

Edinburgh Review

The
Gulf Watch
Papers

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THE GULFWATCH PAPERS

Alastair Hulbert and Alastair McIntosh

GulfWatch was a daily bulletin of news and information about the Gulf War, much of it differing from or extending what was presented through normal media channels. Gleaned from the GreenNet international computer network, fax messages and even one telephone contact from inside Iraq, it was mailed out each day of the war to church and peace groups. Through computer networks and photocopied redistribution by peace groups, it was read by many thousands of people internationally. Broadcasters used the information in Chicago and Montreal. Aid agencies as far away as New Zealand had it faxed to them. Finnish peace activists forwarded it to Swedish bishops. It even touched countries like Nicaragua and elsewhere in the Third World. Complete sets of GulfWatch were requested for all the United Church bishops in Pakistan, to help them show that the war was not a simple Christian versus Moslem issue. Appreciated by those of many or no faith alike, it was described as 'A remarkable service to the Churches at this very critical time' by the Bishop of Manchester, and as 'One of the few bright points in a doomsday scenario' by Duncan Forrester, Professor of Practical Theology at the University of Edinburgh. Indeed, what started as a local effort with a Scottish focus, run by a handful of volunteers in tiny offices in a church belltower and the back of a suburban garage, became an alternative news service of global value.

The Gulf War is the first major conflict in which such high technology has been used internationally to link those concerned with building peace. Here, the *Edinburgh Review* carries an edited summary of the GulfWatch papers, with a commentary placing this unique documentary work in the context of war and the peace-building community by which it arose.

Alastair Hulbert is Secretary of Scottish Churches Action for World Development (SCAWD) and was the main editor of GulfWatch. He has recently taken up a new position in Brussels sponsored by the Church of Scotland to join the staff of the European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society. Alastair McIntosh is Development Director with Edinburgh University's Centre for Human Ecol-

ogy and honorary Business Advisor to the Iona Community. He was the ideas, research and technology person of GulfWatch.

Community on the Edge of War

We arrived feeling desolate, frightened, disbelieving, awestruck, powerless. We had gathered as the Steering Committee of Scottish Churches Action for World Development (SCAWD). The log fire at Peace House near Dunblane spluttered to keep our bodies warm against a snowy night. But within, each was touched by the icy numbing of prescient shellshock.

Donald Briggs. Yvonne Burgess. Kathy Galloway. Alastair Hulbert. Kate Houston. Alastair McIntosh. Meredith Somerville. Helen Steven. Also Marlene Anderson and Tony Robb (apologies, but with us). Similarly, Ellen Moxley and Kay Shanks, not on the Committee, but cooking in the background – like us – caring and stirring.

And so the meeting opened. A reading from Janet Morley's 'Reproaches for Good Friday':

I brooded over the abyss,
with my words I called forth creation:
but you have brooded on destruction,
and manufactured the means of chaos

I made the desert blossom before you,
I fed you with an open hand;
but you have grasped the children's food,
and laid waste fertile lands

I have followed you with the power of my spirit,
to seek truth and heal the oppressed:
but you have been following a lie,
and returned to your own comfort

Long silence. Coloured flumes spurting from logs – beautiful – cozy. But too hot inside. Too hot for children's touch. Too hot to spray down on humankind. Even if they are soldiers, damn them (damn us!), they are still children at heart. Sons and daughters of mothers and fathers. Too human, too REAL to burn.

'War in the Gulf: Not in My Name', said the 20p badges on the table. And when the UN meets in an atmosphere like Peace House, alternatives WILL be found to war. But the agenda! Back to our agenda. Listening time on the agenda. Each now speaks to where she or he is at. More silence. Community. Tears. Holding. Yes, holding. 'Hold on world/ World hold on/ It's gonna be all right/ You gonna see the light/ (Ohh) when you're one/ Really one/ You get things done/ Like they never been done/ So hold on' (John Lennon).

Where better to be at this time? Who better to hold on with? Powerless, perhaps: disempowered – never! But the agenda

Review of the Economics and Debt conference. Planning meetings for One World Week. Reflection on the SCAWD organised church leaders' visit to Israel/Palestine. Arrangements for the visit of London Representative of the PLO, Afif Safieh ... arrangements made, knowing it would be off if war broke out. But what stereotype busting it would be for Scots to learn he is Christian! On to Islam-Christian relations. Before we can think about a conference on this we need to learn much more: agreed – watch Rana Kabbani's 'Letter to Christendom' video at our next meeting. Ongoing programme on the relationship between cultures and development – Ivan Illich might come to our 1992 event. Link it in with our Latin America concerns. Finally, planning the spring conference on 'Enchantment and Liberation' – and yes; Yes! We WILL hold on to that theme. Even war will not stop us from singing, dancing and celebrating our inner freedom.

Back to the Gulf. Was there anything SCAWD could do? somebody wondered. We've been doing it all these years, and failed, bemoaned another. An older voice: ... the first task of the peace movement is not necessarily to succeed, but to bear witness to truth. We agreed, feeling the oppression lift somewhat.

I had spent waiting time earlier that day in Gatwick airport's supposedly interfaith chapel. I had been aghast to see 'Onward Christian Soldiers!' scrawled across the prayer book. Could we do anything to counteract the crusader mentality? Helen had been a peace worker since her relief work days in Vietnam, and voiced concern about how truth gets lost in war, so even the focus of witness and prophesy becomes obscured. Then it was suggested that we use access to international computer networks, fax and telex to establish an alternative news service. GulfWatch was born.

The rest of the evening we felt so excited we forgot to crack open the bottle of whisky. A statement of purpose and method was drawn up by the following morning. Dated 15th January 1991, the eve of war, it said:

Disinformation has already started. The reported defection of 6 Iraqi helicopters was an American setup which the media was taken in by. Our government is recruiting the services of PR consultants to handle the media, as they do not consider the usual civil service channels appropriate to how they want the conflict reported.

SCAWD is concerned that disinformation and censorship means that key representatives within the Scottish churches may not always have access to adequate information on which to base public statements, pastoral letters, etc. arising out of the need for

an ethical critique of war developments. Accordingly, we are setting up an emergency information service to provide daily short digests of material coming in from uncensored sources within the international church, peace, environmental etc. networks. To achieve this:-

- * We will use existing office communications technology at our disposal to access the regular immediate Gulf updates coming in from non-governmental organisations on GreenNet. GreenNet is an internationally networked (50 countries) computer conferencing facility used by organisations such as churches, peace groups, human rights organisations, etc..

- * We will use existing telex, fax and telephone contact numbers to augment GreenNet.

- * We will draw on SCAWD's experience since 1984 in building understanding within the churches of Middle East issues (organising study tours, conferences, etc), to identify where the news we collect differs from or extends what is being presented in the mass media and summarise it in a daily digest.

- * We will mail or fax this out late each afternoon to a manageably small list of key church decision makers and policy advisors, to provide them with information they might not get from the mass media. (The value of this can be appreciated if, say, there was a nuclear attack or radiation fallout from bombing Iraqi nuclear plants. Chernobyl experience showed that GreenNet sources in countries like Sweden fed in information which, it subsequently became apparent, had been kept low key within Britain.)

- * The above is necessary because in a war, and particularly in one which certain elements of the media might try to distort into a Holy War, the voices of church leaders may be amongst the few which can speak freely and express ethical concerns within their congregations and beyond.

- * The service will last only for the duration of any war and will commence tomorrow, Wednesday 16th January. The SCAWD Steering Committee has arranged for editorial, management and other tasks to be conducted on an unpaid basis. Computer access, postage, fax etc. costs will run at around £60 a day. Help will be needed to cover these costs, but we are proceeding without identifying finance due to the utmost urgency of the situation and having this morning consulted by telephone with contactable church leaders.

GulfWatch No. 1 came out on the afternoon of 16th January. There was no news in it not available elsewhere. But there were some powerful statements from concerned church and peace organisa-

tions, so we reproduced these. The following day GreenNet went wild, as war launched the international peace community into frenzied orbit. Each day's two-page GulfWatch thereafter became a distillation from some 40 or 50 pages of selected material, accounting for some 90 hours of computer network access time within two months as well as hundreds of pages of fax and other hard copy. This distillation service backed by research was what GulfWatch readers most appreciated. Jewish peace worker, Margaret Phillips, living in St. Louis, USA, wrote, 'I provide printed copies for the organizers of anti-war activities locally. For that, having it all together is useful.' Alison Burnley of Edinburgh remarked, 'It may not improve my breakfast but it does improve my knowledge!'

Much of our inspiration had come from the 3rd January Statement on the Gulf Crisis, signed by some 30 leading representatives of church and society in Scotland. This group remained our editorial focus, while the mailing list, notwithstanding efforts to curb it, grew to over 200 direct from us, and many thousands indirect. US activist Rich Winkel said, 'I post GulfWatch to an internet activism list with about 700 direct subscribers and about 15 re-distribution points. From there it gets posted to the alt.activism group on Usenet – probably several thousand readers there. I've gotten very positive feedback on it ... please keep it coming!'

What follows is a condensation of the main themes covered in GulfWatch. The GW number indicates the issue of GulfWatch from which the passage is extracted. Source referencing is given for all but the earliest inputs (when we lacked sophistication). For instance, `igc:ckruger mideast.gulf Mar 11` could be checked in the GreenNet user index to show the input came from Cynthia Kruger via the USA's PeaceNet system, at an address with phone number in San Francisco, and indication that her main area of activism is Latin America. `Mideast.gulf` is the name of the particular conference (out of many hundreds) in which the full text of the original material may still be active for responding to, or archived for reading only. The date facilitates location. Our own material is either referenced 'GulfWatch', or 'aldopacific' – our GreenNet account name.

In these ways we were able further to check certain stories – either by telephoning, faxing, or most usually, by e-mail (instant electronic mail) through GreenNet. Since active material in a conference can be publicly debated by subscribers adding their responses to it, any items of questionable authoritativeness pretty quickly get shot down as some 7,000 users in 50 different countries have the opportunity to scrutinise. Similarly, fresh insights quickly get added.

This is the power of electronic networking with satellite computer telecommunication links. Wartime media censorship applied to a

particular affluent country can never be the same henceforth. Some of the same satellites that bounced down bombing schedules, albethey scrambled, also carried messages of love, unscrambled, freely open to the interception we know takes place. In this small way, perhaps, the oppressor's tool can help dismantle his fortress.

The Role of the Media

As war was about to break out, the government took PR control out of the hands of Whitehall civil servants and into those of a private PR company. Media control was subsequently enforced by restricting the supply of reporting permits for Saudi Arabia, causing, for example, Scotland's leading left-of-centre tabloid, the *Daily Record*, great difficulty in getting a reporter on the spot. Hours before the war started it became clear that attempts would also be made to control public opinion.

BBC AND IBA OPPOSE 'UNDESIRABLE' MOD CENSORSHIP RULES (GW2)

GulfWatch.

'Information is the currency of democracy' Ralph Nader. At 9.28 pm today (16 January) as the very last item of its evening news, BBC1 TV reported that they and the IBA considered aspects of MOD reporting requirements to be undesirable.

In case of war breaking out, information will be controlled by an Information Committee, comprising John Wakeham (Chair), Chris Patten and (Chris?) Ryder. Daily briefings would be given to MPs. PR 'problems' would be limited if the war is short, but could become troublesome if the war is protracted.

The report said that the media have today accepted reporting ground rules. These involve no reporting on troop numbers, nothing on future operations, and 'care' to be taken in reporting on casualties. They want the media to 'consult' with them before reporting on: opposition to the war, and scenes of death and injury. The BBC and IBA consider this restriction to be 'undesirable' and are currently having discussions with the MOD about it.

The onset of war activated an array of informal networks as peace workers in various countries anxiously sought to communicate news of war opposition.

PROTESTS IN GERMANY CONTINUE (GW2)

University of Hanover SRC, 3:41 and 4:28 am Jan 17, 1991

In contrast to the information spread by German television and the Innenministerium (Home Office) German cities are not quiet tonight.

On Wednesday again some 200,000 people all over Germany gathered in demonstrations, prayers etc. to protest the Gulf war. In Hamburg and Hannover at 12 noon all public busses, trams and underground trains stopped for five minutes. Passengers were informed by loudspeakers that the reason is the drivers' protest against war.

In Berlin some thousands of school pupils missed school to demonstrate. In Wuppertal since 6 am, Wednesday, the end of ultimatum local time, actors of the local theatre are reading poems from the Bible and the Koran. They promised to read day and night till the war is stopped. Trade unionists consider voting for a general strike to force their government to do everything to stop war.

Eve Sinton, a journalist from New Zealand, reported heavily pro-war media bias there. But a report from the States said that the Irish government were refusing to follow Britain's censorship example. In Italy the media seemed to be positively encouraging dissent, a 17th January report saying, 'On Saturday more than 200,000 people demonstrated in Rome against war. Many local radio stations are broadcasting John Lennon's song 'Give Peace a Chance'. They propose that the same is done all over the world at 3.00 pm local time each day. Audiences should be asked to put up the volume!' (GW3) But the BBC was coming under criticism for being more circumspect, for the best reasons, of course.

JOHN LENNON RADIO CENSORSHIP (GW6)

GulfWatch Jan 20, 1991

Radio Forth reported on Sunday morning at 8.30 am that local radio stations are coming under pressure not to play peace songs such as John Lennon's 'Give Peace a Chance'. The *Sunday Times* (20 Jan) and the *Guardian* (21 Jan) covered this.

GulfWatch contacted Julia Shipston, London based press officer for BBC local radio stations, who said there is no ban: what's happened is that guidelines have been issued to the 37 English BBC local radio stations, calling for sensitivity when certain songs are played and giving a list of 67 potentially risky ones, including songs like, Fields of Fire, I Just Died in Your Arms Tonight, Armed and Extremely Dangerous, and Roberta Flack's Killing me Softly. Shipston explained that a song like Killing me Softly is, of course, completely neutral to war. However, if it was played just after a news report of local soldiers being killed, it could be very painful.

Fair enough, but amidst reports of disk jockeys being fired or censured for playing peace songs, none of us heard any throughout the war. We had to sing our own! One intriguing report was never

again repeated. Attempts by GulfWatch to find out why were frustrated by IRN's newsdesk. Calls over GreenNet to see if the story had been carried elsewhere in the world drew a blank.

BOMBING OF CIVILIAN TARGET? (GW5)

GulfWatch 21 January 1991

Independent radio news reported on Sunday 20 January at 10.00 am that the allies had bombed Saddam's home village of Takrit, identified as a 'peasant village'. Because it was his birth place, went the report, he was expected to be enraged by the action. This is the first report we have of deliberate bombing of a non-strategic target. Has anyone heard of others? The report has not to our knowledge been heard again.

Various reports were telephoned or e-mailed in to GulfWatch about apparent attempts to frustrate the work of the peace movement, and to minimise public alarm. Where these could be verified or were first hand, we carried them, such as a 19th January report that, 'We understand that in certain English cities civil defence measures such as testing air-raid sirens have been suspended, so as not to provoke anxiety amongst the population. A CND advert in a major UK daily last week was allegedly published with 8 mistaken telephone numbers. The paper republished, but who was responsible for the errors? Allegations are being made that certain newspapers have refused to take peace adverts.' (GW4)

Sometimes a news report lacked Western credibility – a Radio Havana piece, something from a student demonstrator in Singapore, accounts from refugees. We were questioned about reliability, how we could be sure of our sources. In some ways the processes of verification of computer networks are best compared with those of psychoanalysis – communication for the sake of self-knowledge and truth, that eventually, in community and with experience, regularity and immediacy, provides its own moral vindication: confirmation of the truth, rejection of the unfounded.

As the war entered its second week the initial sense of disbelief amongst peace workers wore thin, and a touch of fear set in amongst some of us. The very effectiveness of the peace movement made it a threat to the war effort. We learned that CNN and all national TV networks in the USA had carried reports of Glasgow RC Archbishop Thomas Winning's outspoken address of 21st January. GulfWatch had discussions with other computer networkers about the risk that efforts might be made to close us down. We concluded that this would be such bad public relations as to be stupid. But for a while the fear was real, especially as our American partners at PeaceNet were being required by police to provide information on peace actions. It was

evident that stronger censorship measures were in hand should the PR battle start being lost. For instance, we input a report entitled *Sleep Well America – Even Your Dead Are Censored*, stating, ‘A report on BBC Radio 4 at 1745 GMT this evening, 31st January, said that the U.S. authorities are going to stop film of dead Americans coming home from being shown on TV. This breaks with previous custom. The slow-marched, flag-draped coffins are considered to have a detrimental effect on domestic support for warfare.’ (GW14)

While most media coverage involved indirect censorship through denial of information or distraction from relevant issues through incessant focussing on fringe shows, such as the hyped-up performance of Patriot missiles, there were also shafts of disinformation and hardcore censoring. The French media was reported to be heavily muzzled, philosopher Michel Serre remarking that, ‘Our channels of information, which traditionally used to be profoundly reflective, have been contaminated by the immediate event and triviality, which is a style typical of the media serving American society.’ (GW20) Akbar Ahmed wrote in the *Guardian*, 6th February, that the media had tried to make it a war between Islam and the West, frequently featuring Saddam at prayer so that ‘the not so subtle message is that of the holy warrior’ (GW19). One mainstream American journal even retouched a picture of Saddam to make his moustache look more like Hitler’s! The BBC generally seemed to operate as impartially as it could within the confines of what news was accessible, but restraint was still exercised in line with the consensus view that this war was being ‘clinically’ executed.

BBC ADMITS BOMBING SELF CENSORSHIP (GW30)

The Guardian 18 Feb 1991

‘... Film from Baghdad provided those who are anti-war with images of far greater impact than any verbal argument. The effect was enhanced during the 9 o’clock (BBC 1 TV) News on Wednesday when the announcer explained that even more terrible pictures had been received but were not being shown.

‘Working at the BBC on Thursday, I found several supporters of the war angry that the news-reader had mentioned this self-censorship. They felt those against the war would be able to say: “See, the true horrors of the bombing of civilians are being withheld ...”

‘Had film of the charred victims of the Hamburg fire-storm been seen in every British home two days later, could the bombing have gone on? Churchill’s reaction on seeing footage at that time was: “Are we beasts?” What would the British public have said?’ (Article by Martin Gilbert, historian and official biographer of Winston Churchill)

Civilian deaths were referred to by the military and reiterated by

the media as 'collateral damage' in a carefully orchestrated attempt to keep public attention away from the reality that real sons of mothers, fathers of children, were being mercilessly destroyed and maimed. It emerged, as igc:pfranck put it on 24th January that, 'It is clear that the battle has now shifted to the hearts and minds of the US people, and that the media is the absolute key to that battle.' (GW9) Where doublespeak wore thin, the military always had the means to throw up diversionary images. As items on the use of napalm showed, they also had the crassness to expose their own inhumanity.

NAPALM – JUST A DISUSED 'DEFOLIANT' (GW33)

igc:aadams mideast.forum.566.Defoliation of Kuwait ... 4:43 pm Feb 22, 1991

The ABC 5:30 pm (CST) news carried the story of Marine Harrier Jets dropping napalm. The report went on to say that 'it was only being used to clear oil filled trenches'. Then – a mysterious overhead (recon) photo appeared on the screen, supposedly showing the trenches all along the border. (For those without access to U.S. media – recon photos have suddenly started appearing on the tube when they support whatever the administration wants people to believe.)

Two points here: To avoid having napalm classed as a weapon of mass destruction under international law, the U.S. managed to get it officially designated as a 'defoliant' back in the 60s. Just how much of that Kuwaiti forest is still standing anyway? Also, when Jimmy Carter was president, the U.S. airforce publicly announced that it was removing all remaining stocks of napalm from it's inventory, as they felt it was no longer needed. So where did this stuff come from ... an interservice garage sale?

NAPALMING UNIFORMS EASIER THAN PYJAMAS – ADELMAN (GW33)

mts mideast.gulf.378.Napalm ... 10:49 pm Feb 22, 1991, BBC Radio Interview

Nick Ross (Presenter:) 'Kenneth Adelman, can I just ask you something else. We have been getting reports through the day that the Americans are using NAPALM in the Kuwaiti theatre of operations and, indeed, I gather that U.S. Officials have now said: "Yes, indeed! Napalm is being dropped behind Iraqi lines". Now, to some of us here, that's been a surprising development, not for military reasons – because clearly, Napalm can be a very effective weapon indeed – but for all the emotional connotations that Napalm had with Vietnam ... does it surprise you that it is in use – for political rather than military means, I mean?'

Kenneth Adelman (former Director U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency): 'Well, I think the objective was to make sure that

the, behind the lines, er, was as wiped out as possible so that we would not risk American and British boys if we needed to go on the ground war. And I think that as long as the targets are kept military, it's proper, as uninviting as it is. In Vietnam what really caused the stir on Napalm that so inflicted the "Vietnam Memory" was that we couldn't tell who was military and who was civilian. Everybody seemed to be running around in pyjamas part of the time. And I think that, when you went after villages, quote "villages" that were said to be Vietcong, with people in pyjamas said to be officers – but no one could tell the difference between officers and enlisted men and the peasants in the field – that got you in all kinds of problems. Here, I take it, with the Republican Guard and back echelons – military, it's quite clear, they wear uniforms, they sit in tanks, they, you know, cook over fire or whatever they do, they look like military, they are military and they're clearly identified as such. And so I think that it is proper in that time to kind of weed 'em out.' (Media Transcription Service transcript).

Peg:tribune in Australia pointed out how in the media, 'The language describing the war comes mostly from male voices. They use imagery that domesticates what weapons are really doing. Phrases like "taking out" targets and "carpet" bombing sound like getting rid of garbage or fleas (We women) feel that all power has been taken away from us and decisions are made by generals and the generals are men.' (GW20) Women worldwide played a major role in challenging this war, albeit one with a low public profile.

WOMEN IN BLACK DEMONSTRATE IN COLOGNE (GW10)
 sysop mideast.action 11:06 am Jan 25, 1991 (From News system)

A society which places strong emphasis on its military strength and the heroism of its soldiers inevitably marginalizes women. Rachel Ostrowitz, of Women in Black writes of the Israeli experience:

'... The need to understand what was happening in the West Bank and Gaza increased when we realized that censorship was being imposed on the public, and that television was not telling the whole story. Women are sensitive to censorship, direct or indirect, for experience has shown that our stories are not always told ...'

Poster suggestions from igc:lareader included, 'Turn off your TV and Think!' and 'The Media is Carpet Bombing our Consciousness!' (GW13) Others included 'How come "our" oil got under their ground', 'The price of cheap gas is too high' and 'Stop drilling, start killing, so we can keep spilling oil.' (GW12 appendix) Public opinion polls in most Western countries showed strong support for the war. A System Three survey in the *Glasgow Herald* showed that 77% of

Scots supported the war. But other surveys suggested that just over 50% of women opposed it. However, the information base on which the public's views were established was non-existent or distorted. The Bishop of St Andrews, Michael Hare Duke, was quoted saying, 'Stay free – don't get caught in the thinking that's around, the propaganda of war.' (GW31)

U.S. PUBLIC MISINFORMED SAYS NEW OPINION SURVEY (GW30)

igc:peacenet mideast.media.126.Public Misinformed! 8:51 am Feb 19, 1991

An important survey of U.S.A. Gulf war attitudes and opinion manipulation has been carried out by researchers at the Department of Communication, University of Massachusetts/Amherst. It says, 'Despite the months of television coverage devoted to this story, most people, we found, were alarmingly ill informed. If the news media had done a better job in informing people, would there be less support for the war? Our study indicates that the answer to this question is yes.'

As concern about media distortion in Britain grew, a packed meeting of journalists at Friends House, London, decided to set up an alternative weekly newspaper, 'War Report' (GW17). However, it should be recorded that not all regular papers knowingly allowed their vision to be distorted. The *Guardian* was in many ways exemplary; the *Scotsman* received praise north of the border. But GulfWatch seemed to be the only daily bulletin we know of specialising in summarising news from alternative sources. The response of church leaders, for whom it was primarily intended, is summed up in a letter from Rev Maxwell Craig, General Secretary of the ecumenical body, Action of Churches Together in Scotland:

'I am writing on behalf of ACTS to congratulate SCAWD for the quite remarkable production of GulfWatch throughout the Gulf war and beyond it. This was a quite excellent piece of work which made an enormous contribution to all of us who were so deeply concerned both about the period leading up to the outbreak of hostilities and about the conduct of the war itself. It was not simply the information you gave us, though that was important. It was of almost equal importance that the presence of GulfWatch was a healthy reminder to us to be both discriminating and sceptical about the information that was given us through the media. We know that this information was carefully filtered and subject to censorship either by military sources or by the proprietors of the media concerned. GulfWatch was a healthy reminder to us to recognise the ancient maxim that truth is the first casualty of war ...'

Military Dimensions and 'Collateral' Damage

On the evening of 16th January, on my way home from taking the first GulfWatch to the post office, I met Trevor Royle, Defence Correspondent of *Scotland on Sunday*. (We were at school together.) He had just returned the previous day from Saudi Arabia, after spending several days at the front with a British tank regiment. He told me what it was like and shared his foreboding that war would inevitably come soon.

Night falls early in the desert, he said, at about 5.30. On moonless nights it is very dark. No lights are allowed; it is bitterly cold and normally there is simply nothing to do but go to bed. When he was there, however, some of the young soldiers, 20-year-olds, took to crawling along to Trevor's tent to talk in the dark. He was as he said 'a kind of uncle to them for a few hours'.

These boys were afraid – of the future, the unknown, the threat of danger, the disaster and pity of war. Loneliness, the strangeness of the desert, distance from home, inexperience of life, above all the darkness of night brought out their deepest dread. Yet these same fellows, come morning, were up and about their business – determined to go get 'em, resolute, self-confident, macho even.

The pathos of the description affected me deeply. War began, as we discovered, only a few hours after our conversation. I 'watched it on TV', full of dread, until President Bush spoke to the world at about 2.00 am. Then I switched off.

GulfWatch was in a sense an attempt to face up to the dread and foreboding which so many of us, not just those boys in the desert, felt at the onset of war. It was a way of dealing with the alienation imposed on us by television and the illusion of a 'clean war'. The statistics were extensive, even when edited.

AIR WAR (GW15)

igc:greenbase mideast.gulf.290 5:32 pm Jan 31, 1991

Over 10,000 sorties of all sorts had been flown during the first week of war. The number of sorties flown to date is now over 32,000, with 2,600 flown on 31 January. (Six sets of air war stastics follow, all brief but detailed, culminating in this:)

* 300 sorties per day flown against Republican Guards ground units: on Jan 26, 27 B-52s dropped 455 tons of explosives; on Jan 29, 21 B-52s dropped 315 tons of explosives; on Jan 30, 28 B-52s dropped 450 tons of explosives.

Such statistics are difficult to comprehend, especially when related to the television which would have you believe it was actually reporting something by showing the screen lit up like a fireworks display. More eloquent was the following: 'Military censors permit no interviews with the B52 bomber-pilots.' (GW7) Or:

GREENPEACE REPORT ON IRAQI DEATHS (GW13)

igc:pnmid east.mideast.media.63 6:30 pm Jan 30, 1991 Greenpeace/USA

According to a source of mine in the State Department, a B-52 bomber attack that was carried out this morning that wiped out Saddam's elite forces has likely killed up to 150,000 Iraqi troops. That is the number of troops that were housed in the encampment that was bombed ... Daphne Wysham, *Greenpeace Magazine*, Senior Editor.

The question of casualties was a source of great concern – to everyone (except perhaps Saddam) but for different reasons. Given the participants, enormous loss of life was inevitable, as this sum made clear:

SLOGAN OF THE WEEK (GW10)

igc:pnmid east.forum 7:35 pm Jan 27, 1991

Saw this in San Francisco: 1 Bully

+ 1 Bully

1000s dead

Joel Gazis-Sax

At the end of the first week of war GulfWatch relayed a horrific report, not without trepidation as regards its veracity.

GERMAN EX-GENERAL SPEAKS OF 300,000 DEATHS (GW7)

sysop mideast.gulf 5:27 am Jan 23 1991 (From News system)

According to German Radio/TV (ARD) Member of Parliament and former Air-Force General Manfred Opel says there have been more than 300,000 deaths in Iraq. Opel said US military experts had told him there were over 100,000 deaths in Baghdad alone. 'I have no doubt that this information is respectable', he said ...

A journalist friend then discovered that the *Guardian* had investigated the same report and finding it untrustworthy had not published it. GulfWatch backtracked the next day, a little. In retrospect, and in the light of the fact that no trustworthy figures of the Iraqi casualties in the Gulf were ever disclosed, discovered, or even seriously sought by the authorities, it was probably not a bad thing that the German general's report was published. Later reports, especially the transcripts GulfWatch carried of Ramsay Clark's press conference 'Eyewitness Account' (GW25) and BBC 2's interview 'UK Expert's View re Bombed Shelter' (GW27), vied with it for the horror of their message. 300,000 dead? – the enormity of the numbers, like the details of the bombs dropped, had a dreadful numbing effect. A telephone call from a Jordanian worker with the Red Crescent inside Iraq estimated 112,000 civilian deaths, 60% of them children (GW34).

'Official' post-war estimates have settled down in the region of 100,000 to 250,000 combined military and civilian, with presumably several times that number seriously injured.

But in fact the numbers of the dead were not so relevant as their dying. (The Bible incidentally hasn't a good word to say about the search for body counts. And in the end, the One Jesus, like Everyman, represents all.) It is rather the slant, the context, the channel of communication, the do-it-yourself-reliance and commitment to disclosing reality which matter: the difference, as Pablo Casals used to say, between playing notes and making music.

GulfWatch No. 13 began with this little voice crying in the wilderness – a symbolic protest that is now doubly relevant in the light of Gunter Grass's outcry at the Bundeswehr's use of Picasso's *Guernica* for a recruitment advertisement during the Gulf Crisis (*Guardian*, May 23 1991):

GUERNICA'S CALL FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD AND IN THE PERSIAN GULF (GW13)

igc:jgutierrez mideast.action.386 3:22 am Jan 30, 1991

The Town Hall of Guernica in Spain has issued the following proclamation: 'Guernica, a small town in the wake of humanity, cannot keep quiet when faced with the grave situation in the Persian Gulf. For we, too, have been the victim of a barbarous bombing – as represented in the famous painting by Pablo Picasso. Guernica, in valuing human life, expresses its unconditional rejection of all violence ... Armed conflict is a crime against humanity!'

Ironically what has just been said about the relevance of numbers appears to find a parallel in official US reaction to the question of casualties during the war.

CASUALTIES (GW15)

igc:greenbase mideast.gulf.290 5:32 pm Jan 31, 1991

Gen. Schwarzkopf in his summary of the ground engagements this week stated matter of factly that Marines 'reported severe damage on the enemy, and great loss of life.' Yet when asked about Iraqi casualties, the General said that the US was 'shooting, not counting ... Body count means nothing, absolutely nothing.' The military ... fail to understand that people are interested not to keep score, but to gauge the human cost of the war.

GULF CASUALTIES (GW18)

igc:greenbase mideast.gulf 7:44 pm Feb 5, 1991 Greenpeace USA

The Pentagon still vehemently refuses to discuss Iraqi casualties. Some Pentagon spokesmen state that this reluctance simply reflects the lack of information ... Trying to downplay media and public

interest, these spokesmen assert that casualties are not an important measure of the military success of the war ...

US and allied casualties in combat so far number less than 100, according to the Pentagon. But estimates of Iraqi military and civilian casualties vary widely, from the few hundreds to the many thousands. The issue of casualties is one that the US government and the military establishment is quite sensitive to.

The point here is that the Pentagon and General Schwartzkopf were not interested in the human cost to the enemy. They were interested only in winning the war – and of course in keeping US casualties low for the sake of domestic political support for the war. This is why there was so much reference to the Vietnam war with its loss of life and face, and so much triumphalism in the multiple US post-war victory parades, including their firework displays ‘to recreate the atmosphere of the first night of the war’.

But not all the real-life ‘firework’ displays of war went quite as surgically as did the subsequent ticker-tape parades. As shares in Raytheon, makers of Patriot missiles, soared as much as \$4.50 in one day (GW17), journalists in Tel Aviv ducked both missiles and, less successfully, censors.

PATRIOT FACT & FANCIES (GW27)

igc:nytransfer mideast.media.113 4:59 pm Feb 14, 1991 (John Whalen)

According to a journalist, Matt Maranz, just returned from Tel Aviv, Israeli censors have excelled at snuffing reports about Patriot misfires skimming treetops, scattering debris and injuring civilians. While the Patriots seemed to be fairly successful at intercepting Scuds, says Maranz, their low-altitude flying trajectories (often aimed at no apparent target) and their tendency to boomerang back to earth made them more menacing than the Iraqi missiles.

Maranz says that Tokyo Broadcasting and other news agencies shot videotape footage of Patriot missiles, from launch to impact, flying nowhere near Scuds and slamming into residential neighborhoods. ‘They were clearly misfires,’ he says, ‘Patriots that were duds. Although the press had asked the Israeli defense forces about it, they never confirmed it.’

As military censors forge the Patriot’s report card, it’s worth remembering that Pentagon media managers quickly began marketing their anti-Scud miracle weapon to divert attention from another forgery, the early hoopla that the allies had wiped out Iraq’s Scuds.

A more lasting residual effect of modern warfare is heavy metal contamination and radiation. GulfWatch research showed that the effects of bombing Iraq’s nuclear plants would be intense local

contamination, but no Chernobyl-like global threat. However, armour piercing shells would contaminate the region with highly toxic Uranium-238 which, with a half-life of 4.5 billion years, will take forever to transmute to lead.

URANIUM CANNON SHELLS (GW24) aldopacific mideast.forum.445 from 8th Feb

A British TV news programme 10 days ago showed fighter plane cannons which 'shoot uranium cased shells'. GulfWatch has discovered the following information from several sources via international computer networks: 'One of the more innocuous by-products of the nuclear weapons/power industry is a lot of leftover Uranium-238, which makes up more than 99% of natural uranium and is not significantly radioactive ... What the report was talking about were something called 'depleted uranium' shells. These are cannon shells with a soft metal outside and a 'depleted uranium' (DU) center, which includes the tip of the shell. When the shell strikes armor, all of the kinetic energy is transferred to the DU component which then penetrates the armor. They actually MELT/BURN their way through the object they strike.

'Technically these shells are below danger standards for nuclear material but definitely radioactive. The main environmental danger comes from the fact that in a ground war the desert may be littered with thousands of them and thus poisoned for generations. Uranium-238 is an extremely toxic chemical, and, if you survive the wound, the metal will cause kidney failure.' (Sources including Occupational Health and Radiation Safety Dept., University of Pittsburgh).

The March 1991 edition of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (Vol 47, No 2) was to reveal just how very far away Iraq actually was from being able to make its own nuclear device. Presumably the allied forces knew this, but it was inconvenient knowledge. It would have prevented such posturing as Bush emphasising the importance of 'taking out' Saddam's nuclear plants, or Douglas Hurd stating that Britain would reconsider its pledge not to use nuclear weapons in the Gulf if Iraq were found to have its own nuclear capability (GW2). Of course, their Dr Strangeloves were blistering to go in and 'kick ass'.

NEUTRON BOMBS HUMANE (GW19) igc.dkeller mideast.forum.400 8:32 pm Feb 5, 1991

The press in Pittsburgh is hot on the story of the potential of the neutron bomb to 'save American lives'. A reporter here showed me a transcript with Professor Cowan, the 'father of the neutron bomb', claiming it was the perfect weapon for desert war, and that it was at least as humane as napalm.

Barbarity dressed up as humaneness, justice, underwrote much of what the war represented. This text was to go into the final issue of GulfWatch had there been room.

BARBARISM

Le Monde Edgar Morin Thursday, 24 January 1991

... The Middle East, so special in relation to the rest of the world, bears in a unique way the virulent encounter of everything opposed in the planet: Occident and Orient, North and South, Islam and Christianity (with the Jewish nation in between), secularism and religion, fundamentalism and modernism. These oppositions are exacerbated by the antagonism of states with arbitrary frontiers, each oppressing an ethnic group or religion. That is why the Middle East is not just a powder keg in the world, it is also the powder keg of the world ...

The barbarity of every war and especially of every holy war, of all religious fanaticism, of all nationalist anger, of all racial hatred has returned. The barbarity of technology in the service of death, of a spirit which is blind to complexity, is on the move. These two forms of barbarity together make up the face of this century where all the ancient barbarism arising out of the depths of ages, bringing with it murders, tortures, massacres, has joined with the modern forms of barbarism – state, bureaucratic, technical, ideological and mental.

With these words in mind, it is worth studying Goya's 'Desastres de la Guerra', an artistic 'GulfWatch' of the Napoleonic invasion of Spain. They depict all manner of barbarity – rape, torture, murder, executions, horrible atrocities, bestiality, theft, betrayal, famine, destitution, despair. There are eighty-two of the etchings. Some of the later ones are allegorical. No. 77 *Que se rompe la cuerda* (If only the cord might break!) shows a bishop doing a balancing trick on a slack rope above the crowd; No. 79 is entitled *Muria la Verdad* (Truth is dead), depicting the burial of a lovely woman; No. 81, *Fiero monstruo* (Dreadful monster) is of a colossal dog-like beast lying on its side disgorging dead bodies from its mouth. Some critics say Goya went mad with the 'Disasters of War'; in fact what he was doing was portraying a world gone mad.

GulfWatch No. 23 carried two pages of meditations for Lent, including a poem uploaded by Joel Sax, the US facilitator of the GreenNet mideast conferences. Poetry was a frequent feature on GreenNet, providing a sanity-restoring medium by which the war could be felt from the heart's perspective.

MOLOCH (GW23 Appendix)

igc;jsax mideast.forum.279 5.41 pm Jan 16, 1991

The following was written by Allen Ginsberg in 1955. Please read

it closely and as much more than an emotional outburst, although the name of the poem where it is from is HOWL. Naming the demons within us is an age-old function of poetry, and when Ginsberg writes about 'Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone' 'skeleton treasuries' and 'boys sobbing in armies' he is strangely prophetic ...

What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls
and ate up their brains and imagination?

Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unobtainable
dollars! Children screaming under the stairways! Boys sob-
bing in armies! Old men weeping in the parks!

Moloch! Moloch! Nightmare of Moloch! Moloch the loveless!
Mental Moloch! Moloch the heavy judger of men!

Moloch the incomprehensible prison! Moloch the crossbone
soulless jailhouse and Congress of sorrows! Moloch whose
buildings are judgement! Moloch the vast stone of war!
Moloch the stunned governments!

Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is
running money! Moloch whose fingers are ten armies!
Moloch whose breast is a cannibal dynamo! Moloch whose
ear is a smoking tomb!

Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows! Moloch whose
skyscrapers stand in the long streets like endless Jehovahs!
Moloch whose factories dream and croak in the fog! Moloch
whose smokestacks and antennae crown the cities!

Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone! Moloch whose soul
is electricity and banks! Moloch whose poverty is the specter
of genius! Moloch whose fate is a cloud of sexless hydrogen!
Moloch whose name is the mind!

Moloch in whom I sit lonely! Moloch in whom I dream angels!
Crazy in Moloch! Cocksucker in Moloch! Lacklove and
manless in Moloch!

Moloch who entered my soul early! Moloch in whom I am a
consciousness without a body! Moloch who frightened me
out of my natural ecstasy! Moloch whom I abandon! Wake
up in Moloch! Light streaming out of the sky!

Moloch! Moloch! Robot apartments! Invisible suburbs! skeleton
treasuries! blind capitals! demonic industries! spectral na-
tions! invincible mad houses! granite cocks! monstrous
bombs! - R 3 2

They broke their backs lifting Moloch to Heaven! Pavements,
trees, radios, tons! lifting the city to Heaven which exists and
is everywhere about us!

- from Allen Ginsberg, HOWL, 1955

The Reason Why

A week before the Gulf war broke out, the Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd wrote in the *Scotsman*, 'We do not want a war and we have done nothing to encourage war. Iraq bears complete responsibility for this crisis. We have done all in our power to avoid having to wage a just war for a just cause. But Iraq attacked and occupied Kuwait.' ('A Just Cause for Military Action', 10th January 1991)

These fine words were accompanied by a principled defence of the use of force based on the 'Just War' theory of the Christian Church, which was much discussed at the time in England. As with the Government's subsequent arrangements for the 'Gulf Reconciliation Service', Mr Hurd was probably ignorant both of the differences in church organisation between England and Scotland, and of the differences in the theological stance of church leaders in the two nations. His only reference in the article to a stated church position was to one by Cardinal Hume, who as senior prelate of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, has nothing to do with Scotland.

The question remains whether Mr Hurd's words, quoted above, were credible or not. Was it indeed true that 'we' (the Foreign Secretary was speaking under the aegis of the USA) 'do not want a war' and 'have done all in our power to avoid' war? Was he being honest in placing 'complete responsibility for this crisis' on Iraq because it 'attacked and occupied Kuwait'? The questions are particularly important because Mr Hurd was doing theology, and using ethical rather than political arguments for a change. The high moral ground he occupied in the article (reminiscent of Mrs Thatcher's 'Sermon on the Mound' to the Church of Scotland General Assembly in May 1988) were characteristic of the rhetorical build-up to this war.

Ironically, also on 10th January, Noam Chomsky wrote in the *Guardian*, 'As a matter of logic, principles cannot be selectively upheld. As a matter of fact, the US is one of the major violators of the principles now grandly proclaimed.' ('A Stand on Low Moral Ground') The proclaimed stance of President Bush, 'at peace with himself' and with his spiritual adviser Billy Graham on the night of 16th January, rang hollow in the light of the US record in international affairs. In the Gulf crisis, for once US interests happened to accord to some extent with human rights concerns and it seized the opportunity to exploit the moral argument. The British government and Mr Hurd played the same tune.

GulfWatch carried many statements by church bodies and Non-Governmental Organisations who all condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, but went on to deny that it was cause for war. As for crediting the moral stance of the US or Britain, not one of those quoted did so. The American organisation Witness for Peace is a good example:

DOMINANCE FOR WHAT? – THE GULF CRISIS FROM THE CENTRAL AMERICA PERSPECTIVE STATEMENT OF WITNESS FOR PEACE (GW36 Appendix)

Witness for Peace, a faith-based, non-violent organisation committed to opposing war and sharing risks with the oppressed in the struggle for justice, strongly condemns Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Violent aggression by any nation to enrich itself at the expense of any other nation must be denounced and brought to the bar of world opinion. WFP speaks from eight years' experience in Central America, where the United States itself has too often supported the forces of violent aggression against the poor majorities of the area, to raise profound questions about the role of the United States in the Persian Gulf war and beyond.

In Central America the U.S. has shown time and again its resolve to maintain dominance through support of tiny economic elites and massive armies of internal occupation to ensure support of U.S. policies and free access for U.S. business interests. When tiny Nicaragua stepped out of line, the U.S. reacted with a many-sided array of force, including the support of a mercenary army, in order to re-establish the control of the former economic elite. Claiming that Honduras was about to be invaded by Nicaragua, the U.S. muscled into Honduras with a huge military presence to serve as a base for power in the region. U.S. policy continues to support governments dominated by oppressive military forces in El Salvador and Guatemala. Only after Panama (once a staunch U.S. ally) became an unreliable player in the U.S. system, did the Bush administration raise questions about Panama's repressive government, which was followed by an invasion of Panama.

Through these eight years the U.S. administration has shown disdain for multinational negotiation. When twelve nations of Latin America came together under the Contadora Peace Plan to negotiate a peaceful solution to the crisis of U.S. aggression against Nicaragua, the U.S. undermined its every effort. And the U.S. demonstrated particular disdain for the U.N. and its affiliated World Court, in ignoring the judgement against the U.S. for mining Nicaragua's harbours.

Given this experience and understanding, WFP brings a critical eye to the response of the U.S. to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and U.S. long term policy in the Persian Gulf ...

Although the U.N. passed a resolution authorizing the use of force in the Gulf, it is important to note that the impetus for the resolution came most strongly from the U.S.

This analysis leads us to consider the U.S. political and economic dominance framework that has become so obvious in the Central

American region. At its root the war in the Persian Gulf is a struggle for dominance in that vital oil producing region, based on the argument that the U.S. has the inherent right and chilling force to impose its will on any who cross its interests.

The struggle in the Gulf is clearly not about defending democracy, given our commitment to liberate Kuwait to its former state of family dominance. Nor is this a struggle against communism, given that whatever else Saddam Hussein might be he can't be made to wear that banner. Nor given the recent history of U.S. policy in the region is this likely a principled struggle on the part of the United States against violent aggression, though given different premises, it would certainly be that. The U.S. has on too many occasions worked with violent aggressors to assume the mantle of principle in this case ...

The danger at this moment is that the very brilliance of the U.S. military response will blind us to one of the central principles of U.S. foreign policy: that the U.S. will do anything necessary – including ignoring the United Nations or using it – to maintain its military, economic and political dominance over nations and regions. The losers, as we have come to see repeatedly in Central America, are the oppressed, poor majorities of the region, who will be kept in tow by U.S. supported internal armies of occupation ...

At the end of the war, Mick Dümper of the Council for the Advancement of Arab British Understanding had this to say about 'Just War' apologists. (He was speaking particularly about leading members of the church in England.)

TWO WRONGS DO NOT MAKE A RIGHT (GW38)

CRAIG Newsletter 28 CAABU Religious Affairs Group, London Feb 28 1991

... what is surprising is the condoning of policies, which will lead to the destruction of a country and its citizens, as those of a Just War

... It is hard to believe the blindness of those who feel impelled to give this western assault their spiritual blessing. There are persuasive strategic, military and political reasons why politicians have decided to enforce UN resolutions now. The moral reasons, however, are completely bogus, and the invocation of God's name and blessing profoundly undermines the moral stature of the church in this country. Do Iraqi Christians (who make up 10% of the Iraqi population) and Muslims pray to a different God? Does God really distinguish between the gassing of Kurds and the bombardment of Baghdad? Now that innocents have been killed by the anti-Iraq coalition, has not that coalition reduced itself to the moral equivalence of Saddam Hussein? ...

The US cartoon character Pogo was quoted as saying, 'I have met the enemy and he is us' – a phrase popularised by the US anti-Vietnam war movement. (GW38) A theologian, asked whose side God was on, replied, 'on the side of the suffering.'

Why then was this war necessary?

DOUBTS THAT LINGER BEYOND THE SLAUGHTER (GW40)
Observer Janet Watts Sunday 3 March, 1991

'Questions will be asked – that's a must, all about this land of dust,' wrote Private Martin Ferguson of the Queen's Own Highlanders from the Gulf. Will they? 'The answers you know but cannot say, because of the horrors which haunt you every day.' Pte Ferguson was killed by American fire, aged 21.

From early on, and the jokes about a Kuwait that grew carrots not attracting concern from the allies, it was well-known that oil played a major part in the rationale of the war. In fact the *Sun* gave it away right at the beginning of the 'crisis': on 3rd August 1990 it broke the news of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait with the front page banner headline: '20p – Petrol prices set to soar as the Baghdad beast seizes Kuwait.'

But the oil issue was in fact a complex one. First, it suited the oil companies that the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was seen as a threat to oil resources. Prices rose and profits soared. The carefully nurtured moral outcry at Saddam Hussain's invasion of Kuwait drowned any news about what was happening in the commercial sphere. Was there any such news in Britain?

US DOMESTIC POLITICS (GW15)

igc:greenbase mideast.gulf.290 5:32 pm Jan 31, 1991

On Friday, Senators Howard Metzenbaum (D-OH) and Joseph Lieberman (D-CN) announced they would introduce a bill to heavily tax the enormous profits reaped by oil companies as a result of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The Senators introduced a similar bill late last year as an amendment to the overall budget bill; that amendment garnered 33 votes, 18 short of a majority.

... The American Petroleum Institute in Washington, DC, has closed its library to the public for 'security precautions.' Normally, the open library is one of the best sources of data about oil company profits and activities.

Secondly, the battle that was being fought in the Gulf was also over long-term energy policies of crucial importance to the US and the world. On 20th February President Bush unveiled the new US 'National Energy Strategy'. As the Greenpeace Situation Report

quoted in GulfWatch No. 33 pointed out, it virtually ignored renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, the environmental effects of energy, and public involvement in energy decisions.

The National Energy Strategy was challenged by Greenpeace, as recorded in the final GulfWatch bulletin.

ENERGY POLICY BEYOND THE WAR (GW40)

igc:bleland mideast.forum.332. David Chatfield 8:30 pm Mar 5, 1991

SAN FRANCISCO: Statement by Greenpeace Chairman David Chatfield: ' ... The war was waged in large part, in George Bush's words, to preserve American "energy security". As long as energy security means access to cheap oil in the Middle East, the need for US dominance in the Middle East is guaranteed to continue. It is simple geography and economics: Two-thirds of the world's oil is in the Middle East; six of the thirteen largest US corporations are oil companies that import from the Middle East; the US, with 5% of the world's population, uses 25% of the world's oil.

'Together with the "new", status quo national energy policy – which amounts to a declaration of war on the environment in the United States – the US victory solidifies our commitment to a petroleum-based economy. Since US oil resources are slim – despite Bush's intention to drill on our coasts, ANWAR, and native lands – this war implies that we are willing to "secure" other sources of oil.

'We must now look to the future in this country: we must challenge and replace the George Bush energy policy, which has no future. What is required is an energy policy that leads us beyond oil and beyond war ... '

But there was a more sinister if closely related reason for the war. In the final GulfWatch, an emotional Yasser Arafat was reported as saying:

WAR 'A STAIN ON THE WEST' (GW40)

The *Guardian* Yasser Arafat talking to Isabel Pisano Monday March 4, 1991

'The Americans had taken a decision even before the Gulf crisis, and that decision was to strike at Iraq ... The aim was not to save Kuwait, but to destroy Iraq.

'This will never be forgotten, either by Muslims or by the Third World ... Baghdad! We are talking about Baghdad! Do you understand? We are talking about Iraq, about Messopotamia, about the great civilisations of the Assyrians, the Sumerians, the Abbasids ... '

Arafat was in a position to know, as the following demonstrated:

THE PLO AND THE SEARCH FOR PEACE (GW17)

The *Guardian* Pierre Salinger 'Faltering Steps in the Sand' 4 Feb

... In a detailed article Pierre Salinger, one-time press secretary to President J F Kennedy and now chief foreign correspondent for ABC News in London, describes the relentless efforts of PLO Chairman Arafat to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. Some of the details of the article underline suspicions that a collision course with Iraq was what the West wanted from the start (e.g. the participants at the Arab League Summit on 10 August were presented on arrival in Cairo with a communique already written: Arafat, writes Salinger, 'immediately came to the conclusion that it was written in English and translated into Arabic. Four other delegates to that conference who I have talked to came to the same conclusion').

It speaks volumes that Saddam's offer in the second week of February to withdraw from Kuwait was regarded as a 'nightmare'.

WHOSE 'WORST NIGHTMARE'? (GW27)

igc:dwysham mideast.media.116 7:33 am Feb 15, 1991

Listening to news reports of the Iraqi announcement about withdrawal from Kuwait I was struck by how many reporters (USA) stated again and again that this is 'our worst nightmare.' We ask for withdrawal from Kuwait, we get some inkling of a promise of the same, and this is our worst nightmare? Bush doesn't have to say a word. Our press corps says everything for him.

A major purpose of this war was to destroy the power in the region which above all others presented a military threat to Israel. Having immensely benefitted from the West's aid during the Iran-Iraq war, Saddam had grown too powerful for the fragile security equilibrium of the Middle East after the ending of the Cold War. He needed to be cut down to size. The little discussed consequence was Israel's elevation to military supremacy in the region.

CAN BUSH SEIZE HIS OPPORTUNITIES? (GW40)

Middle East International Donald Neff 8 March 1991

... Though it has been little noted, the most dramatic strategic change brought about by the war has been to elevate Israel into the undisputed superpower of the Middle East. The war finally achieved Israel's highest long term military goal of removing Iraq as a potential foe. With Egypt sidelined by its peace treaty with Israel, this leaves Syria as the only Arab state capable of challenging Israel. But, without the aid of Iraq or Egypt, Syria is no serious threat to Israel's power ...

Linkage is clearly unavoidable.

THE WAR'S MESSAGE NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED (GW40)
Middle East International Khalil Barhoum 8 March 1991

Over the past four decades, the Arab Middle East has witnessed six major destructive wars, including that to liberate Kuwait and excluding the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. Like the previous five, this last war too has as primary focus – the yet-unresolved tragedy of the Palestinians who have never been repatriated or compensated since they were forced out of their homes by the newly created state of Israel in 1948.

Yet unlike the previous five wars (in which the US confronted the forces of Arab nationalism via a regional proxy, Israel) this time the US found itself acting as a *deus ex machina* in a war against a nation long perceived by the Israelis as the most credible Arab challenge to their uncontested regional military dominance, especially its not-so-secret nuclear potential. This sudden (US-Israel) role reversal was in fact behind the early outcry by some of America's conservatives that the only beneficiaries from a war with Iraq were Israel's ministry of defence and its ardent supporters in the US.

Moving from the regional to a global perspective, there was obvious military-industrial convenience in finding a new enemy in the Muslim world so soon after the ending of the cold war. What better way to nip talk of a 'peace dividend' in the bud?

TOMAHAWK MISSILES (GW24)

igc:greenbase mideast.gulf.306 7:35 pm Feb 6, 1991 Greenpeace USA

Tomahawk sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCM) have been used in combat for the first time in the war against Iraq. Over 290 conventional missiles have been fired so far (Feb 6) in the war, or almost half of the total number of missiles present in US naval forces in the region. It would cost at least \$560 million to replace the missiles at 1992 prices.

There are a number of political and budgetary implications of the use of Tomahawk missiles in the War against Iraq:

– The submarine community in the Navy had begun to argue before the war that its expensive nuclear-powered attack submarines were more than Cold War weapons, and could play important roles in Third World conflicts. On 26 January, the Pentagon confirmed that Tomahawks had been fired by attack submarines operating in the region. Since at the outset of the war, some 550 conventional Tomahawks were on surface ships, not necessarily requiring submarine launches, the use and announcement of Tomahawk launches by submarines was seemingly made with the intent of scoring big in next year's budget rather than in having a significant effect on the tide of events in Iraq

What these analyses indicate – whether they refer specifically to oil, the need to destroy Iraq, the US as *deus ex machina* for Israel, Cold War surrogacy or the combination of all four – the central issue at stake is US hegemony over the world and the imposition of the monoculture of the West, control by Western ('Christian') secularism over a destabilized Muslim Arabism.

Two commentators, who would certainly have featured in GulfWatch if their work been uploaded on the e-mail in time or had GulfWatch still been in business when they wrote, were first, William Pfaff (writing in the *New Yorker*, January 28, 1991):

'What has happened in Iraq, and happened before that in Iran, and the terrible traumas that have been produced by the struggle between the Palestinians and the Israelis all arise from the provisional defeat of a people and a religion by a rival, yet related, civilization. That is what the crisis in the Middle East is fundamentally about. The grievances (and grief) of modern Islam, its paranoia and defiance come from that. It follows that the present conflict cannot settle anything worth settling, except who controls certain oil sources and who rules a given country. These may be matters that require settling, but they should be understood as the relatively small matters they are, and such settlements as they produce should be understood as assuredly insecure ones, productive of further chains of consequence which are very likely to leave all those involved worse off than they are now.'

Secondly, Louise Cainkar, head of the Palestine Human Rights Information Centre (writing in the *Chicago Reader*, May 1991):

'... before, during, and after the war we learned nothing (about the Arab world). No part of the mainstream media even attempted an honest educational lesson about Arab society or the history of the modern Middle East. Anti-Arab racism in American society and other factors has assured us of a void in this area. It became easy for the US media to limit our information to the intricacies of high-tech weapons and the actions of Saddam Hussein.

'I marvelled at how Kuwaitis were invited to testify before Congress on human-rights violations perpetrated by the Iraqis in Kuwait after three months of occupation, when to this day neither Palestinians nor human rights observers who focus on Palestinians nor anyone of Arab descent has been allowed to testify about Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights during 24 years of occupation.

'Perhaps these voids made it easier to get the American people to support the war venture. But during my post-war visit to the Middle East, I understood the main reason why we never learned about the peoples and history of the region: this war was never fought for people for whom culture and history are integral pieces. This war was

fought for multinational corporations, oil companies, military and construction contractors ...

'The scene in the Middle East is very, very pessimistic, Iraqis, Jordanians, Palestinians – what's going to happen to them? Economically, Jordan is on the skids. They're being punished for having been neutral in the war. They've been isolated. Malnutrition and the poverty rate are rising there. On top of that you have up to 200,000 new refugees from Kuwait who are Jordanian citizens with no jobs – and they were not allowed to take their money out of Kuwait. I don't know how they can absorb all these new refugees, most of whom are Palestinians. It's a time bomb.

'Personally, I think that the Palestinians should have the right to return to Palestine. But obviously the United States government has no interest in settling problems between the Palestinians and Israelis. If it did, it could use the UN as it did in the Gulf war. All the resolutions are there. All the solutions are there. But they've chosen not to employ them. They say they don't want to push Israel.

'I think that the most recent talks are really about establishing ties between the Gulf states and Israel, opening up the Gulf to Israeli investment and technology. And the few Gulf people that I met can't wait for Israel to come there.

'So the vision you get is Israel on one side, the Gulf states on the other, and all these people in between – Jordanians, Palestinians, Iraqis, and probably Syrians and Egyptians in the future – being squeezed and pushed around. Whether they live, die, or eat will be controlled by the US government through Israel and the Gulf-state surrogates. That's what's happening right now. This is the New World Order.'

In the light of these analyses, Douglas Hurd's words with which this chapter began are just part of 'the day's loud lying'. The final GulfWatch ended with a poem:

BEYOND THE HEADLINES Patrick Kavanagh Dublin 1943 (GW40)

Then I saw the wild geese flying
 In fair formation to their bases in Inchicore
 And I knew that these wings would outwear the wings of war
 And a man's simple thoughts outlive the day's loud lying.
 Don't fear, don't fear, I said to my soul.
 The Bedlam of Time is an empty bucket rattled,
 'Tis you who will say in the end who best battles.
 Only they who fly home to God have flown at all.

Linkage with Israel/Palestine

At a SCAWD conference in Dunblane in June 1990, 'At the Cross-roads between Curse and Benediction: Searching for A Just Peace in Israel/Palestine', Ghassan Rubeiz, Middle East Secretary of the World Council of Churches, warned of the imminent danger of another war in the Middle East. 'There has been a war between Israel and the Arabs every decade since 1948,' he said, 'And there will continue to be wars until there is peace with justice between the Israelis and the Palestinians.'

Any serious analysis of the history of the Middle East region cannot avoid linking Iraq's occupation of Kuwait with Israel's occupation of neighbouring territory – Palestine (the Occupied Territories and East Jerusalem), the Golan Heights, Southern Lebanon – not to mention other occupations in the region. To say this is not to credit Saddam Hussein's quite unprincipled exploitation of the linkage argument. But it was precisely because the United Nations was being used to such an extent as justification for the war, while the UN Security Council's Resolutions concerning Israel's occupation of Palestine had been so completely ignored for almost half a century, that the linkage argument was so embarrassing to the coalition partners. Bush, Baker, Hurd and the rest performed quite a turn in the pretended separation of the issues. The media played ball. And the Palestinians have once again had to pay the price.

In his article in the *Scotsman* on 10th January 1991, the Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd assured his readership that 'The Arab/Israel problem is unfinished business to which we must return once this Gulf crisis is resolved, once Iraq is out of Kuwait.' We have now returned to it and, since neither Hurd nor James Baker seem anxious to put Israel out (not a hint of sanctions), it is likely to remain 'unfinished business' for the foreseeable future.

It is not the first time the United States has blatantly manipulated the United Nations on Israel/Palestine. It had happened on 29th November 1947: the partition of Palestine, though then it was the General Assembly. Then, the US also got its way and assured victory for its proteges through a mixture of threat, promise and corruption. History repeats itself.

GulfWatch kept a close watching brief on the Palestinian situation and the response to the war by Palestinians and the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

THE PLO AND THE SEARCH FOR PEACE (GW17)

GulfWatch 5 Feb

'The PLO has shot itself in the foot,' was how a senior Foreign Office official described the PLO response in early August last year

to the invasion of Kuwait. As the progress of the war strengthens the US-Israeli alliance, and media coverage of Scud attacks on Israel make international sympathy for Israel soar, let us recall the stated position of the PLO. Palestinians must not once again become the casualty of world affairs, nor the post-war international community allow itself to be held hostage to Israel.

The official PLO position has been from the beginning to uphold 'the principle of the withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kuwait.' ('The PLO's Position on the Gulf Crisis' by Nabil Shaath, Chairman of the Political Committee of the Palestine National Council, Geneva, 31 August 1990) ...

It cannot be denied however that ordinary Palestinians in Jordan and Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza) strongly supported Saddam Hussein. Given the history of their undeserved suffering at the hands of the Israelis, and the decades of abandonment by the West, their position was easily understandable on the principle of 'my enemy's enemy is my friend'. It was nevertheless much to be regretted that the Israeli propaganda machine and the Western media could so ruthlessly exploit it. The painstaking struggle for international sympathy – represented by three years of *Intifada*, with nearly a thousand deaths and tens of thousands of injuries and imprisonments – had been annulled almost over night. (That the 8th October massacre in Jerusalem should turn the tables of public opinion was a short-lived hope.) Long will the Palestinian stance on the Gulf crisis be used as justification for continued refusal to resolve the Israel/Palestine question. It is a handy excuse for a political agenda that never really existed – except in UN Security Council Resolutions.

GulfWatch was late to get detailed news about the Israeli curfew in the Occupied Territories. It had already been in effect for a week before this report appeared:

PALESTINIAN POPULATION UNDER CURFEW (GW10)

Co-ordinating Committee of International NGOs (Jerusalem) Fax 25 January 1991

The curfew imposed on the Palestinian population in the occupied territories by the Israeli authorities has become a serious obstacle that endangers the life and livelihood of over 1.7 million Palestinians. All Palestinians in the occupied territories have been under a strict 24-hour curfew since January 17. Palestinians found outside their homes face severe penalties, including the possibility of arrest and excessive fines. The entire occupied territories, excluding parts of East Jerusalem, are designated closed military zones.

Three critical problems are related to the extended curfew: inaccessibility to medical facilities, damage to the Palestinian economy,

and the escalation of human rights violations.

It is unreasonable to argue any longer, as the Israeli authorities do, that public order must be maintained in the occupied territories by prolonging the curfew. This curfew has been imposed on a defenseless civilian population who are not at war and who are not provided with any means of protection against war.

Though it got some coverage, news about the curfew and the ongoing atrocities in occupied Palestine never became a main story in the British media, as did human rights abuse in Kuwait. Even responsible newspapers like the *Guardian* denied it headline coverage. The principal source of news on this matter was Fax from NGOs in Jerusalem, or simply by letter – with the inevitable delay:

INSANE WAR WITH INCALCULABLE EVIL CONSEQUENCES (GW21)

Rev Colin Morton (St. Andrew's, Jerusalem) Letter to Rev Robin Ross, 22 Jan

'The important thing is the (occupied) territories information – there is no news of this in the Israeli media that I can see or hear; and the danger is that none gets to the world outside. The chief concern at this time is the continued total curfew for West Bank and Gaza ...

'The special effects are on agriculture – there are no feeding stuffs for animals as they are not being supplied from Israel proper which is the one source. Crops and vegetables cannot be sprayed, harvested or marketed. Some farmers broke the curfew in Jericho and Tulkam areas; they were each fined 2000 Shekels (£500) and their produce was spoiled. Medical – ordinary curfew passes are not being honoured, so medical people cannot get to clinics etc ... It is absolutely inhuman to treat a population of 1³/₄ million this way, and I do hope that strong international pressure can be brought to bear.

'There is also the question of any sort of equal protection from hostile attack. No sirens are sounded in the territories; a few, very few gas-masks are being distributed, but none for children under 15 (half the population). Prisoners are not being protected, although international law demands their protection should come before others. Some prison camps are in tents and some in military zones. Any argument that Palestinians sympathise with Saddam Hussein is the equivalent of putting POWs near possible targets in Iraq.'

Colin calls for 'prayers for peace and an end to this insane war with its incalculable evil consequences.'

The State of Israel may be seen as the result of a colonial enterprise. As the Jewish scholar and professor at the Sorbonne, Maxime Rodinson, put it 25 years ago, the tragedy of the state of Israel is that

it was planned and prepared for in a Europe which thought in colonial terms, but came into being in a world that had rejected colonialism. The Palestinian Arab people have paid the price of this disjunction. The *Intifada* was a sign that the price had become unbearable. Yet even in spite of that nothing has changed, as the curfew reports indicated. As the Gulf war was raging, the UN Human Rights Commission met in Geneva:

UNRESOLVED HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES CAUSE WAR – UN (GW12)

12:33 pm Jan 29, 1991 by unic in peg:unic.news Central News

The (UN) Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, Jan Martenson, said in an opening statement this morning at the forty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights that the effective defence of human rights was an essential element to the preservation of peace ... The conflicts in the world today reinforced the understanding that violations of human rights provided fertile soil for the seeds of war.

A subsequent entry about the same UN Human Rights Commission reported Amnesty International accusations of 'serious and widespread human rights violations in the Israeli-occupied territories.' (GW25) The Israeli peace movement was also active, though absent from even mainline media reports.

PROMINENT ISRAELIS CALL FOR AN END TO THE GULF WAR (GW23)

igc:mappelman mideast.action.459 6.30 pm Feb 11 (AICIPP Press Release 6 Feb)

At a press conference held today in Jerusalem, a petition calling for an immediate cease-fire and a negotiated end to the Gulf War was presented, signed by 126 Israeli peace activists and public figures. Prof. Yeshayahu Leibovitz maintained that Israel was drawn into this war in the Gulf because of its government's unwillingness to withdraw from the Occupied Territories, and that 'continued occupation and oppression of the Palestinians must eventually lead to a full-fledged fascist regime inside Israel and to the unification of the entire Arab world in a war against Israel.' ...

Dr. Avishai Ehrlich criticized the chemical business of German firms with Saddam Hussein. But, according to Ehrlich, as long as Israel itself is selling weapons to dictatorial regimes all over the world, the Israeli government's complaints about the Germans sound somewhat hypocritical.

The Iraqi Scud attacks on Israel were a propaganda windfall, which was manipulated ruthlessly throughout the world. The Israelis

had difficulty suppressing their glee at Saddam's strategic stupidity.

NEW APPEAL FROM JERUSALEM (GW28)

peacemedia mideast.levant.123 6:30 pm Feb 16, 1991

... The great wave of sympathy for the Israeli victims of Iraqi attacks continue. Beside the lift of sanctions by the European community, money is pouring in from Europe and the United States. Israel is negotiating \$3.5 billion from the U.S. and elsewhere, not only to repair the material damage to settle the new Soviet immigrants, but to strengthen its military defense. The Palestinians have lost millions of dollars since the beginning of the curfew and are losing every day tens of thousands of dollars. Who is thinking of raising money to help them and forcing Israel to allow financial support to reach the Occupied Territories? (Nafez Assaily, Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence, Jerusalem, and Yvette Naal, Beit Noah, Jerusalem.)

Prime Minister Yitzak Shamir was reassured in his intransigence.

DIPLOMATIC CHANGES (GW22)

web:greenbase mideast.gulf.314 10:20 pm Feb 7, 1991 Greenpeace USA

... Israeli PM Shamir is positioning Israel to counter international expectations of a settlement of the Palestinian question after the war. On Monday, Shamir told the Knesset he outright rejected an international conference involving the Palestinian question.

The whole complex situation was reflected here at home in this astonishing correspondence with the Israeli Ambassador in London. The rude self-confidence of the Israeli reply is remarkable and unusual for diplomatic circles.

CORRESPONDENCE (GW28)

To: Israeli Ambassador, 2 Palace Green, London W8 4QB. 7th February 1991

Dear Sir, I am deeply concerned about the situation of Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories.

My information is that they have been under strict twenty-four hour curfew since the Gulf war began. The Palestinian economy is suffering exceedingly. The medical health conditions of the people is desperate. The human rights abuse – and flouting of the Geneva Conventions regarding treatment of occupied territories – is extreme.

I wish to express my horror at what your Government is doing. It is reminiscent of when the Jews suffered under Hitler.

Yours sincerely, Alastair Hulbert, Secretary/SCAWD. cc Alistair Darling MP

Reply from the Embassy of Israel, 2 Palace Green, London. 14th February 1991

Dear Mr Hulbert, I am referring to your letter of 7th February.

Is it not a little strange that even at this critical time, when Israeli civilian population is attacked indiscriminately by a blood-thirsty brutal dictator, all you have for us is another condemnation?

Does it not occur to you that measures that Israel has taken in time of war have in fact prevented violent clashes with hostile population that would have resulted in casualties and bloodshed?

Or is it that you actually sympathize with the tyrant of Baghdad, who is already responsible for millions of casualties in death and injury and for mass destruction and human suffering in futile and criminal wars that he initiated against Iraq's neighbouring countries and against his own poor Kurdish population?

Maybe you suggest that Israel should ignore that threat from Baghdad, applauded by the PLO, to engulf Israel in flames and the promise 'to liberate Palestine from the river to the sea'?

All I can say is that I regard your letter, and especially its last sentence, with nothing but contempt.

Sincerely, Emanuel Gluska, Counsellor.

The rhetoric of Mr Gluska's letter, in particular his final sentence, struck one of our GreenNet correspondents in the USA so forcefully that he took it up with the Israeli Ambassador to the UN! But the matter is in fact quite comprehensible. In my letter I had committed the unpardonable. I had suggested a comparison of Israel's present action with the incomparable – the 'unique' event of the holocaust. For Zionists that is taboo; it touches the nerve system of their whole enterprise. Hence the 'contempt'.

The correspondence served to underline, if somewhat polemically, the imponderable sorrow of this Land which is called 'Holy': the myth of Cain who slew his brother Abel, the sins of the fathers visited upon the children, 'the old, old question,' as the turn-of-the-century Hebrew poet Chaim Nachman Bialik put it, 'The one that never yet has reached to heaven, /And never will: Why? Why?' A later Gulfwatch carried an appendix which reflected on the terrible message for Israel and Jewry of Bialik's poem 'In the City of Slaughter', written after the Kishinev pogrom of Easter 1903 in Bielorussia.

BIALIK & SHAMIR (GW38 Appendix)

GulfWatch

... Bialik speaks of a God humiliated by his chosen people, who longs for their curses instead of their prayers. His prophesy of a lasting change in the Jewish people is dreadful. It is here quoted at

length in a translation by Helena Frank. The poet is speaking to the companion who accompanies him throughout the city of slaughter.

‘And hear, thou son of man!
 When next the reader cries upon the platform,
 “Arise, O God, avenge the slaughtered victims,
 Avenge thy holy ones, the pious greybeards,
 The suckling children, God, the little children!”
 And all the people cry with him together,
 And when, like thee, the very pillars tremble,
 I will be cruel to thee, very cruel
 For thou shalt have no single tear to shed;
 And should a cry arise in thee, I’ll choke it,
 And between thy teeth, if need be, I will choke it.
 I will not have thee mourn as do the others.
 The tear unshed, that bury in thyself,
 Deep down within thy heart, and build a tower
 Of gall and hatred round it; let it lie
 A serpent in a nest (and men shall suck
 And pass its venom on),
 With thirst and hunger still unsatisfied.
 And when the day of retribution comes,
 Then break the wall and let the serpent out,
 And like a poisoned arrow shoot it forth
 With hunger raging and with thirsty fang,
 And pierce thy race, thine own race, through the heart!’

The Jewish experience of the pogrom reached a point of no return in 1903 in terms of the psychological trauma that resulted and that is expressed by Bialik. Elsewhere, in an earlier, more compassionate poem, he speaks of sitting ‘at the crossroads of curse and benediction,’ though eventually choosing the curse. Here he can offer only a form of nihilism – corporate, not individualistic, racial.

Looking at the complex character of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir through the lens of Bialik’s ‘In the City of Slaughter’, bearing in mind that as a child Shamir endured the desolation and humiliation of the holocaust, there is little room for optimism as regards his willingness to cooperate internationally or come to terms with the Palestinians. He and his government would seem to have built ‘a tower/Of gall and hatred round’ their own experience of desolation, and it represents a trauma from which they and their people will not lightly recover. Indeed Bialik in the poem counsels madness for his ‘son of man’ ...

Like Shamir – who, having suffered the unthinkable and lost all his

family in Auschwitz, now treats others exactly as he was treated – ‘Israel’ seems to have abandoned its calling and lost its soul.

It is a nerve-racking enterprise to go public on this issue, especially in church circles. We could attempt it only because of the witness at the SCAWD conference last summer of a great American Jew: the outstandingly courageous theologian, Marc Ellis. His brave call for a Jewish liberation theology that recognises contemporary Jewish experience to be no longer experience of weakness and suffering (the holocaust of an earlier time), but rather of power and domination (the US-backed State of Israel); and his consequent challenge to Israel and Jewry to embrace the Palestinians, as an act that would liberate both parties; *this* gives the lie to men like Counsellor Emanuel Gluska, and closer to home to the Church of Scotland clique who would defend a Zionist reading of ‘the Law and the Prophets’, come hail or high water.

Meanwhile:

ISRAEL QUIETLY DESTROYS HOMES, SEIZES LAND (GW38)
Intifada (Tunis) Vol.III, No. 9 28 February 1991

Israeli troops last week demolished or sealed the homes of ten Palestinian families, uprooted hundreds of olive and citrus trees belonging to Palestinian farmers and confiscated several acres of Palestinian land. The continuing destruction and seizure of Palestinian property came as Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir reaffirmed his government’s intention to keep the occupied Palestinian territories in defiance of Security Council resolutions.

Shamir made the announcement in a BBC interview on February 18. Two days later, the U.S. administration announced that it approved \$400 million’s worth of loan guarantees for Israel, to help it house the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews flowing into the country – many of whom are being sent to illegal settlements in Jerusalem and other parts of the Occupied Territories ... The approval of the loan guarantee also follows Shamir’s appointment of Rehavam Zeevi as a Cabinet minister. Zeevi, of the Moledet Party, openly advocates the expulsion of the Palestinian people from the Occupied Territories to Jordan.

In the Jerusalem district, a group of armed Jewish settlers guarded by Israeli troops raided the groves of the village of Bait Sourik last week and uprooted 600 trees, including 200 ancient olive trees ... In the Nablus district, the mayor of the village of Kasra has been notified that 250 acres of the village’s land were marked for confiscation. The notification, dated January 12, 1991, states that the village has the right to challenge the confiscation order within a period ending December 15, 1990 – a month before the order was served. The stolen acres are to be given to an illegal Jewish settlement near Kasra.

The Role of the Peace Movement

In the 1980s in Britain justice, peace and ecology still tended to be seen as separate issues. But as the decade wore on awareness grew in the more radical organisations that these are inter-related themes, breaking common ground between groupings which had previously taken a more sectoral view of their remit. When referring to the peace movement here, we shall generally mean the broad coalition of pacifist, environmental, church, human rights, development and labour groupings which often found themselves sharing a common platform in peace work. We do not include political groupings which viewed opposition to the Gulf War as a means rather than an end.

For some, the issues posed by war were new: others had long seen war as the bottom line contingency by which our consumption-oriented, wealth-importing society is underwritten. While many individuals were devastated that a war like this could actually come about, the positive side was the extent to which PEACE emerged as a broad issue, which, like a natural ecology, could no longer be seen separately from its many constituent parts. To be for peace in the deep sense also means being at least open to human rights, feminism, spiritual expression, political reform, ecology, etc. And to be for any of these calls for peace work within ourselves as well as outwardly in our societies. This represented a starting point far better developed than in any previous war.

As the weal of war raised its awful presence, news came in to us from across the world of demonstrations opposing war. 100 people held a silent vigil on Shetland. Roads in New York city and the Golden Bridge in San Francisco were blocked. Students in all but one German university were on strike, their slogan being, 'It's war time: boycott your usual routine.' (GW7) 75% of Spanish schoolchildren and teachers skipped classes as PM Gonzalez called for parliamentary support for the coalition. As limitation of the war and minimisation of casualties became the peace movement's main objective, links were drawn between war and our lifestyle. The peace movement successfully communicated the point that this war was not about defending democracy in Kuwait, but about oil, and in various parts of the world groups pledged to lobby for future energy conservation strategies and review their use of private cars. A cadre of Vietnam veterans played invaluable roles in teaching from past experience.

GREENPEACE/USA GULF REPORT (GW10)

web:greenbase mideast.gulf 8:25 pm Jan 25, 1991 Excerpts

The image of Vietnam anti-war protests – tie dye, long hair, anti-government youth overtaking buildings and streets – has hung over the heads of those protesting the war against Iraq since demonstrations began. Yet today's protestors are different.

The first important demonstration against the Vietnam War, according to *The Power of the People* (1977) took place in New York on December 19, 1964. It was attended by 1,500 people. The first demonstrations against the War against Iraq took place before the war began. The protests against this war have been diverse and international in a way that the Vietnam protests never were. The picture emerging is that of young and old, parents and children, peaceniks and veterans, conservatives and liberals, and particularly family members of service men and women, expressing their opposition to this war.

In the first week of protest, over 250,000 people came out against the war in the United States, another 2.5 million overseas in 38 countries. After several years of building anti-war sentiment, on November 15, 1969, more than half a million people came to Washington for the biggest anti-war demonstration in U.S. history. Yet two days after the outbreak of war against Iraq, San Francisco police arrested nearly 1,000 people protesting the war – more than were arrested on any single day during the Vietnam protests.

Our greatest regret was not having space at the right time to use the following piece. Input to the mideast.gulf conference by Vietnam veteran igc:hmuskat on January 17th, it comprises the text of an anonymous leaflet distributed on the streets of San Francisco at 16th January demonstrations.

**WAR IN IRAQ: OUR CHANCE TO DIE FOR OIL
WE CAN AND MUST RULE THE WORLD**

All hail our glorious leader, George Bush! Winner of the Cold War, King of the Cocoa fields; multi-national, multi-faced, multi-macho!

It's time to get behind President Liver Lips and support his quest for world domination. Although some might perceive it as collective madness among our ruling class, the war in Iraq is necessary for survival. In an economy with nowhere to go but down, and like the empires of old (Roman, Turk, British, Nazi, what-have-you) we must conquer or die! In a system that clearcuts people with the same relentless market savvy that it does forests, a new crop is needed right now for the security and continued growth of the Military Industrial Complex. Let's tap the vein to come to their aid. Now's your chance to gird your loins, and step up to the front lines to do battle for Bush-And-Big-Oil's wildest dreams of grandeur yet.

IT'S TRIAGE TIME IN PARADISE

Look at it this way: if the U.S. doesn't take over the world now, mass peace and freedom might break out from Boston to Beirut. Your equity will plummet, your stocks will deflate, your power will

diminish. What? You have no equity, stocks or power? Then you get the window seat as a galley slave on our ship of fools. While Arabs may die for Allah, you'll be dying for the Dollah! Our battlecry will be the 'Three Ons': Exxon, Chevron and Hard-on.

Our mystic marketplace, which can make five billion dollars disappear in a days trading, will have no trouble sacrificing your future, should you choose not to offer it freely. (Much like the pusillanimous congressional approval for the war.)

Ask the boys who brought you Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Granada, Panama, Nicaragua and El Salvador, among others. They'll tell you that now is the time to try out those cool-as-shit weapons we invented.

MASS INSANITY? WHO CARES?

You may think that it's totally ridiculous for any American to die to keep the price of oil high. But you're wrong. If Iraqui and Kuwaiti oil were on the market right now, the price of oil, already suffering from a tremendous glut, could hit a low of \$10 per barrel. Saddam Hussein, the mad fool, himself suggested lowering the price of oil. Think of how Chevron, who just announced a billion-dollar increase in revenues for the 4th quarter, would feel if they were forced to supply gas at the pumps at a price of 60 cents a gallon? Surely we can't let this happen. Is giving up your kid, husband, or whatever too great a price to pay? (As far as you kids go, the importance of your lives pales in comparison to that of the GNP.)

If you're still squeamish, realize that what now appears as insanity will soon be perfectly normal in a world driven mad by depression and greed. You've aped the mores of the Rich and Famous, now die for them!

THE GREAT SATAN WANTS YOU

The night war started President Bush went back to the White House 'at peace with himself' having prayed with Dr Billy Graham, his spiritual adviser. But such succour was a far cry from the predominant voice of the churches and spiritual groups of various faiths. Often seen as representing the voice of conscience in national psychologies, churches must henceforth be seen by western nation states as a threat to any future war plans. The Episcopal Church in Japan condemned financial backing for the war. Moslems and radical Jews made common cause with Christians, stating that this was neither jihad nor crusade, but just plain wrong. And the Pope prayed, 'Hear the single-hearted cry of your children, the anguished plea of all humanity: no more war, an adventure without return, no more war, a spiral of death and violence; no war in the Persian Gulf, a threat against all your creatures in heaven, on the earth and in the sea.' (GW17 Appendix)

Peace News reported that the limited anti-war response in the

Netherlands was probably due to church leaders there being not convinced that the war was unjust (GW21). But the pro-war efforts of a number of English clergy notwithstanding, many churches largely abandoned attempting to resurrect just war theory. Some magnificent anti-war statements emerged.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, CANBERRA, STATEMENT (GW30)

GulfWatch Fax WCC/EPS 1235 GMT, 20 Feb 1991

'By a substantial majority, the Seventh Assembly of the WCC called (20 Feb) for an immediate ceasefire in the Gulf war, to be followed by the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. The assembly called for church actions consistent with "the biblical vision of peace with justice for all". It called on the UN "to reassert your role as peacemaker, peacekeeper, conciliator and negotiator". It called for "the initiation of a Conference on Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Middle East with the equal participation of all interested states and peoples". Finally, it expressed refusal "to be separated from brothers and sisters of other faiths as a result of this war, and to reject especially any effort to divide Christians, Muslims and Jews".'

SCOTTISH CHURCH LEADERS AND OTHERS SPEAK (GW7)

GulfWatch

'The obscenity of this war, quite apart from brutalities which are endemic in any war, can also be seen in the vast sums of money poured into preparing for, and sustaining the war effort.' (Thomas Winning, RC Archbishop of Glasgow)

'In speaking against war, I am in the company not only of my fellow Bishops in Scotland but also of our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II. Perhaps we should remind ourselves of his words used at Coventry on his visit to Britain eight years ago: "Today, the scale and horror of modern warfare – whether nuclear or not – makes it totally unacceptable as a means of settling differences between nations. War should belong to the tragic past, to history; it should find no place on humanity's agenda for the future.'" (Keith Patrick O'Brien, RC Archbishop of Edinburgh)

'Let us look around for allies in our own society. It was so very heartening to find the overwhelming support among every part of the community when we spoke out for peace on 3 January. Those networks need to be strengthened.' (Michael Hare Duke, Scot. Episc. Bishop of St. Andrews)

'We appeal to all the parties concerned to end armed hostilities and

to begin the process of dialogue and negotiation.’ (Quaker Peace & Service, London)

‘My feelings are summed up in the words of our great Scottish Socialist anthem:

“Nae mair will our bonny callants march to war
when our braggarts crouselly craw”.

While the statesmen are sending others to their deaths, in most of the countries concerned the wives and mothers do not even have a vote.’ (Maria Fyfe, MP)

BISHOP JOSEPH DEVINE (GW24 Appendix)

Catholic Bishop of Motherwell, Rutherglen Peace Rally 9 Feb (Summary)

‘Some, perhaps many, who have watched this rally for peace today will be unsympathetic, seeing in it an act of disloyalty to our forces in the Middle East. They would be wrong. It is in the name of those forces, and in the name of humanity, that we come together today. The military do not make war. It is the politicians and dictators who make war for others to fight.

‘Saddam’s aggression cannot go unpunished. But the issue lies in the means used to deal with that aggression. I have heard many claim that the war is a just war because our cause is just. But it takes more than a just cause to justify war. Saddam’s intransigence was balanced by our readiness to abandon sanctions. They were taking too long to work, conveniently, as it turned out, just at the point when our forces were in a maximum state of readiness. I am even willing to cede the point that negotiations were fruitless. But more than the breakdown of these is needed to justify war. There are two further conditions needed to justify a war. Once they were able to be validated. Now it is difficult, even impossible, in the context of modern warfare. The first is the awesomeness of the firepower, even “conventional” firepower, available to the West. It seems equivalent to the power of tactical or theatre nuclear weapons. Such firepower, the kind of firepower which dismembers a country, taking it back for a generation in terms of development and progress, cannot be justified.

‘That is not the only reason which outlaws the validity of this war. For a war to be just it must be based on the certainty or the high probability that the outcome will be better than the situation preceding the outbreak of hostilities. I can find little evidence to support that conclusion. There is every likelihood that we will have a whirlwind for years to come in reprisals and ongoing hostilities from peoples outraged by our humiliation of Iraq. I do not find encouragement in looking to a more permanent solution of a lasting peace based on a sense of justice, the justice primarily appealing to the nations in the

Middle East from the present hostilities. That is why they must stop and stop now.'

As an indignant report of military chaplains to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was to show in May 1991, such condemnation had a demoralising effect on allied forces unused to questioning of their role as instruments of foreign policy. While such a direct effect was not intended, the indirect message to politicians regarding future wars is clear. Moral unease was shared by families waiting at home, one officer's wife telling me that in the Falklands War they all felt their husbands were upholding human values, but this was not so clear where a dictatorship's oil was being fought for.

MILITARY FAMILIES SUPPORT NETWORK (GW5)

igc:peacenet mideast.forum 5:24 pm Jan 18, 1991

A network of families of American military personnel in the Gulf, 'patriotic citizens ... who support our troops and love our country' has been established nationwide. They support President Bush's appeal to the UN but oppose the American military offensive. 'We want any peacekeeping force in the Persian Gulf to be truly multinational and purely defensive. We want it to be under UN control. We want to see diplomacy used to resolve this crisis.'

The political effect of questioning the war became manifest in the stushie which blew up over the war thanksgiving service for Great Britain held in Glasgow Cathedral, 5th May. The service ended up as what *Scotland on Sunday* described as 'far from a triumphalist occasion as some critics had warned ... with Falklands-style rejoicing at a great victory. Instead, the whole tone was sombre and restrained, characterised by the Archbishop of York's sermon questioning why the innocent always seemed to suffer more than the guilty ... (and referring to the war as the) ... whole wretched business'.

So, had the critics of the service got it wrong? No – rather they had swung the proceedings. Attended also by Prime Minister John Major, Mrs Thatcher, members of parliament, gold-braided military, and gold-chained wives accompanying ranks of the men in grey suits, the service had been sufficiently modified from its original intent to enable radical church leaders to lay down initial plans for an alternative service. Both the Moderator of the Church of Scotland and the RC Archbishop of Glasgow made changes to the prayers they had been asked to read better to stress the need for repentance and the healing of all nations involved.

Writing in the *Guardian* the day before the service, Falklands War veteran and military author, Hugh McManners, in an article entitled 'Onward to church, Christian soldiers', criticised the questioning sown by the peace movement. He said it was unfair that troops

'should return to endure moral censure from the anti-war lobby. To the troops, debates at home on the morality of the war seem very disloyal – a betrayal of the sacrifices they are preparing to make.' Significantly, he went on to admit that, 'The anti-war lobby was able to affect fundamentally the way the Gulf war was fought. Allied military commanders were put under tremendous pressure not to use nuclear or chemical weapons regardless of what the Iraqis might do, not to enter ("invade") Iraq, and to keep the Allied body count to a minimum.' McManners concluded, 'The Church of England should at least be able to close ranks in support of the troops during future wars.'

Future wars! Without even qualification of the word, 'any'! Little wonder ordinary people felt despair at the build-up to war to such an extent that some were moved in a symbolic action bodily to place themselves between opposing armies. To the west of the Euphrates/Tigris valley some 100 women and men had gathered to form an International Peace Camp in Iraq, about 15 miles closer to the Saudi border than the Iraqi army. GulfWatch carried several reports about them. After a frustrating period of inaction, the protesters found a role accompanying relief convoys which had previously suffered allied air attack.

GULF PEACE TEAM'S 'CORRIDOR OF PEACE' TO IRAQ (GW27) igc:mideastdesk mideast.gulf.346 3:01 pm Feb 15, 1991

Saturday 16 February the Gulf Peace Team will escort a convoy of emergency medical supplies from Amman to Baghdad, intended for the civilian victims of war in Iraq and Kuwait. The convoy is being organized in cooperation with the Jordanian Red Crescent. Recent bombings of civilian targets along the Baghdad-Amman road have made this route perilous for civilians fleeing the conflict.

The Gulf Peace Team intends to create a 'Corridor of Peace' by accompanying civilian convoys. They plan to return to Amman on Monday February 18 where the 16 nation Peace Team is continuing its work having been evacuated from their border encampment on January 27.

... Pat Arrowsmith regards the camp as a precedent-setting action: the most international non-violent team ever assembled for a peace camp right at the border in a situation of overt warfare.

Meanwhile the Stairheid Dynamite Ceilidh Band played for Scottish Friends of Palestine to raise relief funds in Glasgow; Indonesian students were beaten up by police for demonstrating outside British, American and Japanese embassies; Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua launched a non-aligned peace campaign; the Prime Minister of Pakistan did likewise as anti-war demonstrations threatened instabil-

ity in many Moslem countries; Moslem theologians said that jihad (holy war) was being misinterpreted; prominent Israelis demonstrated in Tel-Aviv, with slogans such as 'The Patriot can save our skins – only peace can give us a future!' ... 'Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait, we Israelis from the Occupied Territories!' (GW16) And daily GreenNet was filled with pages of protest information, only selections of which we could download, even smaller amounts making it into GulfWatch. Thankfully, even at a time like this peace work was not without its hallmark dynamic of humour and profundity.

PEACE TEAM DIPLOMACY! (GW12)

f.soethe mideast.action 5:30 am Jan 30, 1991 University of Hanover

When the German activists from the Peace Teams found the German embassy in Iraq deserted, they sent a fax to Mr. Genscher, our minister of foreign affairs. Since, as they argued, the Peace-Teams and their peaceful action represent a majority of the German people, they'd gladly fill in for the diplomats as long as the crisis lasts and reopen the embassy in Baghdad. So far there's been no reply from Genscher.

QUEEN VICTORIA SPEAKS! (GW20)

peaceneews mideast.action.430 8:16 pm Feb 7, 1991

A press release from Queen Victoria in Belfast states: 'Belfast statues have come out forcefully in favour of a nonviolent resolution to the conflict in the Gulf. Things have changed since my day and the British empire is dead. So I'm not amused at the fact that Britain is still behaving as if it was just sending in a gunboat. Give sanctions a chance!' A covering note to the late Queen's press release, which also quotes other famous local statues, explains that the way to speak to statues involves one saying 'Do you deny that you said ...' If you receive no denial, then that can be taken as confirmation.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE DRUM DAY – SATURDAY (GW36)

igc:ppav mideast.gulf.223.Peace Drums 12:58 am Feb 25, 1991

On January 13, a Peace Drum ceremony was begun by Quiet Spirit and others of the Sioux nation. They had come due to a 'vision' to establish what came to be known as 'the heartbeat of the people.' On January 16 the bombing began. Massive numbers of people began to maintain the drum beat on a 24hr basis in the park near the White House. George Bush was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, 'Those dammed drums are keeping me awake all night.' Naturally, as nothing else seemed to be getting his attention, the Peace Drum Circle grew even larger and louder. On February 5 in a White House press conference, Bush bragged (and prompted the reporters to listen for the drums) that the 'drummers have been moved out of there.' The

drums could be heard and one reporter commented, 'We hadn't noticed,' to press corps laughter. The whole White House Press Corps streamed straight out of the press room to Peace Park.

One report of a demonstration outside the UN headquarters concluded, 'Even if the war ended tomorrow Bush would have radicalised a whole generation; thousands of people made their first political statement in the last two weeks. Once war stops they won't go back to passively putting up with the lies and bad government they've been used to.' (GW12) Indeed, linkages between diverse areas of concern are one of the few helpful effects of the war. In a war pledged to protect the rights of Kuwait, human rights issues figured prominently. As a UN Under-Secretary-General attributed war to unresolved human rights issues, Amnesty International launched a powerful full page advert. Dennis Healey had said on BBC TV's question time that, 'If Saddam is a demon he is one of the West's own making'. Amnesty's campaign helped show that the 'Butcher of Baghdad' was by no means our only 'demonic' familiar.

WITH ALLIES LIKE THESE, WHO NEEDS ENEMIES? Amnesty International (UK) (GW33)

aldopacific mideast.gulf.376.Important ... , Feb 22, *The Guardian* 21 Feb 1991

A man is half-suffocated, tortured, beaten senseless and his bruised body is dumped in the desert. Is this Iraq? Occupied Kuwait? No, the venue is Saudi Arabia and the victim is a citizen of neighbouring Yemen. His crime is his government's pro-Iraqi stance. A woman is tortured to death because she owns a Shi'a prayer book and a portrait of Ayatollah Khomeini. The victim, Zahra Habib Mansur al-Nasser, has been killed by the Saudi police. But when we call for an inquiry into her death the authorities do not even reply. Amnesty has evidence that Saudi Arabian security forces have tortured and ill-treated hundreds of Yemeni nationals since the Gulf crisis began. Common Saudi tortures involve *falaqa*, beating the soles of the feet; *tas-hir*, sleep deprivation; and *ta'liq*, hanging by the wrists and beating all over the body. Syria, another member of the anti-Iraq coalition, systematically employs rape, forcing objects into the anus and threats to sexually abuse prisoners' families. During the 1980s, Amnesty reported human rights abuses not just from Iraq but from every country in the Middle East. The world's governments had the opportunity to deal with these issues, but they did not.

Similarly powerful critiques emerged concerning relationships between rich and poor, racism, men and women, interfaith relations and the environment. Yet, as war priorities trampled over decades of

campaigning efforts, it was hard not to lose hope.

THE GULF CRISIS – THE FRIENDS OF THE EARTH RESPONSE (GW14)

foe mideast.gulf.283 11.02 am Jan 31, 1991

FOE Director, David Gee, has issued a statement which points out:

(1) that the Western dependency on oil leads to serious environmental damage globally and can heighten conflict in the Middle East and therefore should be reduced;

(2) that the authority and the budget of the UN should be enhanced to deal with the longer term environmental threats to security (Mr Gee draws attention to the potential loss of an area the size of Saudi Arabia from soil erosion if the UN plan for halting such erosion is not implemented. Territory that is lost through environmental damage is as much a loss as that lost through invasion);

(3) that all wars but particularly those involving potential oil fires, chemical weapons etc have serious environmental consequences which should be given considerable weight in the overall evaluation in the political options facing governments;

(4) that Friends of the Earth raised these issues with the government on 7 January and is still awaiting a response;

(5) beyond that, Friends of the Earth, as an environmental pressure group can not get involved in any discussion of the wider political options facing governments.

PENTAGON WINS WAIVER OF ENVIRONMENTAL RULE (GW16)

igc:mstein mideast.gulf.283 1:51 pm Feb 1, 1991

Concerned that war efforts could otherwise be hampered, the White House has waived the legal requirement for assessments on the effect that Pentagon projects have on the environment. The White House action allows the Pentagon to test new weapons in the West, increase production of material and launch new activities at its military bases without the elaborate public review normally required.

The agreement to waive the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, enacted in 1970, came last August in meetings between the Pentagon and the White House Council on Environmental Quality, after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Details of the agreement were disclosed by the National Toxic Campaign Fund, a national environmental group based in Boston.

Within the near future, the administration may also attempt to exempt war-related activities from the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA – covering hazardous waste storage, treatment, and disposal), and Hazardous Materials Transportation Uniform Safety Act.

DISASTROUS PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (GW23)

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund. From an Indian partner, FAX 11 Feb.

'It is terribly upsetting to find the extent of violence being let loose by the international community in the Middle East. The prospects for the developing countries are going to be disastrous. It is going to further deteriorate the lives of the poor, because of the ruining of the economies of these countries. Even for common people, it is obvious that it is pure insanity, which prevails in many of the heads of the states of this globe. Even remote villagers are already feeling the pinch due to the war. Even ordinary vegetables are two to three times more costly now. Public transport facilities are cut to half, lorries do not bring in essential goods from the places of production. Worse days are not very far off, if the war continues. I hope the concerned become little bit more sensible to take right, peaceful decisions before the whole world becomes another Hiroshima or Nagasaki.'

Hope was not entirely lost, however. If nothing else, the war has raised awareness of the interrelated circumstances which prevent us from living in peace. The peace movement's role in this was, indeed, a cause for joy and celebration. Celebrate, we did.

PHANTOM TREEPLANTERS' CEILIDH (GW38)

GulfWatch

To celebrate the peace movement, all welcome on Sunday afternoon, 24 March for some phantom treeplanting in the Pentland Hills by Edinburgh to create peace groves on tree-less land owned by the army ... Followed by a bring-and-share meal, music and song at Alastair McIntosh's house. 'In this interconnected, interrelated living system, dependent upon diversity, all life has meaning ...' (Beyond War message from Jane Stavoe).

Psycho-Spiritual Aspects of the War

The outbreak of war threw our Scottish justice and peace community into a state of shock and outrage. Just a year earlier a report of the Iona Community, with which several of us on the SCAWD Steering Committee are associated, had proclaimed, '1989 was an "annus mirabilis" for many hundreds of thousands of people in Europe and in Southern Africa We have seen the cause of justice and peace advance on so many fronts Let us not allow anyone to cheat (the peace movement) of some part of the credit for all these changes.' But

the report went on to warn that 'Peace has also to be built, slowly, lovingly and through quiet perseverance The British government is pressing on with the Trident missile developments at a cost equivalent to £30,000 a day over the next 1,000 years. Mandela has been released, but apartheid has not been dismantled. We cannot relax our vigilance or our campaigning.'

But war – war in a theatre so much of our own making – was a body blow unbelievable in its unswerving inevitability. Many of us felt that our remaining hope for humanity, even our confidence in ourselves, had been wrenched from our hearts. The same appeared true of the peace movement worldwide. Commenting on the protest suicides of two US Vietnam veterans, one angrily responded:

US SUICIDES AGAINST THE WAR (GW34)

igc:hmuskat mideast.media.124. Brokaw ... 5:14 pm Feb 20, 1991

This vet. is pissed off each time another one of us takes their lives. They have no right! And at the same time they have every right to take this drastic action. Michael is another victim of not only Bush's war, but of this war the American people seem to want fought – at least by youth. Michael won't be the first Namvet who can't handle this, and you don't need to be 'disturbed' to possess enormous emotional feelings.

Over 65,000 American GIs lost their lives in Vietnam. 20,000 by so-called 'friendly fire'! Yes, I know that's 1/3! A million Vietnamese died. And since the war has ended over 150,000 veterans have died as a result of violence, either self inflicted or otherwise. The Vietnam War, while 'over' 15 years ago is clearly not over for too, too many of us.

Mutual encouragement was important. Some of us drew great strength from a short statement networked the day war broke out by a Catholic environmental educator, Jane Stavoe in the US.

Topic 266 peace igc:rstavoe mideast.forum 7:10 pm Jan 16, 1991

When others ask you, 'what can I do now?' The answer that keeps coming to me when I ponder that question is ... still yourself. We need to treat ourselves, and those we see day to day with gentleness ... peacefully. Yes, continue the actions on the outside. But, we need to renew ourselves on the inside too. Being gentle with ourselves and with those we come in contact with in the days ahead will help us gain needed energy and courage to face the challenges in the days ahead. Peace my friends. Jane Stavoe.

We also reflected deeply on inputs which commented on the psychological, cultural and spiritual backdrops to war. Exploration of these areas helped save the sanity of some of us: others, literally, lost their mental footing in an insane world, became ill or depressed.

Informal on-line therapy groups emerged through GreenNet as some peace campaigners worked out personal lives in the context of the global psychosis war so starkly exposed. The work of Dr Alice Miller (e.g. *For Your Own Good: the Roots of Violence in Child-rearing*, Virago, 1987) is deeply relevant here: Saddam, like Hitler, like most warmongers, like some of us peace workers, had an abused childhood based on a 'poisonous pedagogy' of breaking the will and making love conditional upon conformity with authority. The dictator perpetuates the authoritarian response on an entire people, who must 'love' him or suffer 'for their own good'.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WAR (GW33)

igc:fmayer mideast.forum.573.Malcolm X msg 11:50 pm Feb 22, 1991

The late Ernest Becker, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning book 'The Denial of Death', wrote: 'Many people may feel deeply guilty if they violate long-standing and deep-felt moral codes on his (a national leader's) behalf. Yet, ironically, it is just this that puts them even more in the leader's power, makes them even more willing putty in his hands. If ... the group comes ready-made to the leader with the thirst for servitude, he tries to deepen that servitude even further. If they seek to be free of guilt in his cause, he tries to load them up with an extra burden of guilt and fear to draw the mesh of his immorality around them. He gets a really coercive hold on the members of the group precisely because they follow his lead in committing outrageous acts. He can then use use their guilt against them, binding them closer to himself. He uses their anxiety for his purposes, even arousing it as he needs to; and he can use their fear of being found out and revenged by their victims as a kind of blackmail that keeps them docile and obedient for further atrocities.'

This explains the fact that we saw no significant shift in polling data following the televised aftermath of the incineration of women and children in Baghdad. (Malcolm X Day message, read at N.Y. student rally)

Neither is the peace movement exempt from authoritarianism. As peace workers felt righteous indignation surge through them, and marches were disrupted by the contributions of violent political groupings, there was helpful discussion of how to hold fast to nonviolent principles.

OPEN FORUM: HOW TO WAGE PEACE (GW11 Appendix)

Steve Freedkin, Director, Peace Resource Centre, Santa Barbara CA USA 2:31 am Jan 17, 1991

The peace community faces a number of critical tasks in the days

and weeks ahead, only one of which is attempting to stop the war at the earliest possible date. Let us begin discussion on these points:

1. **STOP THE WAR.** Goes without saying. **HOW** we can achieve this is more difficult.

2. **MAINTAIN A PEACEFUL MOVEMENT.** Already violence has begun to break out in some street demonstrations. We must find ways to channel the sudden, massive public outpourings into **NON VIOLENT**, effective action.

3. **MINIMIZE SOCIAL DIVISION AND HEAL OUR OWN COUNTRY.** The emotional pitch of people's concern about the war (on all sides of the issue) has risen steadily in the last two weeks, and will leap now that the war has become real. We must find ways to honor the pain of those for and against war, and to avoid the painful schisms that tore us apart, individually and collectively, during the Vietnam days.

Let's together work to develop ideas we can share with others in the peace community so that we fight fire with water, wage peace against war, rather than waging war against war and against each other, magnifying the pain caused by President Bush's decision to begin bombing.

We must recognise that there is a place for political argumentation and a place to lend a sympathetic ear. A good indicator: anyone who approaches us in anger probably should be listened to, not argued with. Arguments seldom change minds, whereas honest listening sometimes prompts a reciprocal response. We must recognise that many people will react to peace activists in anger because they are transferring their fears onto us. They may have loved ones in Operation Desert Storm and fear for their lives. To rationalise their sacrifice (and living in fear is a sacrifice) they may not be able to bear thinking about the possibility that this war is wrong. Let us not try to force them to think otherwise; we cannot. Let us recognise that they are emotionally blaming US for the risk to their loved one, and let us listen to their pain. If we show ourselves to be compassionate rather than argumentative, we are far more likely to win hearts and minds.

Yesterday we had someone come in to our office to argue against us. Our volunteer listened for quite a while, and it turned out that this gentleman was homeless. He could not find a job that paid enough for rent, and he saw the military as the only option. To him, war represented a chance that the military might 'hire' him. In his mind, the war might give him a home. So his anger at us was really anger about being homeless ...

I encourage peace activists at this time of great crisis to allow themselves to grieve among friends, because we must heal ourselves so we can better heal our world; to read and reflect upon the writings

and philosophy of the greatest and most effective nonviolent activists in history (Thoreau, Gandhi, King ...), whose guidance we desperately need right now; and to WAGE PEACE: to engage in a peace movement that acts in full accord with Ghandi's admonition that 'the means are the ends in the making'. May God be with us.

At a time when we were looking somewhat despondently for support in the peace effort, this message came in from California. It was news with the quality of gospel. We made it the focus of that day's bulletin, including the full text as an appendix, drawing the attention of people around the country and the world to these wise words.

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL THOSE WORKING FOR PEACE IN A TIME OF WAR (GW11)

igc:Anonymous mideast.forum 12:58 pm Jan 24, 1991 by Robert McAfee Brown

In an open letter to all those working for peace in a time of war, Robert McAfee Brown, Professor Emeritus of Theology and Ethics at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Ca., writes: '... Some of our actions will grow out of frustration as well as cool, rational analysis. But all of them must make clear to our policy-makers that they do not have a docile and willing people at the grassroots ...

One of America's leading theologians, Bob McAfee Brown's Scottish connection dates from his years as a post-graduate student at St. Andrews University in the late '50s.

'Let us insist on keeping alive the agendas we have for the future,' he says, 'by living them out now ... As part of the peace movement, we are committed to the ultimacy of love and are trying to align our lives with it. That is basically what prayer is – not so much words as a fusion of words and deeds. To pray for peace is hollow if we are not working for peace, and working for peace frequently needs the infusion of a new empowerment that words of prayer can sometimes channel ...'

Psychological insights extended from the personal, through the range of political issues, touching on feminism, racism, sexuality, and the 'need' for greed. What does cheap oil really represent? What crass public relations games did our leaders play to psyche us up for a megascrap? What positive attributes in other peoples do such mental fortifications cause us collectively to 'forget'?

PSYCHING OUT THE WAR MACHINE (GW14)

igc:lbensky mideast.media.68 7:41 pm Jan 31, 1991

The Los Angeles Times (31 January) carried an article, 'Is This Any Way to Wage Peace?' by John E. Mack, Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, and Jeffrey Z. Rubin, a Professor of Psychology at Tufts – both members of a group called 'The Interna-

tional Society of Political Psychology'.

Their basic argument is that 'the actions and decisions taken by the United States after August 2, while having the appearance of diplomacy for peace, were in fact the result of deliberate choices toward a very different end ... (they) moved us inexorably along the path to war.' The main steps along the path were ...

1. 'We demonized and dehumanized our adversary ...
2. 'We denied our own contribution to the problem ...
3. 'We relied exclusively on the threatened use of force ...
4. 'We disregarded the other side's stated grievances, and claims, while demanding unconditional surrender ...
5. 'We took no account of cultural differences ...
6. 'We offered a response that was disproportionate to the problem ...
7. 'We overcommitted ourselves to a course of action ...
8. 'We used public presentation of conditions in order to intimidate the other side ...
9. 'We paid lip service to efforts at diplomatic solution ...
10. 'We derogated the other side's conciliatory gestures ...
11. 'We insisted that the conflict be regarded as zero sum ...'

The final GulfWatch ended with this profound and disturbing reflection.

WHAT DOES THE WORD ARAB CONVEY TO YOU? (GW40 Appendix)

Erskine Childers (quoted in L Grollenberg, *Palestine Comes First*, SCM, 1980)

Suppose that ordinary Westerners were asked, 'what does the word Arab convey to you?'

I often wish to make a TV film in Britain standing in Trafalgar Square, about the Arabs. It would shock a British – indeed I think any Western – audience to its foundations. I would point out that the name of the square was Arab; that the cheques passing through the banks around the square were named from an Arabic word and from Arab commercial innovation, and the numbers on them Arabic; that the drains running under the square had been developed in Baghdad and Cordova at a time when London and every city in Europe were squelching nightmares of mud and refuse; that the key stars in the heavens above Trafalgar Square are still called by the names given to them by Arab astronomers who discovered them at Arab observatories; that the techniques of navigation used by Nelson to reach the place called Trafalgar were first refined and codified by Arab navigators; that Nelson's very title, Admiral, is an Arabic word; that the water flowing out of the fountains beneath his statue is pure

because of a science of chemistry and chemical analysis first properly organized by Arabs; that every time some learned lecturer in nearby museums or university halls refers to 'our Greek heritage', he means 'our Greek heritage as preserved, codified, interpreted and spontaneously enriched and then handed on to us by the Arabs'; that the very disciplines of arithmetic, algebra and trigonometry with which it was possible for Englishmen to construct a square called Trafalgar were acquired by their ancestors from the Arabs; and that the very health of the citizens of London who today walk through this square that is a central symbol of Western civilization owes its origin to Arab medical scientists like al-Razi who died in 923, and Ibn Sina, the author of the veritable medical bible of the West for centuries. Finally, when Englishmen think of the very concept of organized history, when students buy texts of sociology in bookshops just beyond this famous square with an Arabic name, they are unknowingly bearing witness to the work of one Arab historian, Ibn Khaldun.

It is surely an incredible story – but the most incredible feature of it in the context of my subject is the almost total ignorance of the overwhelming majority of Westerners today that Arabs ever had anything to do with the very seeds of our civilization ...

As the overt aspects of war drew to a close, the peace movement turned its attention to post-war healing. The Fellowship of Reconciliation launched a Civilian Casualty Fund. Other thinkers questioned the nature of Bush's New World Order and attempted to sow seeds for deeper ways of establishing peace.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF PEACE CONFERENCE (GW34 Appendix)

Ron Beasley 7 February 1991 (Excerpts)

For a Peace Conference to achieve some positive success it seems that the following criteria may be useful as guidelines:

1. All parties should have an equal involvement in the planning of the Peace Conference itself, under the absolute control of the United Nations.

2. As far as is humanly possible we should not fall into the trap of the occasion being billed as a dialogue between the victorious and the defeated. Such a dialogue would be a dialogue of the deaf. In an ultimate sense there are no victors in modern war. We will all be defeated in one sense or another.

3. Care should be taken to ensure that no nation should be represented entirely by politicians and members of the military. There is no evidence that they have particular skills in creating the fabric of peace, nor do they have any monopoly of wisdom.

4. To ensure a deep process being genuinely initiated, women and

men with a spiritual perception who are steeped in the discipline of dialogue with sensitive listening, should be included in the delegation of each nation.

5. A Peace Conference is an appropriate occasion to implement skills of conciliation, reconciliation, conflict resolution and open encounter. Here in the U.K. we recognise the importance of A.C.A.S. in industrial disputes within commerce and industry and in the public sector. Likewise counselling is increasingly recognised as a therapeutic tool in enabling estranged and tormented individuals to come to a new perception of their condition and of possible new ways ahead in the pursuit of wellbeing. These skills and disciplines reflecting an inter-professional range are no less required within the international Peace Conference framework. Indeed without them, we can say without doubt any Peace Conference will be unsuccessful.

6. Those authentic groups and agencies who have given a lifetime or longer to the study and practice of peacemaking should be invited to be present at the Peace Conference in the capacity of consultants and advisers. There will be a need for some to have the precise responsibility of an overview of the whole Peace Making Process, not being distracted by the subjective concerns of any nation engaged in the Peace Conference itself.

7. To undergird this sixth criterion, the authentic peace organisations, such as Amnesty International, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), Pax Christi, the International Conference of Religion & Peace, the War Resisters' International, and other such groups representative of the Islamic, Buddhist and Humanist persuasions should have membership of the consultant and advisory group. A small corps of women and men long experienced in hard bargaining and difficult negotiating, who have demonstrated gifts of impartiality and objectivity should be drawn together as a secretariat and convenor/presidium to have over-all responsibility for guidance and fairness of opportunity for all the constituent members of the Peace Conference. The N.G.O.s attached and affiliated to the United Nations will themselves be key advisers in formulating the whole process on which such a Peace Conference will be established.

... We need today a different kind of Peace Conference. So let's start making this a real possibility now. There is no time to lose.

There has been no different kind of peace conference. Not yet. But nails are being added daily to the coffins of worn out and corrupt political processes. Will they be enough to help humankind make the transition to ways of Being based on peace, justice and living within the carrying capacity of the Earth? Will we learn, perhaps helped by so-called 'primitive' and 'pagan' cultures, about the importance of

ensuring that every child is affirmed in their intrinsic value, freedom, and ultimately, ... divinity? The only good thing possibly to have come out of this war is that many people have been conscientised by it. Dare we hope that our society now has a wider appreciation of for whom the bell tolls? We carried this in our last *GulfWatch*. It seemed to vindicate all we had been doing and those who upheld us.

BULLETS, BULLETINS AND WAR'S TERRIBLE TOLL (GW40)
Scotland on Sunday Review by Kenneth Roy March 3, 1991

'Do not be shy,' said the commander of the British forces on Thursday's Nine O'Clock News. 'I have a message for the people back home. Ring your church bells.' In the same bulletin there was an estimate of the number of Iraqi soldiers dead ... One hundred thousand had died, said Martyn Lewis. This stunning figure – a matter for deep lamentation if even half right – was not considered worthy of elaboration or comment. Remember, this was our 'moment of triumph'.

So powerful was the crude, militaristic imagery of this news bulletin that, long before the end of it, I was half expecting the church bells in our small seaside town to be ringing out the joyful news: two countries laid to waste, the biggest oil slick in history, a tyrant still in his bunker, American arrogance reborn, the slaughter of innocents, environmental catastrophe. The bells stayed silent. But if they had rung, for whom would they have tolled? Ask the Moderator of the General Assembly. Ask Archbishop Tom Winning. Ask any of those decent and honourable Scottish Christians who have stood out against the carnage of the Gulf. They would have tolled in mourning for 100,000 Iraqis; for the young Scots killed by 'friendly' American fire. God knows, they would have tolled for us ...

As I write now, close to midnight, I hear sharp bursts of machine gun fire outside. The army is exercising in the Pentland Hills ... getting ready for the next time. Yes, the next time. Only those who will work, now, for future peace ... only they can curb the inevitability of more wars by striving to understand and then remove the causes which give rise to violence.

A year before the Gulf crisis, eighteen British companies had exhibited at a Baghdad arms fair. British trade credits had doubled following the gassing of Kurdish villages. Now, even rueless Western politicians have been forced to acknowledge the suffering and environmental devastation left in the war's wake. I discussed this with Dr Reza Sabri-Tabrizi, a Middle East scholar at Edinburgh University. It was heartwarming to learn of his love for Scotland and the acceptance he has experienced here. 'You see,' he said, 'we are looking at a common history.'

They handed over to the snipe
 the land of happy folk,
 they dealt without humanity
 with people who were kind.
 Because they might not drown them
 They dispersed them overseas;
 a thralldom worse than Babylon's
 was the plight they were in.

They reckoned as but brittle threads
 the tight and loving cords
 that bound these freemen's noble hearts
 to the high land of the hills.
 The grief they suffered brought them death
 although they suffered long,
 tormented by the cold world
 which had no warmth for them

What solace had the fathers
 of the heroes who won fame?
 Their houses, warm with kindness,
 were in ruins round their ears;
 their sons were on the battlefield
 saving a rueless land,
 their mothers' state was piteous
 with their houses burnt like coal

(Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn, 'Spiorad a' Charthannais' (Spirit of Kindness), in D. Thomson, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry*, 1974.)

The Highland Clearances; hard recruiting sergeants for Scottish regiments to fight English battles; potato famine; later economic depressions. Half a million Scots, not to mention the Irish, directly or indirectly driven from their land over the past 200 years. As in Iraq, so it was here. And then injustice re-perpetuated in the colonies: offspring of poor emigrants fighting native Americans, hunting Aborigines, indenturing Africans ... oppressed turned oppressor. And England! Carver-up of nations for perpetual advantage! Yes, you too, England, dear England, you too were deprived of your soul – much further back, perhaps in Roman times. Jerusalem England!

Boys sobbing in armies! Old men weeping in parks! Moloch! Demonic industries! Granite cocks! Monstrous bombs! Moloch! Moloch! Moloch! They broke their backs lifting Moloch to Heaven! Pavements, trees, radios, tons!

Moloch who entered my soul early! Moloch who frightened me out of my natural ecstasy! Moloch who grasped the children's food

and laid waste fertile lands! Moloch who aped the mores of the Rich and Famous! Moloch, the Great Satan!

Light streaming out of the sky! Wake up! Wake up! Wake up America, Even Your Dead were to be Censored! Wake up Saddam! Bush! Major! Shamir! You! Me! World!

'Hold on world
World hold on
It's gonna be all right
You gonna see the light.'

You gonna see the light. Moloch! Moloch. Moloch, whom I abandon.

C O N T E N T S

EDINBURGH REVIEW ISSUE 87

WINTER 1991-1992

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Aonghas MacNeacail: my street in the desert

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The Gulf War: one year on

A large part of this issue of *Edinburgh Review* is devoted to *The GulfWatch Papers*, a selection from one of the only news services during the Gulf War which consistently recognised that war as a tragedy not a spectacle. GulfWatch was compiled in a country in which 70% of the people were in opposition to the bombing of Iraq on the eve of its commencement. Tom Leonard reflected the way this humanitarian mainstream of Scottish opinion was ignored when he wrote of that time that 'each expression of humanitarian principle, each crumb of sanity, had to be seized on with gratitude'. It is precisely these principles of humanitarianism and sanity which gave birth to GulfWatch. On 28th February as the bombing at last came to a halt Tom Leonard composed the satirical questions and answers of *Leonard's Shorter Catechism*. One of those questions was: 'What do you do when a president gasses 5 000 people in his own country?' The answer: 'Show the bodies on television but keep selling him arms.' And as of writing the plight of Kurds is again ignored by the governments of Europe and the USA just as it was before Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. The full text of *Leonard's Shorter Catechism* is available from AK Press, 3 Balmoral Place, Stirling, Scotland FK8 2RD, price £1.95. It is prefaced by an essay which was written on March 20th 1991 and is worth quoting at length:

It has been a terrible six months, and more. In addition to the publicly planned and quasi-publicly executed destruction of a country and the mass murder of many of its people, there has been the extent to which the addiction of the public in Britain to the belief that they have access every hour to a source of summary about the true condition of the world – with twice daily enlargements in print if required – has been ruthlessly exploited. It has been an essential part of the military bombing campaign: the

largest bombardment of anti-language to which the British public has ever been exposed, as a necessary adjunct to its armed forces' participation in the largest military bombardment of a country in History. That bombing has stopped, but the domestic bombardment continues unchecked and apparently still unquestioned. It seems that people must not be allowed to realise the extent of the savagery that has been perpetrated in their name. By the time that the destruction of cities, towns, food-storage supplies and even essential sewage processing works does begin to dawn on the public mind, it seems it must by that time have been primed to understand that all such destruction and all such murder must be seen as the work of the demon from Hell, Saddam Hussein.

So many countries have had their eye on the carve-up to come, the backhander to be received, or the trade deal threatened with withdrawal. Amongst tonnages of printed matter and months of broadcast verbiage about morality, not a scrap of moral judgement has had any bearing on any one of the thirty or so countries involved. In the Security Council, the supposed 'problem' was to have been Russia and China. But Russia is now in the soup-queue, and its handouts from Saudi Arabia and America would certainly have been scrapped with any genuine Russian opposition. China on the other hand could agree to turn a blind eye while the West reopened trade and let it get on with prosecuting the same students whose indictment for criminal offence the West had previously condemned. The phrase 'all necessary means' was the core of anti-language at the heart. It meant to the Russian and the Chinese 'You three get on with the bombing, we didn't sign anything that can hold us responsible'. The juxtaposition of public statement with a kind of public winking extended throughout, echoed faithfully from Bush to Major to Kinnock, and beyond. 'The sole object is to drive Iraq from Kuwait': 'The worst possible outcome is if Iraq now chooses to leave Kuwait'. These two sentences would be used in the same paragraph as if they did not contradict each other. They didn't, in that language was not being used honestly, but strategically. It was necessary for the evasion of responsibility to say that the object of the exercise was the defence of freedom – not that freedom was a concept much known in Kuwait under the Emir. But it had to be accepted that the real object of the exercise was the effective destruction of Iraq – this for listeners of a

military-strategy turn of mind. In agreeing to this understanding, the listener was flattered with a pseudo-confidentiality, and bolstered with the notion of compliance in decision-making. The decision was 'not to send the wrong signals to Saddam Hussein'. So certain things had to be said, and certain things had to be understood. Mum's the word, corporal.

Or, as the American poet Bob Arnold writes in his poem *Face of Dictator (take your pick)*:

All that has made you
Sick in the past
Is present

AONGHAS MACNEACAIL

‘mo shraid anns an fhasach, san earrach, 1991’

‘my street in the desert, in the spring, 1991’

'mo shraid anns an fhasach, san earrach, 1991'

seall mar a tha na ballaichean seo snaidhte
cho reidh ri fradharc
cho cruaidh ris a chlach
cho dion ris a chlach,
air seasamh an aghaidh
gaillionn siorruidh nan linntean,
dath na greine 'nan liomhadh,
druidhteachd an ruaidhe bhain a freagairt na greine,
bha sinn sona seo, mo cheile 's mo chlann,
mo sheanairean uile, bha sinn sona seo,
bha reiteachadh eadar sinn fhin is a ghrian is an garadh,
bha ar goireasan againn, na dh'iarradh sinn,
agus coimhearsneachd,
is am ballaichean snaidhte
cho reidh ri fradharc
cho cruaidh ris a chlach, cho dall ri ar leirsinn,
nach do mhiannaich cogadh, nach do bheartaich claidheamh,
ach seall mi nise, mo cheile na tobar fala nam chuimhne,
mo chlann, co 's aithne caite,
's mo nabachd na chairn ruadha
is na ballaichean snaidhte seo, reidh ri fradharc
dion ris a chlach, na deoir air an sileadh,
fearg agus fuath dhan a mhurtair
an gaillionn a sguabadh tromh'm chridhe

'my street in the desert, in the spring, 1991'*

see how these walls are carved
as smooth as sight
as hard as stone,
secure as stone, having stood up to
time's eternal hurricanes,
sun's colours in their sheen,
their ingrained pale reds respond to the sun,
we were happy here, my wife and my children,
all our grandfathers, we were happy here,
we had our pact with the sun and the garden,
we had all the gear we needed
and neighbours,
whose walls were carved
as smooth as sight
as hard as stone, as blind as our vision,
who sought no war, who brandished no weapons,
but look at me now, my wife remembered as a fountain of blood,
my children, who knows where,
my neighbourhood mounds of red rubble
and these carved walls, smooth as sight
secure as stone, soul-less,
hard as stone, the tears all shed,
fury and hatred for the murderer
the hurricane sweeping my heart

*Translation previously published in Saturday *Scotsman*

plus work by

Jim Ferguson

Raša Todosijević

Elsbeth Davie

peter plate

Thomas Healy

and features on

Peter Greenaway

Scottish Common Sense Philosophy



. . . welcome to the finest circus on
the planet today . . . step this way
ladies and gentlemen . . . allow your
eyes to become accustomed to the dark . . .
step this way and do not be afraid . . . this
is the show that made the nation
great . . .

peter plate

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fictions

memoirs

poetry

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