

# Books—Corporate War & Grassroot Peace

by Chris Calder

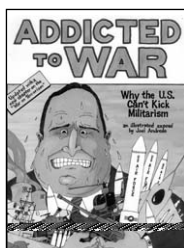


*The Bush Agenda: Invading the World One Economy at a Time* is the work of a Washington insider in the best sense. Antonia Juhasz uses her perch as a former congressional aide and current D.C. think-tanker to shed plenty of sunlight on the neo-con war machine.

*Bush Agenda* is especially good at analyzing Paul Bremer's move from director of Kissinger Associates through his 14-month reign as Saddam Hussein's successor. He knocks down the myth that there was no administration plan for postwar Iraq. Juhasz shows that there was and is a plan, just not one that Karl Rove allows to be spoken publicly, lest Americans take pause at the sociopathic ruthlessness of our leaders. The demolition of Iraqi society and replacement with a playing/killing field for Western multinationals is spelled out convincingly here. This book makes a fine companion to John Perkins' *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, showing exactly what the jackals do once their more genteel colleagues fail.

While most books on this list can be credited with breaking new ground on fairly old arguments, the same cannot be said for *Waging Nonviolent Struggle*. Gene Sharp's work pushes far beyond exposition. In clear, assured prose the author breaks down 23 historical cases where non-violent, people's campaigns, working mostly outside and against existing institutions, were carried out to great effect, if not always success. This is no pacifist's idyll, but a cool-headed, comprehensive treatise on the uses of power from the bottom up. From Russia's 1905 revolution to the UFW grape strike and boycott to the overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic, Sharp derives tried and true tactics and strategies, making it undeniable that power comes from other sources than the barrel of a gun. He supplies theory, but is not primarily a theorist, nor is it even clear what his political orientation is. It would make excellent use of one of Sharp's techniques—political ju-jitsu—to put his vital book to work now at home. For anyone who has despaired at challenging a superpower from within, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle* breaks down the walls of the ballot box and provides abundant hope, with a game plan.

*Addicted to War* covers a century-plus of US imperial policy, but one can still imagine a 16-year-old cruising through it in an afternoon and coming out with a brand new frame of reference for the nation's history. One reason is that *Addicted* is a comic book. Another is that it's witty and direct about the causes and effects of five generations of continuous war. Worried about a teen teetering on the brink of enlistment? Tuck *Addicted to War*



under her pillow and get ready for some hard questions, like, "Why don't they talk about this stuff in school?," and "Why have you let this go on?"

*War is a Racket* is the 1935 classic by Brigadier General Smedley D. Butler, author of the well-known quote beginning, "I spent 33 years in the Marines, most of my time being a high-class muscle man for big business." The tone of Butler's book is obvious from its chapter headings, including *To Hell with War!* and *How to Smash the Racket!* But the delights here go beyond fiery rhetoric. Learn about the fascist coup attempt that nearly toppled Roosevelt (Butler was asked to be a figurehead president, refused and publicly busted the Wall Street plotters) and the ins and outs of war profiteering during World War I. This slim volume is a good one to leave among those who equate supporting the troops with acquiescing to war.

*The New Nuclear Danger* is Dr. Helen Caldicott's "connect-the-dots" between the Bush administration and the nation's nuclear weapons industry. For activists, there are plenty of specifics about war companies, government officials, weapons programs and the deleterious effects of the same, with contact information galore to make your voice heard. This is a depressing, scary book, but with a strong bent toward what is to be done, or at least who is to be written to.

*Sorrows of Empire* by Chalmers Johnson and *Naked Imperialism* by John Bellamy Foster are both fine accounts of America's accelerating shift toward militarism: *Sorrows* the Ivy League account and *Naked* an edgier, more up-to-date version drawn from arguments made in the *Monthly Review*, which Foster edits. Both authors draw important parallels between the US and previous empires, while outlining the political atrophy which allows the current decline to continue. These are scholarly works delineating what many of us feel in our bones: that while thousands die overseas, democracy lies barely conscious and bleeding in the land of the free.

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