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counterpunch

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**Today's
Stories**

September 20,
2005

Paul Craig
Roberts

The Slime Artist

Et Tu, Greg Palast?

September 20, 2005 Coming in the
from
CounterPun
Books!

**The Case Aga
Israel
By Michae
Neumann**

[Will Neocon
Fanaticism
Destroy
America?](#)

[September 19,
2005](#)

[Gary Leupp
Their Patience
and Ours:
Khalilzad
Threatens Syria](#)

[Rev. William E.
Alberts
Mainstream
Religious
Leaders in
Bushtime:
Guardians of
the Status Quo](#)

[Tom Gorman
Padilla and the
Death of the
Republic: the
Power to Hold
Anyone](#)

[Leigh Saavedra
The Anti-War
Movement
Goes on Trial](#)

[Mike Whitney
Hurricane Hugo
at the UN](#)

[Ingmar Lee
Compromise
with a
Chainsaw in the
Rainforests of
BC](#)

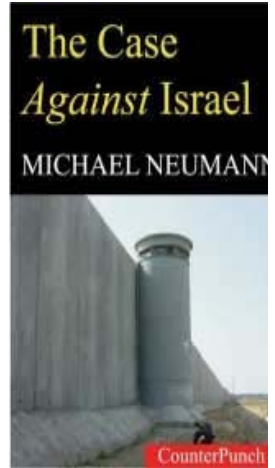
[Katrina Yeaw](#)

By GEORGE GALLOWAY

Until a couple of days ago I hadn't heard of Greg Palast in years, the man who claims to have been pursuing me with questions for two months. He has never phoned, written, emailed or made any other contact with me, which is curiously reminiscent of the behavior of the US Senate committee. Having now forced myself to look at his pernicious writing, it seems like the deranged ramblings you might expect to find pushed out from under the door of a locked ward. He claims to be a journalist. He clearly doesn't get much work.

Palast conflates meetings, truths and half-truths, statements taken out of context to produce a toxic smear which would be actionable in the country he claims to work in, my country. How many times do I have to respond to the ravings of guttersnipes? I met Saddam twice, the same number of times as Donald Rumsfeld. The difference is that I wasn't trying to sell him weapons and guidance systems. The first, and infamous time, my words were taken out of context. The second, where Saddam revealed his favorite confectionery, I was trying to persuade him to let the weapons' inspectors back in. A vain mission, of course, as the US and UK had already decided to illegally go to war whatever he did.

The Mariam Appeal, which Palast drags in to allege I benefited financially from its work, was not a charity. It was a political campaign. Its primary function was not to provide medicines for Iraqi children, although we did, but to



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Devastating
Rebuttal of Al
Dershowitz](#)

[Coming This
Grand Theft
Pentagon:
Tales of Greed
Profiteering in
War on Terror](#)
by Jeffrey St. Clair



[Anti-War Mvt. in Italy: Hunger Strike Against Censorship](#)

[Kathleen and Bill Christison Travels in Palestine: Horror Story](#)

September 17 / 18, 2005

[Alexander Cockburn Levee Town](#)

[Ralph Nader The CEO's Chief Justice](#)

[Diane Christian Abortion and the Politics of Death](#)

[Ned Sublette Mr. Bush's Tuba](#)

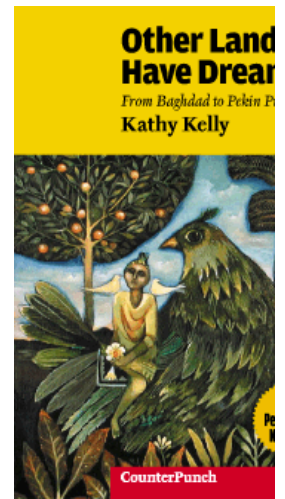
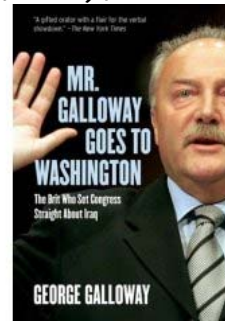
[William Cook Katrina and Poverty: the Poor Have No Lobbyists](#)

[Barbara Ehrenreich Finding a Coach in the Land of Oz](#)

[Nikolas Kozloff Demeaner of](#)

highlight the political conditions which were killing them. Sanctions! The largest donor was the ruler of the UAE (who gave approximately £500,000), followed by Fawaz Zureikat's £375,000, and then the now king of Saudi Arabia (a regime I loath) with £150,000. The donations of these three represented 99% of the campaign's total income. These donors were prominently identified at the time, there was no attempt to hide them, as this palooka claims. None of them have complained the money was ill-spent. Palast might take the view that finance should not be taken from such sources. Sorry, but needs must.

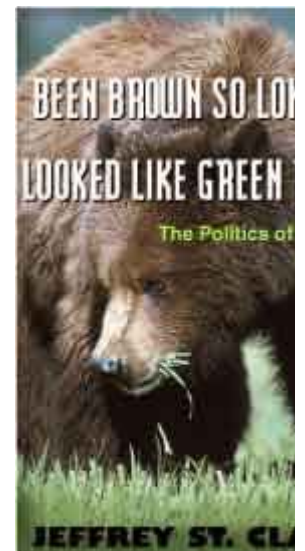
Among the works undertaken by the appeal was a daily newsletter on sanctions, a sanctions-busting flight into Baghdad, the Big Ben to Baghdad trip in a red London bus, countless meetings and conferences, posters and flyers, the projection of an anti-war slogan on the House of Commons, the first time that had ever been done -- and the facilitating of trips to Iraq by dozens of journalists, many of whom sat in on my meetings with Tariq Aziz. And virtually all of whom were conducted around Baghdad by Fawaz Zureikat, openly introduced as the Mariam Appeal's chairman, as well as a businessman trading with Iraq. We brought Mariam Hamza to Britain for treatment -- immodestly, but factually, I claim that we saved her life -- where she remained for half a year, sent back cured. I could go on and on but my enemies would surely claim I was blowing my own trumpet.



The CounterPunch Tow



A Redwood Retreat on the Lost Coast
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Been Brown So Long It Looked Like Green
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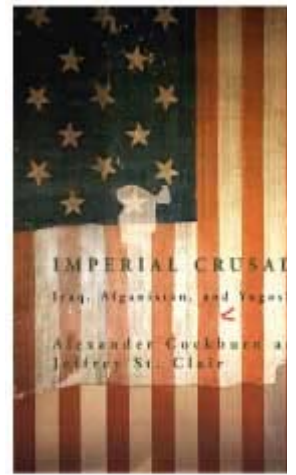
[Jeff Chapman Katrina's Victims and the Minimum Wage](#)

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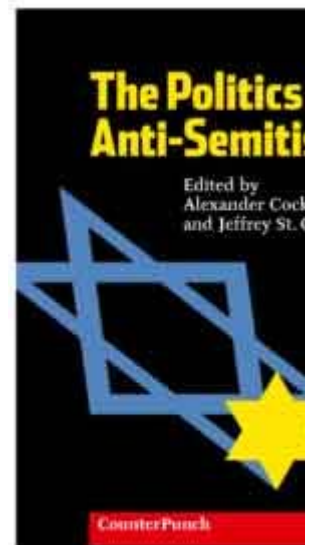
[Ron Jacobs The Politics of Withdrawal from Iraq](#)

But what I will not tolerate -- and will sue in any territory where it is possible to do so -- is the lie that I personally benefited financially from the campaign. The Charity Commission inquiry Palast refers to was occasioned by a referral from Tony Blair's Attorney General. The commission are in possession of every receipt of funds and every cheque issues or bank transfer ever made. They satisfied that there was no malfeasance and closed the case without further action, no doubt to the disappointment of Mr Blair's Attorney General. Charities in Britain cannot campaign politically, which was the prime function of the appeal and in their judgment the commission said that the operation should have been split in two, one arm of which, the one which provided the physical aid, should have registered as a charity. Well, sorry, but that's poppycock.

The stumblebum then drags in Hitchens -- perhaps it's two bums finding mutual support -- a man I recently debated in New York. For what seems like the tenthousandth time let me try to finally nail the canard that I benefited through the oil-for-food programme, an allegation at the time of writing which has netted me at least \$4 million in libel damages and costs. Of course, when I talked with Tariq Aziz, I talked about the programme, but only in respect of the effects it was having on Iraq. I did not request or receive oil vouchers. I did not benefit financially. Not by one thin dime! I said voluntarily and on pain of prosecution under oath to the US Senate committee -- another body which doesn't let the facts get in the way of a good smear -- and I say it again. If I had been guilty of what Palast alleges I'd be sitting not in the House of



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Iraq, Afghanistan &
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Alexander Cockburn
Jeffrey St. Clair**



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[The
Millworker's
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[The Wall and
the Holes in the
Wall](#)

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Koehler
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Bitterroot
National Forest](#)

Ben Tripp
[Some
Optimistic
Thoughts](#)

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Basement
[Nettlin, Albert,
Engel and
Louise](#)

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Weekend
[How to Identify
Misinformation](#)

September 16,
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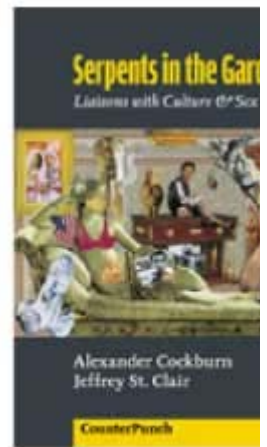
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[Race, Katrina
and the Media](#)

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Jr.
[Bush's Judges
and Black
America](#)

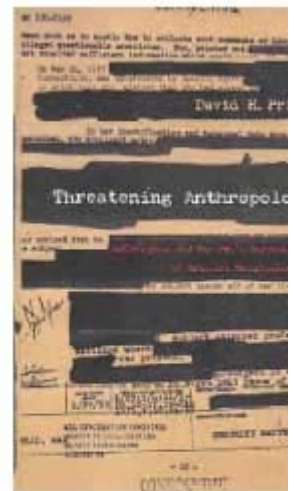
Commons but a prison cell! Let that be an end to it because I'm sure the public is even more tired and bemused than I am.

Crawl back under your rock, Mr Palast!

George Galloway, member of Parliament from Bethnal Green, is the author of [Mr. Galloway Goes to Washington: The Brit Who Set Congress Straight About Iraq](#).



**Serpents in the Garden
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[Anti-War](#)
[Movement](#)

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[Brawl at](#)
[Baruch:](#)
[Hitchens vs.](#)
[Galloway](#)

[Christopher](#)
[Brauchli](#)
[Baked Brownie:](#)
[Cooking a](#)
[Resumé](#)

[Naomi Archer](#)
["It's Not that](#)
[the](#)
[Government](#)
[isn't](#)
[Responding,](#)
[They are](#)
[Obstructing](#)
[Responses"](#)

[Edward Gibbon](#)
[The Patron](#)
[Saint of](#)
[Defense](#)
[Contractors](#)

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[Grounds for](#)
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ALEXANDER COCKBURN, JEFFREY ST
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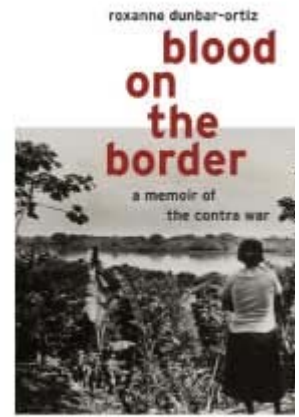
We published an article entitled "A
Saudiless Arabia" by Wayne Madsen
dated October 22, 2002 (the "Article"),
on the website of the Institute for the
Advancement of Journalistic Clarity,
CounterPunch, www.counterpunch.org
(the "Website").

Although it was not our intention,
counsel for Mohammed Hussein Al
Amoudi has advised us the Article
suggests, or could be read as
suggesting, that Mr Al Amoudi has
funded, supported, or is in some way
associated with, the terrorist activities of
Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda
terrorist network.

We do not have any evidence
connecting Mr Al Amoudi with terrorism.

As a result of an exchange of
communications with Mr Al Amoudi's
lawyers, we have removed the Article
from the Website.

We are pleased to clarify the position.



Blood on the Border
by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz



On the Justice of
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September 15,
2005

August 17, 2005

Jeffrey St. Clair
[Flirtations with
Disaster](#)

Brian J. Foley
[The Profit-
Driven War](#)

Justin E.H.
Smith
[Frances Newton
and the
Prospects for a
New
Abolitionism](#)

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[Sacrificial
Murder by
Texas: Frances
Newton Died
for Bush's Sins](#)

Kevin Zeese
[Katrina and
Iraq: the War
Comes Home to
Roost](#)

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New Orleans](#)

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Palestinians
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Factor](#)

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[Brawl in the
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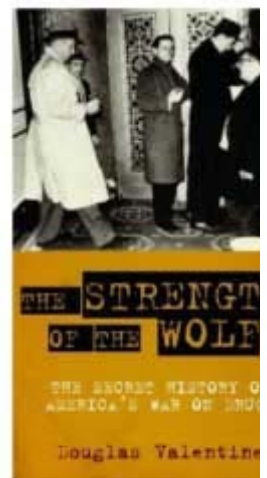
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The Recolonization of Ir**
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1024-A10 1
GB Secure
D...](#)



Strength of the Wo
by Douglas Valentin

Pat Williams
[Lewis and Clark
in Montana](#)

William S. Lind
[Swept Away in
Iraq](#)

Saul Landau
[Bush, God and
Katrina](#)

September 14,
2005

Gary Leupp
[Managing
Perceptions of
Presidential
Ignorance](#)

Evelyn Pringle
[Iraqis to Bush:
Where Did All
Our Money Go?](#)

Jordan Flaherty
[Back Inside
New Orleans](#)

Jeff Chapman
[The WJS's
Flawed War on
the Minimum
Wage](#)

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[The Perils of
Normalization
with Israel](#)

Manuel Garcia,
Jr.
[The Power of
Water](#)

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[Eugene V. Debs
and the Legacy
of Dissent](#)

Sam Hussein
[A Statement
from Mother
Nature](#)

Ralph Nader
[Questioning
Judge Roberts](#)

September 13,
2005

Uri Avnery
[Who Murdered
Arafat?](#)

Werther
[Jackals and
Jackasses](#)

JG
[Where's the
Outrage Over
the Jailing of
Kevin Pina?](#)

Marlene Martin
[The Texas
Killing Machine:
Will Another
Innocent
Woman be
Executed?](#)

Joshua Frank
[Katrina's
Political
Aftermath:
Blame More
Than Bush](#)

Ron Jacobs

[Saving
America's
Serengetti](#)

Dave Lindorff
[Compassion for
the Camera](#)

Ben Tripp
[It's an Ill Wind](#)

Dave Zirin
[Galloway Goes
to Washington](#)

Billy Sothern
[How the Other
Half Lived in
New Orleans](#)

Website of the
Day
[Save the Life of
Frances Newton](#)

**September 12,
2005**

Bill Glahn
[Tears of Rage
in New Orleans](#)

Jason Leopold
[How Michael
Brown Helped
Bush Win
Florida](#)

Bill Simpich
[Confronting
Nancy Pelosi](#)

Mike Whitney
[Padilla and the](#)

[Death of
Personal
Liberty](#)

Justin Felux
[Free Kevin
Pina!: US
Journalists
Arrested in
Haiti](#)

Rep. Cynthia
McKinney
[No One Came
to Get Them](#)

Carol Norris
[Let Them Eat
Toxins](#)

Robert Jensen
[Our Grief is Not
Special](#)

Gideon Levy
[The Mean
Streets of Tel
Rumeida](#)

Paul Craig
Roberts
[Power Grab in
New Orleans](#)

Website of the
Day
[New Orleans
Artists Relief
Fund](#)

September 9 /
11, 2005

William A. Cook
[From New](#)

[Orleans to
Palestine](#)

Saul Landau
[How the US
Supplied Iran
with Nuclear
Know-How](#)

Lance Selfa
[Confederacy of
Dunces: Why
FEMA Failed](#)

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[Paying the
Piper](#)

Elaine Cassel
[Judge Roberts:
On the Far
Right of a Far
Right Party](#)

Ron Jacobs
[Food as Govt.
Weapon in New
Orleans](#)

Elisa Salasin
[My September
11th](#)

Christopher
Brauchli
[When "Action"
is Delay:
Bush's Picnic &
Plan B](#)

Evelyn Pringle
[War Pays:
Douglas Feith's
Platinum
Parachute](#)

Tom

Crumpacker
[The Posada
Case: When
Injustice is
Justice](#)

Dave Lindorff
[The Big
Blowback](#)

Robert Jensen
[Race Stories:
the Heart of
Whiteness](#)

Gary Bass
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from Katrina](#)

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Steven
Sherman
[The American
Left and the
Battle of New
Orleans](#)

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Macgregor
[Escape from
Oz: the
Pentagon's
Light Show](#)

Barghouti /
Grima
[Re-Thinking the
Mediterranean](#)

Jeff Berg
[Katrian and the
Baghdad Dead:
Bush's Tipping
Point?](#)

Fred Gardner
[Marijuana
Might Really
Make You Cool](#)

Charles
Sullivan
[It's Not Easy
Being King](#)

Dan Vojir
[God's
Ambulance
Chasers](#)

Website of the
Weekend
[On the Road in
Louisiana](#)

September 8,
2005

John Chuckman
[Lessons from
Hell](#)

Dan La Botz
[Rehnquist: the
Chief Injustice](#)

Carol Norris
[The
Psychological
Aftermath of
Katrina](#)

David Krieger
[Cindy, Katrina
and Iraq](#)

Irma Thomas
[An SOS from
the Soul Queen
of New Orleans](#)

Roger Morris
[Legacy of
Neglect](#)

September 7,
2005

Roxanne
Dunbar-Ortiz
[John Wayne
and the New
Orleans Indians](#)

Werther
Victor Davis
Hanson: Bard
of the
[Booboisie](#)

Chris Floyd
[No Direction
Home](#)

Jason Leopold
[The Rich and
the Dead](#)

Michael
Donnelly
[Cassandra,
Apollo and the
Red Queen](#)

Niranjan
Ramakrishnan
[Clueless in
Crawford;
Witless in
Washington](#)

Linda Milazzo /
John Stern
[Idiot Wind:
Haley Barbour,
Katrina and
Hiroshima](#)

Gary Leupp
[Nepal: the
Prachanda Path](#)

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[Commander-in-
Zilch Fails New
Orleans](#)

Kevin Zeese
[Kucinich
Speaks: Dem
Leadership
Needs to Get
Out of the Way](#)

Charmaine
Neville
[How We
Survived the
Flood](#)

September 6,
2005

Keeanga-
Yamahtta
Taylor
[Our
Birmingham:
Did Katrina
Blow Off the
White Sheets of
American
Racism?](#)

Dan La Botz
[Katrina: State
Failure and
Human
Solidarity](#)

Larry
Bradshaw /
Lorrie Beth

Slonsky

[Trapped in New Orleans: First By Floods, Then By Martial Law](#)

Chuck D.

[Hell No We Ain't Alright](#)

Debbie Dupre /

Bill Quigley

[Thank God](#)

[There's No One to Bomb in Retaliation](#)

Omar Wariach

[Edward Said](#)

[vs. Orwell and](#)

[Hitchens: "It's](#)

[Racism at the](#)

[Bottom"](#)

Mike Whitney

[Why Rehnquist](#)

[Doesn't](#)

[Deserve to be](#)

[Buried on US](#)

[Soil](#)

Carol Norris

[In the Wake of](#)

[Katrina](#)

Norman

Solomon

[Firing Mike](#)

[Brown is not](#)

[Enough](#)

Michael

Neumann

[But What About](#)

[the Snipers?](#)

September 5,
2005

Paul Craig
Roberts
[Resurrecting
Karl Marx](#)

David Vest
[The Battle of
New
Orleans: It's
Looking a Lot
Like Fallujah](#)

John Blair
[Don't Rebuild
New Orleans,
At Least Where
It Was](#)

Fidel Castro
[What Cuba Has
Offered the
People of the
Gulf Coast](#)

Mike Whitney
[80,000 Rodney
Kings in New
Orleans](#)

Alan Farago
[Talking Points
for a City of
Corpses](#)

Doug Giebel
[Bush's New
Orleans: "So
This is Where
He Used to
Come to Get
Drunk"](#)

Mark Chmiel
[Beatitudes for](#)

[This New
American
Century](#)

**Carol Wolman,
MD**

[God to Bush:
"You Blew It"](#)

Norman
Solomon
[Bush's Answer
to Cindy
Sheehan: "It
Was About Oil"](#)

Eli Stephens
[An
Administration
Without Shame](#)

Peter
Linebaugh
[Loo! Loo! Lulu!
Loot!](#)

**September 3 /
4, 2005**

**Alexander
Cockburn**
[From Mitch to
Katrina](#)

Paul Craig
Roberts
[Failure on
Every Front](#)

Gary Leupp
[New Orleans
and the System
that Destroyed
It](#)

Dave Lindorff
[Profiteering
from Disaster:
the Real
Looters Wear
Pinstripes](#)

Dan La Botz
[Time for the
U.S. to Start
Over](#)

Jonathan M.
Feldman
[From Iraq to
New Orleans:
the U.S. as a
"Failed State"](#)

Landau /
Hassen
[The Cuban 5:
In Prison for
Fighting
Terrorism](#)

Tim Wise
[In the Name of
the Lord:
"Those Looters
Should be
Shot"](#)

Mitchel Cohen
[People of the
Dome: "Let
Them Eat
Shit..."](#)

Dave Zirin
[The
Superdome:
the Earth's
Most Damnable
Homeless
Shelter](#)

Mike Ferner

[Waiting on the
Outside World:
Who Will
Rescue
America?](#)

Rep. Cynthia
McKinney
[Shame on the
Bush
Administration](#)

Jason Leopold

[Bush's
Demented
Priorities: the
State of
Marriage Over
the State of
Louisiana](#)

Justin Felux
[Kayne West is
My Hero: "Bush
Doesn't Care
About Black
People"](#)

Monica
Benderman
[Iraq War as
Thrill Ride:
Getting Off the
Rollercoaster](#)

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[Grab a Towel,
You're Next](#)

Jordan Flaherty
[Notes from
Inside New
Orleans](#)

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[A Rising Tide](#)

[has Swamped
All Boats](#)

Seth
Sandronsky
[Hurricane
Katrina
Exposes the
True Face of
Capitalism](#)

Mark Donham
[Where's Karl
Rove?](#)

Fred Gardner
[CHP Agrees to
Follow Law;
Justice Stevens
Apologizes](#)

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[Winning the
West](#)

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[The
Privatization
Mob](#)

Poets'
Basement
[Albert, Engel,
Louise](#)

September 2,
2005

Evan Jones
[Katrina and the
Corps of
Engineers:
Manufacturing
Disaster](#)

David Stocker
[How Good is
Your Levee?](#)
[Frankly, Scarlet
I Don't Think
He Gives a
Damn](#)

Dave Lindorff
[Baghdad on the
Big Muddy](#)

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[The Smirk of a
Killer: Ending
the Impunity of
the Bush White
House](#)

Mike Whitney
[How Bush
Deals with a
Disaster He
Helped Create:
Blame the
Looters](#)

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[What They
Should Have
Learned from
Hurricane Ivan](#)

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[Katrina, Iraq
and Blood
Profits](#)

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Brauchli
[Onward
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Assassins](#)

Harvey
Wasserman

[Bush to New Orleans: Drop Dead](#)

CounterPunch
Wire
[Faith-Based FEMA? Feds Directing Katrina Money to Pat Robertson](#)

Glen Ford
[Will the "New" New Orleans be Black?](#)

September 1, 2005

Dr. Greg Henderson, MD
[Situation Critical: a Doctor in the Flood](#)

Paul Craig Roberts
[How New Orleans Was Lost](#)

Mike Whitney
[Hurricane Donald: How Rumsfeld Smashed the National Guard](#)

Lee Sustar
[Left Behind to Drown: the Poor and](#)

[Hurricane
Katrina](#)

Dave Lindorff
[The Real
Disaster: Bush
and the
Democrats](#)

Lynn Gonzalez
[The Cindy
Spark:
Mainstream
America Stirs](#)

Chris Floyd
[The Perfect
Storm](#)

August 31,
2005

Cockburn / St.
Clair
[New Orleans
After Katrina](#)

John Walsh
[Democrats and
the War](#)

Bernstein /
Mishel
[Bush Economy:
Incomes Down;
Poverty Up!](#)

Alan Farago
[What are the
Hurricanes
Trying to Tell
Us?](#)

Norman
Solomon
[The National](#)

[Guard Belongs
in New Orleans,
Not Baghdad](#)

Bryan Newbury
["Hey, Shoot
that Black Guy
Running Off
with the Bottled
Water!"](#)

Jason Leopold
[What's Eating
Cindy
Sheehan?](#)

Website of the
Day
[The
Swiftboating of
Cindy Sheehan](#)

August 30,
2005

Gary Leupp
[Venezuela:
Launch Pad for
Muslim
Extremism?](#)

Joshua Frank
[Bunny and the
War Profireers](#)

Evelyn Pringle
[The Woman
Who Blew the
Whistle on
Halliburton
Gets Canned](#)

Urariano Mota
[To Die by
Mistake: the](#)

[Killing of Jean
Claude de
Menezes](#)

Ron Jacobs
[High Water
Everywhere](#)

CP News
Service
[An Open Letter
to Alberto
Gonzales: Free
the Cuban 5](#)

Roger Morris
[The War for the
Future](#)

**August 29,
2005**

Seth
Sandronsky
[Pat Robertson,
Big Oil's
Televangelist](#)

**Norman
Solomon**
[War Liberals
and Cindy
Sheehan](#)

Charles
Sullivan
[Nation of Fools](#)

**Paul Craig
Roberts**
[Does *Anyone*
Know What
We're Doing in
Iraq?](#)

Website of the
Day
[Monsanto](#)
[Threatens](#)
["Bitter Greens"](#)

August 27 / 28,
2005

Alexander
Cockburn
[Assassination:](#)
[as American as](#)
[Apple Pie \(and](#)
[Torture\)](#)

Ricardo Alarcon
[The Cuban 5 in](#)
[Atlanta: a Long](#)
[March Towards](#)
[Justice](#)

Diane Christian
[The Politics of](#)
[Death:](#)
[Assassination](#)

M. Shahid Alam
[How to be a](#)
[Good Victim](#)

Laith al-Saud
[Baghdad](#)
[Circus: Iraq's](#)
[Constitutional](#)
[Process](#)

Diane Farsetta
[School of the](#)
[Americas Fights](#)
[Back: PR Plan](#)
[for Pentagon's](#)
["Demonstration](#)
[Village"](#)

Saul Landau
[Reagan and
Bottled Water:
the
Privatization of
Everything](#)

Tom Barry
[Hurricane
Hugo: Relating
to Venezuela](#)

Nicholas Rowe
[Barenboim in
Ramallah: an
Unfinished
Symphony](#)

George E.
Bisharat
[Enforce the Ban
on Settlements](#)

Dave Lindorff
[Another Mother
for War: the
Exploitation of
Tammy Pruett](#)

Fred Gardner
[Pot Shots:
Doing the Right
Thing, Even If
You Are Fearful](#)

**John Francis
Lee**
[The Juggernaut
of Jingo](#)

Evan Jones
[I.F. Stone on
the Perils of
Empire](#)

Ali Khan
[Defining](#)

Aggression

Poets'

Basement

Albert, Nettnin,

Engel, Ford,

Krieger, Louise

August 26,
2005

Lee Sustar

Showdown at

Northwest

Ramzy Baroud

Cindy Sheehan

and the Power

of the Ordinary

Christopher

Brauchli

The Return of

Edwin Meese

Peter Harley

The Wall as a

Good Thing?

John Snider

Not One of the

Gang

Kathleen

Christison

Can Palestine

be Put Back in

the Equation?

August 25,
2005

Paul Craig

Roberts

[Hegemony
Lost: the
American
Economy is
Destroying
Itself](#)

Cockburn / St.
Clair

[Loewenstein's
Big Mail Bag:
Gaza and "the
Shame of It All"](#)

J.L. Chestnut,
Jr.

[Racial Politics
in California
They May Vote
for You, But
They Won't
Have Lunch
with You](#)

Chhandasi
Pandya
[Libeling
Venezuela](#)

Richard Ward
[Impressions
from Camp
Casey](#)

Norman
Solomon
[Exploiting the
9/11
Anniversary:
Will the Media
Help Bush,
Again?](#)

Joshua Frank
[Will the Real](#)

[Leaders Please
Stand Up?](#)

Seth
Sandronsky
[GM, the UAW
and US Health
Care](#)

Lucinda
Marshall
[The Democratic
Unraveling:
How Not to
Mention the
War](#)

VIPS
[Memo to Bush:
Try a Circle of
Wise Women](#)

Ralph Nader
[It's Time to
Make the Iraq
War Personal](#)

August 24,
2005

[Stan Goff](#)
[Containing the
Anti-War
Movement: the
Hayden Plan](#)

Rachard Itani
[Papal Double
Standards](#)

Elisa Salasin
[The
Militarization of](#)

[Our Children](#)

Ron Jacobs
[Who Would
Jesus
Assassinate?](#)

John Chuckman
[Robertson and
Posada: Bush's
Kind of
Terrorists](#)

Leibowitz /
Heller
[Gaza:
Disengagement
or Military
Redeployment?](#)

**Douglas
Valentine**
[Suicide as
Sacrament](#)

Thomas Nagy
[Congress
Should Go to
Crawford: an
Open Letter to
Cindy Sheehan](#)

**Alexander
Cockburn**
[Hitchens Backs
Down, Says
Sheehan "Not a
La Rouchie"](#)

Website of the
Day
[Stations of the
Cross](#)

August 23,
2005

Rev. Graylan
Scott Hagler
[Pat Robertson](#)
[is Not a](#)
[Christian](#)

Karen Kilroy
[Pittsburgh and](#)
[Salt Lake City](#)
[Protests:](#)
[Violent Echoes](#)
[of Kent State](#)

Stew Albert
[Fascism in](#)
[America: Are](#)
[We There Yet?](#)

Joshua Frank
[The Democrats](#)
[and Cindy](#)
[Sheehan](#)

Dave Zirin
[Pedaling Away](#)
[from Principle:](#)
[Lance](#)
[Armstrong](#)
[Cozies Up to](#)
[Bush](#)

Julia Olmstead
[Our Reckless](#)
[Chemical](#)
[Dependence: A](#)
[Little Round-Up](#)
[With Your](#)
[Precautionary](#)
[Principle?](#)

CounterPunch
Wire

[Prosecuting
Bush in Canada
for Torture: a
Legal Update](#)

Jason Leopold
[Bush's Lips
Move, But He
Says Nothing](#)

Diane Christian
[The Politics of
Death](#)

August 22,
2005

Sonia Nettnin
[Gaza Stripped,
the Occupation
Remains](#)

Mike Whitney
["Shoot to Kill":
Tony Blair's
First Trophy](#)

Kevin Zeese
[The Latest
Falsehood: the
US is in Iraq to
"Stablize It"](#)

Norman
Solomon
[Bush's Bloody
Option:
Escalate the
War in Iraq](#)

**Christopher
Brauchli**
[Secret Talkers](#)

Jeff Bale
[The Left's
Challenge in
Germany](#)

Greg Moses
[Raw Talk
Revival at
Camp Casey
Two](#)

August 20 / 21,
2005

Alexander
Cockburn
[Can Cindy
Sheehan End
the War?](#)

Saul Landau
[Terrorism Then
and Now:
Townley Talks](#)

Kevin Zeese
[an Interview
with Tom
Hayden](#)

Greg Moses
[A Daytrip
without Cindy](#)

Ray McGovern
[Cindy Sheehan
and Creative
Protest](#)

Fred Gardner
[Merck Gets
Whacked](#)

Martin Smith
[Rebellion in the
Ranks: the
Soldiers' Revolt
in Vietnam](#)

Benjamin
Granby
[Gaza's
Economy: the
Key to Sharon's
Strategy?](#)

Frankie Lake
[Dirty
Tricksters: How
the Federalist
Society
Operates](#)

Joshua Frank
[Failing Nature:
the Democrats
and the
Environment](#)

Ron Jacobs
[When
Sympathy is
Not Enough](#)

Tom
Crumpacker
[Moral Values
and the CIA](#)

Mike Ferner
["All of Our
Stories are
Sad"](#)

James Petras
[Suicide
Bombers: the
Sacred and the
Profane](#)

Col. Dan Smith
[The President's
Dilemma](#)

Dr. Teresa
Whitehurst
[What de
Menezes Didn't
Know](#)

Ben Tripp
[Moses on Top
of Old Smokey](#)

Poets'
Basement
[Landau, Albert,
Engel and
Louise](#)

August 19,
2005

Alexander
Cockburn
[A Short History
of Meat, Part 4:
Cutting Up
Mochie](#)

Neve Gordon
[After the
Withdrawal](#)

Gary Leupp
[The Pandora's
Box of Iraq's
Constitution](#)

William S. Lind
[Getting Swept](#)

Vijay Prashad

[The Rosa Parks
of the Anti-War
Movement](#)

Dave Lindorff
[Something Has
Happened](#)

Pat Williams
[Social Security
and the
American West](#)

John Pilger
[Free Speech
and the War on
Terror](#)

Elaine Cassel
[Judge Roberts
and the Death
Penalty](#)

August 18,
2005

Alexander
Cockburn
[A Short History
of Meat, Part 3:
Vegetarians,
Nazis for
Animal Rights,
Blitzkrieg of the
Ungulates](#)

Greg Moses
[Cindy, the
Peace Train and
the Little Ditch
that Could](#)

Ramzy Baroud

[Theatrics in
Gaza: the
Disengagement
That Isn't](#)

Joshua Frank
[Bush's
Emotional
Incapacities](#)

Monica
Benderman
[For Cindy:
There's No
Glory in Dying](#)

Paul Craig
Roberts
[Courthouse
Jackboots:
Corrupted
Justice](#)

August 17,
2005

Alexander
Cockburn
[A Short History
of Meat: Part
Two, the March
to Porkopolis](#)

Robert Jensen
[America's Good
Germans?](#)

Carl G.
Estabrook
[News Notes
from the Global
War on
Terrorism](#)

Mike Whitney

[Greenspan and
the Housing
Bubble](#)

**Niranjan
Ramakrishnan**
[Shaming the
Shameless](#)

Norman
Solomon
[Slurs, Lies and
Innuendos:
Blaming the
Antiwar
Messengers](#)

Dave Zirin
[In Defense of
Felipe Alou](#)

Jennifer
Loewenstein
[The Shame of
It All: Watching
the Gazan
Fiasco](#)

CounterPunch
[Clarification](#)

**August 16,
2005**

Greg Moses
[Mona in a Field
of Crosses at
Camp Casey,
Texas](#)

Thomas Larson
[The
Unmitigated](#)

[Gall of Dinesh
D'Souza](#)

Diana Barahona
[Uneasy
Standoff in
Venezuela's
Media Wars](#)

Dave Lindorff
[The Inquirer's
Minds Don't
Want to Know](#)

**Rep. Cynthia
McKinney**
[A Letter to
President Bush:
Meet with
Cindy Sheehan](#)

Elisa Salasin
[Hitchens Slimes
Cindy Sheehan](#)

David Krieger
[Amazing Grace
and Cindy](#)

Alexander
Cockburn
[A Short History
of Meat: Part
One, Peter's
Dream](#)

Website of the
Day
[Reclaiming
Appalachia: a
Mountain
Takeover](#)

August 15,
2005

Greg Moses
[Pilgrims of
Protest in
Crawford](#)

Paul Craig
Roberts
[Slouching
Toward
Armageddon?](#)

Mike Whitney
[Failing in Iraq](#)

Robert Jensen
[The Challenges
We Face](#)

CounterPunch
Wire
[Judge Fines
Voices in the
Wilderness
\\$20,000 for
Taking
Medicine to
Iraq; Voices
Refuses to Pay](#)

Norman
Solomon
[Someone Tell
Frank Rich the
War Isn't Over](#)

Kathleen
Christison
[Camp David
Redux:
Anatomy of a
Frame-Up](#)

August 13 / 14,
2005

Cockburn / St.
Clair

When Down is
Up: the
"Stricken"
President

William Blum
The al-Dubya
Training Manual

Gary Leupp
High Tide for
the Neocons?

Jack Z. Bratich
Secreting the
News:
Anonymous vs.
Confidential
Sources

Brian Cloughley
The Ridiculous
Rice

Ron Jacobs
Klan Justice:
Mississippi is
Still Burning

John Farley
"Beyond
Chutzpah" Too
Hot for Harvard
Bookstore?

Dave Lindorff
Making the
World
Safer...for
Nukes

Tim Wise

[Animal Whites:
PETA and the
Politics of
Putting Things
in Perspective](#)

J.L. Chestnut,
Jr.
[There's Not
One Real
Liberal or
Conservative in
the Senate](#)

John Gershman
[The Bolton
Opportunity](#)

Felice Pace
[Saving
Northwest
Forests: Time
for a Fresh
Look](#)

Fred Gardner
[Feds Takeover
Prosecution of
Dustin Costa](#)

David Krieger
[The Fable of
the Emperor
and the
Grieving
Mother](#)

**Roxanne
Dunbar-Ortiz**
[Being a
Protestant
Fundamentalist](#)

Ben Tripp
[GWAT: a Tone
Poem](#)

Poets'
Basement
[Reiss, Nettnin,](#)
[Engel and](#)
[Louise](#)

August 12,
2005

Christopher
Brauchli
[Courting God:](#)
[Justice Sunday](#)
[II](#)

Greg Moses
[A Crawford](#)
[Peace House](#)
[Morning with](#)
[Cindy Sheehan](#)

Ramzy Baroud
[Israel's Nuclear](#)
[Puzzle](#)

Norman
Solomon
[Cindy](#)
[Sheehan's](#)
[Message:](#)
[Repudiating](#)
[Bush and Dean](#)

Chris Genovali
[Why is a](#)
[Canadian](#)
[Politician Trying](#)
[to End](#)
[Protections for](#)
[US Grizzly](#)
[Bears?](#)

Chris Floyd

[Cheney and
Halliburton, the
Stench Gets
Worse](#)

[Tariq Ali
Blair's New
Authoritarianism](#)

August 11,
2005

[Saul Landau
Globalization
and Its
Discontents](#)

[Dave Lindorff
Privatization
will Harm Same
Sex Couples](#)

[Ralph Nader
Dear Cindy
Sheehan: May
You Prevail
Where Others
Have Failed](#)

[Talli Nauman
Radioactive
Border: the Hot
Mounds of
Samalayuca](#)

[Gary Leupp
Politics of an
Outing: Plame,
Ledeen and
Iran](#)

[Sharon Smith
The New Anti-](#)

[War Majority](#)

**Paul Craig
Roberts**

[Why is Cheney
Lobbying for a
Boost in
China's Nuclear
Capability?](#)

**August 10,
2005**

Tim Wise
[Indian Mascots
and White Rage](#)

Ron Jacobs
[Rumsfeld's
Delusions](#)

Joshua Frank
[Dean and the
PDA: Don't
Believe the
Hype](#)

**Cynthia
McKinney**
[The 9/11 Op-Ed
the Atlanta
Journal-
Constitution
Refuses to Run](#)

Rick Wilhelm
[Peter Jennings,
Excuse Maker
for War and
Empire](#)

Stan Goff
[Homegrown](#)

Resistance

August 9, 2005

Mike Ferner
What One Mom
has to Say to
Bush: Cindy
Sheehan in
Dallas

Monica
Benderman
Is Being a
Conscientious
Objector Now
Criminal?

Mike Marqusee
Making Excuses
for Killing De
Menezes

Rep. Cynthia
McKinney
Strange Fruit
and Tree-
Shakers

Paul Craig
Roberts
Watching the
US Economy
Crumble

August 6-8,
2005

Alexander

Cockburn
[How the British
Destroyed India](#)

Jason Leopold
[Halliburton and
Iran: Still
Doing Business
After All These
Years?](#)

Ray McGovern
[Iran, Truth-
Tellers and the
Devotees of
Preemption](#)

David Krieger
[From Hiroshima
to Humanity](#)

Sharon K.
Weiner / Robert
Jensen
[From Hiroshima
to Iraq and
Back](#)

Fred Gardner
[The
Budtender's
View of a Rip-
Off](#)

August 5, 2005

Bill Christison
[New NIE Report
on Iran's Nukes
will Not Deter
US's Posture of
Extreme
Aggressiveness](#)

Paul Craig
Roberts
[Kelo: a
Supreme
Assault on
Personal
Liberty](#)

Alexander
Cockburn
[The Taj Mahal
as Kitsch; the
Editor and the
Water-Walking
Guru](#)

August 4, 2005

Tom Barry
[Inside Bush's
"World
Democracy
Movement"](#)

Lila Rajiva
[John Bolton's
New
Internationalism](#)

Greg Moses
[Bush Teaches
Intelligent
Design in
Prison](#)

Alexander
Cockburn
[Indian Journal:
Why Indian
Farmers Kill
Themselves](#)

August 3, 2005

August 3, 2005

Alexander
Cockburn
[Broken Arrows
and Iran: a B-
52 Pilot
Remembers](#)

Paul Craig
Roberts
[The Kelo
Calamity:
Money, Power
and Eminent
Domaine](#)

William A. Cook
[Innocent
Victims: From
Hiroshima to
Lower
Manhattan](#)

Dave Zirin
[Bush's Texas
Rangers: a
Crackhouse for
Juiced Players?](#)

Dave Lindorff
[Court Packing
and Worker
Rights](#)

José Pertierra
[Why Hamdi
Isaac Yes and
Posada Carriles
No?](#)

August 2, 2005

Ramzi Kysia
[Disengagement
and Diaspora:
High Walls and
Razor Wire in
the Hebron](#)

William A. Cook
[Words Without
Meaning:
Torturing
Bodies and
Language](#)

Paul Craig
Roberts
[When
Armageddon
Gets No Press](#)

Mike Whitney
[Chertoff's
Preemptive
Crackdown:
600 Arrests,
Only 76
Charged](#)

Ron Jacobs
[Be a Hero:
Demand That
Johnny Come
Home](#)

Norman
Madarsz
[Before the Stun
Gun: Jean
Charles de
Menezes, RIP](#)

Tim Wise
[The Faulty
Logic of
"Terrorist"](#)

[Profiling](#)

August 1, 2005

Virginia Rodino
[Why Bono and
Geldof Got It
Wrong: War
and Global
Poverty are
Linked](#)

Diana Barahona
[Return to
Venezuela:
Land Reform
and
Neighborhood
Doctors](#)

Joshua Frank
[Gitmo's
Kangaroo
Courts: First
Torture Them,
Then Rig Their
Trials](#)

Mike Whitney
[The
Consolidation
of Powers:
Rubber Stamp
Roberts](#)

Norm Dixon
[The Worst
Terror Attacks
in History](#)

Norman
Solomon
[Operation](#)

[Withdrawal
Scam](#)

James Petras
[The Corruption
of Lula's
Regime](#)

July 30 / 31,
2005

**Alexander
Cockburn**
[Lost Nuclear
Warheads Now
in Iran?](#)

JoAnn
Wypijewski
[Scenes and
Silver Linings
from Labor's
Crack-Up: a
Special Report
from Chicago](#)

**Sheldon
Rampton**
[War is Fun as
Hell: the Video
Games
Recruiters Play](#)

Jack Z. Bratich
[Fingerprints of
Power: a
Summer of
Double Super
Secrecy](#)

Greg Moses
[How to Cool
Your Heels in](#)

[Texas When
It's Late July
Across the
World](#)

Jordan Green
[From
Woolworth to
Wal-Mart:
Economics and
the Race Divide
in a Southern
City](#)

Patrick
Cockburn
[Getting Out of
Iraq: 5,000 US
Troops Have
Gone AWOL](#)

Brian Cloughley
[The Bush-
Cheney
Fixation on Iran](#)

Justin Taylor
[Harry Potter
and the War on
Terror](#)

Saul Landau
[Enhancements
for the Imperial
Life:
Fashionism
Takes
Command!](#)

John Walsh
[Dems Field
Another Pro-
War Candidate:
Meet Hack the
Hawk](#)

Joshua Frank

[Color-Coded
Justice: John
Roberts's Racial
Hang Up](#)

Ron Jacobs
[Who Needs
Feminism? We
Have Condi
Rice!](#)

Fred Gardner
[The Ethan and
Gavin Show](#)

John Chuckman
[Friedman on
Terrorism: the
Dumbest Story
Ever Written](#)

Liaquat Ali
Khan
[Lessons City
Bombers Need
to Learn from
Newton and
Donne](#)

Remi Kanazi
[Annexing
Justice in
Palestine](#)

Naveen
Jaganathan
[The Gurgaon
Riots Rock
India](#)

**Richard
Heinberg**
[Where is the
Hirsch Peak Oil
Report?](#)

Max Watts

[Francis Ona,](#)
[the Napoleon of](#)
[Mekamui](#)

Ben Tripp
[Write Your Own](#)
[Editorial!](#)

Poets'
Basement
[Whalen &](#)
[Engel, Landau,](#)
[Albert and](#)
[Krieger](#)

July 29, 2005

Cockburn / St.
Clair
[Who's the Real](#)
[Martyr? Judy](#)
[Miller or Jim](#)
[DeFede?](#)

P. Sainath
[The Class War](#)
[in Gurgaon](#)

Niranjan
Ramakrishnan
[How the West](#)
[Was Lost:](#)
[CAFTA and the](#)
[Disassembling](#)
[of America](#)

Dave Lindorff
[Marvelous](#)
[Marvin Bush](#)

J.L. Chestnut,

Jr.
[America's
Racist
Inventory:
Oppression
Breeds Violence](#)

Pat Williams
[Giving Away
the Last Best
Place](#)

Norman
Solomon
[In Praise of
Kevin
Benderman: a
Moral Leader of
the Nation
Goes to Prison](#)

Sen. Russ
Feingold
[The Bad News
About the
Energy Bill](#)

July 28, 2005

Paul Craig
Roberts
[Departing Iraq](#)

William S. Lind
[The Duke of
Alba and
George W.
Bush](#)

Gilad Atzmon
[Blair the
Camera Man](#)

Joshua Frank
[Passing CAFTA:
Blame the
Democrats](#)

Lila Rajiva
[Vision Mumbai
Submerged](#)

Amina Mire
[Pigmentation
and Empire:
the Emerging
Skin-Whitening
Industry](#)

Website of the
Day
[Gateway to
Underground
News](#)

July 27, 2005

Roger Morris
[The Source
Beyond Rove:
Condoleezza
Rice at the
Center of the
Plame Scandal](#)

Gary Leupp
[Is Iran Being
Set Up?](#)

Paul Craig
Roberts
[US Falling
Behind Across
the Board](#)

Jackie Corr

[Class War on
the Ruby River:
the Billionaire
with His Foot in
His Mouth](#)

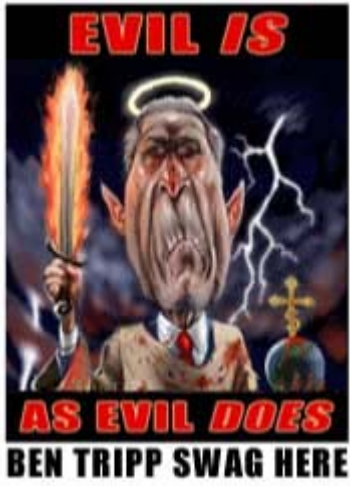
Mike Whitney
[The Coming
End of the
Housing Bubble](#)

Dave Zirin
[Why Lance
Armstrong Must
Break with
Bush](#)

**Christopher
Bradley**
[Why I Have
Trouble
Reading the
News](#)

Norman
Solomon
[Thomas
Friedman,
Liberal Sadist?](#)

**Website of the
Day**
[Stormin'
Norman](#)



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