

2003 And All That

In **1066 and All That**, their classic spoof of British history (or rather, of history *lessons*), W.C.Sellar and R.J.Yeatman list the main objective of the Peasants' Revolt as having been:

- a) To obtain a free pardon for having revolted.

They also remark that, having succeeded in that objective, they were all executed anyway.

In today's surrealistic political scene, unintentional self-parody among the Left and among opponents of the war is commonplace and there is no scope for talents of the kind possessed by Sellar and Yeatman. Therefore it is not surprising to find that many take for granted not only that the (**real**, secret) objective of the war is to **steal oil**, but that if a war must be fought, its principal objective *should* be:

- a) That none of our soldiers should ever violate the rules of war.

This has the same logic as Sellar and Yeatman's joke: it is an objective that can only be realistically achieved by surrendering in advance; and it is an objective perfectly compatible with all being executed anyway. Even Bill Whittle, in the fine **essay** we referred to recently, seems to be analysing the morality of the war in terms of which side adheres more closely to the rules of war. By that standard, the Coalition comes out overwhelmingly ahead. But that neither diminishes the crimes that Coalition soldiers do commit, nor is it a valid argument that the Coalition side is in the right.

We make **no excuses** for cruelty, nor do we condone violence that is not justified by self-defence. But we do not confuse the issue of enforcing the law among soldiers with that of what the objective of, or justification for, fighting **is**.

Sat, 06/04/2005 - 13:13 | [digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [permlink](#)

objective of, or justification for

The link provided, while filled with the self-righteous indignation I've come to expect from "the world" does not seem to be consistent with "the World's" view point. If the (implied) objective is Saddam, then that objective has been met, in which case coalition forces

could withdraw.

by a reader on Sat, 06/04/2005 - 19:57 | [reply](#)

Really?

I don't think **The World** is committed to the position that that link contains an exhaustive list of objectives and justifications for the fighting. Just some powerful ones that easily fit in a short blog post.

The reader claims that it isn't consistent with **The World's** viewpoint, but since he seems to know what that is, he probably knows that it *is* consistent. It's just not the complete story. And, there's no reason that it should have to be. This is a blog, not a book.

One minor quibble, though: I'd probably change "self-defence" to "defence" (I'd actually change it to "defense", but that's a different matter) since I assume that **The World** condones violence to defend others as well.

Gil

by **Gil** on Sun, 06/05/2005 - 00:38 | [reply](#)

Self-Defense

As far as moral justification, defense of others *is* self-defense – by the others.

/AmE [shudder]

by **Editor** on Sun, 06/05/2005 - 00:58 | [reply](#)

Re: Really?

I stand corrected. **The World** has consistently advocated war under various pretexts. I guess that is **The World** ultimate position - to advocate war.

Let's see, There was "Saddam has weapons of mass destruction!" "He doesn't? Well, it doesn't matter anyway". There was "Saddam has ties to al Queda!" "He doesn't? Well, it doesn't matter anyway" There was "Saddam is a brutal ruler!" "We are too? Well, it doesn't matter anyway"

Then there is the Popperianism which somehow infallibly justifies the war. When this fails to convince, **The World** switches to another ideology, the Sharansky doctrine.

by a reader on Sun, 06/05/2005 - 16:20 | [reply](#)

Re: Really?

A reader wrote:

I stand corrected. **The World** has consistently advocated

war under various pretexts. I guess that is **The World** ultimate position - to advocate war.

I advocate peace. Unfortunately there are lots of tyrants and terrorists and if we don't kill or imprison them they'll kill lots of people and generally disturb the peace. So we need to fight a war to get rid of them, then we can have peace.

by **Alan Forrester** on Mon, 06/06/2005 - 02:35 | [reply](#)

war

Well *I* advocate war. Death, blood, gore, pain, all that. And it's not as if we're killing Americans. (Peace later is ok with me.)

We don't know if there are WMDs or not. We do know there used to be, and that Saddam failed to show that they were gone. How are we supposed to feel safe and secure that he doesn't have any if he did have them and then he wouldn't say what he did with them?

Our rulers aren't brutal like Saddam. For example, they let people like you call them brutal, and fail to kill you.

-- Elliot Temple
<http://www.curi.us/>

by **Elliot Temple** on Tue, 06/07/2005 - 03:01 | [reply](#)