

Panarticon

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"There's a time for war, and a time for reloading." —*Doonesbury's* Trudeau

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Fuck indeed. Seven days in Spain convinces just about anyone that Bush isn't the only one reloading his weapons in a mad frenzy... The anti-Americanism in the air is palpable, and it was all but necessary to tattoo a Canadian flag to my forehead in a last-ditch effort to convince the cabbies to avoid side-impacting my frail, Northern body into the ancient, Roman walls of Barcelona... The graffiti on the walls spoke it all — & not only the anarchist *Catalunias*, but some very respectable looking clothing stores in the windy streets of the Old District had converted those "No Entry" signs into crossed-out bombs... *!!No a la Guerra!!* Back when millions were hitting the streets worldwide, the energy peaked in Spain with an astounding 91% against the War, with the populace shutting down the major cities by banging on pots & pans... I can imagine the clamour now — and the *utter seriousness* of such a symbolic gesture, rising against the US, the UK & the pro-war Spanish Government; not only against imperialism and wanton, needless destruction, but neatly conjoining the politics of autonomy that underlie *Catalunya*. Life here is loud, and protest is even louder; while I was staying in my fourth floor apartment on Balmes an *infestation* of 3000 motorbikes terrorised the city with high-volume psych-warfare. Thousands of hot, greased bikes honking at levels far exceeding 100 decibels, revving engines in the 36 degree heat, and calling out the *Policia* — and this was just to show a little muscle against rising insurance rates for motorcyclists; which, given the number of tanned Spaniards on crutches in the downtown core alone, might be a damn good idea...

But what was I saying...I just asked for a rum & coke on British Airways and they looked confused — this must have something to do with the fact that they are serving breakfast as we cruise into Montréal. Luckily I managed to score a plush World Traveller Plus seat to jack the plane's PC power — you only get the juice in the upper echelons, it seems, and this column had to be in *as soon as I landed*... Otherwise Ze Editor would gut me over the *courriel*.

Back to the bikes, pots & pans, and the lurking antagonism in Spain — Is this truly evidence of the power of protest in the Old World? And can one really take it seriously? Up until only a few short decades ago Spain was still under a dictatorship; and the high-powered sentiments against the Americans from France & Russia have more to do with the exact *way* in which Middle Eastern oil is to be distributed. The question of ethics, the absolute lying & subterfuge that "embedded" Gulf War II as 'absolutely necessary' is somewhat of a front — most of Europe had oil contracts with Iraq. But if this is the case, it has not stopped the London press from taking the cause to its limit by front-paging a full, official inquiry into Blair's claims that Iraq had those infamous, nasty — and apparently invisible — Weapons of Mass Destruction. At least the UK public is relatively informed that *no WMD were ever found* — in the US, according to a recent PIPA/Knowledge Networks poll, 41% believed the US *had found* WMD; and 22% believed Iraq *had used*

chemical or biological weapons in the war. Perhaps this also accounts for the Spanish popularity of Michael Moore's *Bowling For Columbine*, which is still playing to packed theatres. Everyone I spoke to had a story to tell from the film, asking if it was true that Canadians kept their doors unlocked, and if Windsor is as peacefully different from Detroit as it appeared to be—"Sort of," I said. What else could I say? Canada is a violent, underlyingly racist country too—one only has to look at our history of Japanese internment camps, First Nations issues, corporate asslicking and "multicultural" policies—but somehow we seem to avoid the nastier manifestations of ultimate Fear & Paranoia which governs US politics. Decriminalization was a big plus for Canada—anyone in Spain who knows we are within an inch of freeing the weed was ecstatic. And let that be a note to our Government: decriminalization improves our international image. Keep it up: full legalization could be attainable in our lifetimes if we live long enough.

Back to the Brits, as there's something going on in the UK—Blair's spittle-laden speeches were maybe a little too eerily reminiscent of events nay 70 years ago across the Channel... Will Blair get it too? (*And he's Labour!*) Meanwhile Bush looks untouched. Not surprising, but why? For reasons that might necessitate rewinding the clock thirty years ago to Nixon. Shortly after Watergate—a year or two, after he was booted from the White House—Nixon's approval rating swung right back into babykissing territory, receiving standing ovations once again. There is something very, very wrong with the majority of human brains.

What's wrong is the same fucked-up sense one feels in European anti-Americanism. It can name the enemy, but only the obvious one, and only to reconstruct a divisionary global field of polarized politics. Take some footage of the rallies in Spain—or hell, Germany—age it in Final Cut, and I'd be willing to bet that nothing much has changed—at least in outward appearances. As those inept motorcyclists so aptly displayed, they could be rallying about *anything*. As long as there is something to *hate*, there is, at its converse, something to *love* and thus, *defend*—even if it's an idea. This is the core of the whole problematic. "Love" embraces the same dynamic; this was the whole trip with the '60s—with Hippie Love came Militant Hate.

Not that we're able to simply jump out and escape the whole mess. In early June a debate erupted on Nettime.org as to how to define our current state of affairs: has the time come to call the US "fascist" at the level of political analysis? What do we mean and understand by "fascism" today? If we define "fascism" as a basic State structure that necessitates surveillance and militarized police control of its own population (what Virilio calls "endocolonization"), a prioritized global military agenda, actions taken to silence serious dissent both internally and externally, an economic agenda protected by the use of military force, secret State operations conducted beyond the reach of law (of the State & international), the ignorance and dismissal of international Law & agreements (World Court, Kyoto, Geneva Convention)—then we already have identified the basic components of "fascism." Fascism proper, insofar as we have historically named it, and as Brian Massumi has pointed out, relies upon a shift of perspective to a Leader—the "black hole" of the leader's face, the intense faciality of a cult-following, i.e., a massive

manifestation of what we can call "pinpoint patriotism." So: here's some news. The US is withdrawing troops in the Korean DMZ. Guess why? So they can utilise tactical nukes. The War, folks, is far from over.

Erase the Face...!