

On Peace and Peacefulness

Written by

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PEJ News - C. L. Cook - I went down to the demonstration to get, I presumed, my fair share of abuse, but there was little of that to be had. With the exception of one "business-type" hollering support for "our" Canadian mission in Afghanistan, and the benefits of "democracy" now enjoyed there, the entire affair was staid, judging by the numbers displaying the majority hopes for peace.

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Hooking up with the Usual Suspects

Please, don't misunderstand; I'm a firm believer in the necessity of public protest, but yesterday's demonstrations marking the looming third anniversary of America's immoral invasion, and subsequent occupation, rife with illegalities, of Iraq was a stark demonstration of the apathy with which the majority of Canadians, in my town at least, accept these outrages against law and humanity.

By the Numbers

The corporate press gleefully advertised the depressingly low turnout for the global day of observance of this monumental crime against humaneness. You can take that for what it's worth; but, the numbers were low here in Victoria, a city of some 300,000 souls. Of the total population, perhaps 500 braved the sunny, yet still cool March day.

Many of those attending I recognize from years past, when we same gathered, sang, and marched into the city streets, waving banners, blowing whistles, and generally firing spitballs against the Colossus that is manifest as the militarizing of Canadian society.

Honks from the Fastlane

As we paraded up the town's main drag, motorists not cursing the momentary inconvenience of our collective presence - those in the free-travelling opposite lane - honked here and there in support of what they were too busy to partake of. Thanks for your support. I know Saturday's are busy, and there's so much to get done, before returning to the, ultimately, war-machine enabling labours that fill most of our work-weeks. The media though, that knows no rest, made a tentative appearance. I noticed them hanging out on the fringes with the bicycle cops, chit-chatting about who knows what?

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And so, we marched. We stopped in the middle of Fort Street, in front of the military recruiting centre. Their front window is covered with a flashy graphic, one of those large decal-type things you see on city buses. There are too a couple of SUV's travelling around town with the same exciting graphic pasted on them, hoping to ignite the imagination of the young. Being Saturday, there was nobody home at the recruiting centre to witness the raspberries, and calls of "Shame!" Pity.

And Tomorrow, and Tomorrow...

So, what to take away from this further effort? After devoting a couple hours of my Saturday, I went home and began scribbling against the fascists: More spitballs against the Colossus. It was good to see the good people I only run into during like events, but I came away with the depressing notion: Canadians, for the large part, don't give a damn.

Perhaps when the bodies begin rolling home in greater numbers from Afghanistan, should the government and "war for" press deign report it - Canadians will look up from their hockey and steins, and begin demanding answers. Maybe. For now though, it looks as though this nation is willing to doze, a country of moral somnambulists, while the State takes the people's necessary tribute, and turns it to warfare.

See y'all next year at noon, in Centennial Square.

Chris Cook is a contributing editor to [PEJ News](#), and host of [Gorilla Radio](#), a weekly public affairs program, broad/webcast from the University of Victoria, Canada. You can check out his writings at the [GR Blog](#) and [Empire Burlesque](#).