

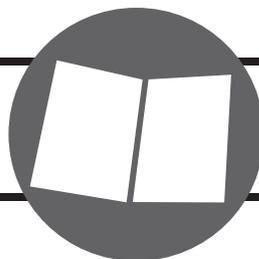
a special issue on the economy

the monitor.



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words.
art.
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"World in Boxers" Special Report: Kundera Faces Possible Disgrace

story by | ben wesselschmidt

Earlier this week, various media sources reported the discovery of old Soviet records which indict Czech-Franco author Milan Kundera as a possible Soviet informer during his youth. This comes as quite a shock and indeed possible disgrace given Mr. Kundera's staunch anti-Communist stance since his exile from former Czechoslovakia in 1975.

According to records recently uncovered by the Czech authorities in the study of totalitarian regimes (twentieth century Czechoslovakia was under the thumb of both Nazi Germany and the U.S.S.R.) revealed that a young Kundera, as a college student in the early 1950s reported Miroslav

Dvoracek, his neighbor who was working as a Western Intelligence agent at the time. Mr. Dvoracek served 14 years in prison, including service in uranium mines, for his conviction. Mr. Kundera has denied all allegations.

The report would not have been highly out of the ordinary, specifically for a young Communist such as Mr. Kundera, who was an ardent supporter and member of the party during his student years. However, given his history with the party after his expulsion from it, and his condemnation thereof specifically after his exile, this kind of revelation comes as somewhat of a shock. The study of the fiction of Milan Kundera is the study of the oppression of the Commu-

nist party in the Eastern Bloc. His most famous novel in the West, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984), displays the exhaustive psychological taxation of living in a system of zero dissent, and the consequences should someone ever chance. This development, however is most ironic in the context of his first novel, *The Joke* (1967), in which the protagonist joking proclaims loyalties to Trotsky and is sent to forced labor prisons similar to that Mr. Dvoracek certainly must have endured.

This surfacing of this kind of news comes as somewhat of an affirmation to the Czech people, to whom Mr. Kundera has been disdainful for years, and vice versa. "The revelation that Kundera denounced

someone is seen by Czechs as a vindication of their belief that he has been betraying them for years," reports Petr A. Bilek, a professor of Comparative Literature at Prague's Charles University (as reported by the *New York Times*). Kundera, resentful over his exile and feeling abandoned by the Czech people for refusing to defend him, has now accepted French citizenship and has even gone so far as to prohibit his new novels, written in French, to be translated into Czech.

The Czechs feel equally as abandoned by perhaps their greatest Post-Modern author totally denying his nation of birth as well as his native tongue. As such, these current developments fuel the fire of resentment over said feelings.

Americas Social Forum Held in Central America

story by | marc becker

Thousands of Maya farmers took over Guatemala City's main boulevard in a massive march on October 12. Men and women, some carrying months-old infants, were dressed in the colorful outfits of their local communities. They carried banners advertising the names of their Indigenous and peasant organizations, and denouncing the privatization of land and water. They shouted out slogans that popular movements are sweeping across Latin America, and that the people united will never be defeated.

This continental march on the Day of Resistance of Indigenous peoples and nationalities brought an end to the Americas Social Forum, a gathering of civil society and social movements. With the participation of more than 7,000 delegates from throughout the Americas and Europe, the 6-day event condemned corporate-led neoliberal economic policies, and pledged to build a better world.

Billed as the "forum of resistance," the gathering intentionally culminated on the anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival in the Americas. Elites previously celebrated October 12 as the Day of the Race, but now Indigenous peoples commemorate it as a day of resistance to exploitation and oppression.

This was the third meeting of the Americas Social Forum, and the first one in

Central America. Since the World Social Forum began in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001, these gatherings have brought together social movements to create alternatives to corporate globalization and empire. Although somewhat smaller than previous gatherings, the participation of 350 organizations in a wide range of events resulted in a very rich meeting.

Forum organizer Joel Suárez from the Martin Luther King Center in Havana, Cuba, noted that "we tried to have a different kind of forum, one with a strong presence of women, Indigenous peoples, young people, and peasants." The forum, indeed, did have a large Maya and female face.

Indigenous peoples, not only from Guatemala but throughout the Americas, met to discuss issues of land and water. Blanca Chancoso, an Indigenous leader from Ecuador, proclaimed that "water is not a commodity; water is life. Land is our mother and our mother is not a commodity."

Tom Goldtooth from the Indigenous Environmental Network based in Minnesota said "we are witnessing the collapse of capitalism." He came to Guatemala to join with other Indigenous peoples across that Americas in opposition to "a neoliberal system that is not working and continues to oppress our people."

The forum came on the aftermath of voters in Ecuador approving a new constitu-

tion that embraced that country's plurinational nature. Ecuadorian Indigenous leader Humberto Cholango contrasted plurinationalism with pluriculturalism that tends to reinforce neoliberalism and the folklorization of Indigenous peoples. Plurinationalism, Cholango argued, was a broad political, social, and economic concept. It means fighting for a new political process, not just for a small representation in government, but for a new concept of state structures.

In addition to plurinationalism, "sumak kawsay" or living well was a theme that ran throughout the Indigenous meetings and

spread to the rest of the forum. Bolivia's foreign relations minister David Choquehuanca introduced this concept at the 2007 Indigenous summit in Guatemala. He noted that development plans look for a better life, but this results in inequality. Indigenous peoples, instead, look to how to live well, or "sumak kawsay" in Quechua. Choquehuanca emphasized the need to look for a culture of life.

As Joel Suárez noted, the forum did have more of a female face than previous meetings. Women's groups used the forum to build...



photo by | marc becker

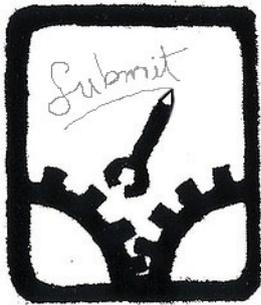
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The Monitor Environmental Forum: Open Your Damn Eyes, Not Your Wallet

opinion by | ryan dalton

Laura Ferry will have to forgive me for drawing much of my argument from her comments. I feel that her concerns and her views are not unlike many who hold a concern for our futures, which will unavoidably be full of consumption (though ideally it will be done conscientiously). With respect to her comment on our mindfulness for the next consumer fad, I feel that this “go green” movement is not preparing us for another fad. In fact, we’re in it.



I suspect that if you walked into Walmart or Target these days, they’d have their stores embellished with these contemporary, green products littered in each department. Their ads still proclaim their product lines to be in accord with the environmental movement: buy this t-shirt because it’s made from US Organic cotton or recycled plastic bottles. Buy, buy, buy, because it’s green. Excuse me? Perhaps my studies of environmentalism have misled me, but it’s my understanding that

defending the environment is not equated with replacing (read disposing) our old products with new products.

There is no doubt in my mind that these green-washed messages are encouraging us to rethink the way we buy products. It’s telling us to think about the earth by buying these products that claim to benefit the earth. In point of fact, however, this consumer-environmentalist ideal is an absolute fallacy. Buying a new product – never mind that it may contain recycled or organic materials – is still an act of supporting systems that impact the environment.

Through the act of buying something pristine, new, profoundly marketed, you are engaging in environmental degradation, physically and metaphorically. Put yourself in the example for the sake of this argument: you purchase one of Walmart’s recycled-bottle t-shirts. You not only feel content with your purchase for the sake of cosmetics, but you feel a sense of environmental residency for simply investing in a “green” product. For one, you now possess a new shirt you very easily may parade around within your social circle, showering the shirt with praise for its environmental design. Making this purchase may tell you, as Laura Ferry alluded to, environmental conservation is important, and the earth becomes a better place by, for example, recycling.

However, the act of recycling is no new champion to the environment,

considering our early upbringing with and constant exposure to it. So when Walmart, in its ad campaigns, associates recycling (read an act of environmentalism) with its product, it thrusts a product onto the market that is presumably beneficial to the environment. What we see is an item that represents the meanings associated with recycling. In looking at a product such as this one – or any organic cotton t-shirt or energy efficient washing and drying machine or fuel-efficient, hybrid car, etc. – the product’s descriptor (e.g. made from recycled plastic bottles, organic cotton, and so on) and marketing point does not carry any sort of proof as to being green; it’s merely an identifier. The fact of the matter is that you invest in yet another product.

There are ramifications for consuming, if you weren’t already aware of this. Through buying new things, you have old things. Whether or not your new toy is “green,” your old toy has to go somewhere. It could end up in the trash or it could end up stored away at some donation collection point. Additionally, this new item of yours required energy to produce it and ship it. What’s more is you’re choosing to support a trend: the “green” market. This campaign is riddled with lies, unsubstantiated evidence, vagueness, irrelevance, and hidden costs.

You are lied to when a fuel-efficient car is placed on the market and it’s labeled as green. The car required a great deal of energy and resources to produce, and I don’t care if

you feel this is a step in the right direction: you’re still putting another damn car on the road. You are being fed unsubstantiated evidence when energy-efficient washing and drying machines claim you’ll save on your energy bills by the boatloads. You don’t know that, and they don’t know that: they’re preying on your insecurities with energy consumption and money management. Green products are simply vague by the sheer fact that you don’t have any of the research and development costs and conclusions. This advertising campaign is simply full of flashy language and warm feelings, and these businesses laugh it up not only in the ad and marketing campaign division, but all the way to the bank too. This color has become bastardized from all previous meaning less greed and money.

I wouldn’t blame you if you felt a little helpless. Just what steps does one take to truly be “green” or “environmentally friendly”? I’m not going to chastise my readership without providing some advice, but I’m going to ask a favor first. To find more information, please visit my blog at <http://monitoreenvironment.wordpress.com>. On this blog, you’ll find an open discussion on topics I’ve written about and on comments I’ve received. As always, I encourage your responses, both on my blog and by email.

Please send your responses to Ryan at monitor.environment@gmail.com

The Real Ayers I Know, Freedom Fighters, You Liars, Republicans

opinion by | larry iles

One of the many justifications for having an alternative press in this part of the world such as this paper comes about when the mainstream media refuses to handle a story they themselves have ignited, equitably. Such is the pathetic case with our sole, near monopoly TV ABC station KTVO who have been running the Palin-McCain smear story against Obama for knowing Bill Ayers and his equally ex-Weatherman wife Bernadine for over a week so far, but have refused to follow up redress calls for balance from people locally like myself who have actually not only met the two, but also are qualified, globally recognized published historians on the Radical events themselves Palin and her irritable old codger sidekick traduce on their network.

Lets deal with the ‘terrorist’ smear first of all in calculated rewrite of history by Palin to try and equate these two Ayers with 9/11. In fact both were and are avowed secularists, not Muslims, defining themselves in Bernadine’s words to me when I met her at their native Chicago’s Gene Siskel film cen-

ter’s UK-funded documentary premier showing of 2003 THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND as today “democratic socialists”. Even at the moment of most asserted Weathermen civil disobedience attacks on Vietnam and other US war facilities, 1970-75, 25 attacks the planners went out of their way NOT to kill civilians, but capitalist property, as a way of bringing home to the US media the unacceptability of killing at conservative minimum 3 million Vietnamese and 50,000 plus US troops so callously.

Of course this breakaway faction as Bernadine in the documentary as good as concedes they were from the non-violent STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY at the rancorous Chicago 1969 June convention did get the freedom fighting wrong and undeniably people were killed in their now both also conceded recognition that the global revolt did not come, despite its promising Paris street beginnings Sarkozy hopes today’s French will slavishly never recollect. But even here it is sheer demagoguery and fearmongering of the extreme Right for Palin to use the 9/11 inflammatory term, terrorist.

The stark truth is that the biggest death toll of the Bob Dylan protest song-named group when the operation of conscience-raising went awry were bungling extremist Weathermen themselves who could not handle their own crude explosives. Sissy Spacek madder her biggest actress debut in a 1975 TV film called “Katherine,” later pejoratively released as the radical in a deliberate slur by Republican party contributory stores ripping off low-incomers in food necessities.

However a stellar cast including the great Art Carney as her fictional father ensure that this film is a pretty faithful rendering of what was the worst Weathermen excess against themselves when a semi-autonomous group headed by another significant WEATHERMEN feminist Diana Oughton blew themselves up right next door in Greenwich village to actor Dustin Hoffman’s house when their bomb short-circuited. Far from the Ayers Professors today approving of this, it caused a hasty California hiding sanctuary from the FBI pursuers, as the Ayers had never agreed with what they themselves at the time

called Diana’s civilian target, a non-commissioned officer’s ball. Oughton’s group having reached the Xenophobic view that US capitalism was near totally irredeemable to saner tactics of overthrow.

That some Weathermen were involved in future ill-considered violence also is indisputable, especially once the Vietnam war protest rationale caused most of the group’s 13 top leaders to give themselves up when in 1975 the USA was at last terminated in losingly that country. Some such as the still-locked-up David Gilbert are still serving plausibly unjust prison sentences for working armed robberies for the Black Liberation groups funds which went wrong, but their actions are not condoned by most of the surviving Weather leaders such as Columbia Campus shut down today Community College math teacher Mark Rudd.

So in conclusion when next oratorically you listen to the Palin camp menace YOUR freedom of association and free speech rights past or...

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**this is orange
line train to
the photo page**



competition by | erin lee givarz

with this picture | thee wed by | s.grace



**here's your stop: submit your
art for fuck's sake ... <3 jess**

backdrop by | mark hardy



rain by | kara bollinger



untitled by | mark couch

A Work of Fiction

fiction by | matt welker

“A bottle of Robitussin costs about eight dollars when bought at the store. It costs sanity, public and personal image, and potential golden years off of your life when taken all at once.”
-Mark L’Wette

Mark L’Wette wouldn’t be leaving Rivkillsek, Imisours for another nineteen hours. He was heading home late for Thanksgiving and had to find a way to pass-by an entire day while his friends departed from Manta’s Utter University (After a heated debate, this name was chosen over “Treat Ma Nuts University,” for undisclosed reasons). An empty hazy plastic bag sat on the shelf, and his wallet was too empty to buy a forty or even a can of goat-sucker piss called high gravity lager. The purple death sitting in the medicine box was whispering to him, ‘Remember the old days? Before intense boozing, but after weekends became synonymous with brain cellicide?’ So, the day before a three-hour-turned-ten-hour-god-damn-that-mother-ucking-snow-storm drive home, Mark found himself weighing the heaviest eight-ounce decision of his life. Or the heaviest decision of his month because, let’s not bullshit here, he’d done this before.

Frightening hours in friends’ basements trying to connect with a former self that had a sense of syntax and depth perception, vomiting glop into urine-stained toilet bowls, being both frightened and stirred emotionally by The Guinness Book of World Records; these were all moderately peppered over his high-school Age of Enlightenment’s main course of marijuana with sides of alcohol and psychedelics less likely to kill a person. The decision practically made itself, he’d reason later without hint of irony.

‘What the fuck is Andy Rooney talking about?’ Mark thought as he effortlessly uncapped the mistake. Only as the final gagging dregs were plipplipping onto his recoiling tongue did the ominous realization dawn: ‘I haven’t had anything to eat today.’ Like church bells during an 11:00 AM hang-over, it resounded a seemingly-uncountable number of times. Then, like the lost hour at the beginning of daylight-savings, noon struck with: ‘I lost my ID card; how am I going to get food? I lost my ID card; how am I... .’

Stumbling out the door and against the day, Mark crossed into a world view where all faces glared back like demon sting-erfish. A deformed plan hatched out of the gooey egg of his mind in which the past could be corrected by the future. He lurched towards the Krik building to obtain a new ID, and, what the fuck, have the picture retaken, too: the dangers of dilated pupils and temporary brain damage. Complete communication breakdown ensued, but a hot laminated ticket to nourishment was procured and the two women working in the ID office nervously force-scuttled the bewildered psychosociopath back to where he could do real damage: the outside world. A forgotten cigarette was lit to cremate between trembling, sweaty fingers.

Twisted sidewalks bounced his legs forward as all physical sense was lost, excepting the wrenching wench of a stomach in an epic battle. Reaching the Your browser may not support display of this image.store, Mark had to sit down on the cold steel bench seat. The attached woven-steel picnic table was flexing and the spires of steel were growing like sunflowers.

Once courage and balance were reestablished, he negotiated the door open as dozens of suspicious eyes watched.

The fluorescent lights hummed songs only Mark heard as he selected the cherriest of week-old “roast beef” sandwiches and a bottle of orange juice that looked particularly interesting at that swirling moment. A sagacious revolt of peasant organs was forming. Angered kidneys, stomach and liver had collected and agreed that the oppressive, incompetent overlord had no one’s best, or even worst, interests in mind. In fact, very little was still contained in that tattered rag of consciousness, and the beheading of misconception was long overdue.

Sitting down at the same hostile picnic table, Mark managed open the plastic death-chamber of a wrapper and began forcefeeding the dry disgust of a mystery meal. About three bites in, the first shots of the revolution were fired. Mark’s eyes watered as people saw him chew. Then his gag reflex quit. Finally, amidst the in-between class bustle of constant passersby, including those headed for the very Your browser may not support display of this image.store he’d emerged from, he calmly walked to the nearby sycamore and vomited, projectile style. For several ten-second heaves. ‘All eyes on me,’ he thought in barely-aware bitterness. ‘Well, two things are for sure. Firstly, I can never take this shit again, medicinal purposes included. And secondly, no one else will be buying a sandwich from the Your browser may not support display of this image.store today.’

Author’s note:

Since this experience, Mark L’Wette drifted away from illegal substance abuse and adopted a healthy, perfectly legal system of intoxication. He now merely chain-smokes and has an insatiable thirst for whiskey.

Also, I wonder why some words were in italics...

Queen Astra

Let the stars be your guide!



Aries (March 21-April 19)

When aliens finally visit, they’ll probably agree to abide by that Star Registry thing that advertises late nights on the radio. Pick yours before all the good stars are gone!

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

I assure you, getting your tongue forked is still going to be an awesome decision ten years down the line. Don’t worry about it!

Gemini (May 21-June 21)

You’re getting a raw deal - you have to split this single horoscope two ways.

Cancer (June 22-July 22)

Are you even really a Cancer, or are you just reading all of the horoscopes hoping that one will be funny? Bad news either way.

Leo (July 23-August 22)

Remember that song “No Sex (in the Champagne Room)?” This week, you will.

Virgo (August 23-Sept. 22)

Knock it off.

Libra (September 23-October 22)

You too.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

If you find that, statistically, over 50% of your decisions end up being wrong, it’s probably time to let the Magic 8 Ball take the wheel.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

I wasn’t fucking kidding when I said it was too hot, but you ate it anyway, and you burned yourself, and now you just look like an ass.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Don’t buy that thing you want to buy. They’ll just announce a better one the day after you do.

Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Take advantage of the current economic downturn and invest in a set of spinning rims. Awww, yeah.

Pisces (February 19-March 20)

We found out who shot J.R. almost thirty years ago. Stop asking. It’s not relevant or funny.