

TROUBLED TIMES



Incorporating uncensored news from Totnes and beyond

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Saturday, April 19, 2003

Special Edition

FREE / DONATION

Inside this issue...

Totnes's first war casualty page 1



Totnes kids are revolting page 7



Supporting the troops center pages



Almost a thousand Totnes people took action against the war.

Anti-censorship protesters publish own newspaper

Since Sir Ray Tindle announced that his papers would censor any dissenting views about the invasion of Iraq, over five hundred people have signed petition statements saying that they will not purchase his papers.

The newspaper you are now reading is a direct response to this blatant threat to free speech in our community.

This paper seeks to provide a forum for

the issues currently being censored by the editors of newspapers owned by Sir Ray Tindle.

This edition aims to fill the gap left by the censorship of the Totnes Times and concentrates on the issues of media control, censorship, patriotism and the activities of the peace movement. It also look at the concerns of those wishing to find a way to support our troops currently serving in the Gulf. We hope that we will only need to

produce this one issue and that the Totnes Times will make a public commitment to avoid any future censorship.

However, if 'normal newspaper service' is not resumed perhaps you will see future issues of Troubled Times.

This project has been funded by donations. Needless to say, it is not cheap producing a paper and any further donations to help us to cover the costs would be most welcome.

Bitter taste as dust settles

by CHARLES O'LEARY

So the 'war' is all but over, the invasion complete and the pro-war pundits are busy claiming vindication. However, does this predictable 'victory' really justify the war?

We've heard many reasons given for why this war was going to happen. The US and the UK reeled out a string of

justification, each one modified as their arguments were shot down: Weapons of Mass Destruction; Ignoring UN resolutions; evil dictator who gassed his own people; threat to the world peace, blah blah blah.

Dissenting voices told us it was all about access to Iraq's oil (the second largest oil reserve in the world). Others claimed it was about securing a strategic military foothold

in the region, with Syria and Iran to be the next targets of US neo-imperialist expansion plans. Not to mention providing a handy distraction from the appalling state of the US economy.

But whatever the real reasons, war always means one thing - suffering and death. Iraqi civilians paid the greatest price and being liberated from Saddam will be little consolation for those who have died, been maimed or lost loved ones.

Just how liberated will they remain? Will we see democracy in Iraq? Take a look at what's going on in Afghanistan since the US claimed 'just cause' to smash the Taliban regime (which they had previously trained, funded and placed in power).

Now the squabbles begin over the spoils of war. Who will get the lucrative contracts to rebuild Iraq? Who will get access to the oil fields?

Will the US stop here, or will it turn its guns on another part of the 'axis of evil'? What about the war on terror? Has smashing Saddam put an end to terror or simply ensured that the war on terror will be a war without end?

All these questions, and many more besides, are questions that should be examined in public. It is essential that we continue to question the decisions of our governments and try to bring them to account. There can be no democracy without dissent.

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Town mourns first casualty of war

It is said that 'the first casualty of war is the truth'. When the bombs started falling on Iraq on March 19th few people would have expected its local paper to be one of the first casualties.

Sir Ray Tindle, owner and Editor in Chief of the Totnes Times and over one hundred other publications has instructed his editors to print "nothing which would attack the decision to conduct the war" and has banned coverage of all anti-war protests.

Gina Coles who edits eight of his titles in the south west said: "I am proud to say I totally agree with his decision. Once war was declared anti-war demonstrations were pointless - the argument was lost". Coles though does admit that Tindle's "brave" move could be seen by some as "censoring the news".

Tindle, an ex-Army Officer worth an estimated £172m, insisted his decision reflected "no political bias". However his intervention in editorial policy has been widely condemned. General Secretary of the NUJ, Jeremy Dear, described the move as "the first indication of formal censorship over the Iraq war by a newspaper group.... So much for the right to know, free speech and all those other rights which our forefathers fought to establish and which Sir Ray Tindle seeks to demolish at the stroke of a pen."

"What makes his censorship better than the censorship of those he would seek to condemn? He merely confirms that freedom of the press really only belongs to those who own the press - the rest of us will be allowed to know only what they deem is suitable. Next stop tyranny?"

Tindle's publications include: Cornish Times; Totnes Times, Ivybridge, South Brent & South Hams Gazette; Kingsbridge, Salcombe & South Hams Gazette; Mid Cornwall Advertiser; Mid Devon Advertiser; North Cornwall Advertiser; County Echo; Dartmouth Chronicle; Alton Herald; Biggin Hill News; Bordon Herald; Cambrian News; Farnham Herald; Haslemere Herald; Petersfield Herald; Pulman's Weekly News; Tavistock Times; Tenby Observer; The Exmoor Visitor; The Devon Heartland Visitor; The North Devon Visitor; The North Somerset Visitor; The Somerset Visitor; The West Somerset Visitor and many more <http://www.tindlenews.co.uk>



Jeremy Dear issued a public challenge to Tindle to debate press freedom at the NUJ's annual conference.

The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom has also "condemned this act of overt censorship at a time when the UK needs open debate about this controversial issue. It is an example of the invidious power that proprietors have over the content of the press."

Barry White, National Officer for the CPBF comments: "Sir Ray Tindle has denied to the readers of his 130 titles access to vital information needed to understand the war".

Tindle reassures readers that "normal newspaper practice will be resumed" when the war is over. However, many people are unwilling to wait and have taken matters into their own hands to fill the gap left by Tindle's censorship.

Dissenting views are essential to democracy and so a new independent paper has been produced to step into the breach... Welcome to Troubled Times.

Normal Service?

On hearing about Tindle's censorship, over five hundred Totnes people signed cards to say that they would not buy the Totnes Times.

Some people considered occupying the newspapers offices but plans for direct action were postponed as phone calls and meetings with the editor, Gina Coles, indicated that the pressure was being felt and that the the position might change.

Sure enough, the following issue did feature a piece about the regular silent walks for peace up the High Street. Did this mean the censorship policy had been dropped? The Peace Group asked the editor to clarify the

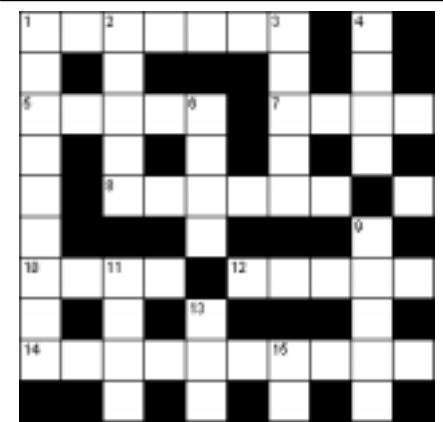
position and to make a statement that there would be no further censorship.

No such statement was ever given and while the paper may now appear to have resumed 'normal service', many people will remain sceptical. The idea that Tindle's papers are apolitical is rubbish and Gina Coles's own opinion has also been made very clear.

Are there any other issues or ideas that the editor won't print - in order to save our simple minds the trouble of digesting any dissenting views?

Will 'normal service' ever really be resumed? Was 'normal service' ever worth the paper it was printed on?

CROSSED WORDS



CLUES - Across

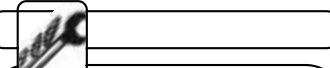
- Blue on Blue
- Colateral damage
- Preemptive war
- Bombed 21 countriess
- Embedded reporter
- Freedom fighter
- Terrorist
- Trained Bin Laden

- Down

- Funded the Taliban
- Killed 500,000 in Iraq
- Desert on moral grounds
- Draft dodging coward
- No war for ...
- Support our troops
- No justice, no ...

SOLUTIONS: War IS Terror. War breeds resistance. One mans terrorist is another's freedom fighter. America IS the rogue state. There can be no peace without justice.

your information guide

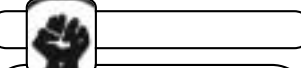


"There is no such thing as a free press, you know it and I know it..."

The business of a journalist is to destroy the truth, to lie outright, to pervert, to vilify, fall at the feet of mammon, and sell himself for his daily bread.

We are tools, vessels of rich men behind the scenes, we are jumping jacks. They pull the strings - we dance."

John Swainton - editor of the New York Times on the day of his retirement.

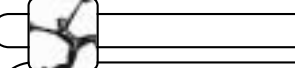


IRAQ INVASION NEWS

- www.waroniraq.org/news.htm
- www.commondreams.org
- www.anti-war.com
- www.alternet.org/waroniraq
- www.davidcogswell.com
- <http://english.aljazeera.net>

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- www.j-n-v.org
- www.stopwar.org.uk



ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

- www.indymedia.org.uk
- www.schnews.org.uk
- www.squall.co.uk
- www.undercurrents.org
- www.beyondtv.org

Correcting media distortion:

- www.medialens.org
- www.prwatch.org
- www.adbusters.com

Letters to the Editor

The following letters are just some of those sent to the editor of the Totnes times in response to their policy of censorship.

Surely it is indisputable in a free and democratic society, that the role of the news media is to report the news. I cannot believe that those who have been ordered to risk their lives in the name of democracy and its associated values, will be heartened by the censorship of news, and by implication, the suppression of freedom of expression by dictat.

Whether Sir Ray manipulates the news by commission or omission, he is manipulating it nevertheless, and such conduct is characteristic not of free democratic societies, but of despots, megalomaniacs and tin-pot dictators throughout modern history.

Along with the tyrants themselves, such actions are ultimately sinister and profoundly dangerous.

Since the reports in the Totnes Times contain so many references to Sir Ray's military experience, one assumes that they are intended to support his indefensible stance.

I cannot qualify this letter by reference to military experience of my own, but I do know a little about the consequences of war. In my own family the entire generation of men of military age were wiped out in WW1 and my father in WW2.

I believe there is a maxim that truth is the first casualty of war. Sir Ray's has scored a direct hit!
Mr E Olivier

I'm completely shocked by the Totnes Times owner & editor. Stating so ashamedly boldly on the front page that the newspaper will only support mass murder & there can be no voice for peace - in Totnes! Well you've really got a story now.

I feel for the people I've met who work in the office there over the years & for Daniel who so enthusiastically took Abby's place. I know you care & are horrified by the ignorance, greed & violence in the world - in this insane war. What on earth are you left to write about - blow up cheques being stiffly handed to smiling charities? Well that's news! No way would I stay working there until that ridiculous refusal of our freedom of self expression be lifted. I'm so disappointed. I've so appreciated the support & enthusiasm of the staff & paper for the positive & creative work I'm so passionate about. You've been instrumental in my healing from deep grief - building my self esteem & purpose.

Until peace has the freedom to speak in the paper count me out - with a heavy heart. Looking forward to your resumed sanity ASAP.
Clio Wonrausch, Totnes

The job of a newspaper is to report the news and having a "free press" is supposedly one of the hallmarks of the democracy the USA and UK governments are fighting to support. Censoring news is the action of dictators like Saddam Hussein. At the same time it cannot be said that to be against this war is to be against the troops, from either side, who are fighting in Iraq. The best way to support the troops is to urge that the war ends so that they come home alive.

Whilst you boycott news against the war I and my business will be boycotting your newspaper; I urge you to think again.
Dr Di Parkin, Totnes

In the past the Totnes Times has done a very good job in the reports of activities of the Peace Group. This is how it should be because the group reflects the views of the majority of people in town. Opposition to the war on Iraq is also shared by most people in this country and indeed throughout the world. The decision of your owner not to publish any more news of peace activities is therefore particularly regrettable.

Nobody in the peace movement is criticising the men and women in the forces. They are doing a horrible and dangerous job. But the decision of the Prime Minister to go to war was both immoral and, without the backing of the Security Council, certainly illegal. Our troops should never have been ordered to invade.

However the war goes many of the men and women involved will be killed or wounded and even more will suffer deep psychological traumas because of what they have to do. The best course of action will be to bring them home.

The UN should be used to end this conflict and settle the question of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction but President Bush has wanted war all along and unfortunately our Prime Minister has gone along with him.

As long as your paper continues to censor the news and only print reports of events like flower shows I shall not be buying it.
Donald Brown, Totnes

As a veteran of the 1940s Dunkirk campaign and occupant of a Nazi prisoner of war camp for five years, I would like to voice my concern at the current attempts by most

The troops need *our* support?

Sir RAY TINDLE, chairman and editor-in-chief of Tindle Newspapers says we need to show our support for the troops by not questioning the invasion of Iraq. Not doubt many people will point out that feeling concerned about the troops doesn't mean we have to agree with the governments decision to invade Iraq. If our children joined the Mafia, would we be compelled to support organised crime?

But I'd like to play devils advocate a bit and ask why we should support the troops, let alone the war.

Okay, so the soldiers serving in Iraq have family and loved ones who are desperately concerned about them. Those people could probably do with emotional support. But what kind of support are we expected to give the troops? They don't need any practical support, theres a 30 billion pound annual budget to supply their needs and an extra 3 billion war chest to spend for this specific 'war'. If we were to offer any kind of practical support we would be supporting and endorsing the illegal invasion.

Some people may ask why we should even give emotional

support or even feel empathy for the situation the troops find themselves. These people DO have choices, they DONT have to be there. Why should we support people who have apparently CHOSEN to obey illegal and imoral orders that have directly resulted in the injury and death of thousands of civilians (mostly children)? Why should we feel greater sympathy for our troops (well trained, well paid and with vastly superiour military might) than we do for the 'enemy' troops who are mostly young poorly eqiped conscripts who, regardless of the crimes of Saddam Hussan, are defending their country against invaders? Why are we expected to condemn the whole of Iraqi population for their governments supposed possession of weapons of mass disstruction while we are expected to support those who have used depleted uranium munitions, the use of which will indiscriminaty devastate countless lives for generations to come.

Want them bought home? Yes. Support them? I think not!
Mark Morgan, Bridgetown

of the media to isolate the growing demand for peace by suggesting that, now that the war has started, we should all be backing our troops in the war zone.

To relieve the boredom during some the 'leisure hours' of our incarceration, a great deal of time was spent discussing the deviousness of politicians all over the world and their abuse of power. At no time has this been more prevalent than throughout the Middle Eastern tragedy. During this period, massive numbers of people from all walks of life have sought to expose these devious people in the political world but have at no time levelled criticism at our troops who have to bear the brunt of this abuse of power, the dangers of war and degree of suffering that is experienced in foreign climates. Our criticisms have solely been levelled at the politicians who previously armed Saddam Hussein against Iran and the Taliban against the Russians. They were determined that war was going to take place in Iraq, come what may. At each statement by Mr Blix and the

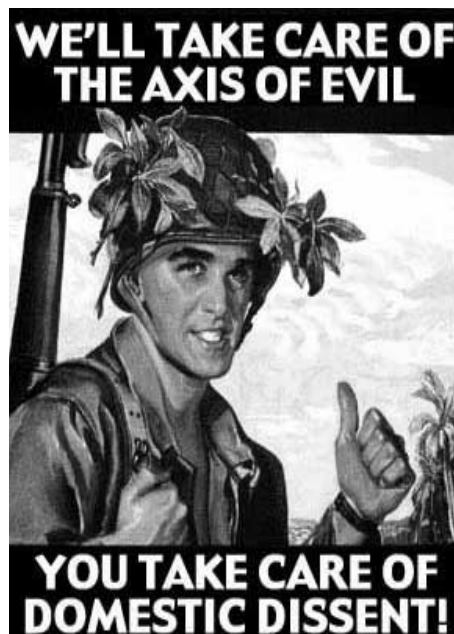
weapons inspectors that progress, although slow, was being made, the goal posts were then moved by Mr Bush and his cohorts. Mr Blix's statement at the outbreak of war was, "I regret US impatience for war..."

Charles Hailey, Totnes

Being a regular reader of your paper and of other local papers, I would like to express my deepest concerns about your public decision to ban any further publication of news concerning the "anti-war" and "pro-peace" actions, points of views and demonstrations that are carrying on to take place in Totnes and the local areas. This constitutes an undemocratic and highly biased action against the will of a very large number of people and readers of your papers in the area. Therefore, I withdraw, from now on, from buying any of your papers.

Nadia Cibuscola, Teignmouth,

There were many more similar letters. We could not print them all here due to lack of space.



Media under fire

It's not just Totnes that is noticing media distortion. The national media has also been heavily criticised for pro bias coverage of the invasion and has been the subject of an increasing number of actions.

On April Fools Day in Manchester, thirty people occupied the offices of News International, which run the Times and the Sun. The London offices of Murdoch's war mongering Sun tabloid was the target of a student die-in. On the same day a protest outside the BBC offices in London prevented access to the building.

These actions followed on from a demonstration outside the Manchester BBC offices on Saturday the 29th, which saw two marches converge on the Headquarters.

The previous night BBC deputy Editor Mark Damazar was confronted with a barrage of questions at a public discussion organised by *Media Workers Against the War* criticising the pro-government war led agenda.

Meanwhile in Totnes, people have been boycotting the Totnes Times and organising their own media in response to Ray Tindle's censorship.

Ray Tindle Ate My Hamster

Wouldn't it be nice if our media was really capable of keeping us informed and not simply using popularism and sensationalism to increase its market-share and sell advertising?

Without a free flow of information and ideas, how can we be expected to make informed decisions about issues that directly effect our lives and the lives of others?

Every day, people in this country spend an average of four hours, reading,

watching, or listening to 'the media' - be it TV or radio, newspapers or magazines, films or videos, books or billboards.

Through the media we are subject to a continuous flow of misinformation and hogwash. Real issues are ignored or scorned while we get populist entertainment dressed up as a true and accurate reflection of the way things are.

Do they neglect important issues because we might find them boring or difficult to understand, or incase we feel inspired to act? If

information is power, then perhaps they prefer us powerless.

Could their daily diet of soaps and celebrity haircuts be intended to distract us from reality and leave us unable to think for ourselves?

LIES

It's easy to see for yourself how the media misrepresent reality. People involved in an event are often surprised at how it is later portrayed in the media. They wonder if they were at a different event and question how the reporters could have got things so wrong. Sometimes the facts may be correct but are given a misleading spin and often focus on some minor point or on personality rather than the issues.

More often the facts are simply ignored as being inconvenient but avoidable obstacles to furthering the publication's own agenda.

Everyone knows the expression 'don't believe everything you read in the papers' yet clearly the media is able to influence our perceptions. Adverts works even though we know they are trying to sell us something.

SPIN

Public relations is often more subtle and harder to recognise. "The best PR is invisible," say industry insiders. To manage the news in favour of their clients, PR firms specialise in setting up phoney citizens groups and scientific 'experts' who spin out contrived research and junk science.

SEX

Love lives of the rich and famous are one of the mainstays of the mass media. It's easy to understand why we are attracted to such imagery and why sex is used to sell almost everything. It is less obvious why violence should be so attractive and yet the media can't get enough.

VIOLENCE

The news media use 'violence' to create more sensational stories. They focus on conflict, often exaggerating it to suit their purpose. If there is no violence, they may invent it or simply ignore the event.

DOUBLE STANDARDS

While smashing the windows of multinational companies becomes acts of mindless violence, riot police charging in with batons, shields, and CS gas are simply said to have controlled the crowd. Even people pulling up a trial of GM crops are said to have 'spoiled an otherwise peaceful protest' thus equating property damage with violence.

VERBAL ABUSE

Carefully selected words can conjure up images that help to shape the reader's opinion. For example the authorities version of events can be presented as fact while words like 'claimed' and 'alleged' are used to cast doubt on other peoples accounts. People may be

discredited with labels such as 'rent-a-mob', 'anarchists', 'extremists' or worse...

TERRORISM

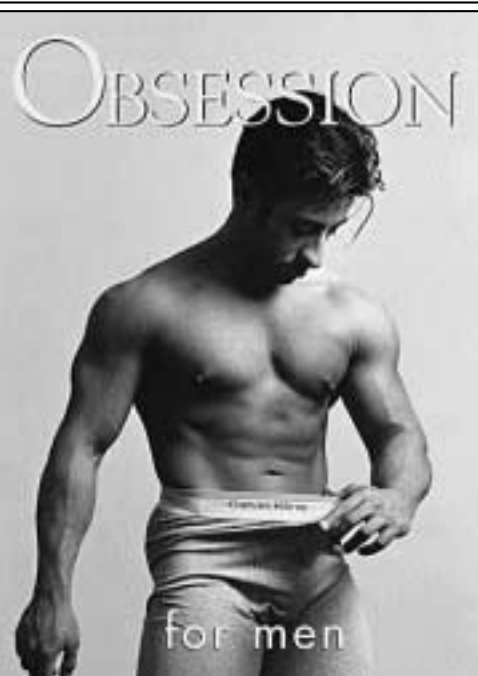
You can't have failed to notice how prevalent the word terrorism has become in recent years. Is there more terrorism? What exactly does the word mean anyway?

With blatant double standards, those in power use the word to describe virtually any act of aggression or dissent of which they don't approve. But isn't one persons terrorist another's freedom fighter? Was Nelson Mandela a terrorist? What about those trashing GM crops? Terrorism is an emotive word invoking fear and anger and its use has helped to justify draconian new police powers, erosion of civil liberties, and extreme acts of violence by governments around the world.

WAR NOW!

War sends the media into a frenzy. Roll out the computer generated maps, defence experts, political commentators, foreign correspondents etc. They love it! Different people saying the same thing - mostly pure fantasy and speculation.

The media support the politician's propaganda - 'defence of democracy' or 'humanitarian necessity'. Dissent is vilified as unpatriotic, played down or ignored. Nothing must challenge the hypocrisy and the manufactured illusion of public support.



MAKING A KILLING

Of course it's not just the media that loves war - politicians also enjoy the opportunities provided.

Draconian laws are passed in the name of national interest and security and unpopular news can be buried under all the media hype and speculation.

Thatcher saved her career by launching a war on Argentina, Clinton escaped his sex scandal by blitzing Iraq, and Bush took his approval rating

from 20% to 90% by bombing Afghanistan and committing the entire 'free world' to an endless 'war on terror' starting with Iraq.

There's also plenty of money to be made. Increased 'defence' budgets provide the arm's trade with a profitable killing, and the spoils of war go to the multinationals in the form of lucrative contracts to rebuild new markets, cheap labour, oil reserves and other tax free resources to plunder.

These articles were taken from a leaflet called 'Media Mogul Ate My Hamster - or why the media sucks'. www.talk.to/hamsters - email: hamsters@talk.to Copy and distribute freely - anti-copyright 2003

MONOPOLY

The major media corporations have a growing monopoly. In the UK just five companies own at least 85% of newspaper sales.

Murdoch's News International controls over two thirds of the newspaper circulation, including The Times, The Sunday Times, The Sun and the News of the World. On top of this they also have a controlling interest in Twentieth Century Fox, publishers Harper Collins, satellite BSkyB and StarTV which covers most of Asia and the Middle East (potentially reaching two thirds of the world's population).

The world's largest media company, AOLTimeWarner, owns the 24-hour cable news channel CNN, 40% of US cable TV, 50 record labels, the magazines Time, Life, Money and People, as well as being the world's largest Internet Service Provider.

VESTED INTERESTS

These huge corporations and rich individuals have values at odds with the rest of us. Their vested interest in almost every major issue

results in them offering a very narrow view of the world. Self censorship is common as the proprietors and advertiser's concerns are considered more important than a duty to the truth. The corporate media doesn't exist for our benefit, its aim is to perpetuate power and profits.

ANOTHER MEDIA IS POSSIBLE

Cheap photocopying, the Internet, and low cost computer and video equipment have made it easier than ever for everyone to publish their own thoughts and experiences.

This information 'revolution' creates opportunities for us all to peer beyond the government propaganda, showbiz hype and consumer bullshit. Now we can all examine for ourselves many of the issues trivialised or ignored by the mainstream.

But while we may become better informed, if we fail to act on what we learn, this 'revolution' will be little more than yet more entertainment for passive spectators. Words mean nothing without action...

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Totnes man arrested four times

All's fair in love and war? Not around Europe's biggest air base in Fairford where civil liberties have been suspended.

RAF Fairford is host to American B52 bombers and people from Totnes have taken an active role in campaigning against the use of this base for daily bombing runs to Iraq.

The base has been the subject of frequent protest. Before the start of the invasion around sixty people broke into the base. One person made it into one of the hangers where he was chased by two policemen. After being tackled to the ground, one of the PCs pulled him up, and gave him a hug. "Well done," he said. "You're doing the right thing".

At Gate 10 in Kempsford, there is a peace camp from which the bombers can be observed being loaded. The police have been using the Terrorism act to intimidate and harrass people visiting the camp. They have made numerous arbitrary arrests. One man from Totnes was arrested three time in one day and also found himself arrested for flying a kite. Each time he was released without charge.



Fairford Peace Camp

A day seems never-ending, like the work that needs to be done to stop the insane killing. I watch the B52s take off with their-death load and then watch them land again. I daren't think what atrocities have happened in between, I have to keep sane, keep on doing the work, keep our spirits up... how to model peace in the face of such obscenities?

How? Well - with the help of good family; good food; good nourishment - in the post from our hundreds of supporters; singing; dancing; meditating; finding useful missions to keep our minds busy;

keeping the camp clean and creative, welcoming our many visitors.

Why? Because our presence is a threat to their legitimacy, because they know we represent so many thousands of people, because we are watching those bombers and logging their every move -they can't lie to the public any more about how many bombs they are dropping on innocent people.

The 'war' may well be over soon, the police are hoping for a rest. But how can we rest when the killing never stops? The work for peace goes on and on and on...till we succeed! the camp will continue, - 'you can't kill the spirit'. Already there is another camp started at Welford where they keep the dumb-bombs, over-looking the M4 (between junctions 13 & 14) with big banners.

More camps are needed, there are 14 gates! Please come! Bring NRG and ideas. Come and party for peace! Benefit night at The Cube 19th May.

Phone 07986 786782 see www.gwi.org.uk and www.fairfordpeacewatch.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk
Send letters to Fairford Peace Camp
Gate 10, USAF Fairford, Dunsford Loop, Dunsford, Glos. GL7 4HE



Bomb convoys target of NVDA

Convoys carrying bombs, by road from the bomb 'depot' at RAF Welford, to RAF Fairford have been repeatedly stopped by direct action.

There are several convoys each week carrying 'dumb'

bombs which will be loaded on to B52s at Fairford and used in carpet bombing raids in Iraq.

Despite being escorted by over a dozen police vehicles, activists have three time surprised the convoy and halted its progression.

In one such action which included Totnes people, a group blocked the lead vehicals, whilst others attempted to 'lock-on' to the bomb transporter lorries. However, police and drivers were intent on keeping the convoy moving at all costs. Police moved quickly in numbers and threw peace campaigners to the side of the road. Trucks continued while campaigners were underneath and the large number of police meant people did not have quite enough time to lock on under the vehicles before police removed them.

Emma from Totnes said, 'we are a few concerned citizens trying to peacefully stop well-trained police and military personnel. Think what could be done if hundreds of civilians, opposed to the war, took direct peaceful action. We do not do this lightly and believe strongly that we all have a responsibility to take action against an illegal war.'

There were no arrests during the first two actions but in the third which involved two people locking themselves to the underside of their own car using bicycle locks, four people were arrested. All but one were later released without charge. Obstruction of the highway is a minor offense- bombing is not.

Totnes Business In Bomb Scare

A local business that specialises in rechargeable batteries and chargers was suprised to learn that they had caused a bomb scare at a military establishment last month. They had recieved an order for a battery charger and had sent it though the post. However, the order came from a serving officer and when it arrived at his base it caused something of a panic when two over hys-

terical Colonels became aware of the re-used Jiffy Bag with observations about the war on Iraq written on it ; '\$ + Oil = WAR' and 'No Blood for OIL'.

They called the bomb squad and the area was evacuated. The bomb squad examined the package and thought about blowing it up. Instead they ex-rayed it and discovered it to be an innocent battery charger.

The MOD Police launched an investigation and after reading the

invoice contained within, they contacted the sender. The Sergeant said, "Are these writings a joke?" No, unfortunately the war in the Gulf isn't a joke and the sender was very sad to see so many lives being wasted for American control of oil. Why were British soldiers fighting for American oil anyway? The MOD officer said that unofficially he supported these feelings, but he wasn't allowed to say anything publicly.

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We support them...



but not their orders.

Marine Mums

Peace protester Judith Ross has been stirring comment with the homemade sign she carries at anti-war marches 'Marine Mom Against War on Iraq'. A question she gets asked a lot: How can you be anti-war and support the troops?

Ross and scores of other anti-war activists with family members in the military are finding themselves in untravelling territory these days.

"Right now, there's all this dichotomised thinking, black and white, that if you're opposed to the war, you do not support the troops," says Ross, a clinical

social worker. "I think that we have to be able to think more critically and understand the complexity of this whole situation."

Scores of interviews and dozens of rallies have shown military families staunchly supporting military action against Iraq. Protesting the war, they say, sends the wrong message to troops. Still, a national anti-war organisation, Military Families Speak Out, has signed up hundreds of members.

"The most important thing that we think the people of this country and this world can do to support our loved ones is to bring them home," says co-founder Nancy Lessin, the mother of a Marine.

Software engineer Marianne Werz O'Brien doesn't have much

practice as a peacenik. Her father, a Marine Major, served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Her grandmother had nine stars in her front window to show how many children served during WWII. She's put a star up in her own window now that her son, Josh Parman, is on the USS Halyburton, a guided missile frigate. In the front yard, she planted an anti-war sign.

"We supported the first Gulf War. Iraq invaded Kuwait, that was an entirely different matter. Now, we're invading a country that was not going to attack us," she says. "Preemptive strike is... just morally wrong."

Ross and O'Brien don't see conflict in loving a fighter, hating the fight. "The sign I carry at the protest is, 'Support our troops. Bring them home alive,'" says O'Brien who asked

her son if he'd mind if she went public against the war and got a cheerful, "absolutely no problem."

Rawles' dad burned his draft card during the Vietnam war, so it was a bit of a surprise when Rawles signed up as a Marine reservist. "I think he needed to prove something about his manhood and the Marines really appealed to him on some very deep level", Rawles' step-dad says.

"He really knows how we feel about war. He would love to be home, but he's a very honorable person and he feels the need to honor his commitment."

"I'm sure that he's going through hell right now and whatever he's experiencing he'll have to deal with for the rest of his life," says Davis.

In the meantime, Davis and Bristol, who also have two younger children, are doing what military families have always done - sending care packages - cookies, handcream, a shortwave radio - and taking care of Rawles' wife and 10-month-old baby.

Davis thought about getting cable TV on the off chance she might catch a glimpse of Rawles, but decided it wasn't worth the downside of watching news she sees as "a lot of propaganda." Coverage of homefront action has been simplistic, she says. "You're either for the troops and you completely support the administration, and if you're against the war, you're against the troops." ...

Taken from an Associated Press article, 5th April.

People in Totnes have been trying to find ways to express their support for the families of the individuals serving in the Gulf while not giving the impression that support the war itself. Many have been uncomfortable about displaying the 'Support Our Armed Forces' posters that have been produced locally as the wording suggests support for the entire military institution rather than the individuals

involved. Others are unhappy with the associations of the Union Jack. The preceding page has been provided as a possible compromise poster for anyone wishing to express support for the people but not the war.

Another option which has been taken up by some people, is wearing the yellow ribbon alongside a white ribbon for peace.

Letters

I was very disappointed to read that you are supporting your Chairman and editor-in-chief, Sir Ray Tindle in his decision to censor 'peace protest' stories until there is a ceasefire.

This follows in the wake of very fair coverage of the activities of the peace movement in Totnes. I fail to see why it should be assumed the peace movement would not support troops who believe they have no alternative but obey orders and go where they are sent. We are deeply concerned by the danger they (and the thousands of innocent people in Iraq) are in and the tragic events unfolding each day confirm our fears. It is precisely because we believe that young men and women should not be sacrificed for the sake of politicians' decision to wage an illegal and immoral war that we wish to pursue the peace argument to bring them home as soon as possible.

The argument of those who say promoting peace is sending the wrong message to the troops, only underlines the ignorance and misunderstanding behind 'quick-fix' war solutions, based often on past war experiences. Modern conflict is very far removed from the scenarios of the past and knee-jerk reactions only perpetuate the idea that war is always preferable to diplomacy and patience.

Recent coverage of the war in other South West regional papers (which are not censoring the peace protests) reports that for one soldier's father it has come as a very real shock that his son is fighting a 'real war' and he is desperately worried about him. He had been hopeful that Bush and Blair were bluffing and that the attack on Iraq would be aborted. Such innocence is symptomatic of a public which is ill-informed. The press has a powerful role to play in presenting different arguments at such crucial life and death moments which, at the very least, could help future generations decide whether they prefer to live in a peaceful or war-ridden world.

It is a salutary thought that the town of Totnes has now been blighted with bigotry and censorship. It can only serve to create rifts amongst our citizens.
Pat Sykes, Totnes

This is an extremely serious matter. It is too easy to laugh at the ridiculous irony of the Totnes Times' intention to censor the news in support of a war on a dictator whose chief weapon of mass deception is to - censor the

news. But Ray Tindle owns 100 newspapers so this is not a minor censorship, this is a major abuse of power and will be widely viewed as such, by public, watchdogs and unions.

It is emphatically not true that if you support and care about British troops you have to support the war they've been sent to. On the contrary 'No war on Iraq' and 'Support our Troops' are complimentary, not oppositional, slogans. All people, whether pro peace or pro war will fervently be wishing that our soldiers are neither killed, maimed, disfigured or have to suffer the trauma of inflicting these fates on other boys of the same age. Neither would we wish them to suffer Gulf War Syndrome and be neglected by the government as happened after the last Gulf War.

The Peace Movement's criticism is of the politicians, and not of the soldiers onto whom Blair and co. so slanderously try to divert our refusal of support. It is also patronizing to the military to imply that they are not able to understand this themselves. The young people in Iraq are as much our future as are the young people reclaiming democracy on the streets of Britain and throughout the world. The Peace Movement wants them home safe and sound, preferably tonight. Your claim to 'support everybody's point of view' whilst censoring those of probably half your readership smacks of either sloppy thinking or hypocrisy and is certainly bad economics for your paper.

Finally, it is incorrect to say that 'once war is declared anti-war demonstrations are pointless'. Briefly: - they can put pressure on politicians for a cease-fire and a U.N. negotiated peace as proposed by our ally, Saudi Arabia. They let the war-makers know we are still watching, but not only the invasion but also humanitarian relief, post invasion democracy, division of oil spoils, etc. They provided a valuable doorway to re/connect with politics for the very people the government chided for being apathetic. They provide a space for anguished and angry opponents of this war to try and make the government listen and to plan to prevent future wars on the Bush agenda.

Finally, they are a forum to counteract the lies being so vigorously promoted e.g that only pro-war people are concerned for our troops or that only foreign dictators enjoy the weapon of censorship. *Paul Wesley, Totnes*

It is a fallacy that we will undermine 'our boys' in the Gulf by continuing to protest against

the war. Many of our military, from the most junior to the most senior level are against this war themselves. They know that opinion varies as to the morality of this war, despite attempts to stop their access to knowledge of world opinion.

The average age of those fighting is 21. Many on the front line will have left school at 16 with no other prospect of employment. Our young men (and a few young women) are cannon fodder to globalising 'colonialist' interests.

Bush has already agreed contracts with US private companies for the reconstruction of Iraq. Bush needs oil but will not support the Kyoto agreement. This war benefits only US industry and arms trade. It is our duty to support our soldiers by educating them, by giving them alternatives to war and a clear understanding that most ordinary people in England and the world do not consider this a legal or a moral war.

Or we could point out that outside of a narrow chauvinism, the lives of British troops are no more worthy of compassionate support than the lives of Iraqi soldiers - many equally young and uneducated. We could note that anyway our troops in Iraq are barely in danger at all because they are assaulting a tenth-rate opponent that has no serious means to defend Iraq much less to attack the world's sole superpower.

In the last Gulf War 147 US military died (most as a result of their own fire) while over 300,000 Iraqis died in the conflict. One and a half million Iraqis died as a result of sanctions.

Support our troops in not having to kill people in Iraq. Support our troops in not being ordered to assault defenceless populations, towns, farms, and the infrastructures of life that sustain a whole country's citizenry. Support our troops in not having to carry out orders from Commander in Chief George W Bush (because it is America that is in charge of this war) and then living the rest of their lives wondering why they obeyed such a barbaric buffoon rather than resisting his illegitimate, immoral authority.

People who are compelled by socio-economic, or for any other, reasons to join the army are not the only people who are fit to be the arbiters of how we can run our lives. They are not the only ones equipped to be nation-builders. If we were to concede that they are, we would find ourselves with a non-sequitur, something that does not follow.

Name and address supplied



Support the POWs

An increasing ordinary number of people are being caught and imprisoned for anti-war activities.

We're sure that they would appreciate postcards of support. Ensure that you include the prisoner number on the envelope. Put a return address on the envelope, and on the letter if you want them to write back to you.

Ulla Roder.

Caused an estimated 25 million worth of damage to a Tornado jet. Contact Jane Tallents 0845 458 8367. Send cards to: Ulla Roder, HMP Cornton Vale, Corton Road, Stirling, FK9 5NY.

Angie Zelter / Clive Fudge

Caught inside US air force base (RAF Lakenheath) near nuclear capable F-15 Strike Eagle aircraft and charged with criminal damage to a fence and aggravated trespass. Angie and Clive are now out of prison on bail conditions. Contact Davida 01508 550 446

Josh Richards

Josh was found near the B52s at Fairford and is accused of possessing an explosive substance. He has been remanded in custody until 30th May. Josh Richards JT5130 HMP Gloucester Barracks Square, Gloucester GL1 2JN

Toby Olditch and Phillip Pritchard (B52-TWO).

On the morning of March 18, these two peace activists set out to disarm a B-52 using hammers at RAF Fairford. They were caught after attaching photographic images of ordinary Iraqi people

labeled 'collateral damage?' to the fence. Phillip Pritchard (32) and Toby Olditch (34), were on their way to hammer on the bomb bay doors to prevent them from opening and dropping bombs, and attempt to disable the engines to prevent the bomber from taking off. They carried warning signs to post onto the bomber to warn the aircrew that the aircraft should not be operated. Photographs of Iraqi civilians were also carried for nailing onto the bomber to inform aircrew of the consequences of bombing.

The activists were carrying seeds as a symbol of life, red and black paint representing the blood of Iraqi civilians and Iraqi oil, respectively, to spill around the B-52 bomber.

They were charged with conspiracy to cause criminal damage, going equipped to cause criminal damage, and aggravated trespass. Bail was refused and they will remain on remand in Gloucester prison until the trial which is set for 30th May.

One of the activists Philip Pritchard said: *'These planes are weapons of mass destruction, its up to us to prevent them from being used to kill innocent people in Iraq. This war is illegal and morally unacceptable. If Tony Blair and George Bush really want to stop terrorism they should stop behaving like terrorists.'*

To send a message of support to Toby and Phil: E-mail: hellophilandtoby@yahoo.co.uk or write to: Toby Olditch-JT5132 Philip Pritchard-JT5131 HMP Gloucester Barrack Sqr, Gloucester, GL1 2JN

Letter in The Daily Telegraph 'Inglorious war' - 26th March

Sir - I am presently held on remand for taking action to attempt to disarm a B52 bomber at RAF Fairford last week. I am concerned at the victorious tone adopted in many of your articles and indeed in most reporting of the tragedy in Iraq. Such celebrations of military might conjure romantic scenes of Second World War heroics but serve only to deepen acceptance of military, rather than diplomatic, solutions. War is horrific, and should be reported as such.

The alliance you praise so effusively is acting illegally and should be brought to account. It is possible to criticise the governments that have brought us to war and yet have empathy for those ordered to do their bidding. I hope that The Daily Telegraph will be conscientious in reporting the aftermath of the tragedy in Iraq, and in promoting imaginative methods of peace building and conflict resolution.

P.Pritchard, HMP Gloucester

War Time Patriotism

Freedom to express The Will of the People is at the very heart of democracy. Where does patriotism fit in?

Being patriotic does not require being in complete agreement with all our elected representatives at all times in all matters. At times, being patriotic may very well require us, the people, to oppose inappropriate actions by our government and remind our elected representatives whom they serve. Doing so is NOT being unpatriotic: That's What Being Patriotic is All About!

Virtually all politicians and almost all the media are demanding that we now support our armed forces in their action. BBC and ITN reporters, for example, have taken to repeatedly asking protesters: "Is

there any point in protesting now that the democratic decision has been taken to go to war?"

The answer is provided by a top secret US Defense Department memorandum from March 1968, which warned that increased force levels in Vietnam ran "great risks of provoking a domestic crisis of unprecedented proportions". Fears of "increased defiance of the draft and growing unrest in the cities" were very much on the minds of military planners as they decided whether to massively escalate the assault on Vietnam, or back off, after the Tet offensive. They backed off.

So beware, in the hands of our politicians, patriotism is merely a propaganda tool.

REFUGEES AND THE WAR

By CHRIS B

The link between conflict and the displacing of people within or outside that country's borders is fairly obvious. In the year leading up to the Iraq Conflict around 150,000 Iraqi refugees applied for asylum in the UK.

Conflicts drive people out of their homes, sometimes for good. In Kosovo, areas that were previously ethnically mixed are now purely Muslim or Serb-supposedly a result of a 'positive' peace process administered by the West. In Afghanistan, the switch of power from the Taliban to other tribal leaders has merely meant that a different part of the population is under threat from persecution. Many thousands of Palestinians have been in refugee camps since 1947 - and have no immediate prospect of leaving. There is a common denominator in all these conflicts - the West, either the US and UK, or the UN has been involved in these conflicts - they have been

involved in the creation of refugees. However, this hasn't necessarily led to an acceptance of moral responsibility for those refugees - the majority of whom remain either internally displaced, or go to an equally poor neighbouring country, without the money or the infrastructure to cope.

One of the few positive aspects of the war is that the tabloids have been too busy cheering 'our boys' on to write their never-ending stream of factually dubious and vicious articles about refugees. However, do not expect this to last. With no less than 17 BNP candidates standing at the local elections in the South West in May, the tabloid press (and the government) with their scare headlines have helped legitimise the policies of the extreme right. With even a Labour government happily using the Asylum issue to divert voters' attention from other issues, it is up to the individual to dispel the tabloid-fuelled pub myth of a poor little England being 'Swamped' by 'Bogus' Asylum Seekers.

Find out what you can do at
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www.ncadc.org.uk

Fighting Fascism Begins At Home



Taking responsibility for peace of course starts in our own behaviour, in our own homes and in our own community.

It must come as a shock and as a challenge to discover that the most poisonous and divisive forces against community have come to the South Hams. Pete Leslie Pirnie is standing as British National Party candidate for South Hams Council in the Dartmouth Townstal Ward. The BNP are putting up seventeen candidates in the South West, where previously they had none. Nearer to Totnes the evil is challenge is even greater.

There are four candidates in Torbay and there are more in Newton Abbot. It is their declared intention to make the South West 'a multi-cultural free zone'.

Their obscene idea is that only white (sic) people can be 'British'.

But often these days they hide their real agenda behind policies that are of genuine local concern - focussing on a rural issue here in the West Country, and one of, say, unemployment in Northern England. The stereotypical skinhead may not be in evidence either, but don't be fooled, they are still the party

of choice for racists.

Whilst we may be excused looking on as Northern towns have been struggling with this brand of Nazism, we have no excuses when it comes to our own doorstep. We must not look the other way as 'decent' Germans did in the thirties.

"... we think that reducing the number of non-whites is the only way to restore peace and racial harmony" (taken from the BNP website).

Can you accept this use of the words peace and harmony for such vile ends? If not it's time to get out of your arm-chairs, off your yoga mats, out of your trance and ACT.

The BNP depends on manufactured fear, lies and our apathy - we must ensure that we actively deny them all three.

Phone Paul on 01803 865794 to get involved in local action to halt the spread of the BNP.

Cluster Bomber Souvenir Plate

The first authorised collectors plate to celebrate

The War On Terrorism

After killing and maiming thousands of innocent civilians in the first Gulf War, Kosovo and Afghanistan, cluster bombs were again used in the latest war against Iraq. Now this historic episode of military wickedness is captured forever on this magnificent collector's plate which illustrates the power and awe of the B1 Bomber and the horror of its cargo.

The 1991 Persian Gulf War saw the most extensive use of cluster bombs in history, resulting in an estimated 1,600 Kuwaiti/Iraqi civilian deaths and 2,500 injuries from dud bomblets (these have a 7% failure rate and unexploded bomblets pose the same problems as anti-personnel mines). Cluster bombs were still being dropped on Iraq in 2001.

Each cluster bomb contains 202 bomblets which are distributed over an area of 100x50 metres. In a four month period in 1999, U.S. / British / Dutch forces dropped 1765 bombs on Yugoslavia - that's 295,000 bomblets. An estimated 20,000 remained unexploded.

Despite the shameful and repulsive statistics from previous conflicts, cluster bombs were once again used in The War on Terrorism. The bomblets were similar in appearance to the token food parcels being dropped at the same time.

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source:www.hrw.org/backgrounder/arms/cluster-bck1031.htm

Feeling Shame

By ANN SCOTT TYSON

Like blinding orange and white stars, US rockets and missiles filled with deadly cluster bombs arced skyward, lending the evening clouds an unnatural glow. Moments later, the munitions exploded on targets around Baghdad, wiping out Iraqi artillery and killing scores of Iraqis.

So lethal was the past week's barrage of artillery - using rockets and missiles designed to demolish everything within a one square kilometer - that it left Lt. John Harrell of the 3rd Infantry Division's 1-39 Artillery Battalion with virtually nothing else to attack. His battalion has shot 350 rockets, including 72 in a single onslaught on Baghdad International Airport.

Yet even as US commanders

cite dramatic success in the three-week-old war, many look upon the wholesale destruction of Iraq's military and the killing of thousands of Iraqi fighters with a sense of regret.

"They have no command and control, no organization. They're just dying," says Brig. Gen. Louis Weber, an assistant commander of the 3rd Infantry Division. This week, the division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team killed at least 1,000 Iraqis by direct fire alone on a single raid into Baghdad, he said.

The combat strength of most regular units has dwindled to below 20 percent, according to US military estimates. Some 70 percent of Iraq's artillery has been knocked out.

"We've destroyed a large majority of their military and they still need to secure their country," says Lt. Col. Woody Radcliffe, who heads a 3rd Infantry Division operations center. "It's an absolute shame. We didn't want to do this. Again and again, US officers



expressed puzzlement over Iraqi fighters' tactical ineptitude and seemingly reckless disregard for their own lives.

For example, Iraqis repeatedly attempted to block roads using vehicles buttressed with loose sand. US forces either blew up the vehicles or drove around them.

As the 3rd Infantry quickly advanced north along the Euphrates and west toward the capital, some soldiers began to describe the battles as almost disturbingly unfair.

"At the Karbala Gap the Iraqis put up a good fight, but to no avail because we had the firepower. It was way too easy," says Staff Sgt. Ira Mack, who serves at the headquarters of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team. US commanders had expected heavier fighting and the possible use of Iraqi chemical weapons.

Earlier, in a battle to isolate Najaf, US commanders called for airstrikes partly out of an aversion to mowing down Iraqis with direct fire.

"There were waves and waves of people coming at them, with AK-47s, out of this factory, and they were killing everyone," says Lieutenant Colonel Radcliffe. "The commander called and said, 'This is not right. This is insane. Let's hit the factory with close air support and take them out all at once.'"

For some soldiers, trauma is already sinking in. "For lack of a better word, I feel almost guilty about the massacre," says one soldier privately. "We

wasted a lot of people. It makes you wonder how many were innocent. It takes away some of the pride. We won, but at what cost?"

Adding to the potential for post-war trauma, some officers suggest, is the fact that many of the 3rd Infantry Division's troops are barely 20 years old.

"The average soldier now is 19 to 21 years old," says Sergeant Mack. "You have 21-year-old sergeants. They're not experienced enough to maintain control over themselves or their soldiers in the heat of the battle. They're just two years off the streets. Before returning home, officers stress that the soldiers must have time to decompress. "The reality is, we've got a bunch of steely-eyed killers that have destroyed all the enemy forces they've come into contact with," worries Radcliffe. "The switch is on right now, and you can't just turn it off."

Weapons of Depleted Uranium

By NEIL MACKAY

BRITISH and American coalition forces are using depleted uranium (DU) shells in the war against Iraq and deliberately flouting a United Nations resolution which classifies the munitions as illegal weapons of mass destruction.

DU contaminates land, causes ill-health and cancers among the soldiers using the weapons, the armies they target and civilians, leading to birth defects in children.

Professor Doug Rokke, ex-director of the Pentagon's depleted uranium project -- a former professor of environmental science at Jacksonville University and onetime US army colonel who was tasked by the US department of defence with the post-first Gulf war depleted uranium desert clean-up -- said use of DU was a 'war crime'.

Rokke said: "There is a moral point to be made here. This war was about Iraq possessing illegal weapons of mass destruction -- yet we are using

weapons of mass destruction ourselves.' He added: 'Such double-standards are repelent.'

The latest use of DU in the current conflict came on Friday when an American A10 tankbuster plane fired a DU shell, killing one British soldier and injuring three others in a 'friendly fire' incident.

According to a August 2002 report by the UN subcommission, laws which are breached by the use of DU shells include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the Charter of the United Nations; the Genocide Convention; the Convention Against Torture; the four Geneva Conventions of 1949; the Conventional Weapons Convention of 1980; and the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, which expressly forbid employing 'poison or poisoned weapons' and 'arms, projectiles or materials calculated to cause unnecessary suffering'. All of these laws are designed to spare civilians from unwarranted suffering in armed conflicts.

DU has been blamed for the effects of Gulf war syndrome - typified by chronic muscle and joint pain, fatigue and memory loss -- among 200,000 US soldiers after the 1991 conflict.

It is also cited as the most

likely cause of the 'increased number of birth deformities and cancer in Iraq' following the first Gulf war.

'Cancer appears to have increased between seven and 10 times and deformities between four and six times,' according to the UN subcommission.

The Pentagon has admitted that 320 metric tons of DU were left on the battlefield after the first Gulf war, although Russian military experts say 1000 metric tons is a more accurate figure.

In 1991, the Allies fired 944,000 DU rounds or some 2700 tons of DU tipped bombs. A UK Atomic Energy Authority report said that some 500,000 people would die before the end of this century, due to radioactive debris left in the desert.

The use of DU has also led to birth defects in the children of Allied veterans and is believed to be the cause of the 'worrying number of anophthalmos cases -- babies born without eyes' in Iraq. Only one in 50 million births should be anophthalmic, yet one Baghdad hospital had eight cases in just two years. Seven of the fathers had been exposed to American DU anti-tank rounds in 1991. There have also been cases of Iraqi babies born without the

crowns of their skulls, a deformity also linked to DU shelling.

A study of Gulf war veterans showed that 67% had children with severe illnesses, missing eyes, blood infections, respiratory problems and fused fingers.

Rokke told the Sunday Herald: 'A nation's military personnel cannot wilfully contaminate any other nation, cause harm to persons and the environment and then ignore the consequences of their actions.

'To do so is a crime against humanity.

'We must do what is right for the citizens of the world -- ban DU.'

He called on the US and UK to 'recognise the immoral con-

sequences of their actions and assume responsibility for medical care and thorough environmental remediation'.

He added: 'We can't just use munitions which leave a toxic wasteland behind them and kill indiscriminately.

'It is equivalent to a war crime.'

Rokke said that coalition troops were currently fighting in the Gulf without adequate respiratory protection against DU contamination.

The Sunday Herald has previously revealed how the Ministry of Defence had test-fired some 6350 DU rounds into the Solway Firth over more than a decade, from 1989 to 1999.

source: http://www.sunday-herald.com/32522_31mar03



Campaign Against Depleted Uranium
Bridge 5 Mill,
22a Beswick Street,
Ancoats, Manchester,
M4 7HR

0161 273 8293 / 8283
info@cadu.org.uk

www.cadu.org.uk



'The meek shall inherit the earth, but not the mineral rights'
John Paul Getty jnr

There's nothing new about the links between oil, war and politics. From the earliest days a relatively small number major companies have controlled world production and prices and relied on close ties to governments, who in turn have helped maintain market conditions and gain new sources of supply. Geopolitical rivalry among major nations throughout the past century has often turned on the control of key oil resources. It comes as no surprise that Bush and his cronies are all oil people.

During the final stage of the first world war, the secretary of the British War cabinet, Sir Maurice Hankey, wrote to the Foreign secretary regarding the oil resources in Mesopotamia/Iraq, saying that 'control of these resources becomes a first-class war aim'. Both the US and UK maintain that control of energy sources are key priorities for foreign policy whilst in 1997, Rumsfeld, Cheney and other right wing oilmen created a lobby group 'Project for the new American Century' (www.newamericancentury.org), and in 1998 wrote a letter to the US Clinton administration demanding regime change in Iraq. In testimony to congress in 1999, General Anthony Zinni, commander in chief of US central command, testified that the Gulf...

is a "vital interest"... and the US "must have free access to the regions resources".

Oil and gas are fossil fuels in more than name - the industry knows that its life is drawing to an end, and scientific consensus acknowledges the need to move away from these fuels to renewable energy supplies.

In the world, the US heads corporate oil domination, with the UK second and France third. The headquarters of the four largest oil companies in the world are in the US and UK. Regarding Iraq, the US and UK acted almost alone as sanctions enforcers and prime advocates of the invasion of Iraq.

Why Iraqi oil?

According to the US Department of Energy, Iraq has almost a quarter of worlds' total reserves of oil, an estimated 112 billion barrels, with at least another 100bn barrels of unproven reserves. The oil demands a premium price on the world markets due to its high quality, and coupled with its low extraction and production costs makes it an extremely lucrative resource (Iraqi extraction costs are approx \$1 - \$1.5 per barrel, compared to \$6 in Russia, and closer to \$20 in Texas).

Oil companies future profits and share prices depend on their control of reserves, so Iraq, with the worlds second largest reserves, is the logical place for companies to replace their reserves in the future. At present Saudi Arabia, which at present controls more than 20% of the

worlds crude reserves (260 billion barrels), has the capacity to control oil prices and exports. The US relies on Saudi oil for around one sixth of its oil imports, and depends on it 'as the only producer... that could boost its exports significantly in the event of a world crude shortage'. However Saudi Arabia is not looking reliable as a source of guaranteed oil exports and if they stopped or lessened their exports to the US there wouldn't be enough spare oil to make up the shortfall.

Who controls the oil pie?

The US and UK used to hold a three quarter share in Iraq's oil production, but lost their position with the nationalisation of Iraq's petroleum company in 1972, which rocked the international oil industry. The major shareholders were Shell, BP, Esso, Mobil, and CFP.

Since the first Gulf War, France, China and Russia have had deals with Saddam to development the oil fields when UN sanctions were lifted. If Saddam had remained in power then BP and large US companies such as ExxonMobil would not be in bidding - which is why they favoured a regime change and a 'level playing field' where all oil companies could compete for production deals in a new Iraq. A report from Deutsch Bank, said that Exxon Mobil would be in 'pole position' post regime change.

'Iraqs investment will probably be divided into two phases: recovery



"We not EXONerate Saddam Hussein for his actions. We will Mobilize to meet this threat to vital interests in the Persian Gulf until an amicable solution is reached. Our best strategy is to BP repaired. Failing that, we ARCO ming to kick your ass."

and development. In the first phase, Halliburton and other service companies have got contracts to restore Iraqi production to pre Gulf War 1 levels. The second, the development phase, would see the worlds biggest companies, vying for production sharing contracts with the newly installed government.

The claim that Iraqi oil played no

part in the US/UK invasion is laughable. The question is whether the US will be satisfied with this prize or press ahead in their 'war against terror'.

Whatever the future holds for further military action, one thing is certain. All our futures are endangered by our reliance on oil. Be it war, pollution or climate change, a significant shift away from oil is required NOW.

One War to Rule them All....

By MICHAEL HALLAM

In 2002 the governments of the world held their second international conference on the environment in Johannesburg. This followed the first Global Summit in Rio de Janeiro ten years earlier.

Whilst the real gains in Rio were slight, the event was significant in that for the first time the nations of the world formally admitted that we face a global environmental crisis of our own making. After 1992, whilst practical action was slow, there was at least a public acknowledgement that the environmental degradation caused by human activity must be eventually tackled.

In 2002 all of the hopes of the last decade seemed to be dashed. The worlds environmental and NGO community watched from the sidelines (mostly denied entry to the summit) as the corporate world systematically sought to undermine every proposal for environmental regulation and replaced it with their own agenda.

The 2002 Johannesburg Summit demonstrated that national governments are no longer in control of the sustainable development agenda and that through such processes as the Global Agreement on Tariffs and Trades it is the corporate world which is increasingly dictating the direction in which the world would go.

This silent takeover of democracy by the world's most powerful corporations during the 1990's has led to an acceleration of the strip-mining of our natural and social capital through the process of 'globalisation'. Whilst purporting to be for the maximum benefit of all, in practice this process does the opposite and benefits only a few at the expense of the many.

In 2000 the American corporations were powerful enough to have their own appointees 'elected' to the highest political office in the world and since that time the agenda of the US government and that of the forces working through the corporations has been identical.

The tricks of the trade in human psychological manipulation have long been

at the service of these powers through advertising, public relations firms and the media, and so it is with seamless ease that they shift from informing us that 'Coke is Best' to informing us that perpetual war is the price of perpetual peace and that human rights must be suspended in order to promote democracy.

This Alice in Wonderland logic was most successfully developed and applied by Joseph Stalin. It was he who perfected the art of pronouncing black to be white, whilst keeping a straight face, and who inspired George Orwell to write both Animal Farm and 1984. Animal Farm, in particular, is a modern parable of the black art of manipulating and intimidating human thinking, and anyone who has read it will not be taken in by the words and phrases spoken by the American and British Governments over the last few months. Thus our own John Prescott can blithely pronounce that we must go to war because the French Government is opposed to the war!

The hope is that by re-spinning the news today, and

offering us yet another new electrical consumer toy, we will forget what we remember of yesterday and accept the most recent re-writing of history. The number of contradictions between the way things are portrayed and the way they are is now so manifest that we barely recognise them anymore.

Luckily, there does seem to have been a miscalculation in the war planning. The sheer number of ordinary people throughout the world who have acquired the capacity to see through the lies and are not buying the war seems far greater than anticipated. There is another revolution taking place in the world, a human revolution. The consciousness of humanity is changing. When the image of the earth was taken from outer space we realised, as a concrete fact, the beauty and vulnerability of our small finite world. That the world has boundaries and that what goes around comes around means that if we throw our rubbish into our neighbour's garden then sooner or later it is going to come back.

But this change is far more profound than that. An increasing number of people

talk about a new deepening of consciousness in which the interconnectivity between people, things and events becomes at least as important as our ability to analytically and systematically take living things to pieces. We re-assemble nature in our own image but unfortunately our self-image is incomplete, for we are more than just the sum of our material parts. Our current material, space-bound, technology-dependent science has become adept at describing the processes of decay but it is yet to describe what life is.

Having reached and exceeded its natural and healthy limitations this one-sided science, along with much of the technology accompanying it has become degenerate and is in decline. The fossil fuels which power this technological version of nature are beginning to run out and the self-awarded licence for America to wage open ended war is the desperate act of a power that knows it has no future if humankind is to evolve in a healthy and sustainable way. So when we protest against this war we must begin to recognise the true scope and depth of this

You are invited to be part of the Carnival Against Oil Wars and Climate Chaos

outside BP's Annual General Meeting
10am, April 24th 2003

Royal Festival Hall, Belvedere Road, South Bank, London

If you're despairing over the carnage this instalment of the war on terror has wrought, don't forget how close we came to preventing it. countless people across the world have seen the war machine stripped bare for the first time, seen the intimate connections between the military, government, big oil and capitalism itself. And instead of staring dazedly at their TV screens, they're getting up and getting active, which is a cause for celebration in the midst of all the darkness. The Carnival Against Oil Wars and Climate Chaos will be another sign of that spirit of DIY resistance.

Why BP? It triggers conflict. It doesn't want you to know it, but it's knee deep in this war, just like Shell, Exxon, Total etc. Let's scratch away the gleaming paintwork of BP's sleek illusion machine by hearing about its record in countries like Colombia, West Papua, Alaska and Azerbaijan. And let's join the dots between oil, war, capitalism and the way they're knocking the world's climate off its axis.

At the Carnival we'll polish up our visions of the world we want to live in. We'll reconnect ourselves with the wild burst of energy that we see all around us in the spring. We'll call for a real, radical change that transports us lifetimes away from the shallow, brutal, racist, unnatural, destructive profit-driven world personified by BP. We'll meet the system's violence with creative defiance. We'll speak and dance of better futures, of an end to oil, of communities owning and running their renewable energy supplies, of resistance and diversity... because there's only one thing better than walking your talk, and that's dancing it.

This will be a positive celebration of a safe, sustainable and socially just future. Book the day off work now, be there by 10am on the 24th and bring solar-powered sounds, instruments, food and drink to share, drums, gladrags, puppets, friends and positive vibes...

There will be a Critical Mass bike ride as part of the day's fun and games, meeting at 9.30am at BP's new HQ - 1, St. James' Square, SW1 - and ending up at the Carnival.

london@risingtide.org.uk

war. We must not allow our thinking to be compartmentalised into accepting the associations that are made on our behalf. We must make all the connections between the war against Iraq, or whichever country is picked next, the war against nature and the war against human rights in the name of a one-sided economics, and we must voice these connections on every opportunity we get.

When Ghandi opposed the British military occupation of India he made the connection between the wearing of British made cloth and the poverty of rural Indians, and organised the first mass consumer boycott in history. He made

the connection between the development of a sustainable local economy and the resisting of tyranny. Resisting elite globalisation, the wholesale destruction of nature and the removal of hard won human rights along with the struggle of local people the world over to avoid the impoverishment forced upon them by corrupt authorities and the opposition to physical warfare are all aspects of the same war.

We must all become our own Ghandi's, we must make the connections and we must be prepared to act only for the good, and to speak the truth as we experience it, in defiance of all pressure to do otherwise.

Storm Brewing In The Gulf

By MARK LYNAS

A blood-red haze had enveloped the Iraqi capital, blotting out the skyline and turning the brightness of day into an eerie dusk.

In Baghdad's northern Shaab neighbourhood, the strange morning light showed up a scene of almost unimaginable horror - wreckage and body parts scattered across the street by a wayward American air strike. Many furious onlookers thought that the sandstorm enveloping Baghdad - reportedly the worst in more than 10 years - was more than just a freak of nature. It was an omen, a curse against the Western enemies who were invading and destroying their country.

Just fifty miles away, the screaming winds and driving sand were taking their toll on the American armoured columns rumbling towards Baghdad. With visibility reduced to only a few metres, the army's advance had ground to a halt, its soldiers forced to seek shelter from the blinding dust. The Middle Eastern weather had achieved what no fighting force on Earth is supposed to be capable of: stopping the might of the American war machine dead in its tracks. That freak sandstorm is unlikely to have been a curse - but nor may it have been entirely natural. For a clearer idea of its probable causes, the invading allies need to look not to the Iraqis but to themselves.

According to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, sandstorms are on the increase in Iraq - and allied actions during the last

Gulf War are partly to blame. During Operation Desert Storm in 1991 tank treads tore up the fragile crust which usually keeps the desert sands in place, and huge areas of natural vegetation were destroyed during the conflict. The problem was aggravated by post-war sanctions, which caused severe energy shortages and forced local people to cut trees and shrubs for cooking and heating fuel during the winter.

But a much greater threat may now be coming into play. Temperatures in the Middle East are currently rising in line with the steady advance of global warming, drying out land surfaces and leaving ever-larger barren and desertified areas to spawn more destructive sandstorms. In addition, the whole Middle East area - together with Afghanistan, Pakistan and much of Central Asia - suffered four years of crippling drought between 98 and 2002, a climatological disaster which was linked directly to global warming according to new research published in Science magazine earlier this year.

As with the carnage in Baghdad, it's clear who is to blame for the burden of global warming. Western countries are responsible for the overwhelming majority of historic greenhouse gas emissions. America alone, with only a twentieth of the world's population, currently emits a quarter of its greenhouse gases. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a UN-backed body comprising of more than 2,000 leading climate scientists, concluded in 2001 that this pollution is already identifiably changing the world's climate - at a rapidly-accelerating rate.

We're told that George Bush is invading Iraq purely to

liberate the Iraqi people. But there seems little doubt that Bush - who leads the most oil-soaked and corrupt administration in US history - also wants to liberate Iraq's massive oil reserves from their rocky prison under the desert sands. Every barrel of this oil, once under American control, will soon be gushing onto world markets - much of it destined to be burned in the engines of American cars.

George Bush has made no secret of his opposition to the Kyoto Protocol on climate change and his wish to protect high carbon-consumption American lifestyles. But even the simplest back-of-an-envelope calculation shows that this policy spells disaster for the world's climate, as well as the people of Iraq.

The US government estimates 112 billion barrels of proven reserves, plus another 200 billion 'probable/possible' reserves are lying under Iraqi soil. When burned, this would add 50 billion tonnes of CO2 to the atmosphere - on its own enough to have a measurable impact on global temperatures.

But Iraq is only the beginning. Once furnished with US military bases, it will be the springboard for tighter control of oil reserves in both neighbouring Saudi Arabia and Iran (Kuwait is already in the bag). Adding these three countries' estimated reserves to the equation would lead to an atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration high enough to raise global temperatures by at least 2 degrees celsius and possibly more. When the rest of the world's coal, gas and oil reserves are factored back in, climate chaos looms ever closer.

'Under the Weather', Mark Lynas' book on the human impacts of climate change, will be published by Flamingo in Spring 2004. marklynas@zetnet.co.uk

The weather . . . (sponsored by Power Generators everywhere)



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GOODBYE BAGHDAD

JO WILDING
Inside Baghdad

30th March 03

I started crying this morning. I thought I was leaving at 8am in a convoy for Jordan and I said goodbye to the staff in the Andalus. Many's the evening I've spent setting the world to rights over tea and cake round the desk on the ground floor or, in the last week and a bit, leaning against a post on the roof with Ahmed, looking out at the city lights, or sometimes the lack of them, and the flashes and the jets of flame.

It got worse when I said goodbye to the young soldiers on the street outside, who share their tea with us

and tell jokes in mime. "Ma'assalama," I said, and added, as a reflex, "Good luck." And then I couldn't bear the thought of them having to face those overwhelmingly powerful tanks and guns and ammunition that can pierce body armour, with nothing but an aging rifle and a hard hat to protect them.

It will probably be a while before any of my friends in Iraq are able to read this, but when you do, this is what I wanted to say. I'm so glad I've met you and had time to hang out with you. Thank you for your friendship, for

glasses of tea and numi basra and coffees and arghilas and songs and chat and gossip and tours of the city and evenings by the river and rollercoaster rides and shared secrets and everything.

I hope you make it safely through this war and I hope you find your freedom, from the bullying of the US/UK and the Iraqi government; I hope you are allowed your peace. Your courage, your dignity, your kindness and humour inspire me.

Ma'assalama.

The above was just a small extract of the last report sent by Jo Wilding - a human rights activist based in Baghdad until told to leave the country by the Iraqi foreign ministry. Her complete diary is available on the internet. see <http://www.bristolfoe.org.uk/wildfire/>

Jo is now back in the UK. Below, is her account of an attempt to visit the peace camp at RAF Fairford to see the B52 bombers being loaded with their deadly cargo of terror, death and destruction.

Jo will be coming to Totnes to give a talk about her experienced in Iraq.

Wednesday 21st May. 7pm Bogan House, Totnes, High Street.

(subject to confirmation - look out for posters near the time or phone 01803 840098)



HELLO LIBERTY?

6th April 03

You don't see the B-52s when you're underneath them in Baghdad. I saw them yesterday at RAF / USAF Fairford, on a gorgeous sunny day in bright green English countryside. This is where someone loads the bombs onto the planes. This is where someone climbs into the cockpit of the plane, amid the birdsong and the daffodils, and sets off to drop bombs on people and their lives.

People had consistently been stopped when they arrived at the Fairford protests and refused access to the peace camp and the protests against the use of British bases for the bombing of Iraq. We arrived on bikes and rode down towards the base and were stopped and searched under s44 of the Terrorism Act 2000, which allows the police to stop and search anyone within a designated zone, for no other reason than being there, though being there is not in itself illegal.

We were allowed to continue but were again stopped a few minutes later and told we couldn't go along the track we were cycling on because it wasn't the designated procession route. There were small clumps of people being escorted by an equal number of police as they marched towards the base. More sat defiantly picnicking having not been let near the march or the peace camp.

Stopping for a drink of water at a quiet pub in nearby Kempford, we were approached by a policeman who read

us s14 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, whereby we could be arrested for "demonstrating" anywhere other than along the designated route. We asked for a definition of demonstrating, because at the time we were only drinking water, but none was given.

Further towards the base we were stopped again and given a further search under s44 of the Terrorism Act. Two of the lads were also given a warning under s 69 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, the aggravated trespass provisions, which prohibit trespass on land in the open air with the intention of disrupting a lawful activity. The warning states that if you return within 3 months you can be arrested for aggravated trespass, regardless of the fact that you had not in fact disrupted anything at all, never mind the fact that the land you were "trespassing" on was a public footpath.

The nine of us were attended during the search by around thirty-five police officers, five vans, with a sixth stopping to offer assistance, a police CCTV van, a police helicopter and two police dogs. Police had been brought in from all over England. We were then treated to a further reading of s14, after which we attempted to go via the direct route, ie. a few hundred metres along a public road, to the peace camp. Two officers told us that we couldn't go into the peace camp. They had been instructed that the road was closed. No, they didn't know why. No, they couldn't tell us what law gave them the authority to close it, but they could get their sergeant to come and tell us it was closed. No, they couldn't tell us what offence we would be committing if we tried to walk up the road, but we would definitely be arrested. And while we

were there they were going to have to search us under s44 of the Terrorism Act.

Surprisingly we still hadn't picked up any dangerous terrorist-assisting items in the brief interlude since the last search: no rocket launchers, no aircraft capable of killing civilians in their beds in the middle of the night, no cluster bombs in our pockets, although someone came down from the peace camp to see us and said they'd just seen cluster bombs being loaded onto an aircraft inside the base. Hmm, does that give anyone a clue as to where they might find the offensive weapons they're so diligently hunting?

They have been refused visitors this weekend and have been forced to provide a list of residents who are the only people allowed in. For a time the press were refused entry, until a law lecturer convinced the police of the illegality of the restriction.

In Iraq the freedom to protest would be considerably more interfered with. But

that's not the point. The lack of civil and political freedom allowed to the Iraqi people is not a reason to bomb them, especially given that the lack of freedom is in part a result of CIA assistance to the Iraqi government when it was an ally. In any case, there is little triumph in comparing ourselves with one of the worst systems and concluding that we come out better.

Where is our democracy, where is our legitimacy to impose change on others with bombs when we use terrorist legislation to prevent ordinary, democratic, peaceful protest? Where is our moral high ground when we create a Human Rights Act which allows freedom "within the law" and then uses the law to take away that freedom?

So it goes on. The troops are destroying the Saddam statues as they go along. Surely that is the right of the Iraqi people. Surely the power and emotion of the moment when those symbols are torn down belongs to them in the way that the hammering and



Waging Peace

By AMI LEE

It is a time of heightened emotion, a time of anger, fear and frustration. It is also a time of great possibility.

There was an e-mail being circulated recently about Robert Muller former assistant secretary general of the United Nations, who was celebrating the fact that finally there is a global conversation about the legitimacy of war. The peace movement around the world has never been so visible or co-ordinated. March 15th was a landmark that most of us will remember for a very long time to come. For me it feels as if we are standing on a precipice. On the one side is the possibility to harness and transform the energy and discourse that has been stimulated and to insist on major change. On the other side is the possibility that we could spiral into our hopelessness and powerlessness and give up our organised struggle for a better world or on the other hand, fail to question what it is at a deep

level we want to see fundamentally changed and present our protest in a way that continues the cycle of aggression, fear and mistrust and the divisions between people.

So for me it is imperative right now that the peace movement questions its agenda. What it is that we do want to see change?

Are we as eloquent or as effective at expressing what we are for as we are at expressing what we are against?

My opinion is that to aim for a sustainable peace based on ending all violence as a legitimate means of communicative currency is the most valuable approach. For sure this involves nonviolent direct action and clear statements of opposition but not only to the use of military might, the arms trade and other oppressive and destructive institutions, but to suicide bombing, scapegoating, misinformation that may demonise a group of people or individuals, the proliferation of ignorance through an intentional lack of information and indeed to aggression towards members of our own community who may not share our opinions.

How much more effective

would our action be if it was in itself modeling the changes we would like to see? For example, if we are protesting for dialogue then I think our protest needs to model the importance of learning to listen well to one another. That takes thought and practice!

Peace as the Absence of Terror

Those in power put forward in a very convincing way policies that are based on the premise that the world is a pretty scary place where everybody is out for themselves, people can't be trusted, there is more that divides us than unifies us and so it's best to get what you can while you can for the sake of your security and well-being. As the teacher Abraham Theodore Heschel cynically misquoted the Bible, they teach us to "suspect our neighbors as ourselves." It is perhaps this premise that convinces good young men (and let's not forget, women) of the legitimacy of taking up arms against one another. How wrought with fear those soldiers engaged in Iraq and their loved ones must be now I cannot imagine.

During the last couple of weeks a potential division has emerged in our own community. Union

jacks are appearing and many people in Totnes who have frankly not been visible in the run-up to the War now want to make their voices heard. I have heard stories about confrontation between supporters of the anti-war campaign and those who disagree with it. I have also heard stories about local people's fear of aggressive action from the peace movement if something they do is construed as pro-war. The posters of this new campaign that are being displayed this week are actually very clear, they ask us to support the troops their wives and families. If we really are for peace for all people, that does not render our two campaigns mutually exclusive. This is not actually a division, though some political factions such as the BNP who are fielding candidates locally in the forthcoming local elections would be most glad to have us believe that it is. Again, I'm aware and heartened that this issue is also being addressed. Some of us have chosen to wear gold ribbons alongside our "not in our name" badges or white ribbons to show that we do care about those people we call "the troops" even if we don't agree with the action they are

currently engaged in. It would be easy to point the finger at America, Tony Blair, the right-wing, the troops etc but the truth is, most, if not all of us will have grown-up fairly convinced by the above premise, saddled with fear mistrust and suspicion. The peace movement itself has not avoided this. Even in our own town divisions are becoming more visible. Some of us (anti-war campaigners) have felt alienated by what has felt like aggression and ambiguity in the handling of certain issues. Nationally, The Stop the War Campaign has now responded to concern from the English Jewish community about the way it has linked the issue of Israel/Palestine on its anti-war posters. The posters used to say "Justice for Palestinians, Freedom for Palestine". Phrasing it in this way implies to me that one should sympathise only with Palestinians in their suffering while regarding Israelis with suspicion and mistrust. But why could the campaign not be phrased; "Peace in Israel and Palestine"? Why can't we make clear a commitment towards the ending of a life of terror for all people?

EVENTS

Faiths.

Thursdays:

Silent Vigil 6:30pm
St Mary's, Dartington.
Silent Vigil 6:00pm
St Petroc's Church, South Brent. All Faiths.

Fridays:

Silent Vigil
11:00am - 12 Noon
Outside St Mary's church Totnes

Peace Table

Outside The Harlequin Bookshop in High St, Totnes.
10:00am - 1:00pm

Silent Vigil 6:00pm - 6:30pm Outside Newsagents (formerly the Anchor pub), South Brent.

Bring a candle if you wish. Email: jjw@onetel.net.uk or J.Rawlinson@plymouth.ac.uk <http://www.peaceplease.co.uk>

Silent Vigil 5:00pm - 6:00pm Bedford Square, Exeter. Organised by the Exeter Quakers.

Open to all those of any faith and no faith.

6:00pm Weekly open meetings of the Exeter Stop the War Coalition. At the Islamic Centre, York Road, Exeter.

Saturdays:

Peace Walk.
11:00am at the Plains, Totnes.

Peace Table Outside The Harlequin Bookshop in High St, Totnes.
10:00am - 1:00pm

Stop The War Stall - Catherine Street, Exeter. 10am to 2pm. Information, Postcards, Petitions, Join up. Organised by Exeter FoE Leafletting and petitioning, Bedford Square. 12 Noon to 2:00pm.

Vigil For Peace 11:00 to 12:00, Outside The Avenue Church, The Avenue, Newton Abbot. Tel. Ruth Homer 01626 774430

email rhomer@fish.co.uk

Vigil For Peace 13:00 to 14:00, top of Fleet Street by GPO, Torquay. Organised by Torbay Stop The War Group, rkitto@robertkitto.co.uk

Stop The War Stall - The Sundial, Armada Way, Plymouth 10.00-11.00am.

Vigil For Peace 12:00 to 13:00, Guildhall Market, Barnstaple.

Sundays:
Silent Vigil 7:00pm, Cleder Place, North St, Ashburton.

Special Events:

"Words Hanging Out" - An Exhibition Of Poems. At Birdwood House, Totnes. From 21st April To 3rd May

Paint For Peace - At Birdwood House, Totnes. 30th March + Every Day.



Niche Killing

By DAVID EDWARDS

There is no glory here - US and UK troops have been led into a nightmare, they are dying for a cause that no one should be asked to die for.

Can you imagine dying for Bush and Blair? Can you imagine killing for them? Michelle Waters, the sister of a Marine who died soon after the war began, says of her family:

"It's all for nothing. That war could have been prevented. Now, we're out of a brother. Bush is not out of a brother. We are."

And the people of Iraq - their soldiers, often conscripts, are people too - are being slaughtered in their thousands. Hell, we now know, is a bombed market place under an orange sky in a war fought for oil and power. Hell is an impoverished, speechless market trader trembling amid the body parts.

Restraining Hands

In some spiritual traditions compassion is described as the "invisible protector" of living beings. If this sounds like mere sentiment, consider that compassion is protecting the civilian population of Iraq in a very real way, right now. The millions of ordinary people who felt like insignificant ants marching in giant crowds in February and March have had this very real effect: they have placed an invisible restraining hand on the shoulders of the people throwing the Tomahawks, the MOABs and the JDAMs.

The US military does not feel able to shed the blood of thousands of civilians by bringing its giant, fiery hammers down on urban areas - they know the world is watching, they know the world will not tolerate it. They know this because you and we filled small areas of space with our bodies on the streets of our cities. It didn't feel like much at the time.

We must be clear about one important point: the protests,



the concern, the dissent, are absolutely vital. They have made a difference.

The media is, of course, busy sanitising the horrors taking place in our names. Indeed the ability to overlook horrors committed by the West and its allies is a key job requirement for mainstream journalists. Steve Anderson, controller of ITV News, responded to complaints that the horrors of war are being sanitised:

"I have seen some of the images on Al-Jazeera television. I would never put them on screen." The BBC's head of news, Richard Sambrook, agrees that such pictures are not suitable for a British audience.

The images in question were indeed horrific - a young Iraqi boy with the top of his skull blown off with only torn flaps of scalp remaining - too much for the British public to bear, we are told. Instead we are trained to admire the Jeremy Clarkson side of war: the muscular curves of Tornado bombers, the cruise missiles ripping at the sky: "This is seriously hardcore machinery going in" (BBC1, March 22), as one BBC 'military expert' drooled.

At the extreme end of the spectrum, even honest debate is being censored. Sir Ray Tindle, chairman and Editor in Chief of Tindle Newspapers Ltd, relayed his orders to editors on the eve of war:

"When British troops come under fire, however, as now seems probable, I ask you to ensure that nothing appears in the columns of your newspapers which attacks the decision to conduct the war."

While we feel sympathy for the plight of our troops - we grieve for all who die in this war - we agree with the respected political commentator, George W. Bush, who said recently of military responsibility: "It

will be no defence to say, 'I was just following orders.'"

We also note the view of Justice Robert Jackson, chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials in 1946, who said: "The very essence of the Nuremberg charter is that individuals have international duties which transcend national obligations of obedience imposed by the state."

We are all human beings - no one is granted special exemption from moral responsibility, least of all people engaged in killing. Our TVs have been full of soldiers and airmen declaring innocently: "I'm just here to do a job and to do it to the best of my ability."

But killing and mutilating people in a cynical and illegal war are about far more than just doing a job. Why do we imagine that signing a contract and agreeing to abide by certain rules in exchange for money means we are relieved of our responsibility as moral actors? What does our promise to do as we are ordered mean when we are ordered to incinerate innocent men, women and child? Which is more important - our agreement, or the burning to death of innocents?

Where does the argument for unconditional support for our troops lead? Consider the words of the dissident Spanish chronicler, Las Casas, recording the actions of Spanish troops on the island of Hispaniola in the 16th century:

"There were 60,000 people living on this island, including the Indians; so that from 1494 to 1508, over three million people had perished from war, slavery, and the mines. Who in future generations will believe this? I myself writing it as a knowledgeable eyewitness can hardly believe it."

By the media's logic if we had been Spanish in 1508 we should have supported 'our' Spanish troops. British troops are not Spanish conquistadors, but the point is that the issue is not black and white - we can't just be told to shut up and stop thinking the moment the shooting starts. Because it's not black and white, it needs to be discussed. Tolstoy described well the reality of the call to mindless patriotism:

"Patriotism in its simplest, clearest, and most indubitable signification is nothing else but a means of obtaining for the rulers their ambitions and covetous desires, and for the ruled the abdication of human dignity, reason, and conscience, and a slavish enthrallment to those in power. And as such it is recommended wherever it is preached. Patriotism is slavery."

Beyond all the facts, evidence, arguments and counter-arguments, there is a simple truth that conflicts with the primitive idea that mass violence is either necessary or effective as a solution to anything. It was elegantly outlined by the 12th century

philosopher Je Gampopa:

"It is not anger and hatred but loving kindness and compassion that vouchsafe the welfare of others."

If we took this idea seriously and acted upon it, the swamp of hatred that breeds the mosquitoes of terror would soon dry up. Anger and hatred are powerless in the face of authentic human kindness. Much of the world now understands that violence and hatred are not good answers to violence and hatred, that the fog of war is not a good antidote to the ignorance of arrogance and greed. Alas, there remain centres of ruthless power which understand what war is good for - it's good for business, for frightening and controlling people into submission, for getting what you want that other people have.

But a bloody US/UK 'victory' means disaster for the Iraqi people and an explosion of hatred around the world. At home, war means the further entrenchment of the fossil fuel fundamentalists, military elites and other greed-driven cynics leading the world to social and environmental ruination. A continuation of the current global protests means something else - it means the possibility that we might at last wake up from the nightmare of history to a world dominated by human concern for others rather than human suffering.

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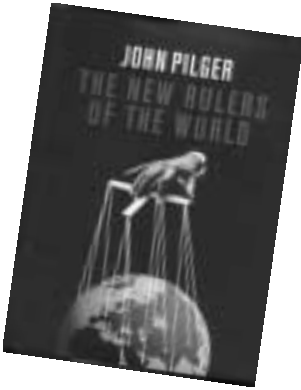
The New Rulers of The World
by John Pilger
Verso, £10, 246pp, hb

Journalist and filmmaker John Pilger is a master at exposing the Orwellian double-speak of hypocritical governments. One of the guiding principles of the western liberal democracies is that the crimes of our 'enemies' must be scrupulously held up for account while our own crimes are ignored, minimised or cast as examples of 'humanitarian intervention'.

The British mainstream media, with significant and brave exceptions, champion the myth that British foreign policy is shaped by benign intent and that on the odd occasion when things 'go wrong', it is merely a mistake or an honest failure. Thankfully, there are still journalists and documentary-makers of the calibre of John Pilger to puncture such myths. Shaped by his experiences reporting from the frontline of earlier abuses of western power, notably in Vietnam and Cambodia, Pilger has long questioned 'the nature of power imposed from a distance, not just by those above the clouds, but by impeccable, faraway figures who order the mass killing of people, and by those who justify their crimes by representing the victims as terrorists, or merely as numbers, without names, faces and histories, or as the inevitable casualties of a superior morality.' The superior morality, of course, belongs to that of the conquering western powers who portray themselves self-servingly as crusaders of democracy, freedom and human rights, all intrinsically linked to the doctrine of free-market capitalism.

John Pilger said in an interview last year: 'a lot of the people who are in the broad anti-globalisation coalition subscribe to the view that the new rulers of the world are the multinational corporations. I don't agree. I think it's a combination of state power - with state power still dominant - and the multinational corporations. The two are really wedded together. It's risky to start describing the world as simply run by corporations.'

To take but one example, the arms trade is only possible courtesy of massive state support. According to a briefing report by the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (www.caat.org.uk), the UK government (i.e. the UK



taxpayer) handed over a net subsidy of £763m to the British arms industry in 2000/2001.

The book covers much ground in four major essays. The first one - 'The Model Pupil' - reveals how General Suharto's bloody seizure of power in Indonesia in the mid-1960s, which resulted in the deaths of up to a million 'Communist sympathisers' led to the imposition of an economy planned to western design. The book's second chapter 'Paying the Price' describes the terrible suffering of ordinary Iraqis as a result of the west's medieval twelve-year long embargo since the Gulf War. Pilger exposes the reality of the supposed Iraqi threat: namely that the 'threat' is a propaganda tool deployed with even greater vigour, post-September 11, by the Bush administration for the benefit of big business. This deceptive propaganda fits neatly into the scaremongering conception of 'total war' (successor to the outdated 'Cold War' myth), all the while filling the coffers of military contractors.

The third chapter, 'The Great Game', illuminates the way in which barely-disguised state power provides the conditions and privileges that protect western markets, while allowing western corporations, on the back of the American military machine, to intervene where they like in the world.

The final chapter, 'The Chosen Ones', sees Pilger return to his home country of Australia to continue a thirty-year engagement with the struggle of the Aboriginal people against the apartheid behind the picture postcard impression of Australia.

Fortunately for us, John Pilger's reporting and analysis is rooted in compassion for the victims of the abuses of western power. He is one of those rare exceptions - a tenacious and courageous reporter - who is unafraid to say what needs to be said. The choice for the reader, as ever, is whether or not to act upon it.

Stupid White Men...

Michael Moore
HarperCollins £18, pp304

As a commentator on social events, Michael Moore has few equals, but even he must be surprised to have waltzed away with the British Book Awards premier award, Book of the Year for Stupid White Men. Moore is a man of many talents, and he certainly makes the most of what he has. The most unlikely movie star EVER, his "Bowling For Columbine" has been called "the best documentary of all time" in a poll by his fellow filmmakers.

Michael Moore, the satirical agent provocateur of modern American life, returns with a caustic new book that created controversy even before it was released. Planned for an autumn 2001 launch, Stupid White Men was shelved in the wake of 11 September, when its publisher, HarperCollins, balked at its anti-Bush attitude.

Although 50,000 copies had already been printed, the author was told, according to Moore, to 'tone down its dissent'. Going public through his own much-visited

website, www.michaelmoore.com, Moore forced the company to reverse its decision and the 'banned' book became a pre-order bestseller, going straight into number three on the New York Times bestseller list.

Best known in the UK for his satirical television series TV Nation, Moore has been exposing and assailing corporate America for years. In his previous best-selling book, Downsize This!, and documentary movies Roger & Me and The Big One, Moore chased down CEOs to bring them to personal account.

Stupid White Men extends this to politics. Moore argues that under Bush the captains of industry and government have collectively done more damage to his country than any other



ethnic or special-interest group. He exposes the corruption of the US ruling elite, their electoral coup and their lies made so easy by the fact that the US media is dominated by six companies.

Moore has already earned his position as an almost lone voice of effective mainstream dissent in the American media. He's a genuine populist; a twenty-first-century pamphleteer with a broad appeal that ageing critics like Chomsky.

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21 countries**

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Korea 1950-53	Vietnam 1961-73	Sudan 1998
Guatemala 1954, 1960, 1967-69	Cambodia 1969-70	Former Yugoslavia 1999
Indonesia 1958	Lebanon 1983-84	
Cuba 1959-61	Grenada 1983	
Congo 1964	Libya 1986	
Paru 1965	EI Salvador 1980s	Afghanistan 1998,
	Nicaragua 1980s	2001-??
	Panama 1989	Iraq 1991-20??

How many more are they planning to bomb? Bush's advisers say Iraq is just a 'battle in the wider war'. They have named North Korea, Iran, and even Syria, Cuba and Libya as possible future targets. They call it a war without end.

But millions of people around the world are raising their voices in protest against this illegal, unjust war. Join us.

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Family's of soldiers in the gulf join peace march in Colchester, home of two conscientious objectors already sent home.

Sporting chance for our troops

Since the UK/US invasion of Iraq was done without the backing of the United Nations, it may have been unlawful and it is possible that British soldiers fighting in Iraq may find themselves hauled up in front of the War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague.

Having signed up to defend our country, it is not surprising that many soldiers were reluctant to fight a war for US corporate interests. If they thought they could get away with it, many would have refused to serve.

Sadly, many do not realise that anyone with a sincere religious, political or moral objection to

war the invasion of Iraq or to any other use of the Armed Forces is a conscientious objector and legally entitled to an honorable discharge.

To start the process you need to state your reason (in writing) as soon as possible. This should be a truthful statement of your own beliefs in your own words. It is very important that you make clear whether you object to any form of military service or just a specific situation.

If you object to any form of military service then you should ask to be discharged on the grounds of conscience. You should ask that this be stated on your discharge papers.

If you would be willing to remain in the Armed Forces then you should state this clearly and ask for a posting to noncombatant duties whilst your case is considered.

The procedure is the same whether you object to all

warfare or just some aspects of military service such as the war on Iraq or strike-breaking.

Please remember that members of the British Armed Forces do not enjoy the same rights to free speech, civil liberties and choice of employment that you do. They do not even have rights enjoyed by members of other European or USA forces.

It is a heavily punishable offence for any member of the British Forces to communicate with the media directly, indirectly or anonymously, to take part in any demonstration or speak in public on any controversial issue. They are committed long contracts and can't 'buy themselves out'. So before you urge them to any action that may incur penalties you will never face, consider advising them to consult AT EASE who provide confidential free advice. 020 7247 5164

c/o 28 Commercial St, E1 6LS.

Whatever our views about the war, there is little doubt that we are saddened by the loss of life. We would like to honour the memory of the British soldiers who are so far known to have been killed during the invasion of Iraq.

21 March 2003 John Cecil Plymouth Royal Marines, Llywelyn Karl Evans Royal Artillery, Les Hehir Royal Artillery, Philip Stuart Guy Royal Marines, Sholto Hedenskog Royal Marines, Mark Stratford Royal Marines, Jason Ward Royal Marines, Ian Seymour Royal Artillery, Antony King Helston

22 March 2003 Philip West Budock Water Royal Navy, James Williams Royal Navy, Philip D Green Royal Navy, Marc A Lawrence Royal Navy, Andrew S Wilson Royal Navy, Kevin Barry Main RAF, David Rhys Williams RAF

23 March 2003 Luke Allsopp Engineer Regiment, Simon Cullingworth Engineer Regiment

24 March 2003 Steven Mark Roberts Royal Tank Regiment, Barry Stephen Black Watch, Stephen John Allbutt Lancers

25 March 2003 David Jeffrey Clarke Lancers

28 March 2003 Matty Hull Household Cavalry Regiment

30 March 2003 Christopher R. Maddison Royal Marines, Shaun Brierley Royal Signals

31 March 2003 Chris Muir Logistics

1 April 2003 Karl Shearer Cavalry

6 April 2003 Kelan John Turrington Fusiliers, Ian Keith Malone Irish Guards, Piper Christopher Muzvuru Zimbabwe Irish Guards

We do not forget the countless Iraq soldiers and civilians who have also been killed, or those who will continue to be killed in the name of freedom, democracy in Iraq.

SUPPORT FOR RETURNING HEROS

Two British servicemen were sent home from the Gulf after refusing to fight in the invasion of Iraq because of the civilian casualties being caused. They face possible court martial and up to two years imprisonment. Gilbert Blades, a Lincoln-based lawyer, said the Ministry of Defense was trying to hush up the cases because it feared a public relations disaster.

A Private and an Air Technician from the 16th Air Assault Brigade and are being held at Colchester Barracks. Supporters in Colchester marched to the garrison where the refusing soldiers are being held. They held banners saying "support a soldiers right to refuse", "bring the troops home" and "no more blood for oil"

After a minutes silence for all those affected by this war, local families tied yellow ribbons to the garrison fence, expressing the wish that all the towns soldiers be brought home now. They do not want soldiers facing the trauma of taking more innocent lives, or risking their own life and health.

UK soldiers now face the brutalising task of enforcing foreign occupation and rule by a retired US general over the Iraqi people. Already reports point to a change in popular attitude from relief at the end of Saddams dictatorship to resentment against the new occupying powers.

Meanwhile Colchester is facing a barrage of propaganda. Tony Blair has written a letter to the people of the town via the local paper urging us to support the war and occupation. The sun has employed people to engage in door to door leafletting. The Garrison Commander, Colonel Barton has even resorted to smearing the Colchester Peace Campaign as marching in support of Saddams brutal regime!

The authorities want to drive a wedge between those who have relatives in the army and the rest of the townsfolk. This is despite the fact that many army families share the general public's doubts about Bush and Blairs agenda.

Supporters of conscientious objectors have pledged to do all they can to show that they can not be isolated or forgotten. This will be true for any other UK services personnel, who by their direct experience of the situation on the ground in Iraq, have seen through the lies, spin and propaganda that the government, army top brass and media produce for domestic consumption.

see www.colchesterpeace.org.uk

The soldiers sent home to Colchester Barracks for refusing to fight an unlawful war would appreciate letters of support. Send them via their solicitor:

c/o Gilbert Blades
Wilkin, Chapman, Epton & Blades Solicitors
Bank Street, Lincoln, LN2 1DR

Tears as away team comes home

The reality of war was bought home for some as the body of an Ivybridge man was one of ten British soldiers flown to RAF Blaze Norton in Oxfordshire.

John Cecil, Royal Marine Colour Sergeant from Plymouth-based 3 Commando, was killed in a helicopter crash on 21st March.

His wife Wendy left a bottle of Newcastle Brown Ale outside Stonehouse Barracks in Plymouth in memory of her husband. One bouquet read "John, I love you so much. Love always - Tracy, Emma, Stacy and Daniel"

At Ease

Need advice about conscientious objection?

c/o 28 Commercial St, London E1 6LS.

confidential helpline
0207 247 5164
on Sun 5pm-7pm.

atease@advisory.freeserve.co.uk

Gulf Families Support Group

www.galcom.co.uk/gfsg

Set up by the families and friends of servicemen and women who are currently serving in the Gulf, we hope to be able to offer local contacts for advice, support, information or just someone to talk to who understands.

support@gulffamilyessupportgroup.co.uk

Obviously this newspaper is not the Totnes Times.

The Troubled Times is totally independent from Tindle Newspapers. It has been published in response to the policy of censorship introduced by Mr Tindle and his editors. There may be further issues depending on whether normal newspaper service is resumed.

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