

# PEACE ACTIVISTS MUST BROADEN THEIR HORIZONS

BY DAVID A. HOROWITZ

There are numerous grounds for opposing U.S. military action in Iraq. Yet it is doubtful whether Portland's resurgent peace movement can be effective in marshaling public opinion against the prospects of a second Persian Gulf War.

Dramatic events like the city's recent peace marches may convey the personal philosophies of participants. But they do little to engage Portlanders on the life and death issues facing the nation after September 11, 2001.

Portland's antiwar demonstrators are operating in a bubble of their own making. The November 17 protest seemed unaffected by the fact that only days earlier the United Nations effectively discarded George Bush's talk of unilaterally imposing a regime change on Iraq with a military invasion. Instead, the Security Council authorized a round of substantive inspections to effect disarmament and required the United States to return for deliberations before initiating further action.

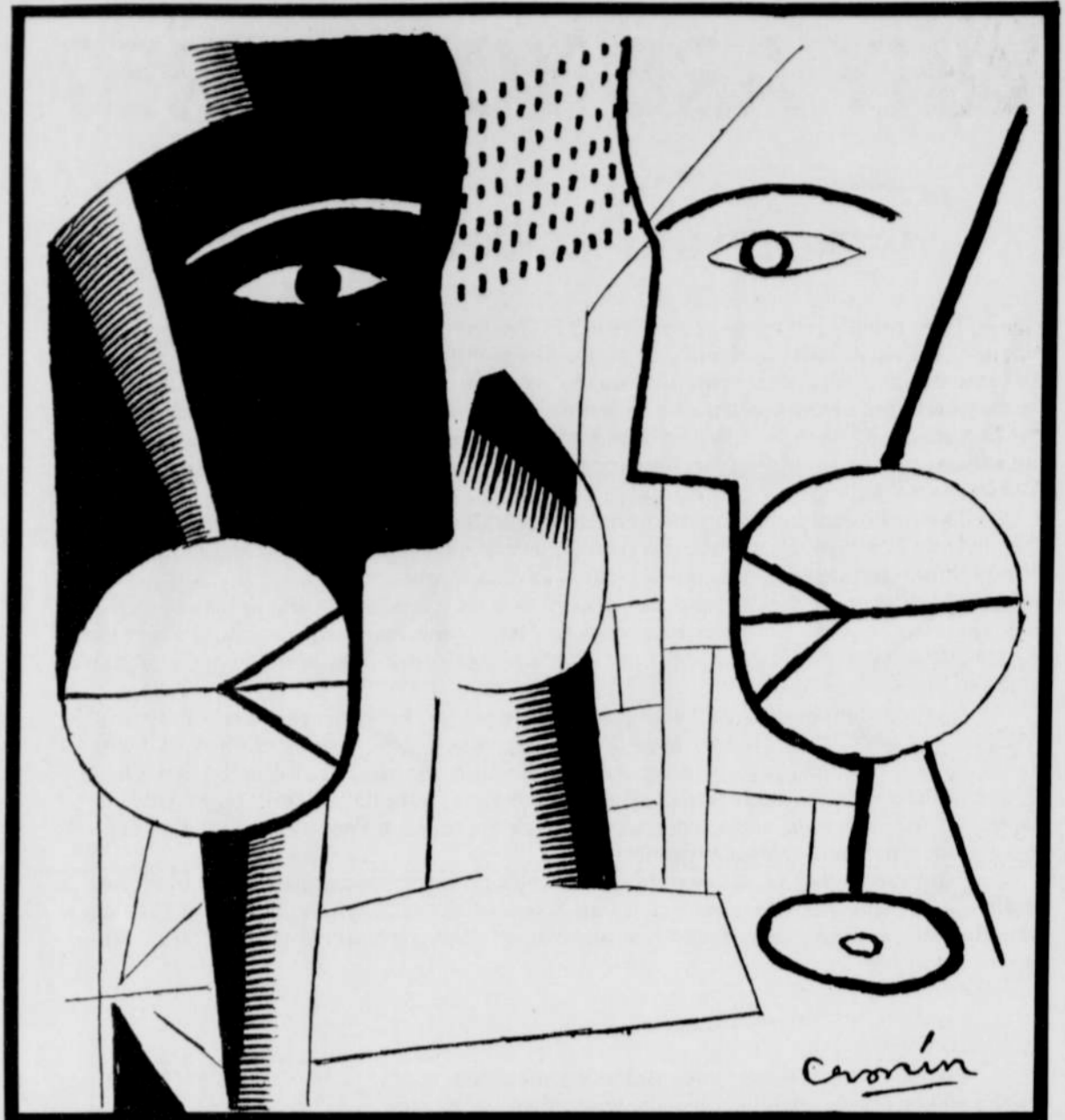
Since Persian Gulf nations such as Kuwait and Bahrain will only authorize use of their territory if there is explicit United Nations approval for a military campaign, this is no minor matter.

Antiwar activists might have taken to the streets in support of a strong United Nations role in monitoring Iraq's weapons stockpiles. They could have claimed that the international community had vindicated the peace camp's preference for inspections and diplomacy. Yet Portland marchers appeared more interested in expressing their opposition to all war, no matter what the context, as long as it involved the United States.

Although pacifist sentiments may reflect the views of some in the Northwest's religious and spiritual communities, they have little relevance for political dialogue. If pacifism merely suggests personal preference, advocates wind up talking to themselves. If it is to be applied to international relations, supporters often assume a cloak of moral superiority that puts off the public they are trying to reach. In the years after Vietnam, activists learned that attempts to change people they did not respect could have disastrous consequences for their causes.

Most Portlanders will reject a dogma that insists that there are no situations in which the United States should resort to arms or that Washington can never do right. The governments of nation-states rest on their ability to protect their populations from outside threat. In democracies, judgments about going to war are inherently populist because they focus on whether the security interests and values of the nation's people are to be served or not. In a dangerous and complex world, the moral preferences of a minority of activists are beside the point.

As Americans, Portlanders want to know whether this particular war is going to make life in this country more or less safe and what the full costs and consequences of military



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involvement might be. Rather than address the specific concerns and needs of citizens in a mutually respectful dialogue, Portland's antiwar activists seem content with a recycled version of "feel good" anti-militarism.

Demonstrators have a democratic right to express their existential views. But others have an equal right to ignore the content of such protest if they deem it irrelevant to their lives.

Organizers claim that it is no longer possible to discount the existence of thousands of antiwar marchers on Portland streets. But there is little point to such theatrics if the message fails to engage the general public and lead to a critical and point assessment of the stark choices before all of us.

David Horowitz is a professor of U.S. cultural and 20th century history at Portland State University. He is the author of *Beyond Left & Right: Insurgency & The Establishment*. He lives in Portland and Arch Cape with his wife Gloria Myers, who is also a writer and historian.

## PROTECT & DEFEND

It is perfectly apparent to most people that pro-war advocates smugly invoke military force as a panacea wrapped in Red, White & Blue.

Military services all swear to protect and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

We have many foreign enemies to shake a big stick at, and the military will attack anyone George W. Bush designates in the new forever war.

The domestic enemies are the pirates who have raided the presidential office, the national armory and the treasury.

When will the military defend the Constitution against the terrorists in the executive branch?

~LESLIE MILLER

Leslie Miller lives in Warrenton



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## A GREAT FEMALE SIN

For all our sakes in the pro-choice/anti-choice war the focus finally must be shifted to where it ultimately belongs. There could be no problem and no war if it were not for the loose and irresponsible use of sperm.

This is not a joke. The placement of sperm must be recognized as the potentially life-threatening act that it is. Sperm-owners must take responsibility and be held strictly accountable for placing sperm where it become activated if there will be a threat to its continuing existence.

Again this is not a joke. Think it through. Sperm placement initiates the whole process. Prime responsibility for unsafe environment lies fair and square with sperm-owners and it is high time for time to face up to this fact f life and death.

~VALERIE LINDHOUT

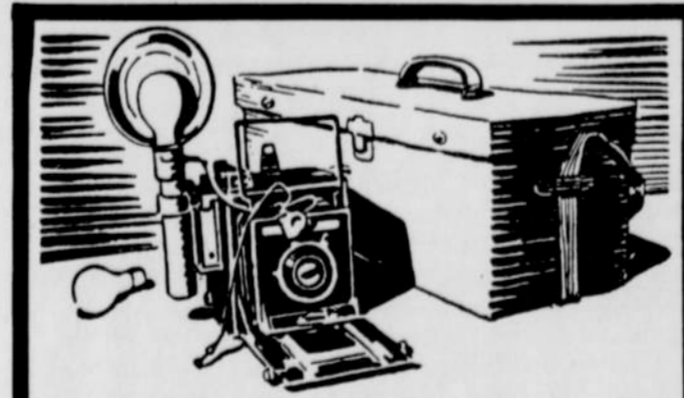
Valerie Lindhout lives in Astoria.

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