ARMY
OF
NONE

DoD photo by: SSGT STACY L PEARSALL, USAF, 2006

U.S. ARMY

ARMY STRONG

Art by David Hollenbach

ARMY OF NONE

Strategies to Counter Military Recruitment,
End War, and Build a Better World

Aimee Allison and David Solnit

Back cover photo: US Marine Corps Drill Instructor and his platoon of "Young Marines" at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina. Camera Operator: LCPL Andrew Pendracki, USMC, 2003.

BOOK DESIGN BY JASON JUSTICE ★ WWW.JUSTICEDESIGN.COM

To those seeking peace and justice—
a better world begins at home.

ARMY OF NONE

SECTION TWO

COUNTERRECRUITMENT 67

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Photo: Camera Operator: LCPL NICHOLAS J. GALVIN, USMC, 2004

TEN REASONS FOR COUNTERRECRUITMENT

As a part of the counterrecruitment movement you can:

1. Support student and youth leadership.

2. Bring veterans to the forefront.

3. Meet the needs of poor and working-class youth.

4. Effectively challenge the teaching of military values.

5. Help build long-term relationships between teachers, parents, community groups, veterans and students.

6. Effectively challenge war and empire.

7. Discover and create alternatives to military values, war, and empire.

8. Affect citywide, nationwide, and international efforts for peace and justice.

9. Build communities committed to social, economic, and political justice.

10. Take concrete action that feels good.

SECTION ONE

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MILITARY RECRUITMENT

US Marine Corps Sergeant verbally "fixes" a Marine Recruit, while conducting an inspection drill at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Paris Island, South Carolina.
Photo by: LCPL BRYSON K. JONES, USMC, 2004

BRAND ARMY:
Molding Minds, Recruiting Bodies

How War Uses Public Relations and Propaganda

The people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country.
—Hermann Goering, German Nazi Party leader

Propaganda: *Any form of communication in support of national objectives designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any group in order to benefit the sponsor, either directly or indirectly.*
—Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and
   Associated Terms

What do Marlboro cigarettes, the German Nazi Party, military recruiters, and Kellogg's Frosted Flakes cereal have in common? They all employ the same public-relation techniques to persuade people to think in a certain way and to want a certain thing.

One of the main problems governments face in waging war is getting soldiers to kill and die in them. War and military recruitment for war have always acted to manufacture the consent of the public. The military often calls propaganda—used against the populations

of adversary governments, neutral allies, or the United States population—"information war" or "psychological operations." Today hundreds of millions of dollars fund private and government research, analysis, public relations, and advertising to up recruitment numbers. A good deal of the military's recruitment budget of $3.9 billion is spent on slick ads that reach students before they set foot on campus—in fashion and music magazines, free iPod downloads, MySpace campaigns, on television and hip-hop radio stations, and through concert and sporting event sponsorships.[75] If we want to counter the recruitment of youth for war or the manipulation of the public to support war, we must understand how propaganda is used by the military.

Modern public relations and propaganda were born during the First World War to convince Americans to go to war. President Woodrow Wilson formed the Committee for Public Information and appointed Walter Lippmann and psychologist Edward Bernays. Within six months the group had generated a propaganda campaign that successfully dehumanized Germans and created anti-German hysteria, so that Americans would be more supportive of fighting a war against them. This was at a time when trade unionists, radicals, socialists, anarchists, and pacifists actively opposed fighting a war in which the working class of each country would be sent to kill the working class of the other for the benefit of those on top.

The "Father of public relations," a nephew of Sigmund Freud, Bernays pioneered the use of psychology in public persuasion, or what he called "engineering consent." After the First World War he went to work for big business, including Procter & Gamble, CBS, the American Tobacco Company, General Electric, and Dodge Motors. His book, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* was used by the Nazi propagandist Goebbels

to consolidate Nazi power and win support for the campaign for the internment of Jews, Roma (Gypsies), dissidents, homosexuals, and other undesirables. Bernays said of his work, "If we understand the mechanism and motives of the group mind, it is now possible to control and regiment the masses according to our will without their knowing it."[76]

This thought was reflected when German politician, military, and Nazi Party leader Hermann Goering bluntly explained to the United States Army Intelligence officer Gustave Gilbert during the 1946 Nuremberg Nazi war-crimes trials, "Why, of course, the *people* don't want war. Why would some poor slob on a farm want to risk his life in a war when the best that he can get out of it is to come back to his farm in one piece? Naturally, the common people don't want war; neither in Russia nor in England nor in America, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the *leaders* of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy or a fascist dictatorship or a Parliament or a Communist dictatorship."[77]

Walter Lippmann, a well-known journalist and co-founder of the *New Republic* magazine, also worked on the Committee for Public Information and later went on to join President Wilson's administration as Assistant to the Secretary of War. Lippmann coined the term "manufacturing consent" about which he said, "The creation of consent is not a new art. It is a very old one, which was supposed to have died out with the appearance of democracy. But it has not died out. It has, in fact, improved enormously in technic, because it is now based on analysis rather than on rule of thumb."

Recruitment Research

The first step for the military is to figure out why people do or do not join. Public and private research and analysis

institutions spend millions of dollars every year to research, analyze, and then design policies and advertising campaigns to both recruit adequate numbers of military personnel and garner public support for government war and foreign policy. Some of the research specifically targets groups of potential recruits, like Latinos or those with high-tech skill. There is also a whole section of research, analysis, PR, and advertising aimed at "influencers"—those who influence young people's decisions like parents, teachers, counselors, priests, coaches, and the like.

Another more disturbing layer of research analyzes what they call "propensed" and "nonpropensed" youth, meaning those more or less likely to join the military. It is in these studies that they attempt to understand the psychological and subconscious beliefs and influences that shape the potential recruits' thinking and increase their propensity to join the military.

A 2005 study by the Joint Advertising Market Research and Studies (JAMRS) called *Military Knowledge Study: Measuring Military Knowledge and Examining its Relationship with Youth Propensity* has this to say:

> Propensed youth associated different images with the military than non-propensed youth. Of note, propensed youth associated both positive and negative concepts with war, whereas nonpropensed youth associated only negative concepts. Furthermore, propensed youth made a connection between war and personally relevant concepts, most importantly defending and protecting their family. The findings have direct implications for messages and images that can be used by recruiters and advertisers to more effectively target youth.

> While non-propensed youth may see the military as honorable and their family as honorable, this connection is not enough to motivate them toward

Camera Operator: SSGT. ARNOLD W. KALMANSON

enlistment. Based on these results, the following recommendation is offered: Advertising messages that directly address issues of armed conflict are necessary. They must clearly communicate to youth the role of military service in defending and protecting their loved ones.

Another distinction between propensed and non-propensed youth was how they related rigidity to the military. Non-propensed youth made a direct connection between rigidity and the military, indicating an overall impression of the military as a rigid organization. On the other hand, propensed youth, similar to enlistees and recruiters, associated rigidity with specific aspects of the military. Propensed youth and recruiters associated rigidity with war, while enlistees associated rigidity with physical challenge. Based on these results, the following recommendation is offered: Advertising messages should emphasize flexible aspects of military life. They should also aim to 'contain' images of rigidity so that they are only associated with specific aspects of military service.

Yet another difference between propensed and non-propensed youth had to do with higher education. Higher education was a central concept for non-propensed youth, but not for propensed youth. The centrality of higher education, along with the fact that it was directly linked to obligation by non-propensed youth, indicates that higher education is very important to this group. While higher education was obviously important to non-propensed youth, they did not associate it with the military.

Based on these results, the following recommendation is offered: Advertising messages need to show non-propensed youth how they can serve in the Military and still fulfill their obligation to higher education. This is different from advertising money for college.[78]

Public Relations and Recruitment

After research and analysis, propagandists use branding and psychological manipulation techniques to help sustain the armed forces. Near the end of the Vietnam War in 1973 President Richard Nixon discontinued the draft and created the all-volunteer military. The draft had been massively unpopular and widely resisted. The military hired public relations and advertising firms to persuade youth to enlist, adopting recruiting messages to encourage enlistment.

The public relations industry web site Brandchannel.com describes branding as "a collection of perceptions in the mind of the consumer." A brand is very different from a product or service. The Army and other military branches have had many slogans that help fashion their brand. "Be All You Can Be," for example, was named the second most popular advertising jingle of the last century by *Advertising Age* magazine.

Air Force Organizational Emblem: Information Warfare Battlelab, Air Intelligence Agency. Camera Operator: AF HISTORICAL RESEARCH AGENCY, 1997

Army Recruitment Slogans:

"I want YOU for the US Army"
First and Second World Wars

"Today's Army wants to join you"
1971–73

"Join the people who've joined the Army"
1973–1979

"This is the Army"
1979–1981

"Be all you can be"
1981–2001

"An Army of one"
2001–2006

"Army strong"
2006–?

Other Branches of the Military Slogans:

"Army National Guard: You Can"
Army National Guard

"Aim high"
Air Force

"Do something amazing"
Air Force

"Accelerate your life"
Navy

"The Few, The Proud, The Marines"
Marines

Army of One

Good advertising does not just circulate information. It penetrates the public mind with desires and belief.
—Leo Burnett

By the end of the 1990s recruitment was down and "Be All You Can Be" was no longer working. "Kids don't like it," said Ray DeThorne of Leo Burnett, the ad agency that took over PR for the Army and produced the "Army of One" campaign "They say it's the voice of their parents telling them what to do."[79]

In an online open discussion of the "U.S. Army brand" on Brandchannel.com, one industry professional wrote, "The brand value of the U.S. Army is taking a body blow: customers (recruits) are staying away; shareholders (U.S. citizens) have lost confidence in the CEO (Bush) to lead; and the product is, in fact, dangerous—see the recently leaked Pentagon report claiming that up to 80% of U.S. fatalities in Iraq could have been prevented by proper body armor. If the U.S. Army were a consumer product, the company would now be facing massive product-liability lawsuits."

During the periodic drops in recruitment the research-and-analysis machine kicks into high gear, recommending more recruiters, new PR and advertising approaches, increased pay, benefits, bonuses, and promises. Often the military hires new PR and advertising corporations to make over their recruitment image and branding. Leo Burnett Worldwide took the major PR and advertising contract after recruitment fell short in 1999.

Leo Burnett and his advertising agency are responsible for such advertising icons as the Marlboro Man, the Jolly Green Giant, the Pillsbury Doughboy, and Tony the Tiger. *Time* magazine called him the "Sultan of Sell," naming him one of the 100 most important people of the twentieth
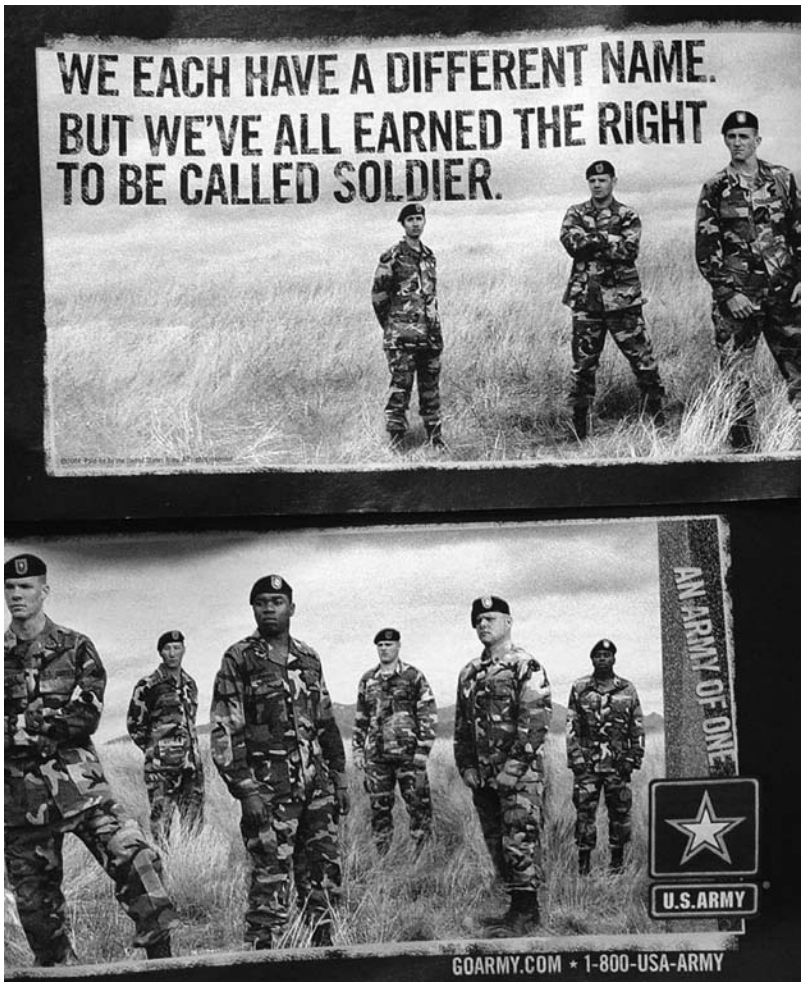
century—the man most responsible for the blizzard of commercial images that assaults us everyday. Though an advertising message might be rejected consciously, he maintained that it was accepted subliminally. Through the "thought force" of symbols, he said, "we absorb it through our pores, without knowing we do so."[80]

In the first "Army of One" TV ad, a soldier is seen running alone through a vast desert. "I am an army of one," he says. "Even though there are 1,045,690 soldiers just like

me, I am my own force. The might of the U.S. Army doesn't lie in numbers, it lies in me."

Louis Caldera, Secretary of the Army, says of young people, "What we are telling them is that the strength of the Army is in individuals. Yes, you're a member of the team and you've got support from your fellow teammates, but you as an individual make a difference."[81] Bob Garfield, an ad critic for *Advertising Age*, has a different view: "It's a clever campaign, but substantially dishonest. The Army is not, never has been, and never will be about one soldier. Individuality has absolutely nothing to do with Army life."[83]

Branding of the Future

In 2005 widespread counterrecruiting efforts culminated in disapproving public opinion to create a recruiting crisis, with many services failing to reach their quotas. In response the Army picked a new advertising agency, McCann Erickson Worldwide, which counts among its clients Coca-Cola, MasterCard, Maybelline, Microsoft, Johnson & Johnson, and Black & Decker. The agency was hired to help enhance the Army's communications with young people and their parents with a new campaign and slogan. *Advertising Age* ranked McCann as the #2 agency network worldwide in 2005, with revenues of $1.5 billion. Its web site boasts of its trademarked "McCann Brand Chain," which talks about "leveraging brand assets" to "create demand" for the agency's clients' products or services.

Army Strong

"There's strong, and then there's Army Strong," says the 30-second TV commercial. The screen fills with images of soldiers with guns running in shorts and Army t-shirts, saluting, boarding combat helicopters, and helping each

other over training courses obstacles. Dramatic music plays and a voiceover says:

> It's more than physical strength; it is emotional strength. Not just strength in numbers, but strength of brothers. Not just the strength to get yourself over, the strength to get over yourself. There's nothing stronger than the U.S. Army, because there is nothing stronger than a U.S. Army soldier. There's strong, and then there's Army Strong.

In October 2006 the U.S. Army announced their new branding message. They sent out press releases and distributed copies of a three-minute "ethos" video to bloggers and YouTube. On November 11th—Veteran's Day— they began airing TV commercials with their new advertising slogan and brand identity. With a budget estimated at $1.35 billion over the next five years, Army Strong advertising will appear in conventional media like television and print ads as well as non-conventional outlets like blogs, MySpace, other social networking web sites, and chat rooms.

"Army Strong" is the U.S. Army's effort to re-brand itself, putting into practice cutting-edge research, analysis, and propaganda techniques in an effort to shape the minds and decisions of young people, their parents, and their communities.

Stuart Elliott of the *New York Times* wrote of the ad campaign, "A prized goal of Madison Avenue is to link a brand to a desirable quality or attribute: Ford trucks with toughness, Coca-Cola with refreshment, FedEx with reliability. Now comes a major effort from one of the oldest brands of all, the Army, to lay claim to the concept of strength."[83]

To give the ads popular appeal, the Army hired award-winning music video director Samuel Bayer to direct the

commercials. Bayer launched his career in 1991 with the music video for Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit," which MTV has recognized as one the most influential music videos ever made. Since then, Bayer has directed music videos for the Rolling Stones, Marilyn Manson, Metallica, the Smashing Pumpkins, David Bowie, Aerosmith, Lenny Kravitz, Blink-182, and Green Day. His advertising work includes campaigns for Nike, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Nissan, Lexus, and Mountain Dew.

Lieutenant General Robert L. Van Antwerp oversees recruiting as Commanding General of the Army Accessions Command. In an Army public relations news interview he was asked what message "Army Strong" will send to potential recruits. He responded, "We tested it with twenty-six different focus groups. They want to go to that next step in their life. Wherever they are. And the Army is going to help them get there. That's the whole point. That's what the Army does for me. It makes me stronger than when I came in."[84]

As noted earlier, the 2005 study of recruitment-age youth showed that propensed youth draw a connection between the military and their families. "Army Strong" ads target these youth by clearly connecting the military to approval and respect from families through images and words.

In several "Army Strong" TV commercials, the Army uses real soldiers and their families, including a Latino family and a young African American man and his family. In another, we are introduced to a young white soldier named Brandon Talsma and his parents on their farm in Monroe, Iowa. Brandon says, "It was tough to tell them I was joining the Army at first—and not because of the obstacle course." His father responds, "I'm pretty nervous, uh, apprehensive, but I'm very proud of him." His mother adds, "He's just a stronger, more driven individual." In this way, the ads also target "influencers" like parents, teachers, and other adults by using positive images of soldiers. Another commercial

ends with a voiceover saying, "If your son or daughter wants to talk about the Army, listen. You made them strong, we'll make them Army Strong."

This concept of "strong" is not without problems. A comment posted on the blog Norwegianity.com explains, "I think this ad is for the folks at home who desperately want their kids who are serving to come back as better people, and not as broken-down fucked-up pieces of bio-hazardous waste."[85]

National Public Radio radio host Bob Garfield writes on the website AdAge.com: "Iraq is a tough sell. The recruiting command has met its targets only by lowering standards on education levels and basic aptitude. What it doesn't do is acknowledge the elephant in the room. Save for one flashing image in the sixty seconds of a medic placing his stethoscope to the chest of a healthy-looking Iraqi boy, there is not the slightest reference to wartime. The strength message scans as far as it goes, but is drowned out by the deafening silence about violent reality."[86]

A group called Texans for Peace put up a web site challenging the "Army Strong" campaign called ArmyWrong.net. Their mission reads, "Army Wrong is a new front in an escalating insurgency to counter the $200 million per year the Army spends on campaigns squarely aimed at the youth of America—packed with images of power and hyped across the full media spectrum. Counterrecruiting efforts like Army Wrong are hoping to do something more serious . . . obstruct the creeping militarism of America and war policies by encouraging youth to find other forms of service."

The site features commentary, recruitment and counter recruitment-related news, and realistic images of soldiers at war, as well as the "Army Wrong" take on the new advertising slogan: "There's wrong and then there's Army

Wrong. The courage to resist today. The courage to resist tomorrow. There is nothing on this green earth that is stronger than integrity."[87]

Research of Public Support for War

Just as research and analysis is done to understand and increase military recruitment, it is also done to understand public support for military operations and wars. The United States military–directed study by the Rand Institute, *American Public Support for U.S. Military Operations from Mogadishu to Baghdad,* explains the "the key factors that are associated with—and can be used to predict—support or opposition for military operations."

These factors are:

- Importance of the stakes. Beliefs about the importance of the United States' stakes in a situation are associated with support and opposition for military operations there—whether in terms of vital national interests, security interests, or moral or humanitarian interests.
- Prospects for success. Beliefs about the prospects for a successful outcome in the operation are with support or opposition.
- Expected and actual casualties and other costs. Beliefs about the likely costs, especially in casualties, are also associated with support.
- Partisan leadership and "followership." These beliefs, and support and opposition as well, are in turn related to partisan leadership and what we call "followership"—the inclination to follow one's party or ideological leaders.

The study notes that while public opinion is not the main factor in deciding on military operations, "public opinion shapes the way military operations are justified and in some cases conducted."

Specialist. Robin Ingram. 88N Transportation Management Coordinator.

THIS UNIFORM DIDN'T CHANGE ME. EARNING THE RIGHT TO WEAR IT DID.

AN ARMY OF ONE

U.S. ARMY

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In the Iraq war, the report notes that, "The prevalence of beliefs about the importance of the stakes and, to a lesser extent, the high probability of success were the key sources that buoyed support; as a result, although casualty expectations were much higher than in the peace operations we examined, the willingness to tolerate casualties in a war in Iraq also was much higher."[88]

The Bush administration has used public relations and propaganda techniques more brazenly than any other administration in recent history in an effort to influence the "key factors" and mold public support for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and efforts to dominate Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela, and the underlying policies of empire. This has included "big lie" tactics of repetitive misinformation, such as linking Iraq with the September 11th attacks and claims of Iraqi stockpiles of nuclear weapons; fabricated news stories, such as the toppling of Saddam's statue just after the invasion of Iraq or the "rescue" of a United States servicewoman in Iraq, Jessica Lynch; hiring PR firms, creating newspapers in Iraq, planting false or misleading stories, and creating the Iraqi national Congress which pushed for a U.S. invasion; influencing the media through embedded reporting, control of information and access in Iraq, etc. The Bush administration has also created "memes" and stories to brand its foreign policies, like the "war on terror," "weapons of mass destruction," and "Operation Iraqi Freedom" (originally "Operation Iraqi Liberation," until people realized that the acronym spelled O-I-L).

Counterpropaganda

Understanding how advertising, public relations, and propaganda techniques are used to influence youth into enlisting and the public into supporting war and empire is essential to stopping predatory recruiting and illegal and immoral wars and occupations. Here are some ways we can counter this propaganda.

Leo Burnett Campaign

One approach to countering recruitment propaganda is to directly confront and pressure those that do the dirty

propaganda work for the military. Students and youth in Chicago from Students for Justice, decided to confront the advertising firm that made the United States military's recruitment propaganda. Author/activist Naomi Klein wrote in early 2003, "In Chicago last week, more than a hundred high-school students demonstrated outside the headquarters of Leo Burnett, the advertising firm that designed the U.S. military's hip, youth-targeted 'Army of One' campaign. The students claim that in under-funded Latino and African American high schools, the army recruiters far outnumber the college scouts."[89]

Joe, an organizer with Students for Justice, explains their actions, which led to the arrests of a number of students: "The protests against Leo Burnett from Dec. '02 to April '03 exposed their role in this recruitment. They could not ignore the attention brought on them. No company wants negative publicity, especially a firm in an industry based on public opinion, like advertising."[90] The Chicago Business newspaper *Crains* revealed that the protests caused conflicts within the company. Some employees opposed the war and the Army of One contract.

Battle of the Story

One term that is helpful in understanding advertising, propaganda, and how to counter them is the concept of a "meme." Organizer and author Doyle Canning defines a "meme" as a unit of self-replicating cultural information— a slogan, melody, image or idea that bounces through the culture. Doyle is part of a group of organizers, trainers, strategists, and communications professionals called smart-Meme who have developed tools and who lead training for activists and communities to understand how we are manipulated by the stories and propaganda of those in power and how we might wage a "battle of the story," in which we powerfully communicate our own stories to counter theirs.

There are two kinds of memes. Another smartMeme organizer, Patrick Reinsborough, defines them:

controlMeme: a meme used to marginalize, coopt or limit the scale of social change ideas by institutionalizing a status-quo bias into popular perception of events. The type of memes that analysts from the United States military and government analysis and research think tank, RAND Corporation, and Pentagon information warfare experts spend countless hours and millions of dollars designing.

smartMeme: a designer meme, which injects new infectious ideas into popular culture, contests established meaning (controlMemes), and facilitates popular rethinking of assumptions. These are memes that act as containers for collaborative power, reveal creative possibilities for change, and help grassroots social movements contest idea space.

In section three of this book there is a "Battle of the Story" worksheet that can be used by individuals and groups to help them to understand the status-quo story on an issue, so that we can better tell our own counterstory.

At the core, much of what their advertising, branding, and PR does is to tell a story that influences our beliefs and thinking. Being able to understand, break down, and expose their stories

An Army Of One

Brought to you by George Bush and Leo Burnett, USA

and propaganda is key, but it's not enough to win. We also have to be able to tell and amplify our own real-life stories clearly, powerfully, and effectively.

SECTION THREE

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PEOPLE POWER AND STRATEGIC ORGANIZING

FOR A SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT

PEOPLE POWER STRATEGY TO END WAR AND BUILD A BETTER WORLD

It dawned on me after the election that people are tired of unfocused protests and calls to action with no strategy or concrete goals to work for.
—Mike Kress, an Air Force veteran and conscientious objec-
   tor who now works with the Spokane Peace and Justice
   Action League

The world seems to be waiting for those of us in the United States—and millions of us here are ready—to finally stand up to the Bush administration and the bi-partisan policies of empire. How will we actually stop the war and occupation?

In 2003 we tried to stop the invasion of Iraq, and in 2004 we tried to oust the invader. Both times, incredible ground-swells of grassroots activism from nearly every sector of society hit the streets and doorsteps of the United States. We won important, though less visible, victories but failed on both counts. One reason it's been so hard to mobilize people after the invasion is that there is no clear logic as to where our efforts are headed. What will another march or even nonviolent direct action add up to? How will we actually stop the war and occupation? We have exhausted the established channels of change. Political pressure, lobbying, and elections have not worked. It's time for a different approach.

The antiwar movement needs a new strategy to stop the war and occupation of Iraq.

The solution is written in the mountain-road block-ades and mass mobilizations in Bolivia that have driven out transnational corporations like Bechtel and Suez and even the country's president in 2003. It is written in the farm-worker-led Taco Bell boycott victory of 2005, and the immigration-rights boycotts, walkouts, and mobilizations. It's in our rewritten history. It's called people power.

People power is an assertion of real democracy. It ass-erts the democratic will of communities and movements to change the things that matter when the established so-called democratic channels turn out be little more than public relations for elite rule. Every successful movement in the United States, from the workers' and civil rights movements to victories in anticorporate campaigns today, and every dictator toppled in recent history, have relied on people power methods. The term was popularized by the 1986 Philippine uprising against the U.S.-backed dictator Ferdinand Marcos, in which military resistance and mass mobilizations were central to ousting him.

A people power analysis understands that power is not something that those in power hold but is a fragile relation-ship between those in power and the rest of us. Our com-pliance forms the pillars on which their power depends. When we withhold our cooperation and organize deter-mined movements to intervene, we can assert our power and force changes—or remove those who refuse to make them.

If we adopt a people power strategic framework, iden-tify the pillars that support the war, and choose thoughtful campaigns with creative tactics to remove them, then we will have a viable movement. People who do counterrecruit-ment organizing witness concrete victories everyday on a one-on-one level, and can see its potential to end the war

and even stop the next one by cutting off the supply of soldiers. It is one key part of a bigger strategy. Doing this important work, while sharing the same overarching goal with other types of equally important justice work, will allow for all our efforts to cumulate into something very powerful. In this way, we may retain a sustaining sense of purpose as we achieve specific victories and milestones. In all of our steps we may engage in a long-term struggle for a fundamental revision of the United States foreign and domestic policies, for real democracy and against empire. Do we have the guts and imagination?

We are throwing a lot of words around here,
so let's define the terms:

- **Strategic Framework:** a basic concept or plan for achieving longer-term goals.
- **Campaign:** a series of activities to achieve specific goals; these can be both short-range and long-range.
- **Tactics:** a specific action intending to get a particular result, often as part of a campaign.

In the lead-up to the 2003 United States invasion of Iraq, as the world protested and pressured the U.S. government to stop, some parts of the antiwar movements began to turn toward a people power approach. In Ireland a campaign of protest and direct action at Shannon Air Force Base successfully stopped it from being used as a major refueling stop for U.S. troop and supply flights on their way to Iraq. In Britain, dockworkers refused to load supplies for the U.S. war. In Italy, activists blocked trains moving

People Power Strategy

supplies for the war. In Turkey, mass protest forced the government to refuse to let the nation be used as a staging base for the invasion, which U.S. war planners had taken for granted.

In San Francisco, the Bay Area Direct Action to Stop the War called for a next-day shutdown of the city's financial district if the United States invaded Iraq. The well-publicized goals of the shutdown said in part, "We will impose real economic, social, and political costs and stop business as usual until the war stops with the express intention of deterring a war in Iraq and future wars." A diverse San Francisco Bay Area antiwar movement united around this common framework. On March 19, 2003, the United States began its invasion. The next day the *San Francisco Chronicle* quoted San Francisco police officer Drew Cohen as saying, "They succeeded this morning—they shut the city down. They're highly organized but they are totally spontaneous. The protesters are always one step ahead of us." It worked because everyone understood and was operating within a common-strategy framework that made sense and had logic to it.

A Common-Strategy Framework

A common strategy framework is a shared sense of purpose that allows everyone to work together while doing what they can individually, complementary of one another's efforts.

It's clear that we are not all going to agree on any one (or two or three) campaigns, but it is possible for us to consciously adopt and promote a people power strategy that makes our various efforts complementary and cumulative. I think of it as a massive umbrella under which we can—whether we are a national organization, a local group, or a decentralized network—make our efforts add up.

COURAGE
TO
RESIST!

ARMY OF NONE
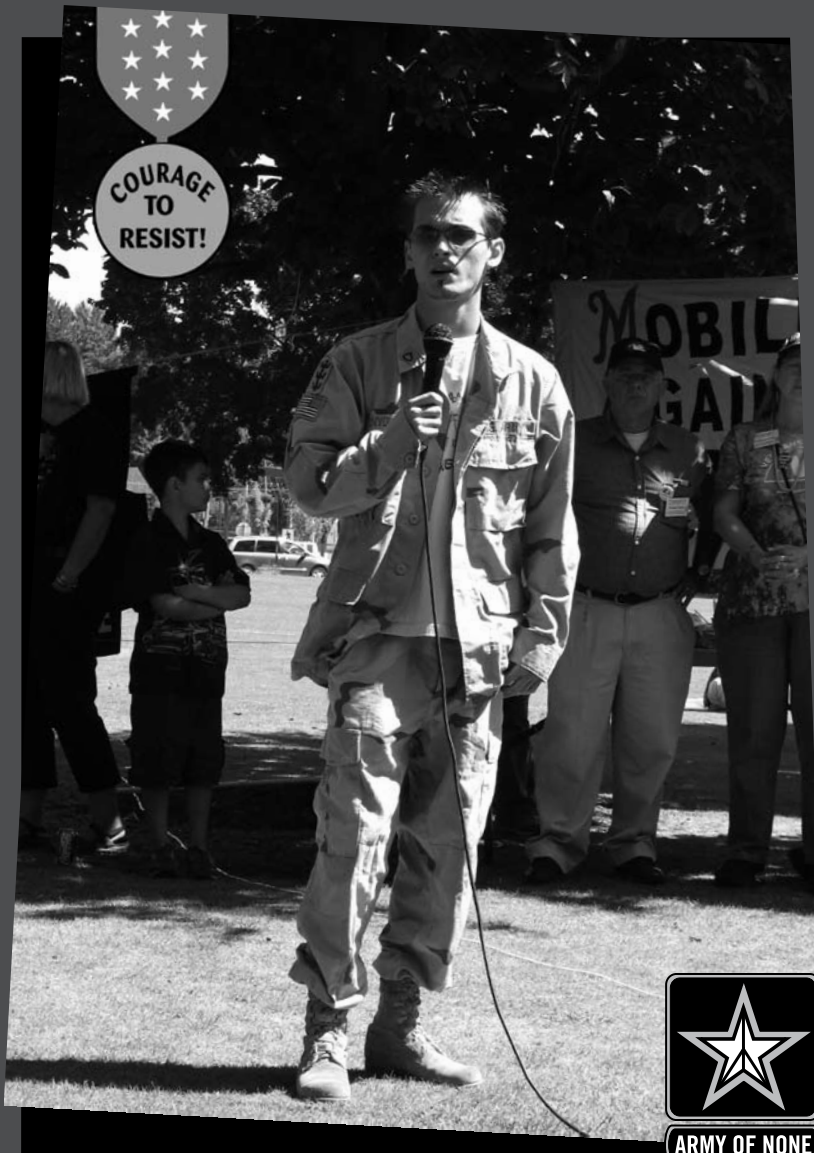
"I left the military because the situation is now that it is not conducting itself as a professional unit. I refuse to work in an organization that commits war crimes."

"At the end of the day, you have to ask yourself if this is something you can live with. It's your life and the choice is ultimately yours to make. I said NO and I will never regret it."

— KYLE SNYDER

"It is my conclusion as an officer of the Armed Forces that the war in Iraq is not only morally wrong but a horrible breach of American law. Although I have tried to resign out of protest, I am forced to participate in a war that is manifestly illegal. As the order to take part in an illegal act is ultimately unlawful as well, I must as an officer of honor and integrity refuse that order."

— LIEUTENANT EHREN WATADA

Lt. Ehren Watada (with Iraq Veterans Against the War behind him)
addresses the National Veterance for Peace Conference, 2006.
Photo by Jeff.Paterson, Jeff.Paterson.net

Here are a few key elements that made the short-term people power actions in San Francisco at the start of the Iraq War successful:

- Clear What-and-Why Logic: Shut down the Financial District in order to impose a cost on war.
- Broadly Publicized: Repeated lead-up actions and press conferences, street art, tens of thousands of fliers, a widely utilized web site and broad community mobilizing made sure a huge portion of the Bay Area knew what was planned and why.
- Mass Training and Mass Organization: A few thousand people received civil-disobedience trainings at schools, churches, and rallies, and well over a thousand people were directly involved in the organizing via affinity groups, working groups, and public meetings.
- Decentralization: Many allied groups who had minimal contact with the initiating organization understood and supported the strategy, and participated in the action without coming to an organizing meeting or bothering to identify as part of the organizing nucleus, "Direct Action to Stop the War."

What if we, locally, nationally, or internationally, had agreed on a long-term people power strategy before the war started in Iraq? What if we were not just trying to have our voices heard in order to influence those in power, but were actually asserting our own power and withdrawing the pillars of support for war and empire-building policies? What if we do it now?

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Pillars of War

A group of people in a college campus classroom are participating in a "people power strategy to end the war" workshop. They are asked to "think of what are the pillars of support that the U.S. war in Iraq depend on—which, if you removed them, the war and occupation could not continue?" "Troops," someone shouts out. That person is asked to step forward and become that pillar by holding up part of a mattress with the words war and occupation of Iraq taped to it. Another person says, "Corporations, like Halliburton." That person becomes the second pillar holding up the war and occupation mattress. "Media— that persuades people to support the war and misinforms them." The person steps forward, and the mattress has three pillars.

The workshop facilitator asks, "What are some ways we can weaken or remove these pillars of support—let's start

Photo by Jeff Paterson, Jeff.Paterson.net

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with troops?" "Counterrecruiting, so they can't get enough soldiers." "Supporting soldiers who refuse," someone else offers. "Resisting a military draft that they might turn to if we are successful at counterrecruiting."

"If we do all these things, will that weaken or remove the pillar of troops?" People agree that it could, and so that pillar is removed and the mattress lurches, held up by just two pillars. The same exercise is done with the "corporate" and "media" pillars. The mattress collapses.

What are the key pillars of support—the sources of power without which the war and occupation could not continue? Three key pillars are soldiers, corporations, and media disinformation. While they are not the exclusive list of pillars people might identify, here's an explanation of why they are key and what effective campaign/s might look like:

Pillar of War: Troops

The United States government can't fight war or maintain an occupation without enough troops—or without obedient troops. Nor can it begin new wars. This pillar could be weakened if we:

Counterrecruit to reduce the military's ability to recruit young people

As you have been learning about in this book, students and community members across the United States have taken spirited action and waged legal and political challenges that have driven military recruiters from their campuses and communities. Massive countereducation of students and youth, mounting protest and direct action at recruiting centers, and increasing resistance in the Army reserves have contributed (along with the losing war in Iraq) to low military recruitment.

Develop campaigns that support troops and National Guard (or private or government employees) who refuse deployment or orders, in compliance with international law

GI resistance within the military, together with mass desertion and draft resistance, is widely credited with being a key element in forcing the United States out of Vietnam. David Zeiger, director of the recent Vietnam GI resistance movement film, *Sir, No Sir!,* and active organizer in the antiwar GI coffeehouse-related solidarity efforts, describes the movement:

> Like the Vietnam War itself, the GI Antiwar Movement started small and within a few years had exploded into a force that altered history. And like the times from which it grew, the movement involved organized actions and spontaneous resistance, political groups and cultural upheaval. Between 1966 and 1975, groups of soldiers—some small and some numbering in the thousands—emerged to challenge the war and racism in the military. Group action and individual defiance, from the 500,000 GIs who deserted over the course of the war to the untold numbers who wore peace signs, defied military discipline and avoided combat, created a "Fuck the Army" counter culture that threatened the entire military culture of the time and changed the course of the war.[109]

Lt. Ehren Watada, the first commissioned officer to publicly refuse deployment to Iraq, asserted the power of GI Resistance to stop the war and occupation in Iraq and the importance of civilian support to enable this, at his speech to the annual Veterans for Peace gathering in Seattle on August 12, 2006:

I speak with you about a radical idea . . . The idea is this: that to stop an illegal and unjust war, the soldiers can choose to stop fighting it . . . Those wearing the uniform must know beyond any shadow of a doubt that by refusing immoral and illegal orders they will be supported by the people not with mere words but by action . . . To support the troops who resist, you must make your voices heard. If they see thousands supporting me, they will know. I have seen this support with my own eyes . . . For me it was a leap of faith. For other soldiers, they do not have that luxury. They must know it and you must show it to them. Convince them that no matter how long they sit in prison, no matter how long this country takes to right itself, their families will have a roof over their heads, food in their stomachs, opportunities and education.[110]

For refusing to deploy to the illegal war in Iraq and for engaging in free speech, Lt. Watada already faces a maximum of eight years in jail for a series of charges, including: missing movement, contempt toward officials (saying Bush lied about the war), and conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman (speaking out against illegal war). To counter this kind of crackdown, we can, as Lt Watada explains, build support "not with mere words but by action" in our communities and in antiwar and counterrecruitment movements that will help to take a stand or refuse deployment.

Resist the draft and draft registration by supporting young men who refuse to register for the selective service and preparing for mass resistance to a possible draft

If our counterrecruitment efforts successfully cut into the military's recruitment numbers, it could mean the

government will have to bring back a standard military draft, "national service," or a special medical-worker draft, all of which may open a space for massive public resistance.

According to 1980 draft registration resister and current antidraft organizer Ed Hasbrouck, massive draft registration non cooperation may have been key in preventing a draft over the last the twenty-five years. He said the last General Accounting Office audit of the Selective Service found that they did not have current information on the whereabouts of as many as 75 percent of potential draftees.

We can begin educating medical professionals, who may be the most likely to be drafted, and young draft-age and younger men about the possibility of a draft and how to resist it. Instead of waiting until draft induction begins, peace-and-justice groups and individuals can begin now to help make a draft unworkable later. Young men can refuse to register, refuse to tell the selective service their whereabouts when they move, and urge their parents or those at the registration address (if you did register) not to accept or sign for an induction or other Selective Service notice, or give out any information about current whereabouts. People who did register can actively publicize their commitment to refuse a military draft.

Together counterrecruitment, GI resistance, and draft registration resistance can cut off the supply of troops and help to stop wars for empire. However, to be effective we also have to be prepared for U.S. military innovations that circumvent the need for conventional military troops. These innovations include the following:

■ Privatization of the military—mercenary and private corporations getting paid for traditional military roles.

■ Increased mechanization of war, or air wars and bombing campaigns that involve fewer troops and

On August 11th 2006, after being AWOL from the military for over 14 months, US Army Interrogator Sgt. Ricky Clousing spoke publicly about what he called "the daily devastation of occupation in Iraq" which led to his decision to leave his unit after completion of his tour in Iraq. He then turned himself over to military custody. On October 11th he was found guilty of AWOL and sentenced to three months in prison. Photo by Jeff Paterson, Jeff.Paterson.net

Iraq era veteran and GI resister Pablo Paredes and Fernando Suraez de Solar, father of soldier killed in Iraq, lead the Latino March for Peace and for immigrant rights in Watsonville, CA. The march went from Tijuana, Mexico to San Francisco, California.
Photo by Jeff Paterson, Jeff.Paterson.net

reduce U.S. military deaths, though often resulting
in more civilian deaths among the targeted country
or area.

■ Recruitment, training, funding, arming, and direct-
ing of proxy armies, guerrillas, terrorist groups and
death squads to do U.S. bidding without involving
large numbers of U.S. troops—examples include the
anti-Soviet guerrilla Army in Afghanistan in the late
1970s and 1980s, and the "Contra" Army against
Nicaragua in the 1980s.

■ Use of clandestine or CIA operations to disrupt,
repress, or destroy governments, movements, organi-
zations, and individuals the United States govern-
ment objects to.

We can prepare for these other forms of war and
intervention that do not rely on large numbers of troops by
breaking out of the limitations of single issue organizing.
If we educate ourselves, our groups, our communities, the
public and our movements about the history of United
States interventions and war, we will see why it is important
not to organize simply against a particular war, like Iraq, or
a particular component of militarism, like recruitment. We
can't afford to create new organizations or movements every
time the government finds new ways to assert its policies of
war for empire.

Many groups and movements develop an understanding
of underlying systemic problems and include them in their
goals and mission statements, so it is not a stretch when the
U.S. government wages war on another country or resorts
to forms of intervention that do not depend on troops. For
example the GI Resister support group Courage to Resist,
instead of just opposing the Iraq war and occupation, has
adopted a mission statement that includes opposition to
"war and occupation and the policies of empire."

Pillar of War: Corporate Profiteers

Another of the most obvious pillars of war are the corporations that play an essential role in the Iraqi occupation, and in the motives behind it. Corporations are essential to continuing the war and occupation in Iraq. Forcing them to withdraw their participation would shut down essential components of and motives for the war and occupation—while opening up tremendous opportunities to Iraqis to define and create their own economic future.

There are four main types of corporate involvement in the war and occupation:

- ■ "Reconstruction" contractors, like Parsons, with $5.3 billion in reconstruction contracts that include $243 million for the construction of 150 health care centers. More than two years into the work and $186 million spent, just six centers have been built, only two of which are treating patients.
- ■ Privatizers, the corporations that are working toward privatizing Iraq's economy, such as Chevron Texaco, which is poised to reap trillions of dollars off of Iraq's oil sector.
- ■ Weapons and military supply manufacturers, like Lockheed-Martin, that have seen their stock value and profits skyrocket since the "War on Terror" began.
- ■ Mercenary "private security" corporations that provide logistics and services, like CACI International, which provides interrogators, including those involved in Abu Ghraib torture.

Campaigns targeting corporate profiteers are gaining momentum. The Bay Area's Direct Action to Stop the War targeted the San Francisco–based Bechtel Corporation in 2003–2004 after the company received an early Iraq reconstruction contract. Protestors emphasized that not only

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Iraq era veteran and GI resister Pablo Paredes leads the Latino March for Peace and for immigrant rights in Salins, CA. The march went from Tijuana, Mexico to San Francisco, California. Photo by Jeff Paterson, Jeff.Paterson.net

ARMY OF NONE

did the company receive its contract without competition, but that it ultimately received nearly $3 billion for work that absolutely could and should have been done by Iraqis themselves, and with far better results. Bechtel's inability to restore water, electricity, or sewage to even pre-war levels significantly contributed to anger—and likely violent resistance to—the occupation and the soldiers enforcing it. Hundreds of protestors repeatedly blockaded the entrances to Bechtel's headquarters while delivering scathing critiques of the company's performance in Iraq. Unable to endure the constant attention, Bechtel executives decided not to bid on any new work in Iraq after their initial two contracts.

In Houston, Texas, activists organized a grassroots campaign to raise awareness about Halliburton's complicity in the occupation of Iraq, which included two large scale nonviolent direct actions at the company's 2004 and 2005 shareholder meetings.

Houston Global Awareness, the lead organizing group, said in its call to action, "Halliburton is essential to continuing the war and occupation in Iraq and forcing them to withdraw their participation would shut down essential parts and motives for the war and occupation. Not only are their operations in Iraq depriving the children and people of Iraq of any sort of future, but also the billions upon billions in no-bid contracts heaped upon them by George Bush and Dick Cheney results in the further weakening of social services here at home."

These protests increased the chorus of resistance to Halliburton's obscene profits and poor performance in Iraq. The company is now being investigated under dozens of charges by government agencies and, most significantly, has lost its largest U.S. government contract in 2006 for logistical support for U.S. troops. The contract is now being competitively bid.

The power of corporate profiteers can be weakened through aggressive and innovative anti-corporate campaigns. These campaigns create an economic, political and social cost to war profiteering, until they are forced to pull out.

Corporate Media

Corporate media's steady stream of lies, distortions, and repetition of the United States government "war on terror" rhetoric was essential in propagating the pretense for the invasion of Iraq and is key to maintaining some level of public support for the war and occupation. If people were given the right information, they would be more likely, and better equipped, to resist. Independent Iraq and Middle East journalist Dahr Jamail explains that creating reliable independent media and optimizing access to it "will be a better path to ending the occupation than continuing to react to the disinformation and the lies put out by the corporate media and the Bush administration."

We can weaken this pillar by creating and supporting independent media and running media accountability campaigns to educate the public to become critical of media bias, and to curb some of the most outrageous lies and distortions. Additionally, independent media advocacy campaigns could set goals of switching over large numbers of people from watching/listening/reading corporate media to watching/listening/reading more alternative media. Groups can pressure local radio and television to carry syndicated independent media programs like Democracy Now! and Free Speech Radio News. Imagine if switching to independent media sources had been a key component of all the antiwar organizing over the last few years.

For example, a local group could pick one local TV station and monitor the experts and opinions about the Iraq

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war over one month. They could very publicly demand, in a country split on the issue, that the station have balanced war coverage with equal numbers of pro- and antiwar experts and opinions. This could include public education, letter-writing and phone-call campaigns, meetings with producers, petitions calling for balanced coverage, and pledges to switch to independent media if the station does not meet the demand for balanced war coverage.

Successful alternative media campaigns act to give people all the information they need to understand their world, and decide for themselves how to participate in it.

Achieving Fundamental Change

To stop the next war—be it in Iran, North Korea, Syria, Venezuela, or elsewhere—and to counter the domestic impact of the policies of empire (of which the Iraq war and occupation are symptoms), it is essential that we think and frame our campaigns and education within its systemic context. In this way our efforts to stop the Iraq war will be complementary and cumulative rather than competitive and fractured, and will build momentum towards stopping other wars and injustices without having to start new movements each time.

Importantly, we must articulate positive, directly democratic, socially just, ecological alternatives. When we oppose oil companies like Chevron Texaco, we must simultaneously advocate alternative fuel/transportation systems and democratic non-corporate institutions to take their place. When we call for soldiers to refuse deployment, we must build supportive communities for them to join instead. When we expose the lies of corporate media, we must provide alternative sources. This "saying yes as loudly as we say no" will help the movement we are building to

continue on long after we have stopped the occupation of Iraq.

A final key ingredient for a successful strategy is our ability to frame our own struggles, or tell our own story. If we are acting defensively within the framework of the United States government and their "war on terror" story, we will always be on the defensive. If we allow them to define reality, we will always lose. If we limit ourselves to defensively arguing that there are no nuclear weapons in Iraq, for example, without challenging the legitimacy and cost of the U.S. being an empire, then we are operating in a reality defined by those in power. We have to be able to understand, fight and win the "battle of the story."

The courage of young people in the military, on the campuses and in the streets are showing us how to assert our people power. It's clear that more and more folks in the U.S. and around the world have the courage to resist. Can we can find what lies in the root of the word courage—le coeur, or heart—to assert our power as communities, as movements and as people to reverse the policies of empire and build a better world?

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Aimee Allison

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David Solnit

Global justice activist David Solnit was a key organizer in the direct action shut down of the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999 and in the shutdown of San Francisco the day after Iraq was invaded in 2003. He is the editor of *Globalize Liberation: How to Uproot the System and Build a Better World* (City Lights Publishers, 2004).

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