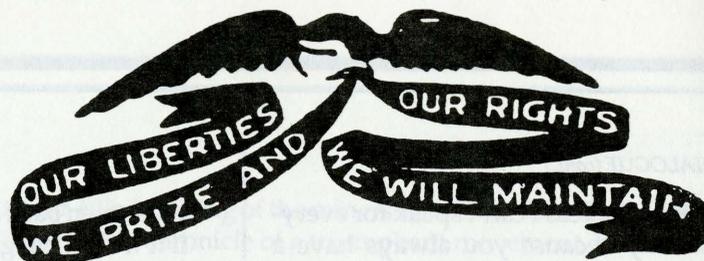


THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE



March 1991

A NEWSLETTER FOR IOWA'S DEMOCRATIC LEFT

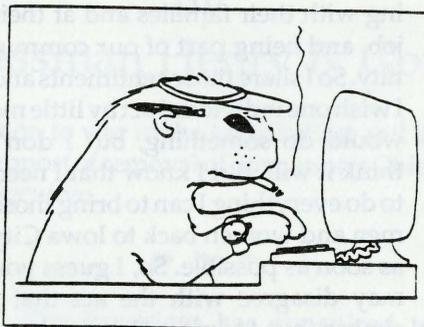
Desert Storm Dialogue

*i*n the spirit of Mayor John McDonald's proclamation encouraging tolerance of diverse opinions about the war against Iraq (see p. 3), Prairie Dog has transcribed the following public discussion between Iowa City City Council member Karen Kubby and a concerned citizen at the January 22 council meeting:

Mayor: Item number seven is public discussion. This is the place on the agenda where anyone can approach the Council about any item that does not appear in this evening's agenda. We ask that you sign your name and address, please, and identify yourself.

Louis: I'm going to use the name Bud Louis here. It's not the right name, the whole name. First of all, I'm a member of the Civil Service Board and so I'm going to say right now I'm not here tonight representing them or in any way connected with the Civil Service Board. I'll try to stand to one side so you can see me behind the microphone. About 30 years ago my father was on the Council, and the first night he went down and he took an oath that he would support the President of the United States, and the laws of the United States and the State of Iowa and the City of Iowa City. I think you have a similar oath that you all took now, is that right? I have a copy

of it here. Well, then I'd like to address a question to Councilman Kubby. What would you think if I was going to come over to your house and spray it with red paint tonight? Would I get arrested? Would that be not following the laws of this city? I think I saw on television you had a, excuse me, you were arrested at the Federal Building, right, one of the ten?



Kubby: Yes, but I was not tried or convicted as of yet, I have not even pled yet.

Louis: Good, ok. Well, I just wanted to pose that question. Would you feel I was breaking the law if I came and sprayed red paint on your home? They were spraying, your group was spraying red paint on the Federal Building down there. You had a bull horn, leading the group, and I would like to ask you what you thought was going to come of

that? Now I'm a great defender of your right to demonstrate. I mean here sits Bill Ambrisco, wounded in combat, he fought for that right. Your dad, a West Point graduate, did. I'm a short-timer, I've only got 43. Does that fit the picture, Karen?

Kubby: Well, I have to say first of all that the group that I was working with did no damage to the Post Office. I was the last person to leave the Post Office and the red paint that appeared on the south side of the Post Office was not there when I left. We cleaned up after ourselves, and we did not block access to any doorway, stairway, or elevator. The paint was done by somebody else and I cannot take responsibility, and will not take responsibility, for any damage by other individuals. I can take responsibility for personal behavior.

Louis: I got my information from one of the recruiting sergeants at the building down there. In other words, future demonstrations aren't going to have, you'll still be blocking the streets, I imagine, and things like that: Or what's coming up in the future? I read the article in the paper tonight. I think you and Carol DeProse thought that all these protesters had been respecting the law. From now on there won't be any more things like that you don't feel?

(cont. on p. 2)

DIALOGUE (cont.)

Kubby: I guess I can't speak for everybody because you always have a few people in the crowd who do things that you and I may not approve of, or agree with. But, I can say that in my activities I am advocating, not only for my personal behavior, but I'm advocating that the movement maintain an attitude and value of nonviolence. And for my personal definition of that, it includes not destroying property, not blocking access to public buildings, as well as violence against an individual in terms of verbal abuse or physical abuse. And I can't guarantee other people's behavior but my own.

Louis: Because they look up to you, Karen. You're a council person and a leader, and that's why I address this to you.

Kubby: That's why I stood up in front of the fountain at the large rally on Saturday and advocated what I just outlined to you. And there were a lot of people who agreed with me and thanked me for making that clear. The people involved in Bring the Troops Home, the group that organized and participated in the action at the Post Office, are trying to be witnesses to this nonviolence, including nondestruction of property, and are trying as an organization to get other people to behave in that way while they're expressing their views. And as personal witnesses that when we see something going on that we think is inappropriate to confront that person, to say, "Why do you feel you need to do that? And we encourage you to find another way to express yourself." So we're in agreement on that point.

Louis: Do you honestly feel that those kind of things are going to bring

those men back any faster? Because if it would I'm going to be out there tomorrow doing it with you. I want them back as bad as anybody. But, I mean can you envision someone rushing in to the President's office and slipping a note under his face that says there are some kids hollering on Clinton Street in Iowa City that want this war stopped right now, and he'd turn to the Chief of Staff and say call it off, it's all over now. It's not that simple, Karen.

Kubby: I can't say that any individual action is going to stop what's happening and one of my hopes is that troops are safe and troops are going to get home as soon as possible. Iowa is overwhelmingly represented there, we are overrepresented.

Louis: We really are.

Kubby: I want those people here dealing with their families and at their job, and being part of our community. So I share those sentiments and I wish one individual act by little me would do something, but I don't think it will. But I know that I need to do everything I can to bring those men and women back to Iowa City as soon as possible. So, I guess you may disagree with the act that I choose, but to know that we have the same sentiment, that I want people home and I'm going to do what I know how to do to the best of my ability to get those goals reached.

Louis: Well, I'm sorry if I was misinformed about the spray painting incident, but that's all I needed tonight was to know what track we're on with the demonstrations around here.

Kubby: And also when you speak of, you know like Bill being involved, I

feel like I've been involved around war issues all my life being an army brat. Having my father be...

Louis: I know, that's why you surprised me so much.

Kubby: I don't want other kids to grow up with that threat of war around them every day, living in Germany and feeling the tanks going down the cobblestone streets and the apartment building is shaking, and in my thoughts, are, "My dad's at work."

Louis: Yeah.

Kubby: I don't want other kids to grow up under that threat all the time. With their father leaving to go to war, coming back, not knowing what's happening.

Louis: Well, then we must keep strong in the military now, that's the only way to avoid the war. Those that have no military are soon taken over.

Kubby: Well I don't know if I would agree with that.

Louis: Thank you.

Kubby: Thank you, Bud.

Mayor: Thank you, Mr. Louis. ☺

• Do This Now •

State Representative Johnnie Hammond of Ames has introduced a bill to establish a single payer health insurance system for the state of Iowa. Modeled after the highly successful Canadian national health plan, this legislation is the outgrowth of organizing efforts by the Iowa Citizen Action Network (Iowa City Office, 354-8116). Please take time today to write in support of this legislation to your state representative and state senator at the Iowa State Capitol, Des Moines, IA 50309.

IOWA FEDERATION OF LABOR CALLS FOR CEASEFIRE

The following resolution was passed at the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, Executive Council meeting on January 25, 1991.

Whereas, the United States of America is now at war in the Persian Gulf and Iraqi aggression is to be condemned, and whereas, this war has and will continue to exact huge costs in human life, and whereas, this war will create economic costs for our society which will wipe out any peace dividend and once again leave unmet basic human needs for such items as employment, housing, education and health care; therefore be it resolved: that the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO supports an immediate cease fire, and supports an international peace conference under United Nations auspices; and be it further resolved: that in any event the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO strongly supports the Allied troops both in battle and upon their return home; and be it finally resolved that this resolution be sent to the Iowa Congressional delegation and to the President. ☛

THE D.C. MARCH: GIVE PEACE A COVERAGE

BY JAE RETZ

With the Cold War over and the Soviet Union in disarray the United States was in a singular, perfect position to make peace the most powerful and sophisticated modern weapon for resolving international disputes. But once George Bush drew the line in the sand, war was inevitable: a man who had so recently lost his lips could not afford to lose face. And the only lessons learned from Vietnam appear to be: if America goes to war again—full steam ahead and damn the press.

So on January 26th the first large-scale peace demonstration of this war brought together from 75,000 to 300,000 people in Washington, D.C., depending on whether the White House media or those of us marching were doing the counting. The pilots who talk of the great hormonal rush they get from bombing should try one of these peace marches for a death-denying high. The numbers and emotion recalled the peak days of the Vietnam protest movement. The manipulation of public war sentiment here at home, however, must be closer to the peak levels of World War II. And war makes a more riveting media event than peace. This march that was life

over death for those in it might as well not have happened for the rest of the country.

This march was serious business. There was everywhere an exhilarating sense of camaraderie and purpose and, as the chants and slogans testify, humor. Many ridiculed the testosterone factor, like the one that proclaimed (in blunter form than here): No war over the size of that seminal part of a man's anatomy which bears a fatal resemblance to the shape of a missile.

Bus and van loads of people from all over the country drove throughout the night for this event. One man in his seventies took a bus from Florida and would get back on it right after the march. Many Iowans were present, proudly displaying their peace doves while enhancing our growing reputation as the Peace State. As one marcher explained to two African-American women from Youngstown, Ohio: "Iowa would rather feed than fight the world."

People of color, so over-represented on the front lines, were well-represented on the march. These two women from Youngstown were there for their brothers—one killed in Viet-

Iowa City City Council Calls for Tolerance

*City of Iowa City Proclamation
January 22, 1991*

Whereas, the Iowa City community has a diverse population with diverse opinions, and whereas, the city of Iowa City, through our Human Rights Commission, works to eliminate prejudice, intolerance, and bigotry, and whereas, a commitment by all members of our society is essential to the preservation of individual rights and individual expression, and whereas, the United States is involved in a global conflict, and our community's diverse population has varied opinions on this conflict, and whereas, we want Iowa City to be a place where peace and harmony can exist along with these varied opinions, now, therefore, I, John McDonald, Mayor of the City of Iowa City, Iowa, pledge that the City of Iowa City will treat all opinions, and the people who express these opinions, with tolerance and respect, and we urge all of our citizens to respect the opinions of others and their right to express these opinions. ☛

nam and the other living in a body "riddled" by Agent Orange—and a draft age son "they're not going to get." They shared rumors of a developing underground railroad for war resisters. Always on the run from the white man's homicidal racism.

The "Bread and Puppets" troupe from Vermont was the highlight of the march, that took us from the Capitol to an area beyond the White House. These "puppets" included gigantic figures representing Death, a Pale Rider on a Pale Horse, Corporate Interests, and other leading beneficiaries of war. The New Order came in the form of a 20-foot high top-hatted white man.

(Cont. on page 4)

D.C. MARCH (cont.)

Moving sometimes in slow motion, to the sound of an eerie drum beat, these images were beautiful and terrifying.

Then Jesse Jackson spoke like only Jesse can. Peg Mullen, one of Iowa's most famous peace activists and the subject of the book and television movie "Friendly Fire," was also there, and would call Jesse "the best mind in the country against this war." Jesse decried the war as a disaster for this country too: "Every bomb we drop in Baghdad costs \$1 million. Every bomb a school we didn't build, a road we didn't pave, a thousand children we did not feed. "To the charge that protestors don't support the troops Jesse declared that "Bush loves them when they're in the Persian Gulf, but we also love them when they're home" fighting the social battles in the war we're losing here.

Molly Yard, president of NOW, followed Jesse. This Congress, which voted for war, she informed us, is 95% white males. Of the female members, 61% voted against the war. "If there were gender parity in Congress, the war would never have gotten the vote it did."

Maybe someday present and potential mothers of combatants will say "a curse on both your parties" and surprise us by injecting the nascent third party movement with a much-needed shot of estrogen.

Wearily, with messages of hope and peace ringing in their ears, marchers made their way out of the park. Did they make a difference that day? It's a sad fact of American life that only an outbreak of violence would have guaranteed proper media coverage.

The next morning in our nation's capitol there was not a hint that somewhere on our planet war was raging. In our country, which once each year, on Pearl Harbor Day, confuses itself with Dresden, it was so calm. And peaceful. ☺

Everything you wanted to know about the American Left

By Bruce Nissen and Roberta Till-Retz

It's a sure bet that once you pick up the recently published Encyclopedia of the American Left, you won't easily be able to put it down. Among its over 600 carefully-indexed and well-referenced short essays, readers of The Prairie Progressive will be happy to find information on the Democratic Socialists of America whose Iowa City chapter edits and publishes this quarterly newsletter.

The Encyclopedia is a wonderfully well-written reference work on the main currents, figures, organizations, and issues of the modern U.S. political and cultural Left. It quite naturally emphasizes the "hitherto lost history" of American Socialists, Anarchists and Communists, but contains as well lots of information on those other "lost" histories—of unions for example, and of feminist, ethnic and racial organizations and movements.

From the first article on Abortion/

reproductive rights, to its final entry on the Yiddish-language newspaper Di Zukunft, the Encyclopedia treats with intelligence and care a remarkably wide-ranging number of topics.

A few of the entries appear at first glance to have little direct relationship to the U.S. Left: "Animal Rights," "Modern dance," "Psychology" and an entry on "one of the few fashion designers to involve herself with politics" (Elizabeth Hawes). But they are all tied into the political Left in interesting and revealing ways. Some entries make provocative claims about this relationship: the "Detective fiction" piece argues that the hard boiled detective is "almost a living metaphor of the antifascist determination" and that "the detective story remains the primary genre where political themes survive as the subtext of modern alienation, and in which the mores and

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

(FROM D.C. MARCH)

WAR IS BUSH

DEATH IS WHAT THE MEDIA
IS NOT SHOWING YOU

LET BARBARA DEAL WITH
GEORGE'S NAKED AGGRES-
SION

RICH MAN'S WAR
POOR MAN'S FIGHT

SMART BOMBS
DUMB WAR

DINOSAURS BECAME EXTINCT
TOO MUCH ARMOR, TOO
LITTLE VISION

ELVIS SAYS NO WAR

BUSH PULL OUT
WE WISH YOUR FATHER HAD

DON'T LET DESERT STORM
BECOME PENTAGON SHIELD

WE'RE TIRED, WE'RE CRANKY
WE DON'T LIKE THE GOVERN-
MENT

LYSISTRATA'S BACK

conspiracies of capitalism...can be worked out in fiction."

The book is full of such interesting interpretations and ideas, and is a mine of information on events as relevant and topical as P-9 and the Hormel Strike, or as resonant with wars past and future as the essays on the "Bring the Boys Home" Movement of 1945-46 and the Viet Nam-era GI Coffee House Movement.

Pick almost at random any two or three of the biographical entries: those on A.J. Muste, Anne Braden and Lorraine Hansberry, for example, suggest the wealth of heroes the labor and Civil Rights movements have bequeathed

(cont. on page 5)

us. Look at "Union-sponsored radical films" to read about the terror-filled making of the miners' film *Salt of the Earth*. These pages remind us forcibly time and again that this Encyclopedia is not the chronicle of a triumphant movement, but it is the story of a movement that will not die.

In a history marked by so many bitter sectarian disputes, readers will look at the handling of intra-Left factionalism with special interest. It is a blessing that the sympathetic attitudes of the contributors and editors toward the Left do not blind them to the flaws or inadequacies of the organizations or individuals treated. Readers may not always agree with the interpretations given especially controversial topics like the American Communist Party, but on the whole, the balance and fairness of these entries is remarkable.

One inevitably takes issue here and there: perhaps first of all with the asking price of \$95 which lifts it out of the range of many of those it is talking about and, surely, aimed at! And, more substantively, with a definition of the "Left" as "that segment of society which has sought fundamental changes in the economic, political and cultural systems..." which omits any notion of egalitarianism and thus could also include far right and racist movements. When one turns to "Feminism" one has two referrals only – to "Women's Liberation" and "Socialist Feminism." And the Democratic Party, whose electoral strategies have done so much to derail socialism among American workers, has no essay of its own and is relegated in the index to only a couple of mentions under "Irish Americans" and the "International Association of Machinists."

But we really find all these to be minor complaints before the magnificent overall achievement of this volume, which should find widespread use as a reference, and offer pleasurable (sometimes painful) reading for veterans of past and current struggles. [*Encyclopedia of the American Left*. Edited by Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, and Dan Georgakas. New York: Gerland Publishing, Inc., 1990. 928 pp. \$95 cloth] ☞

Terms of Impeachment

by
Congressman Henry B. Gonzales

Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness, yet with great conviction, that I introduce today a Resolution of Impeachment of President Bush. At a time when our nation is deeply divided over the question of war, we find ourselves on the brink of a world war of such magnitude that our minds cannot fully comprehend the destruction that is about to be leveled. The position we are in is a direct result of the actions of one man and the reactions of another. The Iraqi people are as opposed to war as are the American people – the difference is that the Iraqi people have no choice but to support their country's leader, but the American people not only have the right to oppose and speak out in disagreement with their President, but they have the responsibility to do so if our democracy is to be preserved. Today I exercise this constitutional right and responsibility to speak out in oppo-

sition to war in the Middle East and in support of removal of our nation's Chief Executive.

The President has conspired to engage in a massive war against Iraq, employing methods of mass destruction that will result in the killing of tens of thousands of civilians, many of whom will be children. No civilians' lives have yet been lost, that we know of, but when we start using the weapons of massive destruction, that are in place for this war, there is no doubt that thousands of innocent civilians will lose their lives. As killings occur, the principles laid down in the Nuremberg trial will be applicable. Their (civilians') deaths will not only be a moral outrage, but they will constitute a violation of international law.

Mr. Speaker, it is a sad day for our country, and it will be an even sadder day once the fighting begins. President Bush must be stopped- a divided Congress, reflecting a divided country, is no way to conduct a war. Their preservation of lives is at stake, as well. I urge my Colleagues to support this resolution, and to stand up to the president on behalf of the soldiers who will die, the civilians who will be massacred, and the Constitution that will be destroyed if this country goes to war in the Middle East. ☞

Henry B. Gonzalez is a Congressman from San Antonio, Texas. These comments are excerpts from his speech to the House of Representatives on January 16, before U.S. warplanes had begun to attack Iraq.

"I fear we are once again entering a dark tunnel with no light at the end."

- Senator Tom Harkin Dec. 6, 1990

THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE is edited by members of the Iowa City Local of The Democratic Socialists of America. Ed. for this issue: Jeff Cox

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