

the ACTivist

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Special Emergency Issue

If you signed the Peace in the Middle East petition, you are receiving this special issue of the ACTIVIST. If you want to subscribe, please send \$5 to
ACT for Disarmament
736 Bathurst St., Toronto
M5S 2R4

Newspaper of the ACT for Disarmament Coalition • Volume 7, Issue 1 • Pay what you can

WAR BREAKS OUT

By Maggie Helwig

Toronto, January 19, 2:30 a.m. EST (9:30 a.m., Baghdad)

"The liberation of Kuwait has begun."

—George Bush

"The President is at peace with him self."

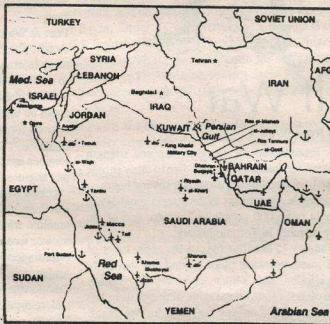
—White House spokesman
Marlin Fitzwater

"I am the masculine American man — I kill, therefore I am."

—Phil Ochs

As I am writing this, Iraq and Kuwait have been under non-stop heavy bombing from US, British, Italian, French, Saudi and Kuwaiti planes for over 50 hours. The US-led troops (Canada, Britain and France have officially turned their command over to the US) have used attack jets, fighter-bombers, Tomahawk cruise missiles and B-52s, among others, to drop on Iraq and Kuwait loads of explosives totaling more than the power of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs combined. The planes continue to fly about 2,000 sorties a day, slamming more and more missiles into Baghdad and elsewhere.

And suddenly the radio broadcasts



nothing but taped music.

The emphasis in the media has been on the "efficiency", the "precision" of this massive assault. Indeed, we are being told that this attack is so efficient it is hitting only military targets. How it could be pos-

sible to bomb nothing but military targets for over two straight days has never been explained. The likelihood that there are people out of or in explosion range of these targets has not been brought up. There has, in fact, been virtually no mention of Iraqi or

Jan 16, 6:30 p.m.

EST (2:30 a.m. Iraq)

US launches first attack

Jan 17, 8 a.m.

EST (4 a.m. Iraq)

Second major US attack

Jan 17, 7 p.m.

EST (3 a.m. Iraq)

Iraqi missiles hit Tel Aviv and Haifa

Jan 19, 12:30 a.m.

EST (4 a.m. Iraq)

Iraqi missiles hit Tel Aviv again

Continuous bombing of Iraq and Kuwait

Kuwaiti casualties in the media at all.

There is a complete blackout on communication from Baghdad, and radio signals are jammed. Amnesty International and the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War say that they have not been able to make even an estimate of deaths so far.

Both sides have played down the number of casualties to an extreme. But Kurds in northern Iraq have reported bombing of civilian sites there, and hundreds of deaths. The Kurds, it should be noted, are hostile to Saddam Hussein, who has used poison gas against them, and have no reason to exaggerate deaths from US bombing. The total casualties through Iraq and Kuwait must number in at least the thousands.

Let us remember what this means. It is not just a number. It is hundreds of thousands of deaths, and probably in large part deaths of civilians, for that is the nature of an air raid. Deaths of women and children and old people and young people. Many, many more must be injured, and medical treatment can hardly be easily available.

But the news is all of military hardware.

Last night, and again tonight, Iraq launched SCUD missiles against Israel, apparently deliberately aiming at civilian targets. At this moment, we are waiting to hear if Israel will retaliate. If they do, it could tear the US-constructed alliance apart, and turn the region into a free-for-all battle which would be uncontrollable.

At the time of the attack, 85 people were in a peace camp on the Iraqi-Saudi border. 20 people associated with the camp were in Baghdad, and a few on the road in between. The camp is a multinational, non-aligned, non-violent peace presence, opposed to all acts of aggression in the region, set up to witness for peace between the armies. Since January 15, there has been no contact with anyone in the camp (including one Canadian, a Quaker woman from B.C.). It is suspected, however, that there has not been much military activity in that area. The peace campers, on January 15, announced that they wished to stay in the camp even if war broke out, and we assume they have done so.

It appears that Canadian forces will be taking an offensive role, with Canadian CF-18s escorting American bombers. The vote in the House of Commons that was supposed to precede Canadian involvement in military action never took place. It seems now that Mulroney may simply recess Parliament and turn decision-making power over to the War Cabinet.

But it cannot, it can never, be said that the Canadian people have sat back and let

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Calendar of Events

Thursday, January 24

- Prayer vigil for peace, Moss Park Armoury (Queen and Jarvis), 5-6 p.m.
- ACT meeting, 736 Bathurst, 7 p.m.
- Rally in St. Catharines

Saturday, January 26

- Rally at City Hall, noon
- Organized by the Coalition for Troops Out of the Gulf
- March on Washington, DC

Sunday, January 27

- Youth Peace Conference, Washington

Tuesday, January 29

- National School Strike
- Teach-In on the Middle East and on political organizing, 519 Church St., 1-5 p.m.
- Call 531-6154 for details

Thursday, January 31

- Prayer vigil, Moss Park Armoury, 5-6 p.m.
- Rally in St. Catharines

Saturday, February 2

- Rally for Peace in the Middle East, organized by ACT Toronto, City Hall, 1 p.m.

Tuesday, February 5

- Discernment Session for Christian peace activists considering civil disobedience, Regis College, 5:30 p.m. Call 604-3163 or 454-0709

Thursday, February 7

- Prayerful preparation for Christian Action for Peace, Regis College, 5:30 p.m. Call as above.
- Prayer vigil, Moss Park Armoury, 5-6 p.m.
- Rally in St. Catharines

Friday, February 8

- Christian Action for Peace, 4 p.m. Call as above.

Saturday, February 9

- ACT Oakville rally, 2 p.m., Centennial Public Library, Navy St. and Lakeshore, Oakville

Thursday, February 14

- National general strike?(in planning stage)
- Prayer vigil, Moss Park Armoury, 5-6 p.m.
- Rally in St. Catherine's

Events continue to be organized on an ad hoc basis, often on short notice. Call 531-6154 for up-to-date details on events around the city. We also hope there will be a demonstration at the Iraqi Embassy in Ottawa.

No winners in the end game

There can be no winners now, and no one in the right — as Iraq is subjected to an unending bombardment that amounts to aerial genocide, as Kuwait is "liberated" by being destroyed, as SCUDs target Israeli civilians and we wait to see if the whole Middle East will be levelled, or only half of it.

Meanwhile George Bush is in the White House, "at peace with himself", and Saddam Hussein is reported safe and well. And the innocents simply die. The war games of two evil men, playing within an evil system, have turned into an end game we can hardly imagine.

Is it worth that much to the US to maintain their military economy and their police role in the world after the Cold War, to establish themselves in the Middle East? Is it worth every life in Iraq? Is it worth every life in the Middle East for Saddam just to save face; was it worth the torture of Kuwaitis to try to improve his international financial leverage?

ACTIVIST Editorial

Perhaps there is a temptation, as the bombs keep falling, to see Iraq as a victim only — and certainly the statements of Western leaders that Iraq's "spies" last night were "unprovoked" are vile. But it was Saddam Hussein, too, who chose to sacrifice vast numbers of Iraqis and Kuwaitis rather than make any moves towards compromise or negotiation; Hussein, of course, who invaded Kuwait in the first place, who really did perpetrate the atrocities there which Bush advances as an excuse for not continuing sanctions. It was Saddam Hussein who sent missiles against Israel, a non-combatant, and aimed them at civilian targets. Making excuses for one act of war is the first step towards making excuses for them all.

They are all killing the children.

It is a bleak and terrifying landscape in front of us now. But we cannot afford the luxury of losing hope. We must act now, in every way we can, to demand a ceasefire, to try to make sure the killing does not go on any longer than it has already. We must insist that negotiation is still possible, that it is not necessary to respond to these acts of violence with even more violence. We must not allow this conflict to escalate further.

Most of all, we must work for the truth. The truth that the vast majority of the people of the world are against this war. The truth that non-violent solutions were always available, and a few "leaders" chose to sabotage them. The truth that this war is not just about military hardware, but the deaths of countless good and ordinary people. The truth that acts of aggression are always wrong, that war is murder, that governments lie and lie and lie.

They will be lying to us a lot in the next weeks and months. Part of the job of the ACTIVIST now is to make sure they don't get away with their lies.✘

Next Issue: Life During Wartime

While the Gulf War continues, we cannot forget other wars being waged around the world — in Lithuania, where once again Soviet tanks have rolled over peaceful people demanding self-determination; in East Timor, where students and others continue their brave resistance to the Indonesian occupation; in Canada, where the native people are subjected to cultural genocide, driven from their lands by our government and military, and perhaps, soon attacked with tanks by the police. The February issue of the ACTIVIST will cover some of these wars, as well as continuing coverage of the Gulf.



Gulf War

continued from page 1

this happen. Protests had increased in size and strength through January. On January 8, twenty-five to thirty people blockaded the US Consulate in Toronto for several hours — one arrest was made. On January 12, an international day of protest brought out 5,000 people in Toronto, one of the largest peace marches in Toronto history.

As the January 15 deadline ran out, the entire range of protests and responses took place around the world. In Toronto, the US Consulate's fax machine was faxed peace petitions non-stop for four hours; more petitions were left when they turned off their fax machine for the night. Canadian Women's Action occupied the office of Conservative MP John Bosley. A die-in and rally at the US Consulate, organized by Troops Out Now!, moved to the Toronto Stock Exchange, which was occupied by hundreds of protesters for half an hour. The protesters then continued on to Conservative Party Headquarters, where they blocked Richmond St. until two representatives of Voice of Women (who had been picketing the building meanwhile) were allowed inside to deliver paper cranes, a symbol of peace. Paper cranes were also mailed to Saddam Hussein. Students walked out of the Etobicoke School of the Arts and Contact Alternative School, and some teachers at York University cancelled classes. That night, thousands gathered at the US Consulate, then marched through the city, stopping traffic on Yonge Street, up to Bloor, and Bloor across to Avenue Road, despite attempts by the police to halt the march.

People returned to the US Consulate as soon as reports of the American-led attack were heard, and blocked traffic on University Avenue. The next day, January 17, the recruiting centre in North York was blockaded by Troops Out Now!, with about thirty people preventing access to the office and handing out leaflets, and again a rally of thousands gathered at the Consulate, blocking University for the third day running.

There have also been occupations and blockades of recruiting centres in Peterborough and Kingston, a sit-in at a local MP's office and a high school students' rally in St. Catherine's, almost daily protests at Parliament Hill, and continuous activity across the country — and, of course, internationally.

So far only three arrests have been made in anti-war protests across Canada, perhaps a sign of the level of public support for the protesters.

The sustained, spontaneous, large-scale actions, and the favourable public response, make it very clear that the majority of Canadians are opposed to the war; that the government is no longer making even a pretense of representing the people. It remains to be seen how long they can continue to make this war in the face of public protest.

Someone has to stop this war. It is only all of us who can.✘



The Canadian Role

Canadian companies supply arms and arms components to virtually all Middle Eastern countries — sometimes directly, more often by selling arms components to middleman countries. Middle East sales since 1984 include:

Evra

Components of F-16s, howitzers, tanks and surface-to-air missiles via the US; Pratt & Whitney engines for military training aircraft via Brazil.

Iran

Pratt & Whitney engines for military training aircraft, supplied via Switzerland. These training aircraft can easily be converted into attack planes. In 1986, Pratt & Whitney were selling helicopter engine parts to Iran supposedly for civilian use only. These were identical to military engine components and were in fact used in military helicopters.

Iraq

Pratt & Whitney engines for military training aircraft via Brazil. These training aircraft were, according to Amnesty International, converted to attack planes and used to bombard Kurdish villages with chemical weapons in 1987. If chemical weapons are used, these same planes could be involved. We have also sold Pratt & Whitney engines for attack helicopters, via Italy.

Israel

Engines used in Arava military aircraft; Pratt & Whitney engines for military helicopters and aircraft (often exported from Israel to countries like El Salvador and Honduras). Canada is suspected of having supplied uranium which made it possible for Israel to develop nuclear weapons. (Source: Middle East Research and Information Project)

Jordan

Components of helicopters, tanks, howitzers and anti-tank missiles via the US.

Kuwait

Components of tanks and personnel carriers via the US. Saudi Arabia

Components of F-15s, howitzers, tanks, anti-tank missiles and military aircraft via the US; components of Tornado fighter jets via Britain. General Motors is now in the process of selling over 1,000 armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia via the US.

United Arab Emirates

Components of anti-tank missiles and surface-to-air missiles via the US; castings for attack helicopters via Italy

Main sources: Project Ploughshares, MERIP

Human Rights Watch

Massive human rights violations by the Iraqi occupation forces in Kuwait have been documented by Amnesty International in a report available from Amnesty, 322 Bloor St. W., Toronto. Thousands of people have been arbitrarily arrested, several hundred have "disappeared", and hundreds more, including children, have been executed. There are widespread and documented reports of torture, and as of December about 300,000 Kuwaitis had fled the country.

Meanwhile, in Saudi Arabia, thousands of legal Yemeni residents were arrested, held incommunicado, and tortured after the Yemeni government opposed the US military presence. About 800,000 Yemenis have fled Saudi Arabia.

The unending and massive bombardment of Iraq and Kuwait is itself, of course, a terrible violation of human rights. The number of refugees created by the attack can barely be imagined at this point, but will probably run well into the millions. Even before the attack, almost a million refugees had arrived in Jordan, and resources were already stretched. 10,000 refugees came to Jordan December 18, but now are mostly going to Iran, where 100,000 are expected to arrive by tonight (Saturday, Jan. 19)

In Britain, 75 legal Iraqi residents were served with expulsion orders; on January 16, 28 of them were arrested in order to be deported to Iraq. Whether the massive air strikes beginning later that same day have caused any change in plans is not known. Troops are now patrolling London's Heathrow airport, while tanks encircle the perimeter. And three Iraqis, all embassy staff, were ordered to leave Canada just after the attack began.✘

ACT NOW!

1. Join rallies, civil disobedience actions, and other events taking place regularly. See calendar, page 1, or call 531-6154 for information.

2. Phone or fax Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, head of the UN Security Council (phone 212-754-1966; fax 212-754-1970) and demand that the UN impose an immediate ceasefire.

3. Send faxes, and make phone calls, of protest to: Brian Mulrooney (phone 613-992-4211; fax 613-995-0101)

Joe Clark, External Affairs (phone 613-995-1851; fax 613-992-6474)

Bill McKnight, Defense Minister (phone 613-996-4450; fax 613-993-6587)

US Defense Attaché (phone 613-238-8968)

US Consulate (phone 416-595-1700; fax 416-595-0051)

Iraqi Embassy (phone 613-236-9177; fax 613-567-1101)

Demand an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of multinational troops from the Gulf and Iraqi troops from Kuwait, and information on the status of the Gulf Peace Camp.

4. Circulate the Peace in the Middle East petition (page 4). Signatures collected are being used in regular fax blockades of the US and Iraqi Embassies.

5. Encourage anyone you know involved in the military to refuse to serve in the Gulf or provide support for the war effort there. Support those who choose to resist military service. For more information, call 531-6154. Write to soldiers in the Gulf, and tell them that we support them, but we do not support the decision to send them to die in a senseless war. Explain that we believe we can best support the soldiers by ending the war and bringing them home.

Letters can be sent to Canadian Sailors, HMCS Terra Nova, Protector or Athabaska, CFPO 5071, FMO Halifax, NS, B3K 2X0 or Canadian Army/Air Force, CFPO 5004, Belleville, Ont., K0K 3R0.

6. Boycott Canadian companies involved in arms sales to the Middle East, eg. General Motors, Bata, CAE Electronics, Magna Electronics, Canadian Marconi, Canadair.

7. Join a Peace Camp to be set up soon in Toronto (531-6154).

8. Think about energy conservation; it was partly a "need" to protect oil supplies that got us involved in the Gulf war. For information contact Energy Probe, 978-7014.

9. Educate yourself about the background to the current conflict. Attend the teach-in at 519 Church St., Jan. 29, 1-5 p.m. Order ACT's information kit on the Gulf crisis (\$5, from ACT Toronto). Read *Middle East Report*, an excellent periodical available from the Middle East Research and Information Project, Suite 119, 11500 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20005 (202-223-3677).

Be aware that this conflict has deep and complex roots. Consider supporting the self-determination struggles of other peoples of the Middle East, especially Palestinians and Kurds.

Remember that the news is now subjected to military censorship and may not be full or accurate. Be aware too that anti-Arab racism will begin to spread. Examine your own attitudes to Arab people; be wary of believing in the "terrorist threat" too readily.

10. Make a financial contribution to ACT's continuing anti-war campaign. Peace is far less costly than war, but we do have expenses. Donate directly to ACT for Disarmament, 736 Bathurst St., Toronto, M5S 2R4. The Parkdale Green Constituency Association supports ACT's work and has a policy of turning all tax credit donations earmarked "peace" directly and entirely to ACT. As a political party, they can issue tax receipts, which are good for a 75% rebate on the first \$200. This does not tie ACT or you to the Green Party in any way. Make cheques out to the Parkdale Green Constituency Association and earmark them "peace"; mail c/o 736 Bathurst St., Toronto, M5S 2R4.

Background to the crisis

"We do not want a military solution"

From an interview with Ahmad al-Khatib in *Middle East Report*

Ahmad al-Khatib has been active for many years in the Kuwaiti democratic opposition movement and was a member of Kuwait's parliament until it was dissolved by Saddam Hussein in 1986; he was jailed by the al-Sabah monarchy last year. Ahmad al-Khatib is presently living in London. This interview was conducted prior to the US attack.

Q: The question now is how to resolve the crisis. The ruling family favours US military action. What is your attitude to this?

A: I can tell you we do not want a military solution... A military solution will destroy Kuwait and will not help those of our people who are still inside. It will also destroy Iraq — not just the Iraqi army, but also the whole infrastructure of the country. That will be a loss. Iraq is an Arab country — it is not just a matter of Saddam. Today he is president, tomorrow he may not be there.

Q: Is there support in Kuwait for reconstituting the border issue?

A: I don't think that any Kuwaitis is in the mood to discuss the border issue with Iraqis, not after what they did — occupying, looting, killing. Not now.

...The Rumaila dispute should be treated like any other oil field shared between two countries. On access to the sea, it depends what they want it for. If it is for a port, there is no problem... If it is something specific for Saddam, that's another matter.

A: ...Kuwaitis are having second thoughts about what Kuwait should be after liberation. Some say the emir has a place but not the rest of the family; the government should be formed after an election and should contain no member of the ruling family... It is only natural that the whole government has to be questioned after this affair. It was not a small mistake, it was a catastrophe. The al-Sabahs have to be accountable.

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or 531-4969

The 120 Peace Camp volunteers, representing 21 nations,
on the Iraqi-Saudi border
DEMAND AN IMMEDIATE

CEASEFIRE

AND A RETURN TO NEGOTIATIONS NOW!

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I would like to make a tax-deductible donation of:

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THE ACTIVIST
Volume 7, Issue 1
January 1991
2nd class mailing
registration #6769

Subscriptions are \$5 per year, \$25 for institutions. Publisher: ACT for Disarmament, 736 Bathurst St., Toronto, M5S 2R4. Opinions expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of ACT for Disarmament.

