our country, and its peace is worth protesting for.

Maureen Paige is a senior humanities major.



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