

# the ACTivist

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Newspaper of the ACT for Disarmament Coalition • Volume 7, Issue 6 • June 1991 • Pay what you can

## Canada to allow new arms sales

By DAVID WEBSTER  
THE ACTIVIST

The federal government's on-again, off-again commitment to controlling the international arms trade has declined to almost nothing with the introduction of new legislation aimed at easing the export of Canadian weapons.

Light armoured vehicles (tanks) and automatic weapons are among the goods that will be easier for Canadian companies to sell abroad without special permission under the terms of International Trade Minister Michael Wilson's proposed new Export-Import Act. Target markets are thought to include the Middle East.

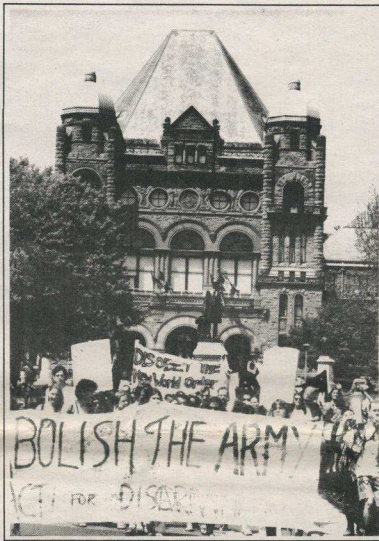
Wilson insists increased arms sales will not undercut Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's efforts to host an international summit on the arms trade. "Mr Mulroney and [former External Affairs Minister Joe] Clark both specifically men-

tioned weapons of mass destruction. These are not weapons of mass destruction. These are weapons which are used for conventional defence."

The changes seem designed to facilitate low-key weapons sales to make up for the likely loss of the high-profile ARMX '91 arms show. Recent signs are that ARMX '91, already postponed from May to September, will be postponed again until May 1992 or cancelled entirely.

ARMX '89 at Ottawa's Lansdowne park showcased Canadian arms production and attracted thousands of visitors from the Canadian Armed Forces and dozens of foreign embassies. None of the construction that would be needed for an event of the same scale has begun in Carp, Ont., site of ARMX '91. And ARMX sponsors Baxter Publishing make no mention of the weapons show in

Turn to Canada, page 3



Jack Lehmann/The Globe and Mail

## ACT spring protest part of worldwide campaign

By STEPHEN DANKOWICH  
THE ACTIVIST

ACT for Disarmament's 9th Annual Spring Protest for Peace successfully raised awareness about the international campaign for a World Without Armies.

On a sunny Saturday May 11th afternoon, around 350 peace activists gathered at Queen's Park. MC's Maggie Kay and Mai Cao introduced the speakers, beginning with ACT spokesperson Mac Scott, who denounced the \$1 trillion spent annually on weapons of war worldwide, the annual Canadian military budget of near \$13 billion, and the lack of democratic public control over military actions. In opposition to a system of nation-states always in preparation for war, Mac appealed for the abolition of all armies and the resolution of conflicts by non-violent means.

Rebecca Barclay inspired the crowd with songs about respect for Mother Earth, peace and freedom.

The exuberant march down Yonge Street to City Hall chanted, "No Armies — No War," and gathered significant support from the public.

We were greeted upon arrival at City Hall by the hardcore band One Blood.

Keynote speaker Karen Reid of Peace Brigades International talked about the practise of non-violence in war-torn El Salvador, where she worked for several years

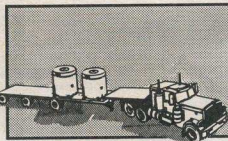
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## Radioactive releases from tritium plant cause health hazards

By MAGGIE HELWIG  
THE ACTIVIST

On April 26, an employee of the Cavan Waste Transport Station, in Cavan Township near Peterborough, Ontario, discovered eight garbage bags filled with lab equipment, rubber gloves, discarded papers, and broken glass marked with radiation hazard symbols. This was the beginning of a series of discoveries that has uncovered serious health hazards, and potential contributions to the nuclear weapons industry, in the Peterborough area.

The garbage bags, Waste Station employees found, came from Shield Source Incorporated, an American-owned company which operates a small plant at the Peterborough airport. Their main product is tritium-activated EXIT signs, and other tritium-activated lighting devices. Since 1986, they have been assembling signs with components supplied by the U.S. parent company. More recently, they have begun manufacturing tritium tubes on site, with tritium



from the Reprocessing Facility at the Darlington Nuclear Reactor. Shield Source employs eight people, some university students and some graduates.

Samples of the dumped trash were sent to the Atomic Energy Control Board, and came back testing at a level of 8-13 microcuries/kg — significantly radioactive, but well within AECB's "acceptable limits." These acceptable limits are considerably higher than those in some other countries, including the United States. As long as the tritium level does not exceed 1,000 microcuries/kg, there is no limit on how many kilos of waste can be dumped under Canadian law. Will Hagerty, president of Shield Source, acknowledges that the Cavan Waste Transfer Station has been

## Special Report

used for the dumping of low-level radioactive garbage previously.

The danger posed by the garbage is somewhat increased by the fact that the Waste Transport Station is in a swampy area, as tritium is taken up by the body only after it combines with water molecules. The greater the amount of tritium that comes into contact with water in any form, the more it can be absorbed into the body.

Dump employees who were tested for radiation exposure also tested within "acceptable limits." Cavan residents, however, were angry. Harald Glass, of Millbrook-Cavan Environmental Watch, interviewed on May 17, pointed out that "the staff's been sitting there since April 26th under a makeshift tarp, because nobody

wants to touch it ... People frequent it (the Waste Transport Station) a lot, and take as much as they leave, often; building materials and so on." On May 18, there was a demonstration of some 50 people from Cavan, Millbrook and Peterborough at the gates of the Waste Station. They then drove to Shield Source Inc., leaving garbage bags representing the waste, pasting radiation symbols to the windows, and hanging a banner on an outside wall.

After the story became public  
Turn to Tritium, page 10



International Peace Bureau  
1991 Conference  
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Reconciliation & Resistance

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I was heartened by the article concerning the Romanian Candu (The ACTIVIST, May 1991). Of all peace groups, I respect the distinctiveness of ACT for Disarmament, particularly for its purposeful opposition to dictatorSHIT, whether of the left, right, or far out.

I would like to inform the readers that Romania's Iliescu regime last February decided to increase its "defence" budget with an extra \$280 million. Meanwhile, AIDS, hepatitis and other infections are spreading through the continual re-use of syringes in spite of their relative cheapness. This reflects the perverse sense of priorities of the Iliescu regime.

Last October Amnesty International expressed serious concern about the complicity of government officials in attacks against ethnic minorities. One of Iliescu's members of parliament, Gelu Voican-Voiculescu, openly advocated that the Hungarian minority "should be exterminated." ...

Most unsettling of all is the official campaign to rehabilitate Marshall Ion Antonescu who took power with the Iron Guard, a nationalist anti-Jewish party, and allied with Hitler.

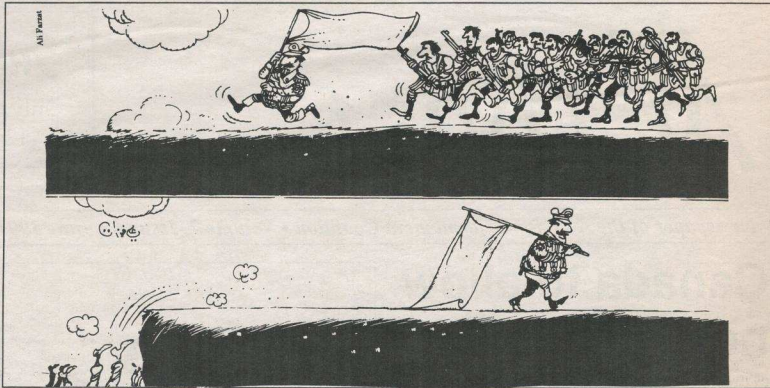
It is exceedingly bad business for Canada to profit from the construction of nuclear reactors for such a dangerous regime. This is aside from the fact that it is economically a bad deal for Canada and Romania. Lastly, Romania's decrepit third world infrastructure is unsuitable to ensure the safe maintenance of a first world high-tech nuclear power plant.

Wally Keeler  
Coburg, Ont.

**Jo Peacenik**  
returns next issue for more

**THE ACTIVIST**

Volume 7, # 6 (June 1991)  
2nd class mailing #6769  
The ACTIVIST is published monthly by ACT for Disarmament, 736 Bathurst Street, Toronto, Canada, M5S 2R4, (416) 531-6154. Subscriptions are available with a donation of \$10 or more to ACT for Disarmament (\$25 for institutions or funded agencies). Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of ACT for Disarmament. Reprint articles freely, but please credit The ACTIVIST.



*In April 1991, a special supplement on women in social change movements was inserted in The ACTIVIST. As a paid insert, it did not necessarily reflect the views of The ACTIVIST or of ACT for Disarmament. However, a number of letters were received in response to the supplement, of which we publish shortened versions of two here. Copies of the issue containing the supplement are still available from the ACT office for \$1 postage and handling.*

I wanted to thank you for doing the women's supplement. It was good. The ideas, politics and anger were all clear. I would be curious to know how the men around ACT responded. Hopefully, not in such a way as to add to the list of regrettable incidents.

As a man who has been going through vivid memories of being abused by several men, some repeatedly, I feel that men have a lot to answer for. While individual men are not responsible for the actions of other men, we are certainly responsible to do something about the level of violence, sexual or otherwise, against women and children. Men simply protect the abusers by trying to intellectualize about these violent acts, or by discounting the frequency with which they occur, or minimizing the degree of damage done to those who have survived them in the past and endure them in the present.

Few men understand that when a woman responds to some hurtful comment or to being ignored or excluded, that to them seems rather trivial, the woman is responding to a lifetime of such comments and such thoughtlessness...

It seems to me now that the sexual abuse of children is one of the corner stones of this oppressive society. Survivors of sexual abuse have the very characteristics — low self-

image, feeling that one doesn't deserve anything better, being easy to manipulate into abusive patterns, fearful, having difficulty in connecting with people, accepting the reality according to those more powerful even when one knows it is not true, etc — are precisely what capitalism needs to function, a large body of people who will take a lot of shit without complaining. The exposure over the past couple of years of people remembering being abused as children confirms that this abuse has happened to a sizeable minority of the population....

I know that I still have much to learn and integrate. I still find it hard to respond to the pervasive anti-woman comments that, as a man, I hear all the time. But if we're going to change society, then we're all going to have to change ourselves. We all need to heal. Men shouldn't be so resistant to the idea that they still have a lot of work to do in terms of relating to women. Ironically, men too often personalize the political reality between men and women. The dynamics of a particular relationship, whether sexual or not, don't change the fundamental imbalance of power between women and men; this particular woman may have done this, or that one may have done that, but such arguments are irrelevant. It is a question of politics, and a question of power. It is now up to men to decide whether we're on the side of those with power, or those who are challenging them.

Jim Campbell  
Toronto

The supplement contains an unsigned article entitled "Justice for Mark Curtis?" which calls into question the legitimacy of the international campaign to win justice for this

union and political activist who was the victim of a frame-up by the Des Moines, Iowa, cops in March 1988.

Curtis was active in the struggle to build his union and defend his immigrant co-workers

who were being victimized by the immigration police. On March 4, he was arrested by the Des Moines cops who beat him unconscious, calling him a "Mexican lover, just like you love those coloureds." Curtis is presently serving a 25-year sentence at the John Bennet Correctional Centre in Fort Madison, Iowa.

The article implies that the over 8,000 individuals and organizations around the world which have endorsed the campaign by the Des Moines Mark Curtis Defense Committee do not know the real facts and are unwittingly participating in a cynical effort to cover up the actions of a person guilty of raping a young Black woman.

The article makes several mis-statements of fact and omits a wealth of information available on the case from police records and court transcripts....

It suggests that the campaign to defend Mark Curtis centres on accusing the woman allegedly raped by Curtis of lying about being raped. The campaign simply states that the facts show that Curtis was not guilty of the charges and that the cop frame-up was politically motivated.

This is why the international

campaign for justice for Mark Curtis has become one of the most widely-known US human rights battles around the world. The case has been brought before the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

The thousands of campaign supporters include Black, civil rights, union, and solidarity activists, the Québec Federation of Labour, woman's rights activist Judy Rebick, John Evasin, president of Local 280P of the United Food and Commercial Workers at Gainers meatpacking in Edmonton, and many others.

A recent letter of support from the National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa says "the case is another example of police brutality against unionists and political activists. Rape charges are fabricated against political activists as part of the harassment and intimidation [by] the police."

The frame-up of Mark Curtis and other union and political activists in Canada and the United States underlines the reality that any readers of The ACTIVIST active in the struggle for social change could, like Mark Curtis, find themselves the victims of a cop frame-up.

As the South African mineworkers point out in their letter, "an injury to one is an injury to all." Like the victory of the Birmingham Six, a victory for Mark Curtis will strengthen the struggles of all those fighting against oppression and war.

A video entitled "The Frame-up of Mark Curtis" and other materials are available from the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa, 50311, USA. In Toronto, phone 537-0093 or 861-1399.

Carolyn Egan  
Brigitte Groux  
Cherie MacDonald  
Frank Showler  
John Steele  
Toronto

# Refusing conscription in Soviet Union

By MAGGIE HELWIG  
THE ACTIVIST

The Gulf War has focused attention on the issue of conscientious objection in the United States and Canada. But there are struggles for the right simply to refuse to kill not only here but around the world. In some countries — Israel, South Africa — conscientious objection is one of the most important political statements that can be made.

In the Soviet Union, too, there is an implicitly political dimension to conscientious objection. Military service is compulsory for all male citizens when they reach the age of 18. Any who refuse their term of service can be imprisoned; and, what is more, when they are released they are still expected to serve their term in the army. If they continue to refuse, they are sent back to jail, and this vicious cycle continues until they are 27 years old and no longer eligible for military service.

In the republics, however, the majority of young men consider the Soviet army to be an army of occupation. For them, it is politically abhorrent to belong to this army, and failure to register for military service is far too widespread to control. In Armenia, in 1989, recruiters managed to enlist 411 men — about 7% of the eligible population. Those who refuse to register often have the support of the local authorities, many of whom have passed legislation invalidating the Soviet laws.

Not that the Soviet government has paid much attention to this. It was a crackdown on conscientious objectors, after all, that led to the tragedy in Lithuania this past winter.

But it is not only in the republics that more and more young

## ACT protest opposes army

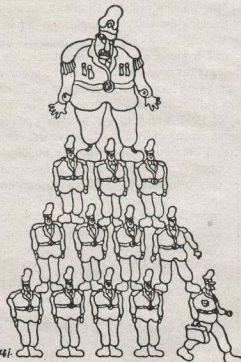
Continued from page 1 as a human rights activist.

Peace movement elder Joanne Young, of the Voice of Women, spoke of the need to stop Canadian involvement in the international arms trade and the pressing need for economic conversion. Joanne is also a member of the Raging Grannies, who came on stage to entertain the crowd with new lyrics to recognizable tunes.

The ever-popular ACT open mike allowed many activists to share their ideas, campaigns, concerns and even poetry with the people at Nathan Phillips Square.

Days after last year's spring protest against the low-level flight testing over Innu lands, the NATO base proposed for Goose Bay was scrapped. Days after this year's spring protest, over \$900 million in military expenditures was cut from the Department of National Defense budget.

Someone must be listening! ☸



men are refusing to serve in the army. In Russia itself, and especially in Moscow, many — acting from a variety of political and moral convictions — are boycotting the call-up, some at the risk of years in prison. And there are more all the time. In 1988, official records counted 1,044 objectors to military service; in 1989, 6,647; and in the spring alone of 1990, about 30,000. Desertion from the armed forces, too, is increasingly common.

Normally a young man who refuses to report for call-up the first time, if he is caught and convicted, faces about two years of forced labour at "construction projects of the national economy."

Should he again refuse call-up after his sentence expires, he will usually be given two years in a work camp for criminal offenders. Terms of up to five years are possible. Of course, only a few of the thousands of objectors can actually be prosecuted — but, as elsewhere, it is those who are open and vocal about their beliefs who are the most vulnerable.

Conscientious objectors now in jail in the Soviet Union are supported by War Resisters International and by the Transnational Radical Party, a Soviet group which promotes non-violence and is working for reforms in the country. One of their main issues is establishing in law the right to

perform alternate, civilian service rather than entering the military.

Amazingly, support for this demand came recently from the deputy head of the general staff of the Soviet armed forces, who said in February that it may soon be possible for Soviet citizens who have moral objections to military service to perform non-military alternative service. The alternative service would last three years, and have no connection with the Ministry of Defense, the KGB, or the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Though not fully satisfactory (especially as regards the committees deciding who 'qualifies' as a conscientious objector), this would be a significant step forward. The Transnational Radical Party believes that this shift in official position is due partly to international pressure through the UN, and partly due to a grass-roots petition campaign and the initiative of the local governments who have taken it upon themselves to overrule the Ministry of Defense. ☸

*Conscientious objectors Vladimir Zverev and Aleksandr Kapicin are currently facing trial, and conscientious objector Sergei Osnach has just been arrested. Letters demanding their release can be sent to USSR, Moscow 103793, GSP, Pushkinskaja pl. 15a, Procurator's Office of the USSR; or to USSR, Moscow 121260, ul. Vorovskogo 15, Supreme Court of the USSR. For updates or further information and suggestions, call ACT at 531-6154.*

## Sign Up For Peace! Conscientious Objectors' Registry

At present, there is no right to conscientious objection in Canadian law, though it is recognized as a basic human right by the United Nations. As part of a campaign to establish conscientious objection in Canada, we are encouraging people, especially young people, to formally register their opposition to war.

The Conscientious Objectors' Registry will keep your declaration on record.

Preparing a conscientious objector claim can help you to clarify your own thinking about war and non-violence. It can also demonstrate to the government how many people in Canada would refuse to fight and kill in war.

Forms for the Conscientious Objectors' Registry are available from ACT for Disarmament, 736 Bathurst St., M5S 2R4, (416) 531-6154.

## Canada selling arms without ARMX

Continued from page 1 the latest issue of their magazine, Canadian Defence Quarterly.

ARMX has become symbolic of Canada's role in the arms trade of a world. Favoured customers like Saudi Arabia, south Korea, Turkey, Pakistan and Indonesia have sent representatives to the show in past years and subsequently purchased military equipment from Canadian companies. Peace movement opposition, and public outrage at Ottawa's willingness to sell weapons to human rights violators, have crystallized around ARMX.

Signals over ARMX '91 are mixed. Baxter Publishing says ARMX will not be held this September; Ottawa insists the show will go on as planned. But it seems that the battle over ARMX that has been raging in military circles for several months is now drawing to a close.

The April 17 issue of The Wednesday Report, billed as "Canada's Aerospace & Defence Weekly," makes the case clear. "If ARMX should by any chance flounder," the magazine comments in its lead article, "even for reasons unrelated to the coming

peacenik offensive, it will be claimed as a victory and greatly boost [the peace movement's] morale, finances and following. From the highest to the lowest, we should make sure they do not win this round. ARMX should go forward, whatever the cost, irrespective of whatever amount of profiteering the organizers may be accused of doing."

ARMX, certainly, has floundered. Whether the Canadian arms trade itself is in similar straits is still an open question. ☸



**GREECE** — Some 420 Jehovah's Witnesses are in jail in Greece because of their refusal to perform military service. Forty non-Witnesses, whose objection is based on anti-militarist convictions, have publicly announced their refusal to serve in the army, and arrest warrants have been issued for seven of them. Others who have refused military service, though not under immediate threat of arrest, are forbidden to leave the country.

Greece is the only country in the European Community that does not recognize any right to conscientious objection.

**SOUTH AFRICA** — Alan Storey, a Methodist minister who refused compulsory military training in the South African army, will go on trial June 17.

Storey's trial was initially scheduled for April 15, and his supporters see the delay as a sign of the government's lack of confidence in their case. Some feel that the emphasis on non-violence in Storey's stand, and the uncertainty about the future of white-only conscription, have made the case embarrassing for the South African government. Rev. Frank Chikane of the South African Council of Churches praised Storey and said, "We hope that others will be heartened and follow his example in choosing to address the problems our country faces through nonviolent means."

**UNITED STATES** — Trials of the Gulf War resisters continue. The Camp Lejeune objectors continue to be sentenced one by one, usually getting sentences of 8 to 18 months in the brig. Two of those sentenced, Eric Hayes and Doug Schiell, have been declared Prisoners of Conscience by Amnesty International, and it is likely that more will be declared soon. One of the Camp Lejeune resisters, Eric Lawson, was told during a bail hearing that he could face the death penalty for desertion in time of war.

Yolanda Huet-Vaughan, who appeared at rallies in several cities before turning herself in as a deserter, was scheduled for a final hearing in mid-May, to determine if she would be charged with desertion with intent to avoid hazardous duty — a charge carrying a possible five years in prison. While awaiting court-martial, she is confined to Fort Leonard Wood (Missouri), unable to receive visits from her husband and children.

# Human rights under attack in army-ruled Burma

By Shelley Anderson  
PEACE MEDIA SERVICE

During the first week of March, I took part in an international delegation to Burma to take a first-hand look at the deteriorating human rights situation.

It was a frightening time to be in Burma. When a military coup occurred in Thailand, one of the few countries to congratulate the military for overthrowing the democratically-elected Thai government and rescinding the constitution was SLORC—the State Law and Order Restoration Council which currently rules Burma. SLORC has extensive experience in suppressing democracy. In August

1988, during massive pro-democracy demonstrations throughout Burma, the military massacred 3,000 students. The National League for Democracy and its leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi won the national elections last May, but SLORC has refused to hand over power. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been under house arrest since July 1989. (Her recent nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize may provide some protection to her and will at the same time increasing international awareness about the human rights situation in Burma.)

After the 1988 massacre, thousands of Burmese students fled the cities for the jungle. Many are now dead from malaria and malnutrition. Some fled to Bangkok, where they are harassed by Thai authorities who are making plans to round them up and put them in a camp. Others were be-

tried by indigenous groups—the Karen, the Shan, the Pao and others—who live in the jungle, and who have been fighting the Burmese government for over forty years.

After an exhausting ride up a mountainous dirt road, we stopped to meet our guides. Armed Pao soldiers stepped out from behind trees to guard the truck while we



were led up another trail to an indigenous village of some 73 families. The villagers had fled from the Burmese military, who capture indigenous people and force them to serve as porters. Few people survive—porters are routinely chained and beaten, given a handful of rice per day for food and forced to carry fifty kilos or more of ammunition and weapons for the army. Some of the villagers built and then abandoned their homes seven times in one year.

Next to the village was a school where four Burmese students were teaching about forty village children. The teachers, all in their late teens or early twenties, belonged to the faction of exiled Burmese students who have joined the indigenous people in armed struggle. Another student faction, based in Bangkok, has taken up nonviolent struggle, and

requested books on nonviolence and training. The students in the jungle were teaching the village children (in the children's own languages) basic hygiene, arithmetic, English and Burmese. The ethnic groups living along the Burma border believe in education. In May of 1990, with help from the Burma Project of Thailand, the Federal University was opened. It is the only institution of higher education open in Burma today, as SLORC closed all universities after the 1988 pro-democracy uprising. The Federal University can only accommodate 52 students; all of the students are ethnic minorities.

The mountains around the village are beautiful, but they are soaked in blood. Warlords with private armies fight for the opium trade here, while over 11 indigenous groups fight for their way of life. The Burmese military government fights to control the rich teak forests, which they are rapidly destroying in exchange for much-needed foreign currency, and the gem mines.

Listening to the children singing their ABCs, I wondered what their future will be. The Burmese government is facing increasing censure from the international community for its human rights abuses and its policy of deforestation. But it has powerful allies. The Thai government, eager to make an agreement with SLORC authorities about exploring southern Burma for natural gas, imposes heavy fines and jail sentences on anyone from ethnic minorities who crosses the border. The Japanese are buying teak as

fast as the forests can be cut down. China is supplying tanks and airplanes—airplanes which will, it is expected, be used to attack the Federal University soon.

It is encouraging to notice among many Burmese the confidence that SLORC will be forced to hand over power within two or three years. The courage of Burma's Buddhist monks, who refuse to assist funerals or weddings of military families and even refuse food offered by soldiers during the monks' daily alms round, is helping to bring this

change about. This religious boycott of the army is undermining military morale in this deeply religious country.

Yet while SLORC's end is inevitable, a question remains: when it goes down, how many innocent people will it take along? And what will be the response of the world community?

Shelley Anderson edits *Reconciliation International*, the magazine of the *International Fellowship of Reconciliation*.

## Tian'an'men students nominated for Nobel

PEACE MEDIA SERVICE

Mairaed Corrigan Maguire, a founder of the Peace People movement in Northern Ireland and a former recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, has nominated Chai Ling and Wang Dan, two leaders of the student pro-democracy movement in Beijing, for the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize.

In her letter to the Nobel Committee, she wrote:

"In June 1989 the peoples of the world watched with sadness and horror, the brutal massacre of these unarmed demonstrators by the Chinese Government troops. In spite of brutal repression, both then and now, the students have maintained their commitment to nonviolence and this is evidenced by the inspiring words of Ms. Chai Ling when she said, 'We knew we were conducting a war between love and hate, not a war between arms and violence.'

"In awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to Chai Ling and Wang Dan,



the Nobel Committee would be giving recognition and support to millions of Chinese men and women, some of whom have already given their lives; many of whom continue to suffer, for peace, justice, democracy, freedom and progress in the People's Republic of China. Furthermore in awarding the prize to the students, the Committee would be showing its support for nonviolent campaigns for democracy in our world, and its opposition to oppressive measures designed to stop movements for justice and peace."

## Thank you

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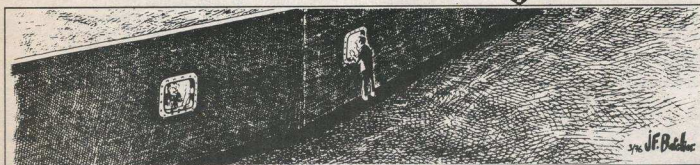
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## Voices speaking out of discord

### A Discord of Flags

ed. Michael Redhill, Peter Ormshaw, Stephen Heighston  
pp. 40  
(independently published)

REVIEWED BY MARIA ERSKINE

So tell me: when you see a phalanx of those insta-books on the paperback shelf, capitalizing on some still-warm catastrophe, don't you eye them askance — sort of look down your nose at them? I didn't think I was the only one.

So take a look at *A Discord of Flags* and shake up that belief. It's subtitled *Canadian Poets Write About the Persian Gulf War*, and Canadians especially (especially those shaken by that war), will appreciate it. And those of you who run off

when you read the word poems, get back here; reading this chapbook does not require black clothes or blue stockings.

Like the office humour or refrigerator-door whimsy that photocopies its way through a company/a city, friend to friend, these poems are largely accessible and immediate. In fact, the editors urge the reader to copy and pass on this collection — as long as it's copied in its entirety.

But unlike some fillets of popular culture, this poetry, at its best, is deeply moving; some of its evolving, shape-shifting images and cogent phrases may well be fresh in your mind when the Desert Storm bubblegum cards lie bleached and dusty on the attic windowsill.

The poems run the gamut from a gently hopeful, near-haiku length observation from Nicholas Power —

through lyrics, prose-poems, even an acrostic sonnet from Victor Coleman — to a punster's screed of multi-page rage by Gerry Gilbert. If there is a collective voice, it could be described as that of a mature sensibility, sickened and angered — though not surprised — by the brutality and hypocrisy of the conflict; perhaps tired or wry, but not jaded; perhaps backed by a politically sophisticated mind, but still facing the simple truths about war — and often the simple, unanswerable questions of a child.

To me, it was also the voice of a friend I wish I'd had then, saying, "the personal is political," advising, "it's not poetry until it's shared," asking, "did you think you were the only one?"

You might suspect that these Canadians' physical distance from that desert storm would lead to arid

writing. No. It's true that many of these poets deal with the war as it was filtered through some other screen — TV, movies, nightmares, myths or censors; this adds to their power. Carnage, after all, is not the only horror of war. How necessary and how welcome to hear Canadian points of view, not just for war-as-hockey-game cleverness, but for reflections on the gulf war from here, on the images we were NOT getting, reflections that "bring home" the gulf — between word and feeling, word and action.

Reading *A Discord of Flags*, I found myself recollecting, as the book often does, discrete moments of that time; in front of a Second Cup newspaper, in tears of outrage at gleeful military cackling; *fish in a barrel, a turkey shoot* — starting at / stopped by those photocopied collages pasted up on downtown walls — charged up, charging up Yonge Street on January 15, in a flow of like-hearted people — or one night walking home from the ACT office, eating a donut hole and hearing broken English: *can I have piece?*

Or was it peace?

I ask you.

Want a copy?

Didn't think I was the only one.

*Copies of A Discord of Flags are available from 97 Lyall Avenue, Toronto, Ont., M4E 1W4.*

## An uncompromising new book on women and AIDS

**Women, AIDS and Activism**  
by the Act Up/NY Women and  
Aids Book Group  
Between the Lines  
pp.304  
\$15.95 (pb)

REVIEWED BY KAREN BROWN

A lesbian couple struggle with the horrors of one partner's illness and the uncharted terrain of safer sex between women; a woman learns to get turned on by latex barriers; another continues to have hot (protected) sex with her HIV-infected lover, in this collective effort to explore the "impact of AIDS on women's lives from a feminist perspective, and to promote grass roots activism."

The contributors are diverse. In "Voices," prison inmates support and counsel their HIV-positive sisters. Later, they make quilt squares for those who've died, so that "their lives will be remembered, they will be honoured and celebrated ..."

Activist Risa Denenberg sets down a comprehensive women's treatment agenda under the "Demands" subheading ("Demands" are to be found at the ends of many of the chapters). Her



clearly written "Treatment and Trials" includes a short, descriptive list of the most common drugs used in both treatment and prophylaxis, and some grim US statistics about the low percentages of women enrolled in drug trials.

IV drug users, native women, lesbians and prostitutes tell their stories. This is a swift read; testimonials are vivid and touching, facts and figures (dispiriting as they may be) come laid out bluntly, without repetition. Best of all, the political analyses and demands are uncompromising and concise; they resist the temptation to persuade the hesitant or undecided reader.

For example, blind testing (subjects are not identified, whether notified if they test positive for HIV) and contact

tracing (searching out former sex/IV drug use partners) must be stopped. We need a research agenda that directly applies to women's specific needs. Now.

There is sex after HIV-positive diagnosis. Safe sex (masturbation, fondling, etc.) and safer sex (some oral practices); the use of barriers — condoms, dams) are *real* alternatives to abstinence.

Some facts:

- Women are dying from AIDS much faster than are men.

- We continue to be misdiagnosed and underdiagnosed — "ARC", now considered by many to be a trivializing label, is often used because we haven't developed a clear picture yet of what AIDS looks like in women (why not?)

- Pharmaceutical companies discourage the enrolment of women in drug trials because these companies fear the women in question will sustain fetal damage and will launch lawsuits. We are still being seen and treated primarily as potential child-bearers.

- Those who face multiple oppressions (women of colour, single parents, lesbians, etc.) cannot assume they will receive equal treatment from the medical establishment.

Leslie Gaynor, the women's AIDS prevention and education coordinator of the AIDS Committee of Toronto, agrees that these points are equally valid here in Canada. She adds that our much-touted national medicare system requires a paper blizzard (literally sheaves of drug forms that secretaries and nurses are not permitted to fill out) that has become a major cause of the burnout of primary care physicians of AIDS/HIV-positive patients.

The Act Up women demonstrate in the streets against government indifference to the plight of women with AIDS. Some have been arrested and illegally strip-searched (a lawsuit is pending). They promote sexually explicit videos and posters to get their points across. Reading their book is an empowering experience.

## The killing of Chico Mendes

The World is Burning  
Alex Shoumatoff  
Little, Brown and Co.  
pp. 380  
\$11.95 (pb), \$24.95 (hc)

REVIEWED BY JOHN CORCORAN

Chico Mendes was murdered on December 22, 1988, just after sundown, as he walked out the back door of his home. Chico, the leader of the Brazilian rubber tapper's union, had just come home to spend Christmas with his wife and two young children. While they watched a soap opera called *Anything Goes*, based on the decadent lives of the rich in Rio de Janeiro, he went out back to take a shower in the yard. A shotgun blast came out of the darkness, catching him in the chest, and he staggered back into the bedroom and died before his wife's eyes.

Perhaps the most shocking aspect of the brutal slaying of Chico Mendes is that it came as no surprise to anyone. Chico was fighting for his people's right to live in, and make a living from, the rain forest. In the last two decades the 130 cattle ranchers in Chico's home state, Acre, have used gunnery to force tens of thousands of rubber tappers out of the disputed areas of the forest. They clear-cut the vacated land, torch the debris, and sow grass seed for their cattle. Overgrazing often turns the once-lush land to desert in a few years.

Chico Mendes led his fellow rubber tappers and their families on *empates*, non-violent human blockades to stop the chain-saw squads hired by the ranchers. The local authorities have close ties with the ranchers (the current governor of Acre has the state monopoly on meat production), and Chico

had discovered that the *empates* were the only way to save the land his people had subsisted on for a hundred years.

Six months before he was murdered Chico received a phone call informing him he had not long to live. This was the *anuncio*, a form of psychological torture. Chico continued to organize grassroots resistance during that six months, and also sent a stream of desperate telex messages to the authorities, everyone from the editor of the town newspaper on up to the president of Brazil, begging for help and naming the ranchers who were planning to kill him. He received not a single reply.

Chico's fate was sealed a month before the *anuncio*, when he led an *empace* against the chain-saws of Darli Alves, a rancher notorious for his violence. Darli had just claimed title to part of the rubber estate where Chico had grown up; it was still occupied by Chico's relatives. The *empace* was successful, and the government expropriated the land and turned it into an "extractive reserve", a new type of nature preserve that Chico himself had invented, one that allowed the rubber tappers and Indians to continue their way of life. Darli responded by boasting that he was going to kill Chico.

It was actually Darli's son, Darci, who committed the murder with the help of some of his father's employees, and who eventually confessed to it in an attempt to divert attention from his father and the other ranchers who had planned the act. Not that the apprehension of the killers was much comfort to the rubber tappers. After Chico's death, their movement was left ineffectual, and the fragile ties that Chico had been able to forge with the local Indians, traditional enemies of the tappers, were broken.



Alex Shoumatoff, an American who was a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, tells this tale with journalistic verve and a competency built up through fourteen years of writing about Brazil. The many interviews, with rubber tappers, Indians, ranchers and policemen, were conducted in Portuguese, the official language of Brazil, which Shoumatoff speaks almost fluently.

As usual, those of us who support gender equality will find plenty of passages that jangle the nerves. Not all the blame for this can be laid at Shoumatoff's feet. He is writing, after all, about Brazil, a country where a man can still be acquitted of his wife's murder as long as he can show evidence that she got into bed with another man. But Shoumatoff displays a lot of good old North American sexism as well; it seems that every unmarried female under the age of thirty is a "girl." Here is Shoumatoff setting the scene in Rio Branco: "The main plaza was full of budding teenage girls in white blouses — dark-skinned, very short, buxom, Indian-nordestino mixes with big, lush mouths, 'sensual dwarves'." If a cattle ranch could revert to rain forest every time Shoumatoff calls a woman "lush" or "buxom", the Amazon would be saved.

To Shoumatoff's credit, he does not romanticize either Chico Mendes or the tappers he led. And he pulls no punches when it comes to his own country's "blatant hypocrisy." The cult of the automobile in the United States is re-

sponsible for half the carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, released into the atmosphere annually. The Americans had to exploit their own country's resources, then those of the countries in their economic empire, to become a great power. Now American ecologists are telling the Brazilian government that their attempt to mimic America's success is "criminal." Naturally the Brazilians are suspicious.

I recommend this book to anyone who has doubts about the wisdom of spreading the North American "good life" throughout the world. This book has it all: union solidarity versus wage capitalism; humble, hard-working people struggling against a corrupt system; and, front and centre, the rain forest itself: our last unspoiled sanctuary. Under attack by people who have swallowed the American Dream hook, line and sinker, people who want to turn Mother Earth's lungs into beef-steak and asphalt, and to smother the sacred lands of the Kayapo with game shows and re-runs of *Dallas*. *♫*

Casualties still mount in the struggle for the forests of the South. On April 26, Santiago Leguizamon, a Paraguayan journalist known for his weekly radio shows focussing on the destruction of the forests of Paraguay, was murdered by wildlife and timber smugglers. A combination of legal and illegal forest clearance has made the rate of forest loss in Paraguay one of the highest in Latin America.

## In defense of Mother Earth: some questions

Green Race  
Christopher Manes  
Little, Brown & Co.  
pp. 304  
\$11.95 (pb), \$23.95 (hc)

Christopher Manes, former associate editor of the *Earth First! Journal*, wrote *Green Race* in defense of radical environmentalism. Like any other book written on a controversial subject, it needs to be read very attentively, as it is written from an extremely passionate point of view.

There are many strong arguments for radical environmentalism within the pages of this book, well-backed by facts about logging corporations such as Louisiana-Pacific, Lancaster Timber, Maxam and many more. On a purely educational level, it is excellent for reference to subjects such as the trials of radical environmentalists, their treatment by the U.S. Forests Service, and the influence of radical environmentalism on the mainstream environmental organizations. Christopher Manes obviously researched quite well before writing this book. The outcome is very factual information that has the ability to shock and disgust the reader with its

1984-like situation.

However, the book may evoke anger and frustration in some readers. As mentioned before, it is written from an extreme point of view, and extremes are bound to create oppositions.

A large part of *Green Race* is spent in praise of David Foreman, U.S. co-founder of *Earth First!*, a man who has made publicly racist and sexist statements. He has also been known to suggest that AIDS and Third World famine are an environmentalist's dream come true, as both decrease the population of the destructive human race. This fails to address the fact that Third World famine is largely government-created, and neglects the basic human rights of famine victims and people with AIDS.

Manes himself avoids expressing an opinion on such issues. However, it might be assumed, in light of his avid praise of Foreman, that Manes is essentially in agreement.

Also mentioned by Manes are what he calls "eco-wars." Consider the following statement: "The (environmental) crisis may at its worst conceivably incite armed intervention against countries like Brazil whose deforestation projects threaten the stability of the world's climate."

Many people, even radical environmentalists, who feel strongly about non-violence would have difficulty accepting this. Many environmentalists, many members of *Earth First!*, base their actions on two words — Respect Life. This includes all life, be it plant, animal or human. Life is sacred, not to be squandered for any cause. This means the belief that all war is senseless, that humans are part of the Earth, no matter how far the institutions of society have alienated us from nature, that harming another human is denying the Earth

First! philosophy — that Earth is of foremost importance.

I would recommend this book for its information about the radical environmental movement and the response of the government, but it is important to remember that the opinions stated within it are not necessarily a reflection of the radical environmental movement as a whole (likewise, the opinions expressed in this review do not necessarily speak for *Earth First!* Toronto as a whole).

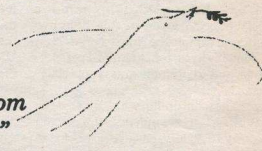
-a woman of *Earth First!* Toronto *♫*

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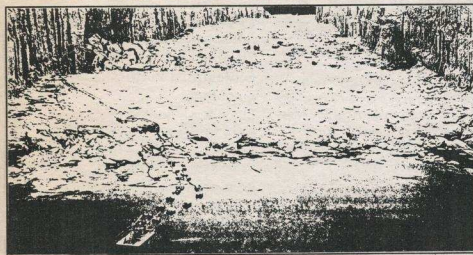
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# Criminal interests



## Strangers Devour the Land

By Boyce Richardson  
Douglas and McIntyre  
pp. 378  
\$17.95 (pb)

REVIEWED BY JOHN BACHER

After reading Boyce Richardson's *Strangers Devour the Land*, one is left with the impression that the book could have been more accurately titled *History of a Crime*. What one receives from reading this book is a sense of the stunning contrast between the reverence for nature exhibited by the Cree hunters of the north, and the brutal arrogance of Hydro Québec and its backers of mad plots to profit from the destruction of wilderness.

We receive in the first chapter a beautiful portrait of the reverence for the land of the Cree expressed in shamanic drumming and spirit invocation. As Cree elder Isaiah Awashish explains, "You cannot demand of a tree that it will cure someone who is ill without giving something back." In opposition to such ancient ecological wisdom, Richardson cleverly lets Premier Robert Bourassa speak for himself. We hear his most outlandish war chant against nature, his regret that "every day millions of potential kilowatt-hours flow downhill and out to the sea. What a waste!"

What makes *Strangers Devour the Land* so poignant is the moving description of how the Cree painfully won an initial court decision to block the first James Bay project only to have their

patient skill and labour dashed. Their short-lived victory came after months of courtroom testimony using the expertise of ecologists, anthropologists and even "the only man in Canada to have developed a sophisticated mathematical procedure for predicting future energy demands." All this effort was nullified by a combination of appeals to blatantly racist judges and a well-orchestrated media campaign. Court orders to stop construction were actually violated by threatening pilots with the removal of their licenses to fly in reporters. All the evidence as to the ecological damage and lack of need of "the project of the century" was dismissed on the grounds of "giving priority to Québec interests."

Richardson notes how many aspects of James Bay I, such as the mercury poisoning of both fish and the Cree, were not even imagined in the original environmental criticism of the project. He describes the international coalition that has been building to stop James Bay II. This latest round, described by the Audubon Society as the temperate zone equivalent of the destruction of the tropical rainforest, would flood some 11,000 square miles of land, approximately the area of New Jersey. Kayapo Indians of Brazil, who have also been fighting flooding by Hydro dams, have signed a treaty of alliance with the Cree and Inuit. Hopefully Richardson's warning will soon have the quality of a dated period piece; when all but the most fanatic of engineers will look back and wonder how such environmental insanities could ever have been contemplated.

# Courage and cynicism

## The Redundancy of Courage

Timothy Mo  
Chatto & Windus  
pp. 414  
\$24.95 (hc)

REVIEWED BY MAGGIE HELWIG

At first you wonder why Timothy Mo has called the country in his latest novel *Danu* — it is so obviously the story of East Timor under the Indonesian occupation, even down to details like date of the invasion (December 7th) or the death of an Australian journalist.

After a while, though, it makes sense. *The Redundancy of Courage* is not really about East Timor; you would have to work hard to find in it anything about Timorese life or culture, or even the feelings of the Timorese people under Indonesian rule. It is about a stock character, a Toronto-educated, cynical, efete, homosexual *hotelier*, running around with some general guerrillas whose cause he does not greatly believe or disbelieve in, in the mountains of a country whose people he is not really part of. Nevertheless, he proves himself a real man (even though he is, as he reminds us every other page, homosexual) by devising many clever gimmicks to kill the *malais* (the Indonesians) in especially painful and humiliating ways.

There is a lot of killing, no discernible sense that it is worth anything, and an overall corrosive cynicism that just leaves the reader depressed.

And it is really a shame, because Mo — fine though he is as a stylist — has missed all the stories that matter. He has, most notably, missed the Timorese. The country people, the mountain people, make only fleeting appearances, no one seems to care about them, and certainly we are given not even the most superficial insight into their lives. Mo's narrator, Adolph Ng, is Chinese by descent, entirely urbanized, and mostly outside Timorese society; clearly this was a deliberate move on Mo's part, but I think a wrong one.

His lack of understanding of Timor can be seen, for instance, in the fact that among his guerrillas there is exactly one devout Catholic, the most unpleasant character in the book, and the one who ends up going over to the Indonesian side. Or, for that matter, in his insistence on FRETILIN (FAKINTIL, in the novel) as the beginning and the end of Timorese resistance.

Well, if that were true, East Timor would have been doomed long ago. FRETILIN has for a long time been more important symbolically than strategi-

cally. Maybe Mo, like many others, can see resistance only the framework of blowing people up in the jungle, in the nastiest ways you can think of. But he has to work very hard to exclude or diminish the other heroes of East Timor.

He admits, for instance, that the Indonesians have been hurt perhaps worst of all by Joaquim Lobato (José Ramos-Horta, in real life) and his stubborn uphill struggle in the United Nations, but we see Lobato for barely two pages out of four hundred. Similarly with Monsignor Teixeira (Monsignor da Costa Lopes), endlessly reading the names of the dead out in his cathedral, insistently trying to keep their memory in front of the world. And the people Jill Jolliffe speaks of, "the illiterate peasant who travels on foot through the mountains with his precious cargo of information hidden in his clothing ... the Timorese in Jakarta who risks imprisonment and torture for passing words and images to the exterior; the Indonesian officer who risks court-martial for treason because he puts human principles above nationality." Or the young people who raise the FRETILIN flag at the risk of their lives; the people who demonstrate at public events, or simply remain silent when they are supposed to cheer and sing; the people all through the country who refuse, on whatever their own terms are, to accept Indonesian rule.

The struggle of East Timor is perhaps above all a struggle to communicate truth; and Mo, civilized and post-modern as he is, seems to doubt that any moral truth, or any goodness, actually exists (this is also, I guess, why he is so wildly unsympathetic to the Church, which has been the single most important institution in maintaining the hope for Timorese independence). He has not, I think, chosen the best subject for himself.

Mo is, certainly, a good writer, though stronger on action and cleverness than on characterization. The first chapter, describing the invasion, is marvellously done, especially the brief scene in the Timorese radio station, surrounded by a sort of halo of terror, as the radio operator broadcasts to Australia in calm desperation. And the story of Adolph Ng's time in Toronto is witty.

It's mostly downhill from there, though. Adolph himself is a most unconvincing character. Although we are reminded with irritating frequency that he is — that's right — homosexual, he is never actually shown in an emotional or sexual relationship with another man (or boy, since he seems to be, most of the time, a pedophile as well). One can only conclude that he is homosexual out of some curious sense of style. Certainly he spares no effort to remind us how campy and stereotypically "queer" he is. No one else, sadly, is much more real. In fact, the eccentric Joaquim Lobato, in his fleeting appearance, is probably the most *alive* character in the book.

It is not that Mo is a bad writer, certainly. It is just that he and East Timor are not right for each other. There are so many stories in East Timor that could be told. But it will take someone else to tell them.

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## Arguing with the Goddess

**Green Business: Hope or Hoax?**  
ed. Christopher and Judith Plant  
New Society Publishers  
pp. 136  
\$9.95 (pb)

REVIEWED BY MARIA ERSKINE

What time have you got? Years since that moment of innocence lost, when you peered in the window of an idling car to see someone in a Save the Planet t-shirt drinking from a steaming styrofoam cup? Minutes since you gazed watching the grand-daughter in that pro-nuclear commercial drape her mac around the tender shoulders of a sapping to keep off the acid rain?

It's been twenty-one years since the first Earth Day, and time is what the planet hasn't got. So, if by this time "Buy Green!" makes you see red, you might pick up a book called **Green Business: Hope or Hoax?** and assume you know the answer. But these articles, edited by Christopher Plant and Judith Plant, establish that green business is only *sometimes* an oxymoron. The Plants (uh-huh) have gleaned various sources for these bite-sized, specific examples of both what works and what doesn't: they make worthwhile, non-taxing reading.

It's a diverse collection of mostly American voices (else it surely would include Robert Priest's rap "My Earth Friendly Bag" or some early Andrew Cash lyrics) with one refrain: "Nothing less than a drastic overhaul of this civilization and an abandonment of its ingrained gods — progress, growth, exploitation, technology, materialism, humanism and power — will do anything substantial to halt our path to environmental destruction..."

Initial contemplation of a change



this great can be somewhat overwhelming, like sizing up the distance from here to a world without armies! This is about the only use for so-called green consumerism: that it can be a valuable first step out of paralysis.

However, even at its best it never goes far enough. How could it, when the true solution is so often "Don't buy it!" (or don't produce it?) When only 28% of U.S. energy consumption is individual use? When even if everyone in the U.S. recycled all their personal solid waste, 99% would remain?

It's a new mask over the same impulse that leads to invasion, rape and plunder of other kinds. It is another example of "the power of the system to co-opt the very forces that seek its transformation" and as such is largely a pernicious distraction. It gives a society afflicted by consumer madness the illusion of action and choice, the kind of voting for which the poor, the generation to come and the natural world have no franchise.

The book begins with examples of this betrayal, to leave one with some hope. Its second half deals with instances of what the Plants call "deep green" strategies; inspirational new ways — land trusts, human-scale forestry, community-supported agricul-

ture — that are, in fact, often resurrected old ways.

All these steps "toward an authentic strategy for restoring the Earth" decentralize, take power from the Megacorpse and give it back to communities and collectives, whose members are accountable to one another. They treat land not as a commodity, but as part of a living thing; they recognize that what is required to end this war is action at all levels, from individual to global.

Change is never comfortable. I think my favourite title in this collection is a list called "50 DIFFICULT Things You Can Do To Save The Earth." No honest person can deny that the task before us is immense, and pressing; let's also remember it is necessary and possible. I used to hang out with an otherwise intelligent couple who maintained not only that people are more willing to sacrifice the planet than their material standard of living, but that by the time we become aware of an environmental problem it is always too late to remedy it. I should lend them this book; because whether one is already familiar with its ideas or not, it is motivating.

Don't buy the lies! Borrow this book.!

**Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics**  
Janet Biehl  
Black Rose Books  
pp. 170  
\$16.95 (pb), \$35.95 (hc)

REVIEWED BY MAGGIE HELWIG

"Ecofeminism" is a hard concept to pin down, but it could probably be summed up as the environmental equivalent of the belief that women are natural peacemakers, running the gamut from high scholastic theorizing to floaty daydreams about the Goddess. It is more than somewhat problematic, and much in need of good critique. Sadly, **Finding Our Way** goes only a small way towards providing this critique.

Biehl's problem with ecofeminism seems to be largely that it does not accord with the "social ecology" theories of Murray Bookchin, and all she is really doing is substituting one dogmatism of theory for another.

Utterly impatient of anything even vaguely resembling spirituality, Biehl attacks ecofeminism mainly because it is based on metaphor. Well, sure, of course it is. Social ecology is based on metaphor, too. All our theoretical systems are based on metaphor, that's just how we build our systems; it is more important to examine the effects these metaphors have on the ways that we think and act. There is some of that in **Finding Our Way**, and there are parts of the book well worth reading. But it is not a useful or original rethinking of anything much. *ms*



**the ACTivist**  
Newspaper of the ACT for Disarmament Coalition • Volume 7, Issue 4 • April 1991 • Pay what you can

**After the Gulf war, war as usual**  
By Mark Bruce  
...breaking up the coalition...  
...in this issue: the world after the War — analysis by NOAM CHOMSKY and a member of Kuwait's democratic opposition

**The Anarchist Papers**  
ed. Dimitrios Roussopoulos  
Black Rose Books  
pp. 211  
\$12.95 (pb), \$29.95 (hc)

REVIEWED BY STEPHEN DANKOWICH

The Anarchist Papers is a brilliant collection of essays culled from the periodical *Our Generation*.

The editor, Dimitrios Roussopoulos, has extracted writings from the periodical which show just how deeply anarchist thought has permeated present-day political movements for radical social change.

Recent popular unrest in Europe is scrutinized in an article about the crisis of Soviet statism by Frank Harrison, and in two essays by Bruce Allen, a member of ACT for Disarmament Niagara, about the new generation of oppositionists in Poland and (East) Germany. You can also read a few eyewitness accounts of the Tiananmen Square massacre from the non-violent

resisters in China. The chasm between the agendas of neo-conservatism and social ecology are revealed in an essay by Raymond Wrebly, while L. Susan Brown looks at the connection between feminism, anarchism and human freedom.

Beyond just analysis of contemporary anarchism, **The Anarchist Papers** also surveys some of its more interesting historical aspects. George Woodcock appraises Kropotkin's monumental work on the French Revolution, while Brian Morris' essay suggests that the French Revolution was essentially not a permanent but an unfinished revolution. Frank Harrison looks at the issue of science and anarchism in an analysis of Bakunin and Bookchin.

This collection is topped off with the reprint of Kropotkin's famous article for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* titled 'Anarchism.' Read this excellent collection of essays to find out what anarchism really stands for.

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# A year after Oka, another Indian Summer?

With tensions running high from coast to coast, Canada looks set for another "Indian Summer" in 1991. Below The ACTivist profiles some of the First Nations territories that could see conflict this summer.

**Nitassinan (Québec-Labrador):** The Innu of Nitassinan have been protesting NATO overflights for the past decade. In September of 1988, the community of Sheshatshit began a campaign of non-violent civil disobedience, occupying Canadian Forces Base Goose Bay and blocking runways. Ultimately, NATO cancelled their plan for a Tactical Fighter Weapons Training Centre at Goose Bay, but German and Dutch planes continue to overfly the Innu regularly. The Innu, the last hunter-gatherer culture surviving in Canada, have also been frequently arrested for violating hunting and fishing regulations.

**James Bay (Québec):** The Cree and Inuit of James Bay have already seen three rivers on their land destroyed by the James Bay I hydro-electric project, mercury released into the water, and the environment seriously damaged. Now James Bay II (the Great Whale Project) is being pushed through by Hydro-Québec; this project would destroy eight more rivers, and most of the Cree and Inuit hunting areas. Most of the power generated by James Bay II would be sold to the United States.

Former Grand Chief of the James Bay Cree, Billy Diamond, had said that the Cree might oppose James Bay by shooting down Hydro-Québec helicopters, but his successor, Matthew Coon Come, says that the Cree protests will remain non-violent. He does, however, foresee the probability of blockades to stop construction.



**La Verendrye (Québec):** The Barriere Lake Algonquins of La Verendrye Wildlife Reserve have been resisting clearcutting by lumber companies on their land for some years, through lobbying, protests at Parliament Hill, and blockades of logging roads. For a while, it seemed that a negotiated settlement was possible, but provincial government inflexibility caused the Algonquins to break off negotiations this spring. Logging is scheduled to resume May 27, and it is likely that there will be further blockades.

**Kahnawake/Kanesetake (Québec):** The site of last year's Oka crisis, these communities remain divided and conflict-ridden, with frequent conflicts between natives and the police, and the Warriors and native Peacekeepers. Meanwhile, the government is attempting to "redefine" commitments made during the crisis, and to return to the Mohawks less than the full land area they were promised. Tensions are also running high at the Akwesasne Mohawk territory, where last spring a shooting war between pro- and anti-gambling factions resulted in the deaths of two Mohawk men.

**Algonquin Park (Ontario):** The Golden Lake Algonquins, whose land claim includes Algonquin Park as well as Ottawa, were recently exempted from hunting and fishing regulations in the Park, by the new Ontario NDP government. However, this has brought about protests both from environmentalists and from non-native hunters.

**N'daki Menan (Ontario):** Throughout 1988 and 1989, the homeland of the Teme-Augama was the site of repeated blockades attempting to stop clear-cut logging in the area. At length a co-management deal was made between the provincial government and the Teme-Augama (though it was not met with

universal approval from the band and its supporters). This month, charges were dropped against all Teme-Augama arrested on the blockades, except for some who had already been sentenced. Non-native protestors are still facing trial.

**Lubicon Lake (Alberta):** The Lubicon Cree have spent years attempting to prevent the destruction of their land by oil drilling and logging. Presently, the greatest threat comes from clear-cut logging by two Japanese-owned companies, Daishowa and Mitsubishi, who have been granted leases to clear-cut 15% of the province.

The Lubicon declared themselves a sovereign nation in 1988. A blockade at this time initially seemed to force some commitments from the federal government, but the government later went back on these. Finally, on November 8, 1990, Chief Bernard Ominiyak issued a final eviction notice to all companies operating on Lubicon land, stating that anyone operating on the land without permits from the Lubicon would be subject to removal without further notice. On November 24, a fire in a logging camp caused \$20,000 in damages to Daishowa equipment. Thirteen Lubicon are now awaiting trial on charges of arson, possession of explosives, and disguise with intent.

**Oldman River (Alberta):** The provincial government is proceeding with plans to dam the Oldman River, despite the objections of the Peigan natives and the fact that an environmental assessment has not been completed. Milton Born With a Tooth, of the Peigan Lonefighters, was arrested last fall after firing two warning shots in the air as RCMP officers approached a Peigan protest camp. In March he was sentenced to a year and a half in prison. He is currently free while his case is appealed.

**Lillooet Lake (BC):** The Lil'wat people of B.C. are fighting to save their land from clear-cutting, which would include the building of a logging road through traditional sacred burial grounds. In February, there was a confrontation between Lil'wat and RCMP officers, when the officers were seen defacing sacred petroglyphs. Through the spring, the Lil'wat Peoples' Movement mounted roadblocks to prevent construction of the road. On April 17, a bomb blast destroyed a logging bridge leading to the road. The Lil'wat Peoples' Movement is suspected, though Lil'wat spokesmen will not comment. Their lawyer, Lyn Crompton, says that she does not believe they were responsible, and that the Lil'wat movement has been non-violent throughout.

**Gitskan-Wet'suwet'en territories (BC):** The Gitskan and Wet'suwet'en people are pursuing both a land settlement, and opposition to logging on their lands. Their lawsuit against the government was recently set back by the decision of Judge Allen MacEachern that aboriginal rights exist only "at the pleasure of the crown." They intend to appeal the decision, but will probably be heard by the same judge.

**Haida Gwaii (BC):** The Haida have staged a number of blockades to assert their land rights and oppose "development" interests. On April 29, a logging bridge near Clayoquot Sound burned down, cutting off access to a MacMillan Bloedel logging area. The RCMP say they suspect arson.

**Kiggavik (Northwest Territories):** Both Dene and Inuit are strongly opposed to plans to mine uranium at Kiggavik, near Baker Lake and the Keewatin caribou herds.

## Turtle Island Notes



### Native artifacts returned

**CURVE LAKE (Ontario)**—The Peterborough Centennial Museum and Archives has announced its plan to return skeletons and burial artifacts taken from local archeological digs to the Curve Lake First Nation. This is the first time a museum in Canada has made such a move.

"It is incredibly fulfilling for us," said Curve Lake Chief Mel Jacobs.

### AFN to elect new chief

**WINNIPEG (Manitoba)**—The 500,000-member Assembly of First Nations will be electing a new national chief at their convention in Winnipeg on June 11.

Running to replace Georges Erasmus, elected as national chief in 1985, are Mike Mitchell, Akwesasne Mohawk Territory; Bill Montour, Grand River, Ontario; Phil Fontaine, Fort Alexander, Manitoba; Ovide Mercredi, Grand Rapids, Manitoba; Neil Sterritt, Hazelton, B.C.; and Bill Wilson, Comox, B.C.

## Tritium trash in township

Continued from page 1

lic, Shield Source removed the waste and sent it to a landfill site either in Kingston or Ottawa. This was not the end of the story, however, as people began to have serious concerns about the operation of Shield Source itself.

Shield Source is located in a fairly small, cramped space on the first floor of a building shared with six other companies. When it was visited on May 18, a half dozen cardboard boxes marked with radiation hazard symbols were piled up near the front door. Inside were two rather primitive fume hoods, a metal cabinet marked HAZARDOUS—TRITIUM GAS, and many more of the cardboard boxes. No radiation hazard symbols were posted anywhere on the outside of the building, not even on the front door.

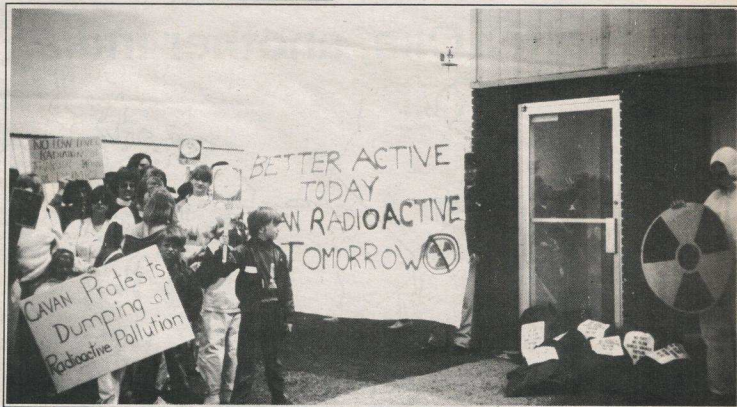
Hegarty estimates that Shield Source produces some 500 EXIT signs a week, as well as other lighting systems. It should be noted that each EXIT sign contains 8 to 24 curies of tritium, an amount that could, under some conditions, provide an acutely lethal dose of radiation. The U.S. National Council on Radiological Protection has recommended a maximum inhalation exposure of 0.1 millicuries/year of tritium.

A source within the plant states that at some time after Shield Source began manufacturing tritium tubes last fall and before late May of this year, there was at least one accident involving breakage of a tube and evacuation of the plant.

And, within the bags of garbage that were dumped, Cavan citizens found paperwork documenting a serious accident on April 16 — ten days before the dumping — which involved the release of something on the order of 6,000 curies of tritium, according to Irene Kock of the Nuclear Awareness Project.

The ACTivist spoke to Hugh Spence at the Atomic Energy Control Board, and Philip Carter of Provincial Energy Minister Jenny Carter's office. Both denied any knowledge of accidents at Shield Source, as did Hegarty. "No accidents. No. No," said Hegarty. "Tiny amounts of tritium are caused by maintenance, but they are well within acceptable limits, and cause no harm to the environment." When asked about Kock's documentation, he responded, "I don't know what she's talking about. Documentation of leaks is ... I mean, was it significant or was it not? In maintenance ... you know, we document everything that goes on."

Spence did not know what sort of radiation monitoring Shield Source had (Hegarty stated that they did have tritium gas monitors within the work area). He also said that there were no medical personnel



Demonstration at Shield Source Inc., Peterborough, May 18 [Photo: Craig Anderson]

with expertise in the field of radiation exposure attached to the plant; "I don't think that would be expected."

Employees of other companies in the building reported that at no time during the past year had they been told of any accidents at Shield Source, nor had their offices ever been cleared for any reason.

Aside from the dumping of low-level contaminated waste in a municipal dumpsite, and aside from the probability that there have been significant unreported releases of tritium into the environment, there are other concerns around the Shield Source operation. First, there is the transport of tritium along the highways. Tritium-contaminated heavy water is trucked from various Ontario nuclear reactors to Darlington. The tritium is then removed, and sent in vans to Peterborough as a tritide, fixed on metal. Philip Carter stated that "the tritium can only be released by raising it to fairly high temperatures" (which raises concerns about the possibility of an accident in which a tritium van might catch fire). After assembly, the tubes and signs are sent out from the Peterborough airport to different locations, mostly in the States. They are packaged in what Spence describes as "Type A containers — robust containers to withstand the rigours of normal shipment." From an inspection of Shield Source, that appears to mean reinforced cardboard boxes. Spence said they would probably be shipped on normal transport planes, perhaps with other materials. "Only if you have above a certain quantity do you need a 'dedicated carrier'." He did not know, however, what that quantity was, nor could he find it in his reference materials. He finally concluded that "it's very likely, since we're dealing with tritium, it would be an enormous amount."

Philip Carter said that the Energy

Minister's office was nearing the conclusion of a review of tritium transport and export policies, but he could not say if the review would affect Shield Source.

Another concern is that fact that, according to Hegarty, 75% of the plant's sales are to the United States. Tritium is an important part of the U.S. nuclear weapons program, and any tritium sales to the U.S. directly or indirectly support this program. The U.S., because of concerns about the safety of their tritium-making reactors, has cut back on tritium production. In order for them to sustain their weapons program, they must import tritium. Every gram of Canadian tritium that is sold to the U.S., even in exit signs, frees up a gram for nuclear weapons production.

It is also not entirely clear that all the tritium exported by Shield Source is in the form of lights. Hegarty would not give a complete account of Shield Source products; it may be that tritium is being shipped out relatively untriated. Even if it is earmarked for "civilian" use, it would be all too easy to sideline it into weapons production.

Some Shield Source sales are overseas; Hegarty did not say to which countries. If they are countries pursuing nuclear ambitions of their own, the same dangers apply.

There is also the matter of black market tritium — a significant market. We do not know how meticulously Shield Source keeps their books, or whether they have reported any losses of tritium. However, their doors and windows are plain glass, in some cases a single pane. Sergeant Casey, of the Ontario Provincial Police detachment in Peterborough, estimated that it could take the OPP up to 15 minutes to respond to an alarm at the airport. Considering that boxes are piled up in the doorway, that is quite enough

time for a potential theft to take place.

There are still many unanswered questions about Shield Source Inc., but there is enough evidence now to make it clear that it is a dangerous business. Residents of Peterborough are now organizing a campaign demanding that Shield Source convert to manufacturing non-radioactive lights. ☻

For more information about the campaign against Shield Source, call 705-741-4848. You can write letters to: Jenny Carter, MPP, Queen's Park, Toronto, M7A 1A1; Jake Epp, Minister of Energy, House of Commons, Ottawa, K1A 0A6; and Shield Source, RR #5, Refurb Building, Unit 1, Peterborough Airport, Peterborough, Ont. K9J 6X6

PRIDE DAY UPDATE

### Rummage Sale

Find a treasure. All proceeds go toward organizing Pride Day '91.  
Sat., June 8, 11 a.m.—3 p.m.  
519 Church Street  
Bring your donations to the 519 on Friday, June 7, 9 a.m.—10 p.m.

### Volunteer Night

Sign up to help on Pride Day.  
Lots of fun stuff to do!  
Wed., June 12, 8—10 p.m.  
519 Church Street Centre.

### LESBIAN & GAY PRIDE DAY

Sunday, June 30,  
11 a.m.—7 p.m.  
519 Church Street  
All presentations sign language interpreted. Child care provided.



For information on all events  
CALL 975-0017

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**MAKE A DIFFERENCE!** How do you feel about hazardous waste in your backyard? Act before it's too late. Atmosphere Action provides a kit with letters ready to mail to your government representatives. Atmosphere Action opposes such industrial malpractices as the slaughtering of Earth's remaining whales; hazardous waste incineration; one hundred acres of tropical forest being recklessly wiped out per minute, with species of plant

hour; the construction of James Bay II; 4 billion tons of toxic pesticides used per year; dioxin legalized in our food; Antarctic exploration. Help us help the planet. Call 416-693-8321. Leave message.

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# EAST TIMOR WAJATE



*In December 1975, just ten days after declaring its independence from Portugal, the tiny country of East Timor was invaded by its neighbour Indonesia. In the decade-and-a-half since, an estimated 250,000 people — over a third of the population — have been killed. Genocide and massive human rights violations — including rape, forced abortions, torture, indiscriminate killings and mass executions — go on to this day. But so does the struggle for freedom of the East Timorese people. It is largely the support of countries like Canada that allows the Indonesian military to maintain its occupation.*

*East Timor Update is edited in Toronto by the East Timor Alert Network. Contact the Network for more information:*

*National/West: 104—2120 West 44th, Vancouver BC, V6M 2G2.*

*Toronto: PO Box 562, Station P, Toronto, M5S 2T1.*

*Ottawa: 27 Third Ave., Ottawa Ont., K1S 2J5.*

*Eastern Ontario: 217 Clengarry Rd., Kingston Ont., K7M 3J6.*

*Western Ontario: Dr Peter Eglin, Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo Ont., N2L 3C5.*

*East: 1592 Vernon Street, Halifax NS, B3H 3M7.*

## East Timor and Kuwait

In 1990 Iraq invaded the tiny state of Kuwait: the international community reacted quickly and decisively to stop the occupation. In 1975, Indonesia invaded the tiny state of East Timor: the world condemned the invasion, but did nothing.

The contrast between the two reactions is the subject of a new backgrounder released by the East Timor Alert Network. It covers the basic facts, war and resistance in East Timor since 1975, the 1990 military offensive, the United Nations position, human rights violations, Canadian policy, and the question of oil. The backgrounder is available for \$1 from the East Timor Alert Network (send to Toronto address).

**ACTION:** Ask your local newspaper to read the backgrounder and give East Timor the same attention given to Kuwait. Copies of the backgrounder and other materials will be sent to editors on request.

### Army tortures students

At the heart of recent East Timorese protest against Indonesian rule is the student-led "Timorese Inifada." Young people have been demonstrating almost constantly since the visit of the Pope to East Timor in 1989, while Indonesian military authorities have grown more repressive in response. According to church sources in the capital, Dili, "never before has the situation been so terrible or so tense." An elaborate network of young Timorese activists has developed, linking the diplomatic front abroad with the resistance leadership in the mountains. No fewer than 16 different groups, active in East Timor and among Timorese students in Indonesia, have become the main target for army operations.

Methods used during army intelligence interrogations include beatings with iron bars, batons and bare fists, burning with lighted cigarettes, slashing with razor blades and immersion for long periods in fetid water.

—Tapol



### STOP ARMING INDONESIA!

The photo above shows Indonesian helicopters in East Timor just before the latest military offensive, launched last fall. Many of Indonesia's military aircraft are powered by engines supplied by Pratt and Whitney of Canada.

Despite its claims to be at the forefront of arms control, Canada is among the countries which sell military equipment to Indonesia. One Canadian company, Pratt and Whitney, provides the engines for many of Indonesia's counter-insurgency helicopters, which are used in the war in East Timor. Other companies, including de Havilland, General Motors of Canada, and Litton Systems, have also been authorized to sell arms to the Indonesian military. According to José Ramos-Horta, former East Timor representative to the United Nations, "these weapons play an important role in the war in east Timor."

Demand Canada ban arms sales to Indonesia until it ends its war against East Timor. Write to: External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall, House of Commons, Ottawa Ont., K1A 0A6 (postage free).

### Offensive fails to capture resistance leaders

Information from East Timor indicates that the Indonesian military offensive initiated in November 1990 aimed at capturing resistance leader Xanana Gusmão and other FRETILIN Central Committee members, is proceeding relentlessly all over the country, with atrocities against the civilian population in the villages.

A message dated 13 April, the commander of the 2nd guerrilla unit, Alex Dai-Tula, said the Indonesian army launched a major offensive in mid-February this year, in the sub-districts of Uatolari, Ossu, Venilale, Vemasse, Laleia, Baucau and Viqueaque, with 6 battalions, supported by helicopter-gunships.

On the other hand, a report sent out by the underground resistance, dated 17 April, claims that military operations against the East Timorese resistance are continuing; it said that from November till March, at least 149 Indonesians were killed and many more injured, in the areas of Same-Ainaro (70), Aitana (47) and Laleia (32). A large quantity of US-manufactured M-16 rifles, ammunition, a radio trans-receiver, and first-aid kits were seized.

In one typical report, Mau Hodu Ran Kadalak described his escape from an encirclement operation: "The enemy deployed a chain of ambush groups every hundred

metres — on the slopes, the mountains, the hillsides and in our temporary supply bases — the enemy was everywhere! Nobody would have bet a cent on my chances of survival, and when everyone thought I was among the 'saudosos' (the deceased), I suddenly reappeared. They asked me: 'How did you manage to escape?' I just answered, 'Matebian protects us!' (Matebian is the ancestors' spirit)."

—Fretilin

### Pope remembers E. Timor

While visiting Portugal in May, Pope John Paul II made his strongest statement yet on behalf of the rights of East Timor and its largely Catholic population. "I hope this problem of East Timor will be solved in a way that respects the principles of justice, human rights and international law," the Pope told a national radio audience. "What I want for this community is... that it should be able to live according to the principles that it believes in — with its own language, its own culture, its own traditions and its own religion."

Polls taken shortly before the visit showed that nearly 70% of Portuguese thought the Pope should speak out on behalf of Portugal's former East Timor colony. John Paul's statement came after a leading Lisbon daily headlined its main story 'Pope forgets East Timor again.'



# Get ACTIVE!

ACT for Disarmament is an all-volunteer, independent, non-aligned, grassroots peace group working to make the connections between peace, human rights and ecology. ACT is establishing working committees to better facilitate the many important campaigns we are working on. Get involved! Give us a call, or use the form below to volunteer and subscribe.

- ✓ **ARMS TRADE COMMITTEE:** Work to end Canada's involvement in the international weapons trade, including the ARMX arms show.
- ✓ **EAST TIMOR COMMITTEE:** Work with the East Timor Alert Network to support the rights of East Timor and end Canadian support for the Indonesian invasion.
- ✓ **EAST-WEST COMMITTEE:** Work with the Helsinki Citizens Assembly to involve civil society in building a new Europe, free of Cold War divisions.
- ✓ **ENVIRONMENT/NUCLEAR COMMITTEE:** Work with environment groups to end Canada's reliance on the destructive nuclear fuel chain.
- ✓ **GE BOYCOTT COMMITTEE:** Work on converting General Electric from nuclear to peaceful production through a grassroots consumer boycott.
- ✓ **INNU SUPPORT COMMITTEE:** Work to support the Innu native people in their struggle against low-level military flight testing over their homeland.
- ✓ **INTERNATIONAL PEACE BUREAU:** Help organize the IPB's September 1991 conference, being hosted by ACT in Toronto.
- ✓ **MILITARY RESISTANCE COMMITTEE:** Work for: the right for Canadian soldiers to refuse military service; oppose military recruitment; support conscientious objectors from the Soviet Union to South Africa.
- ✓ **THE ACTIVIST COLLECTIVE:** Writing, producing and distributing this paper!

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