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http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Nos. 1 and 2 at end.

Contents of #3 Feb. 9, 2012

Consequences to Humans
Hochschild, World War I
Chris Hedges, About War
Army Indifference to Brutality and Killing
Dover AFB: Remains of Soldiers Dumped
Damage to Domestic Liberties
Kingston, Veterans of War, Veterans of Peace
Wounded Veterans: 2 Books
PTSD: Guilt
Tirman, The Deaths of Others

Consequences to Earth
Books and Films
Planet Earth by Rosalie Bertell
Militarized Economy Weakens Ability to Adapt to Warming and other Crises

Contents of #4
Dick, Endless War: Cemeteries Filling Up
Topmiller and Neill, Pentagon/VA Mistreatment of Vets
Hedges, War Is a Force
Hedges, Murder
Cohen, Drugs, Suicide
Bettinez et al., Resisting Racism and Militarism
Dick, Budget Cuts at Home

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, October 8, 2012,

“Veterans cemetery in NLR filling up, slowly showing age”
By Amy Schlesing

The State Veterans Cemetery in North Little Rock has quickly filled up and slowly declined
since opening 11 years ago, another victim of financial neglect within the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs.

Dick: After the National Cemetery in North Little Rock reached capacity, the State of Arkansas built its first Veterans Cemetery. It is now projected to be full by late 2014. Since it opened in 2001 more than 5,000 veterans have been interred, the burials increasing by more than 15 percent each year, and now averaging about 48 a month. Further, the $50,000 for maintenance has become inadequate. Death a vivid, visual, permanent consequence of US permanent war since 1941.

**Binding Their Wounds: America's Assault on Its Veterans**

- Robert J. Topmiller and T. Kerby Neill

**Paperback**
- Publish date: April 2011
- List Price: $22.95
- Your Price: $19.51

**Description**

It is in the nature of our naïveté about war that we prepare for combat but rarely for its aftermath. Vietnam vet and historian Robert “Doc” Topmiller began *Binding Their Wounds* while he was still struggling with his own PTSD but died before he could finish the book. Completed by his friends, the book provides an engaging account of America’s attitudes and treatment of its veterans, from the revolutionary war forward. Major chapters focus on the failures of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs (and its predecessors) to address the needs of vets exposed to radiation in post–World War II military experiments, vets suffering from Gulf War illnesses, and vets exposed to Agent Orange during Vietnam. Particular attention is given to the persistent issues of trauma and suicide in soldiers and veterans. This volume documents strengths and shortcomings of military and VA responses to the needs of our servicemen and women and suggests ways that we can do better, including the avoidance of armed conflict. Rich in personal accounts of veterans, Doc’s own story is compellingly woven into the narrative.

War is a force that gives us meaning

by Chris Hedges

Amnesty International NOW magazine, Winter 2002

War and conflict have marked most of my adult life. I have been in ambushes on desolate stretches of Central American roads, locked in unnerving firefights in the marshes in southern Iraq, imprisoned in the Sudan, beaten by Saudi military police, deported from Libya and Iran, captured and held for a week by Iraqi Republican Guards, strafed by Russian Mig-21s in central Bosnia, shot at by Serb snipers and shelled with deafening rounds of artillery in Sarajevo that threw out thousands of deadly bits of iron fragments. I have seen too much of violent death. I have tasted too much of my own fear. I have painful memories that lie buried most of the time. It is never easy when they surface.

And yet there is a part of me that remains nostalgic for war's simplicity and high. The enduring attraction of war is this: Even with its destruction and carnage it gives us what we all long for in life. It gives us purpose, meaning, a reason for living. Only when we are in the midst of conflict does the shallowness and vapidness of our lives become apparent. Trivia dominates our conversations and increasingly our news. And war is an enticing elixir. It gives us resolve, a cause. It allows us to be noble. And those that have the least meaning in their lives-the impoverished refugees in Gaza, the disenfranchised North African immigrants in France, even the lost legions of youth that live in the splendid indolence and safety of the industrialized world-are all susceptible to war's appeal.

WAR AS CULTURE

I learned early on that war forms its own culture. The rush of battle is a potent and often lethal addiction, for war is a drug, one I ingested for many years. It is peddled by myth makers -historians, war correspondents, filmmakers novelists and the state-all of whom endow it with qualities it often does possess: excitement, exoticism, power, chances to rise above our small stations in life, and a bizarre and fantastic universe that has a grotesque and dark beauty. It dominates culture, distorts memory, corrupts language and infects everything around it, even humor, which becomes preoccupied with the grim perversities of smut and death. Fundamental questions about the meaning, or meaninglessness, of our place on the planet are laid bare when we watch those around us sink to the lowest depths. War exposes the capacity for evil that lurks just below the surface within all of us.

And so it takes little in wartime to turn ordinary men into killers. Most give themselves willingly to the seduction of unlimited power to destroy, and all feel the peer pressure. Few, once in bottle, can find the strength to resist.
The historian Christopher Browning noted the willingness to kill in Ordinary Men, his study of Reserve Police Battalion 101 in Poland during World War II. On the morning of July 12, 1942, the battalion was ordered to shoot 1800 Jews in the village of Jozefow in a day-long action. The men in the unit had to round up the Jews, march them into the forest and one by one order them to lie down in a row. The victims, including women, infants, children and the elderly, were shot dead at close range.

Battalion members were offered the option to refuse, an option only about a dozen men took, although more asked to be relieved once the killing began. Those who did not want to continue, Browning says, were disgusted rather than plagued by conscience. When the men returned to the barracks they "were depressed, angered, embittered and shaken." They drank heavily. They were told not to talk about the event, "but they needed no encouragement in that direction."

WAR AS MYTH

The most recent U.S. conflicts have insulated the public and U.S. troops from both the disgust and pangs of conscience. The Gulf War-waged from bombers high above the fray and reported by carefully controlled journalists-made war fashionable again. It was a cause the nation willingly embraced. It exorcised the ghosts of Vietnam. It gave us heroes and the heady belief in our own military superiority and technology. It almost made war fun. And the chief culprit was, as in many conflicts, not the military but the press. Television reporters happily disseminated the spoon-fed images that served the propaganda effort of the military and the state. These images did little to convey the reality of war. Pool reporters, those guided around in groups by the military, wrote once again about "our boys" eating packaged army food, practicing for chemical weapons attacks and bathing out of buckets in the desert. It was war as spectacle, war, if we are honest, as entertainment. The images and stories were designed to make us feel good about our nation, about ourselves. The families and soldiers being blown to bits by iron fragmentation bombs just over the border in Iraq were faceless and nameless phantoms.

The moment I stepped off an Army C-130 military transport in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, to cover the Persian Gulf War, I was escorted to a room with several dozen other reporters and photographers. I was told to sign a paper that said I would abide by the severe restrictions placed on the press. The restrictions authorized "pool reporters" to be escorted by the military on field trips. Most of the press sat in hotel rooms and rewrote the bland copy filed by the pool or used the pool video and photos. I violated this agreement the next morning when I went into the field without authorization. The rest of the war, most of which I spent dodging Military Police and trying to talk my way into units, was a forlorn and lonely struggle against the heavy press control.
The notion that the press was used in the war is incorrect. The press wanted to be used. It saw itself as part of the war effort. Most reporters sent to cover a war don't really want to go near the fighting. They do not tell this to their editors and indeed will moan and complain about restrictions. The handful who actually head out into the field have a bitter enmity with the hotel room warriors. But even those who do go out are guilty of distortion—maybe more so. For they not only believe the myth, feed off of the drug, but also embrace the cause. They may do it with more skepticism. They certainly expose more lies and misconceptions. But they believe. We all believe. When you stop believing you stop going to war.

I knew a Muslim soldier, a father, who fought on the front lines around Sarajevo. His unit, in one of the rare attempts to take back a few streets controlled by the Serbs, pushed across Serb lines. They did not get very far. The fighting was heavy. As he moved down the street, he heard a door swing open and fired a burst from his AK-47 assault rifle. A 12-year-old girl dropped dead. He saw in the body of the unknown girl lying prostrate in front of him the image of his own 1z-year-old daughter. He broke down. He had to be helped back to the city. He was lost for the rest of the war, shuttered inside his apartment, nervous, morose and broken. This experience is far more typical of warfare than the Rambo heroics we are fed by the state and the entertainment industry. The cost of killing is all the more bitter because of the deep disillusionment that war usually brings.

WAR AS CRUSADE

The disillusionment comes later. Each generation again responds to war as innocents. Each generation discovers its own disillusionment—often at a terrible price.

"We believed we were there for a high moral purpose," wrote Philip Caputo in his book on Vietnam, Rumor of War. "But somehow our idealism was lost, our morals corrupted, and the purpose forgotten."

Once again the United States stands poised on the threshold of war. "We go forward," President George W. Bush assures us, "to defend freedom and all that is good and just in the world." He is not shy about warning other states that they either stand with us in the war on terrorism or will be counted as aligned with those that defy us. This too is a crusade.

But the war on terrorism is different in that we Americans find ourselves in the dangerous position of going to war not against a state but a phantom. The crusade we have embarked upon in the war on terrorism is targeting an elusive and protean enemy. The battle we have begun is never-ending. But it may be too late to wind back the heady rhetoric. We have embarked on a campaign as quixotic as the one mounted to destroy us. As it continues, as terrorist attacks intrude on our lives, as we feel less and less secure, the acceptance of all methods to lash out at real and perceived enemies will distort and deform our democracy.
And yet, the campaign's attraction seems irresistible. War makes the world understandable, a black-and-white tableau of them and us. It suspends thought, especially self-critical thought. All bow before the supreme effort. We are one. Most of us willingly accept war as long as we can fold it into a belief system that paints the ensuing suffering as necessary for a higher good; for human beings seek not only happiness but also meaning. And tragically, war is sometimes the most powerful way in human society to achieve meaning.

Chris Hedges is a reporter with the New York Times where he was part of the team that won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for reporting on global terrorism. He won Al's 2002 Global Award for Human Rights Journalism. This article was adapted from War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning (Public Affairs, Perseus Group, 2002).

“Chris Hedges | Murder Is Not an Anomaly in War”
TruthDig, March 19, 2012
Excerpt: "Robert Bales, a U.S. Army staff sergeant who allegedly killed 16 civilians in two Afghan villages, including nine children, is not an anomaly. To decry the butchery of this case and to defend the wars of occupation we wage is to know nothing about combat."
READ MORE http://readerssupportednews.org/opinion2/266-32/10532-focus-murder-is-not-an-anomaly-in-war

On America’s Birthday, Let’s Protect Our Troops from Legal Drugs
Larry Cohen, Op-Ed, NationofChange July 3, 2012: “Hallucinations. Paranoia. Confusion. Severe anxiety. Unusual behavior. Suicide. Why would we want to unnecessarily expose people - especially soldiers - to these side effects? Unfortunately, that is exactly what we are doing. The symptoms listed above are just some of the officially acknowledged side effects associated with Lariam, an anti-malaria drug commonly prescribed to U.S. soldiers serving abroad, Peace Corps volunteers, business travelers, and tourists.” READ | DISCUSS | SHARE
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http://www.nationofchange.org/america-s-birthday-let-s-protect-our-troops-legal-drugs-1341327208

We Have Not Been Moved: Resisting Racism and Militarism in 21st Century America
Overview

*We Have Not Been Moved* is a compendium addressing the two leading pillars of U.S. Empire. Inspired by the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who called for a “true revolution of values” against the racism, militarism, and materialism which he saw as the heart of a society “approaching spiritual death,” this book recognizes that—for the most part—the traditional peace movement has not been moved far beyond the half-century-old call for a deepening critique of its own prejudices. While reviewing the major points of intersection between white supremacy and the war machine through both historic and contemporary articles from a diverse range of scholars and activists, the editors emphasize what needs to be done now to move forward for lasting social change. Produced in collaboration with the war movement, the book also examines the strategic and tactic possibilities of radical transformation through revolutionary nonviolence.

Among the historic texts included are rarely-seen writings by antiracist icons such as Anne Braden, Barbara Deming, and Audre Lorde, as well as a dialogue between Dr. King, revolutionary nationalist Robert F. Williams, Dave Dellinger, and Dorothy Day. Never-before-published pieces appear from civil rights and gay rights organizer Bayard Rustin and from celebrated U.S. pacifist supporter of Puerto Rican sovereignty Ruth Reynolds. Additional articles making their debut in this collection include new essays by and interviews with Fred Ho, Jose Lopez, Joel Kovel, Francesca Fiorentini and Clare Bayard, David McReynolds, Greg Payton, Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, Ellen Barfield, Jon Cohen, Suzanne Ross, Sachio Ko-Yin, Edward Hasbrouck, Dean Johnson, and Dan Berger. Other contributions include work by Andrea Dworkin, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Starhawk, Andrea Smith, John Stoltenberg, Vincent Harding, Liz McAlister, Victor Lewis, Matthew Lyons, Tim Wise, Dorothy Cotton, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Kenyon Farrow, Frida Berrigan, David Gilbert, Chris Crass, and many others. Peppered throughout the anthology are original and new poems by Chrystos, Dylcia Pagan, Malkia M’Buzi Moore, Sarah Husein, Mary Jane Sullivan, Liz Roberts, and the late Marilyn Buck.

Praise:

“When we sang out ‘We Shall Not Be Moved’ in Montgomery and Selma, we were committed to our unshakeable unity against segregation and violence. This important book continues in
that struggle—suggesting ways in which we need to do better, and actions we must take against war and continued racism today. If the human race is still here in 2111, the War Resisters League will be one of the reasons why!"

—Pete Seeger, folk singer and activist

“The rich and still evolving tradition of revolutionary pacifism, effectively sampled in these thoughtful and penetrating essays, offers the best hope we have for overcoming threats that are imminent and grim, and for moving on to create a society that is more just and free. These outstanding contributions should be carefully pondered, and taken to heart as a call for action.”

—Noam Chomsky, professor emeritus of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; philosopher, cognitive scientist, and activist

“One of the biggest stumbling blocks to building a successful movement against war has been our inability to cross racial and cultural lines, bridging the divides created and maintained by the powers that be. Since the 1960s, there have been some hopeful signs—in grassroots groups and in educational efforts—but the road forward is still long and difficult. The contributors to We Have Not Been Moved, with extraordinary scope and vision, have given us an indispensable tool to fight oppression, resist war and injustice, and create powerful new coalitions for lasting social change. This volume should be required reading—alongside of Howard Zinn's A People's History of the United States—in every sociology and political science class.”

—Connie Hogarth, life-long peace and justice activist and inspiration for Manhattanville College's Connie Hogarth Center for Social Action; co-founder and former executive director of the Westchester People’s Action Coalition

"While it is nearly impossible to agree, or to disagree, with the totality of this or any other book, I applaud the ways in which We Have Not Been Moved helps us sharpen our understanding of these moral and social imperatives. This book is in the best tradition of civil and human rights movements and a welcome addition to the literature on these crucial issues."

—Congressman Luis V. Gutiérrez, (D-IL)

“In an era of rampant militarism, growing anti-Islamic sentiment and racist violence, the essays in We Have Not Been Moved provide us with urgently needed analytical frameworks
and on-the-ground strategies for challenging structural injustice. The wide range of voices in this collection, spanning generations and social movements, remind us of the interconnectedness of our struggles against racism, militarism, violence, and injustice, and collectively urge us to build a unified, principled movement to resist intensified empire.”

—Angela Y. Davis
author, activist, and professor emerita, History of Consciousness, UC Santa Cruz

About Elizabeth Betita Martínez:

Elizabeth Betita Martínez is a Chicana feminist and a long-time community organizer, activist, author, and educator. She has written numerous books and articles on different topics relating to social movements in the Americas. Her best-known work is the bilingual 500 Years of Chicano History in Pictures, which later formed the basis for the educational video ¡Viva la Causa! 500 Years of Chicano History. Her work has been hailed by Angela Y. Davis as comprising "one of the most important living histories of progressive activism in the contemporary era ... [Martínez is] inimitable...irrepressible...indefatigable."

Martínez began her political work in the early 1950s. She worked in New York for the United Nations Secretariat as a researcher on colonialism and decolonization in Africa. During the 1960s, Martínez served full-time in the civil rights movement with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the South and as a coordinator of its New York office. In 1968, she moved to New Mexico to start a newspaper to support the Alianza Federal de Mercedes. Along with lawyer Beverly Axelrod, Martínez founded the bilingual movement newspaper El Grito del Norte, and co-founded and directed the Chicano Communications Center, a barrio-based organizing and education project. Since moving to the Bay Area in 1976, Martínez has organized around Latino community issues, taught women's studies, conducted anti-racist training workshops, and worked with youth groups. She ran for governor of California on the Peace & Freedom Party ticket in 1982 and has received many awards from student, community, and academic organizations, including Scholar of the Year 2000 by the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies. She is the author of De Colores Means All of Us: Latina Views for a Multi-Colored Century (1998), and editor of SNCC's Letters From Mississippi (1964). In 1997, she and Phil Hutchings co-founded the Institute for MultiRacial Justice, which "aims to strengthen the struggle against white supremacy by serving as a resource center to help build alliances among peoples of color and combat
About Mandy Carter:

Mandy Carter began her long career as a human rights and nonviolent activist working with the War Resister's League (WRL) in San Francisco, beginning in 1969. A veteran of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Poor People Campaign, Carter has been called "one of the nation's leading African American lesbian activists" by the National Organization of Women. She has served on countless planning committees for national and regional lesbian and gay pride marches—including the steering committee for the historic 1987 March on Washington for Lesbians and Gays. As a staff member of the WRL's Southeast regional office throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, Carter worked on the Boards of the National Stonewall Democratic Federation, the Triangle Foundation, Equal Partners in Faith, and Ladyslipper Music.

In 1992, Carter joined the staff of the Human Rights Campaign in Washington DC, serving as Public Policy Advocate with a particular focus on the religious and radical right's attacks on gays and lesbians through exploitation of the black community. In 1995, she returned to the south and founded North Carolina Mobilization '96, an electoral campaign organizing against long-time Senator Jesse Helms. She also has served as the national field director and board member of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum. Carter is a co-founder of Southerners on New Ground (SONG). In 2010, the National Black Justice Coalition featured Mandy in their "Jewel" column, noting that she is "a legend in the LGBT community, the Black community, and to all of us concerned about peace."

About Matt Meyer:

Matt Meyer is an educator-activist, based in New York City. Founding co-chair of the Peace and Justice Studies Association, and former Chair of the Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development (COPRED), Meyer has long worked to bring together academics and activists for lasting social change. A former public draft registration resister and chair of the War Resisters League, he continues to serve as convener of the War Resisters International Africa Working Group. With Bill Sutherland, Meyer authored Guns and Gandhi in Africa: Pan-African Insights on Nonviolence, Armed Struggle and Liberation (2000), of which Archbishop Desmond Tutu wrote, "Sutherland and Meyer have looked beyond the short-term strategies and tactics which too often divide progressive people... They have begun to
develop a language which looks at the roots of our humanness."


**About Cornel West (Introduction):**

Cornel West is a prominent and provocative democratic intellectual. He is the Class of 1943 University Professor at Princeton University. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from Harvard in three years and obtained his M.A. and Ph.D. in Philosophy at Princeton. He has taught at Union Theological Seminary, Yale, Harvard, and the University of Paris. He has written 19 books and edited 13 books. He is best known for his classic *Race Matters, Democracy Matters*, and his new memoir, *Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud*. He appears frequently on the Bill Maher Show, Colbert Report, CNN and C-Span as well as on his dear Brother, Tavis Smiley’s PBS TV Show.

**About Alice Walker (Afterword/poems):**

Alice Walker’s writings have been translated into more than two dozen languages, and her books have sold more than fifteen million copies. Along with the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, Walker’s awards and fellowships include a Guggenheim Fellowship and a residency at Yaddo. In 2006, Walker was honored as one of the inaugural inductees into the California Hall of Fame. In 2007, Walker appointed Emory University as the custodian of her
archive, which opened to researchers and the public on April 24, 2009.

**About Sonia Sanchez (Afterword/poems):**

Sonia Sanchez is a poet, mother, professor, and lecturer on Black Culture and Literature, Women’s Liberation, Peace, and Racial Justice. Sonia Sanchez is the author of over 16 books.

**Product Details:**

Editors: Elizabeth Betita Martínez, Mandy Carter & Matt Meyer with an Introduction by Cornel West and Afterwords/poems by Alice Walker & Sonia Sanchez

Publisher: PM Press


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**GUNS ABROAD, CUTTING LIVELIHOODS CLOSE AT HOME**

“Student Migrant Program Faces Cuts.” *NAT (7-5-12).* The Federal Migrant Education Program for children of migrants working with raw food materials, such as poultry, 8000 in AR, and NWA a hub. The long article reverberates with compassion for these children, but with its peep-hole vision it omits two major realities: the program is a subsidy to the corporations that seek such part-time cheap labor from their parents, and the permanent war (some 50 invasions and interventions since 1945) robs all treasuries of money urgently needed at home and for adaptations to the consequences of climate change. Dick

**Contents of #1 April 9, 2011**

Iraq: Killing Innocents
Libya: Weapons
Our Soldiers
  - Combat Injuries
  - Deaths
  - Bitter Memories
Monetary Costs: Stiglitz and Bilmes
Civil Liberties Lost: Wiretapping, *NYT* editorial
Unintended Consequences: Hagan and Bickerton
Collapsing Empire: Glenn Greenwald

**Contents of #2 June 26, 2011**

Consequences to US Soldiers
Women Combat Amputees
*Poster Girl* Film
Suicides
Bradley Manning
Film: *Beyond Treason*, experiments on US military personnel

Consequences to Others
Bagram
Civilian Victims
Consequences to US Citizens: Civil Liberties Lost, Continued.

Consequences to Nature
Dai Dong
Film: *Scarred Lands and Wounded Lives* by Alice and Lincoln Day
Book: *Green Zone* by Barry Sanders

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Dick Bennett
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http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Index:
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