

COMMENT

It was the second policy that failed

THE language of war is tough. The language of peace and diplomacy, by contrast, can seem wittingly tender. Language has been a terrible confusion through the first third of the Gulf crisis. As, barring miracles, that phase draws to a close, it is necessary to rescue meaning and purpose from a pile of verbiage.

The allies have pursued two policies since Saddam Hussein — misreading indolent signals from the American State Department — invaded Kuwait. The first policy was to bolster a fearful Saudi Arabia against attack and to impose the most draconian of trade embargoes upon Iraq. Two months on, that policy was a success. The Saudis were safe; and the lifelines of trade for Baghdad were severed. Then the policy — for reasons which remain obscure — changed. There was a White House decision to give the defensive allied troops along the Kuwait border an offensive capability. Millions of tons of hardware poured in; troop levels doubled. The long-term costs became gargantuan. A deadline for possible military action — January 15 — was set.

Well, we are now up to January 15 and beyond. How does the second policy look? By its own espoused ends — “the last, best chance for peace”, as George Bush told Congress only last weekend — the policy stares bleak failure in the face. The combination of sanctions and offensive military build-up has not worked as the politicians who designed it hoped. It leaves, now, armed attack as the last, best chance for peace. That is bloody nonsense.

Let us explain, one more time, why the first allied policy — sanctions and a defensive ring — seemed the right one to this paper. Saddam Hussein, on his record, is a murderous thug. He ran Iraq, through the eight-year debacle of the Iranian war, with three shots in his locker: Terror against opponents. Military back-up from what is laughingly called the world community. And money from the same source. The reaction to Kuwait stripped him of the last two of those comforts. His military machine is grinding to a stop for want of spares and outside expertise. And, absolutely crucially, the cash he depends on to oil the wheels of Iraqi society dried up the moment his pipelines were cut. Take the CIA's own figures. Ninety-seven per cent of Iraqi exports have stopped. Saddam's life support system is cut. It is only a matter of time before sanctions bring him down.

Ah — the immediate counter cry — but how long could you give that first, more peaceful policy? Three months? A year? Three years? It is a facile debating point, easily turned upon the proponents of war. How many casualties are they prepared to endure? Three thousand? Thirty thousand? How long are they prepared to fight for? Three days, or months, or years? How much of Kuwait City are they prepared to flatten in the exercise, the liberators of Dresden?

The advantages of the sanctions and defence route were

twofold. In the precise circumstances of Iraq — forget Rhodesia or South Africa or Libya, because the parallels are meaningless — they offered a certain way of bringing a change of regime in Baghdad. And, crucially, they meant that the transition might be moderately coherent: in short, that there would be an Iraqi government left to build again upon the ashes of Saddam's folly.

How, then, did we stumble into Policy Two? What wind of change blew us, and the initial UN stance, off course in October and November? Historians and archives, much later on, can get the balances right, but the simple answer is: political frailty. George Bush, struggling with his own public opinion and a pretty unconvinced world community, sought to still the doubters by building up troops on the ground. The UN wrote in January 15 to keep the Soviet Union on board — because it was a deadline that seemed to give plenty of time. American reservists in their tens of thousands were called up to fill the diplomatic vacuum with an appearance of decisiveness. As the forces were decanted in the desert, the rhetoric against diplomacy hardened. No linkage. No partial withdrawals. And the inevitable, infinitely predictable result is what we see today. Great armies massed in the desert. Diplomacy seemingly ended. The political imperatives all set for war, yet remember: this was the policy for *peace*. It is an awful flop. It does not betoken strength. Any weakling can call in the generals and then turn ashen as the options drain away. It betokens feebleness: a political inability to lead rather than drift with the tide of events. There has been too much feebleness in the first phase of this crisis.

Take one current example. The early rhetoric warning Saddam against partial withdrawal — compared and contrasted with the present rhetoric, which would fall gratefully on his neck if he moved a few tanks. If some movement would help now, why on earth did our leaders pretend that it would be anathema in December? If sanctions were working in October — and that is what the White House solemnly told Congress — why on earth did the tune change in November? It was nothing Saddam Hussein did: it was what our politicians did to themselves. They built the box they now wriggle in.

Two things can happen now. One is that, even after the passing of a purely permissive deadline, there may be a continuance of diplomacy and sanctions. That would see, to repeat, Kuwait liberated — if we had the will and the money to see it through. But nothing in the last five months hints at such will. So we must prepare for imminent war.

The Guardian doesn't shrink from that. War is what we've been left by those who claimed to be fighting for peace. No-one can tell how it will go. The odds, for what they are worth, are on allied success. The allies have

trillions of dollars of shiny new kit for the testing. They have air and sea dominance. They face, immediately, a conscript army. It may all (the dream scenario) be over in a week. The hawks may have their chortling day. The Iraqi generals may swiftly revolt against pending slaughter. Let us fervently hope that it goes that way.

But there are also no guarantees. The Israeli dimension, the scope for Arab chaos in the allied ranks, is manifest. The Storming Normans of the sixties thought Vietnam could be bombed into submission. The problems of leading a multi-national force are huge. Much of the technology is untested in battle. That goes for 90 per cent of the foot soldiers, too. The language of the operating theatre — as in surgical strike — is curiously inapposite. War is mayhem. This war may be mayhem too. Perhaps the operation will be a success: apart from the possibility that the patient, what is left of Kuwait, will die.

The Gulf crisis, for historians, will fall — as we say — into three phases. The efforts to punish Saddam and persuade him to retreat. The conflict, if it comes. And then the problem of victory. It is not too soon to anticipate those. We are belatedly told that, without linkage of course, there must now be a final Middle East peace settlement. James Baker and Douglas Hurd affirm it with all the vehemence of Francois Mitterrand. Yet nobody, at midnight, can foresee what can be built on the rubble of war. Smash the Iraqi Army as well as Saddam, and Iraq breaks — like a gigantic Lebanon — into warring fiefdoms. Create another supposed Arab martyr and the fault lines open instantly. Posit a situation where American troops must permanently remain to defend feudal kingdoms against their own citizens and the endless ordeal becomes evident. If the genuine third phase of the exercise is a lasting Middle East peace it is a genuine hole in the heart: because no-one involved has any plan for turning battlefield victory into diplomatic settlement.

For a while, of course, it may all seem much simpler. The politicians will fade as the generals take over. Saddam has chosen to fight, for a short span at least. The course of that battle will shape what comes next. But it is worth, one more time, pausing to take stock. Within a few days, barring those ephemeral miracles, the “new world order” will manifest itself in a single decision from the White House to order half-a-million troops in a firestorm. The UN goes, cold-bloodedly, to war. That may be where the logic of five, feeble months has got us. But it is a perversion of the original logic. It remains, whilst there is any chance, worth striving to avoid. And, if it happens, it will require a level of leadership from our leaders that they have so far given scant hint of. The slide to conflict has been a tender stumbling: emerging from it, with lasting peace, will truly be the toughest challenge.

1,2 → DC 13/12

2830

1, 2, 5 X

The Guardian

INDEPENDENT RADICAL NEWSWEEKLY

VOL. 43, NO. 7 ■ DECEMBER 5, 1990

\$1.25

Resisters within the ranks

Guardian
5-12-90



Sam Lwin and five other New York reservists refused to go.

By TOD ENSIGN

"For me, war is immoral, killing is immoral," declared Marine reservist Sam Lwin, explaining his refusal to report when his unit was activated for Persian Gulf duty Nov. 24.

"I felt like I should be proud, but I wasn't," said Colin Bootman, who also refused to go. "Every drill, I saw guys walking around with knives strapped to their hip and I thought, 'Why don't I feel like they feel?'"

On Nov. 24, Lwin and Bootman, members of a Marine Reserve unit in the Bronx, N.Y., were part of the first act of mass GI resistance to foreign military deployment since the Vietnam War. Six members of the unit known as Fox Company publicly disobeyed orders to report for active duty.

The six are part of what is clearly a growing number of active-duty resisters throughout the country. The Pentagon contends that fewer than 100 U.S. troops, reservists and National Guard members are resisting service in the Gulf, but anti-war organizers say the number is many times higher.

NO 'BOX COMPANY'

Evidently in response, meanwhile, the Army has ruled that soldiers in units on alert for Gulf service will not be allowed to file for conscientious objector status until they actually arrive in Saudi Arabia. Most Army units are now on alert status.

Four of the Fox Company refusers

held a press conference at New York's New School for Social Research Nov. 26 to explain their reasons for resisting Gulf service.

Lwin, 21, a Burmese-American from Queens, N.Y., and the group's leader, had taken a public stand against Middle East duty several weeks earlier. An ad hoc group of New School students and faculty members calling itself the "Hands Off Sam!" committee was organized to support him and other reservists. The group conducted leafleting and vigils outside the Ft. Schuyler Marine armory in the Bronx.

This effort paid off when several other Marines decided to join Lwin in refusing activation. The Marines adopted as their slogan, "Don't let them turn the Fox Company into the Box Company!"

Citing a supporter's comment that he was a hero, Lwin observed, "The real heroes are all the people in this country who are taking action to try and stop President Bush from launching this catastrophe."

The other reservists at the press conference, Bootman, Keith Jones, and Wayne McWhite, are Black New Yorkers. Bootman, 24, was born in Trinidad and immigrated to the United States as a child. He explained that he enlisted partly to repay what he felt was a debt to this country. Once in the Marines, however, his thinking changed.

Bootman cited the U.S. invasion of Grenada as a reason for his resis-

(Continued on page 2)

How NATO's terrorists blew up a busy train station, and other sordid tales from 'Operation Gladio'

Page 5

Inside: 16-page pullout section

What's Left to Read?

Winter book supplement

Eulogy for perestroikaS-4

Chicano murals: 'Signs from the Heart' Centerfold



Poems of pain and magic s-10

'Bad Attitude' in a Processed WorldS-11

and much, much more ...

'They're already shipping the body bags ...'

Page 2

William Kunstler on Noriega: 'Give the Devil benefit of law'

Page 3

Why the Iron Lady lost it all

Page 4

Body bags headed for the Gulf

By DON OGDEN
Special to the Guardian

CHICOPEE, Mass.—One hundred thousand body bags, 10,000 pints of blood plasma that will be unusable in 60 days and a specialized military unit trained to work with prisoners of war have reportedly been shipped recently to the Persian Gulf from Westover Air Force Base here and other U.S. military air fields.

In addition, there are indications that nuclear weapons were recently loaded onto mammoth C-5A cargo planes at Westover and sent to the Gulf. According to a civilian self-described as a "close confidant of an Air Force member stationed at Westover," the Air Force member participated in loading a Gulf-bound plane using special procedures reserved for nuclear weapons.

The confidant, who wishes to remain anonymous to protect the Air Force member, said that the information that body bags, blood and the prisoner of war unit

were shipped to the Gulf around Nov. 22 is in general circulation at the Air Force base.

The Air Force member also told the confidant that a friend was being shipped out for Gulf service—to Turkey. Turkey, which borders Iraq to the north, has been mentioned as a possible launching point for a "second front" against Iraq.

Longtime peace activist Frances Crowe, the American Friends Service Committee field staffer in Western Massachusetts, said the report "hasn't been verified, but I think the source is very good. I know the people that collected the information, and I think it's true."

NUKES ON THE WAY?

Joseph Gerson, New England peace education secretary for AFSC, is not surprised that nuclear weapons are apparently on the way to the Gulf. "The U.S. has threatened nuclear attacks on the Middle East on at least five occasions," he notes, "including the time the Eisenhower administration landed tactical nuclear weapons in Beirut as

part of a plan to attack Iraq, lest Iraq's anti-monarchical revolution spill into Kuwait."

Gerson thinks nuclear war in the Gulf is "unlikely but possible," adding that in addition to whatever nukes came from Westover, U.S. Navy ships in the Gulf carry cruise missiles with nuclear warheads.

Local activists say Westover handles half of the military air cargo going to the Persian Gulf. Since Aug. 17, 23,000 tons of cargo have passed through the base—troops, tanks, helicopters, weapons, ammunition, food and medical supplies. Sixteen to 21 flights a day still leave Westover, just short of its 24-flight capacity.

Peace activists have been demonstrating at least weekly at the gates of the Air Force base since the United States first sent troops in early August. The initial small vigils, led by the Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist order, have been followed by larger actions, including civil disobedience Oct. 20 in which 21 were arrested.

The anti-war actions have prompted some

controversy. The base commander has blasted Chicopee's mayor for alleged police "coddling" of demonstrators, and a local radio talk show host is rallying supporters of U.S. Gulf policy against the protests.

Peace activists have a demonstration and blockade planned for Westover Dec. 1, and talk show host Al Giordano has urged listeners to show up for a counterdemonstration.

Local anti-war forces also have to contend with "Operation Desert Cookie." Eight area businesses have donated money and ingredients and are making commercial kitchen space available for people to prepare care packages to be sent to the troops.

Veteran peace organizer Apple Ahearn says the operation is netting its sponsors thousands of dollars worth of free advertising through sympathetic media coverage. "It reminds me of what they did in World War II," Ahearn observes. "Mom and apple pie is equated with war. ... People don't ask why we're there."

More GIs resisting Persian Gulf deployment

(Continued from page 1)

My aunt, a leader in the New Jewel Movement, was assassinated as a result of the political turmoil. My family encouraged me to leave the Marines because they saw no future in waging wars."

Jones, 22, a lance corporal like the others, explained that when he joined the Marines at 21 he was "close-minded" toward the anti-war groups on his City College campus. His attitude changed however, after he performed in two plays written by Vietnam veterans. "They say that at the age I joined you should know what's happening," Jones noted, "but if I had it to do all over again, I wouldn't enlist. This is insane ... insane!"

Each of the four men has filed for designation as a conscientious objector. To win CO status they must establish sincere opposition to all war—not just the one likely to occur in the Persian Gulf. This had the effect of taking some of the political edge off their resistance. For example, Keith Jones began by stating, "This is not a political decision—it's a matter of my own moral and ethical beliefs."

To reporters' questions as to why they had joined in the first place, each of the men complained about fraudulent recruiting practices. Colin Bootman's recruiter, for instance, told him that going to war was "optional" for reservists.

One other Fox Company member, John Fernandez, also has filed for CO designation, but chose to report when called. Two other unit members, who didn't appear at the press conference, have refused to report.

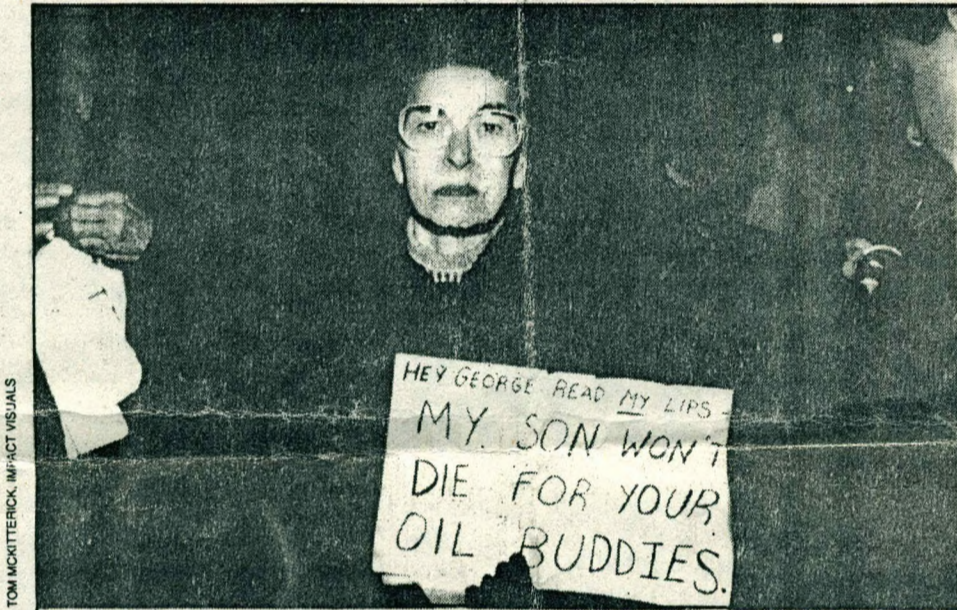
Throughout the country, military counseling groups report being deluged with requests for information and advice from GIs and their families.

Michael Marsh of the War Resisters League says his office is currently counseling over 30 armed forces members who seek CO status. Tricia Critchfield of Citizen Soldier, a New York-based GI rights advocacy group, estimates that at least five service members or their spouses call for assistance on an average day.

In California, the United Bay Area Veterans Against War in the Middle East has leafleted military bases and met with a positive response, reports Jerry Condon. He says reservists have started coming to the group's meetings.

Erik Larsen, a Marine Reserve resister from the Bay Area, has organized GIs for Peace, specifically to mobilize active-duty GIs and reservists for political action and outreach to other military members. (Larsen is on his second European organizing tour; his first included a speech before an Italian anti-war rally of 100,000 people.)

It is unclear how the Marine Corps will respond to the challenge of the Fox Company Six. Each of them could be charged with being absent without leave as well as "missing a movement." Courts-martial could impose lengthy prison terms and dis-



About 600 anti-war demonstrators received a "great reception" from holiday travelers at New York's Penn Station Nov. 21, according to the Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East, which organized the event. The group plans to zap President Bush and Gen. Colin Powell, who will be receiving awards at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel Dec. 9. For information: (212) 254-2295. Military facilities and federal offices will be among the targets of civil disobedience actions in U.S. and Canadian cities Dec. 7 and 8. For information: Mobilization for Survival, (212) 385-2222.

honorable discharges.

To date, the military has responded differently from case to case.

Army Spc. 4 Stephanie Atkinson, who garnered wide publicity as the first female Gulf resister, was released with an administrative "bad" discharge in lieu of court-martial. (Atkinson and other resisters led the Oct. 20 New York City march against the Gulf buildup.)

However, Jeff Paterson, the Marine who refused to board a plane bound for Saudi Arabia, is being court-martialed, starting Dec. 3. (On that day, Bay Area veterans planned to blockade Alameda Air Station in support of Paterson.)

Haitian-American resister Ronald Jean-Baptiste of Brooklyn, N.Y., has been charged with several counts of AWOL by his Air Force unit and will likely face court-martial in the near future, according to his attorney, Ron Kuby. The Committee to Defend Ronald Jean-Baptiste, which organized a Nov. 28 protest at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey, says authorities are "harassing Ronald by withholding his checks in spite of the fact that he is the sole supporter of his very ill mother and baby daughter."

In another development, the Army has rewritten its regulations governing conscientious objector claims in such a way that many GIs may no longer be able to prepare successful applications. Citizen Soldier staffer Critchfield learned of the policy shift when two GIs at Ft. Riley, Kan., complained that their CO applications had been rejected by base commanders citing the new regulations.

According to Ft. Riley officials, "No sol-

dier can now file for CO status once his unit has been placed on alert for service in Saudi Arabia. Once there, a soldier can apply for CO." Under the old rules, a GI could apply for CO at any time, unless he or she had actually received reassignment orders.

This policy change may also be adopted by the other service branches and could eventually affect the rights of thousands of GIs. Critchfield charges that the policy is illegal and conflicts with other Army regulations.

"It's designed to stop the growing number of soldiers who are refusing duty in the Gulf," she

says. "By making them wait until they've arrived in Saudi Arabia, the Army is placing impassable barriers in a CO's path," she argued. Once in Saudi Arabia, soldiers are isolated from any legal or family support, crucial in filing for CO status.

On another front, the Center for Constitutional Rights last month filed a lawsuit on behalf of Sgt. Michael R. Ange seeking an injunction against his being sent to the Persian Gulf. The lawsuit contends that President Bush's massive military buildup there violates both U.S. and international laws and treaties. A federal judge dismissed Ange's request for a temporary injunction, but agreed to hold further hearings on the matter; they will begin next week.

A number of organizations are working with active and reserve duty soldiers who have refused duty in the Persian Gulf, offering legal support, arranging public speaking engagements or publicizing their actions. A partial list follows:

GIs for Peace, 2923 Winchester Dr., Hayward, Calif. 94541; (415) 538-6525.

Citizen Soldier, 175 Fifth Ave., #808, New York, N.Y. 10010; (212) 777-3470.

War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette St., New York, N.Y. 10012; (212) 228-0450.

Center for Constitutional Rights, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012; (212) 614-6464.

Committee to Defend Ronald Jean-Baptiste, 36 E. 12th St., New York, N.Y. 10003; (212) 254-2295.

Veterans Peace Action Teams, P.O. Box 170670, San Francisco, Calif. 94117; (415) 753-2130.

CCCO/Western Region, P.O. Box 42249, San Francisco, Calif. 94142; (415) 474-3002.

Northwest Coalition Against Military Intervention in the Middle East, 8923 Second Ave. NE, Seattle, Wash. 98115; (206) 524-7055.

Committee to Defend Jeff Paterson, c/o Atty. Eric A. Seitz, 820 Mililani St., Suite 714, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813; (808) 533-7424.

Pledge Of Resistance, 4228 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, Calif. 94609; (415) 655-1181.

Contents

NATIONAL NEWS	S-3 Photographing 'Salvador'
1 War resisters in the ranks	S-4 'After the Bombs,' a novel
2 Body bags, blood, nukes shipped to Gulf	S-4 Kagarlitsky's frank 'Farewell to Perestroika'
3 Congress members sue over war powers	S-5 Resurrecting a Black 'Fallen Prince'
3 Opinion—Tapes violate Noriega's rights	S-5 'How I Became Hettie Jones'
INTERNATIONAL NEWS	S-6 Book Shorts
4 Tory confab picks Thatcher's successor	S-7 Books Briefly
5 NATO's secret army in Italy	S-8 'Signs from the Heart': Chicano murals
5 NATO's secret armies around Europe	S-10 'Invocation L.A.': Multicultural poetry
6 El Salvador's rebel offensive	S-10 'Color of the Heart': A feminist's journey
7 Right-wing uprising in Nicaragua	S-11 Processed World's 'Bad Attitude'
DEPARTMENTS	S-13 'Abortion Without Apology'
4 Movement Directory	S-13 'The Autobiography of Mother Jones'
12 Classifieds/Calendar of events	S-14 'Dead Heat': Global warming
BOOK REVIEW SUPPLEMENT	S-16 Intifada: 'From Stones to Statehood'
S-2 'Unreliable Sources': News media bias	
S-2 'Freedom Under Fire'	

VOL. 43, NO. 7

NONVIOLENT ACTIVISTS NEWSLETTER

W

MUSINGS FROM THE
CHAIR OF WRI:
NARAYAN DESAI

TWO REPORTS FROM
EASTERN EUROPE:
CAN THE LEFT IN-
FLUENCE CHANGE?

REPORT FROM
JERUSALEM:
TIME OF PEACE
ACTIONS

500 YEARS OF
OPPRESSION:
INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S
STRUGGLE IN
GUATEMALA

R

CONVERTING THE U.S.
ECONOMY:
PEACE, JOBS AND
JUSTICE

OVERVIEW:
U.S. PEACE MOVEMENT
AND WRL LOCAL
ACTION

REVIEWS:
BANANAS, BEACHES
AND BASES
OUT OF STEP

INTERNATIONAL WAR
TAX RESISTANCE
UPDATES AND MORE!

I

CONTENTS

MUSINGS BY NARAYAN DESAI	3
REPORTS FROM EASTERN EUROPE	4
TIME OF PEACE ACTIONS	7
INDIGENOUS STRUGGLE IN GUATEMALA	9
CONVERTING THE U.S. ECONOMY	11
OVERVIEW OF U.S. GROUPS	13
WRL LOCAL ACTION	14
REVIEWS	15
INTERNATIONAL WAR TAX RESISTANCE	17
NEWS NOTES	18
ACTION ARCHIVES	22



PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

RUTH BENN (EDITOR)
RICK BICKHART (DESIGN)
BILL BARRETT, DAVID McREYNOLDS,
MATT MEYER, JOHN MILLER, SUSAN
PINES, WENDY SCHWARTZ, IRA UNGAR

WRI COORDINATION

CHRIS BOOTH, HOWARD CLARK,
VERONICA KELLY

EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE

JUDY KOWALOK, CHRIS TIEDJE

AD SALES

BERNICE LANNING

ADVISORY BOARD

MARIE BLOOM, OLIVE BOWERS, ROBERT
COONEY, KATE DONNELLY, LARRY GARA,
CAROL JAHNKOW, CECELIA KIRKMAN,
MICHAEL MARSH, CRAIG SIMPSON

WRL NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF

RUTH BENN, KARL BISSINGER, RALPH
DIGIA, MICHELA GIUSTI, MICHAEL
MARSH, DAVID McREYNOLDS, IGAL
ROODENKO, DORIE WILSNACK

INTERN

CHRIS TIEDJE

VOLUNTEERS

VIRGINIA EGGLESTON, MAUREEN GILROY,
GAR MacARTHUR, MARILYN MEYER

WRI STAFF

CHRIS BOOTH, HOWARD CLARK,
VERONICA KELLY

WRI Newsletter: ISSN: 0085 7662 No. 229

Annual subscription £6.00 (£8.00 airmail to
addresses outside Europe).

War Resisters International
55 Dawes Street
London SE17 1EL, England
44 1 703 7189

The Nonviolent Activist: ISSN 8755-7428
VOLUME 7, No. 3

Annual subscription US\$15 individuals,

US\$25 institutions
War Resisters League
339 Lafayette St.
New York, NY 10012 USA
(212) 228-0450

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The idea for publishing a joint issue of the *War Resisters International Newsletter* and *The Nonviolent Activist* (the magazine of the War Resisters League) was originally discussed over a year ago. It didn't happen then, but last summer the WRI Council encouraged the project. The WRL Publications Committee was still enthusiastic, and, now, six months later we are able to send you this nonviolent model of a (non-profit) joint venture. Even in these days of fax machines and computer mail, trying to coordinate an international project still takes time and patience.

We had many thoughts and ideas of what we hoped this special issue would accomplish. We wanted American pacifists to remember that they are connected to an international movement, and we wanted to make that movement real by having WRI activists write about it. We wanted members of WRI to get an in-depth look at an American movement that is diverse and multi-issue. We wanted to try and convey our sense that the U.S. is a large country, and that there is progressive political work happening in many communities and focussing on many issues, not just in the big cities and not necessarily on what many of us think of as traditional "peace" issues.

There is a tremendous amount of organizing for justice and peace in the world today. There are also many ways in which it has not always been crystal clear for us on what issues and in which ways pacifists should be working. Through our affiliation to WRI, both, as member sections and as individuals, we share a common passion for a world without violence. As a pacifist community we hope this issue helps us grow and gives us all support and encouragement and makes us a little bit smarter about the movement we are part of. And of course, we hope it inspires new actions, new ways of thinking, and new ideas for working together in the future.

Susan Pines

Nonviolent Activist Publications Committee
WRL Representative to WRI

Note: Readers may notice peculiar spellings in this issue. This is because we have retained the British spelling for the WRI pieces and American spelling for the WRL articles.

MUSINGS FROM THE CHAIR OF WRI

BY NARAYAN DESAI



Photo by Matt Meyer

SITTING in my little hut, made without using much of cement and steel, facing my little wooden desk designed fifty years ago by a Polish engineer who worked in Gandhi's Ashram for "appropriate technology," I muse and meditate, ruminate and reflect.

My musings and meditation bring me face-to-face with questions which I may

Narayan Desai is the Chairperson of War Resisters International and heads the Institute for Total Revolution in Vedchhi, India.

otherwise try to avoid.

I am supposed to be a nonviolent activist and sometimes I even flatter myself to believe I am a nonviolent revolutionary. To me the spirit of nonviolence lies in harmony. And I ask myself: is there harmony between my words and deeds, between my thoughts and my life; and finally is there harmony between my work and the people for whom I want the revolution?

Looking around I sense a conspiracy against people, against peace and against the very planet on which we are living.

The conspiracy is manipulated through our concept of development, which manifests itself in GNPs and not in fulfilling the needs of the needy; through sciences and technology which are not only not neutral but are anti-people; through our approach to nature which makes us barter the life of our future generations for the benefit of an infinitesimal part of the present generation. The conspiracy is evident in our attitudes towards our fellow beings. It is evident in our relationships within our families, within our tiny peace organizations. Even the pacifist in me sometimes fails to understand not only the adversary but also those who disagree with me. But I am amazed when we witness the conspiracy destroying the harmony at the macro-level.

The conspiracy is evident in our educational system which endeavors to build a replica of the same old unjust society; in our economy which is callous to about five-sixths of the world's population because it wants to care for the other sixth; and in our politics, which strengthens the strong and weakens the weak; and in our social system that breeds pride in our genes and prejudice in our veins.

While disarmament talks succeed between the first two worlds, the arms race accelerates in the third world. In fact the third world has become the market place of arms and the dumping place for all the toxic wastes of the earth. The so-called culture of the "advanced" countries works to dehumanize the "less advanced" and in doing so debases itself.

In such a dismal situation as this, what

is it that sustains me? I think it is hope and faith. I go on because I see some of the problems of the macro-level raising their heads at the micro-level of our Institute, which is a small community, but they are manageable. They can be resolved because we have trust and faith in each other, because we try to understand each other and share our concerns with each other.

I feel empowered when I realize that ours is not only an isolated experience. There are hundreds, thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of communities like ours who want to care for their fellow human beings and for mother earth.

I go on because I have faith in the people. I am delighted to see the people's power raising its head and changing the structures in Eastern Europe. But I am sometimes disappointed to see the response of the Western world, which fails to see the writing on the wall for itself. The change is bound to come soon to the so-called democracies too. They can no longer remain liberal until they become really democratic in the economic and the social fields. For the last half-a-century the great divide has been between the forces of equality without freedom and the forces of freedom without equality. Now that the people's power has struck the roots of totalitarianism and is reviving freedom on one side, how long is it going to take for the people on the other side to realize that freedom and inequality cannot go together? The democracies can no longer be true democracies unless they have democracy in their economic and social life too. Freedom and exploitation, racism, and sexism go ill together. The sooner the Western world realizes this the better for them.

Do we, who consider ourselves to be harbingers of peace realize this enough? Do we realize that peace is as much connected with non-exploitation, equality of opportunities and human dignity as it is with conscientious objection and disarmament? Do we also realize that nonviolent revolution, which begins with ourselves, is inextricably linked with our structures, our institutions, our relationships and our attitudes? Sitting in my little hut I muse and meditate. ■

TWO REPORTS FROM EASTERN EUROPEAN CAN THE LEFT INFLUENCE CHANGE?

ZUZANNA DABROWSKA: STILL IN OPPOSITION

In 1986, peace groups around the world began to receive tiny pieces of paper signed by three Polish women. One of those women was Zuzanna Dabrowska, at that time an activist in Wolnosc i Pokoj (WiP or Freedom and Peace) in Wroclaw. Now living in Warsaw and the mother of a 14-month old baby, Zuzanna is on the national council of the Polish Socialist Party-Democratic Revolution (PPS-RD, the most radical of three Polish Socialist Parties). For the first time in 10 years, she has a passport and in February was able to visit Britain.

In a Poland beset by inflation of nearly 80% in the month of January, the leading role of the party has given way to the leading role of the IMF. And Zuzanna Dabrowska still finds herself in opposition.

POLAND is a special place. We are in the middle of the road, and we don't know where to go. Mazowiecki's government knows exactly where to go; they'll go exactly where the IMF wants them to.

Poland has much less independence than Czechoslovakia. We know President Havel from the Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity Circle meetings on the border in Silesia during the last five years, and he's a real President and independent. We are not independent. Poland has not had a revolution. We have been dependent for 50 years on the Soviet Union and now we are starting to depend completely on the IMF. For example, in the United Nations vote on the U.S. invasion of Panama, Poland abstained—an example of our new foreign policy.

Our chance to become independent can only be brought about through a federation of the independent states of Eastern

Europe, to create a common market with them, to present a new disarmament model with them. Here again, President Havel will have proposals, not our government.

Our partners should be states in Eastern Europe with other or similar problems. Poland is the poorest, but we are also attractive because of our raw materials: forests, mines. Our most natural partner is Czechoslovakia, but our government is only interested in the way of the IMF. We should also look towards Lithuania and the Baltic states. The problem in gaining real independence in making foreign policy is in the political and economic alliances.

People expect that in two or three years they'll be living in America; what they don't realise is that it will be South America. We have no capital. We have no chance to be the next good capitalist state in Europe even if we want. OK, after 50 years of communism, it's understandable that people want capitalism. But our mass media speak as if there is only one system of Western capitalism, ignoring the differences between, for example, Sweden and Britain. And where will Poland get the money for a capitalist economy? Western money is not money for free. Full privatisation does not mean salvation in our case. Unfortunately people in Poland cannot understand fully that. The market may be a more effective system of distributing goods, but it must be controlled.

We have seen the end of Stalinism in our state, the end of the totalitarian system, but it is the beginning of a new system and unfortunately it's going to be like Mexico, with democracy in the constitution but with one very strong party which will win all elections. This was the result in the last elections in June (when 35% of the seats were contested), and I'm afraid it will be the same in the elections for the citizens' committees in May.

WHOSE GOVERNMENT?

Our society is used to having social

security. Before the election, nobody from Solidarity talked about unemployment, nobody talked about cutting free holidays for children and so on. There is not much chance that Solidarity can be a movement for all Polish citizens while implementing an austerity programme. Then the next wave in Poland could be a wave of authoritarian nationalism, with Walesa as the authority on the top of the wave.

The people from Solidarity now in Parliament were our friends and comrades from the underground, from the peace movement, from the trade unions and workers in the factory. These personal connections provide the only way to find out what the parliamentary establishment of Solidarity intends to do. It is impossible to get clearer information, for example about proposed new legislation. Among the mass media, there is a monopoly of information: there are new newspapers, one emerging from social democrats (connected with the Communist Party), one from Solidarity, but none of them wants to publish information from a critical point of view about proposed laws or about the situation, so it's very hard to show the left point of view to the public. Sometimes we are able to appear on TV news, but we are not able to get an honest commentary.

Our old friends in the Parliament say, "There's no need for demonstrations any more, you can just talk to us." But Parliament did not debate nuclear power, even after a demonstration and 44-day hunger strike in Gdansk and a traffic blockade in Warsaw. They have not improved the legislation on conscientious objection, introduced in 1988, despite the protests of the new CO Union. They have cut some Army Institutes, but they have done nothing serious to demilitarise the country.

In the years in the underground, there was a very clear division—us and them. Now, according to the mass media, we have "our government." Every day, the so-called President Jaruselski becomes more and

This article was transcribed by WRI staff person Howard Clark from a talk given by Dabrowska in London in mid-February, 1990.

Collection Number: AG1977

END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of a collection held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.