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the ACTivist



**INTERNATIONAL
PEACE CONFERENCE**
TORONTO • SEPT. 13-15
 — See Centre pages —

Newspaper of the ACT for Disarmament Coalition • Volume 7, Issue 9 • September 1991 • Pay what you can

USSR: Driving into Disunion

Coverage of the events in the former Soviet Union inside

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“People Power” stops Soviet coup

By ALEXANDER PRONOZIN
SPECIAL TO THE ACTIVIST

MOSCOW, 29 August — The attempted coup in the Soviet Union this August rightfully occupies a place as one of the most important and most unusual events of the twentieth century. It is not at all strange that the coup took place. The continuing political reforms, culminating in the signing of the Union Treaty on August 20, would have inevitably led to a fundamental weakening of the power of the central governmental party apparatus. It was difficult to see how this apparatus, which had completely possessed power in the Soviet government from its first moments, would agree to relinquish control without a fight. Its only weapons were the powers of the government structures: the army, KGB, and the organs of internal affairs. As a result, only a military coup could defend the

apparatus' power.

But the swift, shattering strike that came down on the conspirators seems surprising; no one could have expected such a quick end. It is impossible to accuse the coup plotters of insufficient ability or practical skills to carry out such a plan. In terms of military adventurism the Soviet government already accumulated considerable experience. And it is unthinkable to suspect that they suffered from an excessive love of humanity or a desire to prevent bloodshed of innocent people. In recent years they have repeatedly demonstrated their complete ruthlessness and cynicism in the Baltic states, Georgia and Armenia.

Several million soldiers and the most advanced military technology were under their control. Any military specialist would have said that no military hardware could have finished off these monsters in all of three, practically bloodless days. But such weaponry was found. It is called nonviolent civilian based defense.

There were weaknesses in the position of the putschists. Not one of the eight conspirators had gained respect either among the civilian population or among the military. The catastrophic condition of the Soviet economy did not give them the luxury of disregarding the

opinion of the international community. Furthermore, the vast majority of the USSR military are conscripts, and these 18-year-old soldiers grew up in the period of perestroika. In addition, the officer corps of the Soviet military is primarily composed of Slavs. While these officers may be counted on in the non-Slavic regions like the Baltics, their willingness to act against a peaceful population in Moscow or Leningrad is not so assured.

The main danger for the putschists came from the Parliament of the Russian Federation, a tall white building on the banks of the Moscow River which houses the power structure of President Boris Yeltsin and his Russian administration. Russians have christened it “the White House.” It was necessary for the conspirators to discredit the Russian Federation and gain support for an assault on the Moscow River if they were to consolidate their power. To accomplish this measure the putschists first seized control of the media and communications which were immediately deployed for a massive propaganda campaign.

But six years of glasnost and perestroika had accomplished one of its goals. People learned how to separate truth from lies, and in the

first several hours thousands of demonstrators gathered at the White House and surrounded it with a dense human ring. The conspirators had not planned for this response. They had expected the response of previous years when the people, if not overly delighted, at least tolerated changes in the political course of the Soviet leadership.

A special section of the KGB Department for the Struggle against Terrorism with the code name “Alpha” was given the direct responsibility for sweeping the people from the streets around the Federation building. Operational plans were carefully worked out, and the troops were equipped with the most powerful, state-of-the-art weapons, including grenades and anti-tank devices. But when it was explained that “in the process” the men would have to kill several hundreds or perhaps thousands of unarmed civilians, the entire subdivision refused to carry out the order. Until this moment everything had gone according to the putschists' plan. But for the first time, the weapon of nonviolent opposition appeared, and it demoralized the opposition.

The first victory provided impetus to the mass opposition movement. In this situation the

World peace

Peace activists from 25 countries, from Australia to Zimbabwe, are coming to Toronto for the annual conference of the International Peace Bureau this September 13-15.

The conference, the IPB's first in its 100 years of peacemaking to be held in North America, is hosted by ACT for Disarmament.

International guests, representing all six continents, and dynamic local activists, will share their insights at 30 workshops, including

- Prospects for Peace in the USSR
- Baltic Peace
- Arms Trade and Conversion
- Peace in the Middle East
- Women and Violence
- Ecology and Peace

Other highlights include a public forum at OISE, a cruise on Lake Ontario, a demonstration against the arms trade, and two benefit concerts.

Registration, including most meals, is \$60. Please register early! See centre pages for details.

Alexander Pronozin is a Russian peace activist and draft resister who was involved in the non-violent defense of Moscow. This is the first English-language publication of his article. For details on Pronozin's recent imprisonment, see p. 13

THE ACTIVIST

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Soviet perils

The current crisis in the USSR has proved to be yet another victory for "people's power". Contrary to the experience of Tiananmen Square, the mobilizations seen last month in the streets of Moscow would seem to underline that, when the moment is right, the conscience of the people can be awakened — to the point that troops armed with all the mobile hardware of the strong state will refuse to fire on unarmed civilians, their own flesh and blood, even if their masters are prepared to do so. Such scenes inspire great hope.

The International Peace Bureau is a democratic and independent organization and as such rejoices in the triumph of a democratic movement overturning an undisputably corrupt and authoritarian system. A free market economy may not be everyone's utopia, but clearly the centralized system had failed on a massive scale — not least in terms of its destructive impact on the environment. The new arrangements will certainly promote the development of far more vigorous citizen's movements. We support fully the free choices of nations who have decided to take their destiny into their own hands. No people should be forced to submit to foreign masters, be it through military occupation, political control or economic influence.

Nevertheless there are a number of areas where the international peace movement in particular should be cautious:

The sudden creation of a dozen or more new states gives rise to concern that the creation of a dozen new armed forces, coupled with a multiplicity of new opportunities for international tension, may before long lead to more bloodshed. The daily worsening situation in Yugoslavia acts as an appalling warning to those who would fan the flames of ethnic conflict. The question of the exact military role of the resulting confederation — if there is to be one — is indeed a crucial one, especially since both nuclear, chemical, and no doubt biological weapons are involved, as well as huge conventional forces. While there continues to be uncertainty, the West will use it as a continuing justification for lack of progress from its side in the disarmament process.

While Russian president Boris Yeltsin's support for the independence of the other republics is a welcome sign, the colossal bulk of Russia, and its economic and military power in relation to the midge that surround it makes us uneasy as to the likely future relationship between these erstwhile partners. Russian nationalism has been visibly on the rise in recent years, and the much poorer Asian republics may find themselves rapidly consigned to the despised Third World. Already the Russian leadership is talking about conditions for opening up sensitive border questions.

The implications for global security are many and already much-discussed. As peace movements we measure particularly the limited but nevertheless significant progress made through disarmament agreements in the Gorbachev years, and we will struggle hard to protect these gains from any who would threaten either to overturn them or fail to follow them through, for example at the ratification or implementation stages. International vigilance will be of the greatest importance at a time when the locus of government authority in the "Soviet Union" may not always be clear.

The current post-Cold War triumphalism evident in many western circles — notably in the USA — is certainly cause for alarm, since it cements yet more firmly the notion that the US and its military allies can have the free run of the world, bribing or bombing as they see fit. Without some kind of effective restraining force on power at the international level, there are no checks and balances; only cheques and ballistics.

—Colin Archer

International Peace Bureau



Thank you for the newsletter. Seventeen Canadian dollars are enclosed to cover a subscription and mail costs or whatnot.

You ask how ACT might help us. Please bear in mind that Yesh Gvul is not an organization of conscientious objectors in the usual sense. The people we support do serve in the army, but they refuse to take part in the oppression of the Palestinians, and this includes a refusal to serve in certain places. For the most part these places are the West Bank and Gaza. You might call us "selective refusers, on grounds of conscience."

The Gulf War, I imagine you know, has been a major setback to the Israeli peace movement, largely because of the way in which it affected our people's perception of the Palestinians. But we go on. Those who have remained are those who began without illusions; they are in it for the duration. Soldiers continue to refuse to serve in the West Bank and Gaza, choosing jail instead — but it remains a trickle. Yesh Gvul continues to support them and their families. We continue to go out and mark the borders.

We continue to demonstrate every Friday in Jerusalem (before the Women in Black, holding the squares for them against the Right Wing) and in Tel Aviv (there with the Women in Black, defending them against violence). In short, we continue to shelter the glowing coil — or twice to vary the metaphor, to keep a foot in the door of the occupation and to be a bone in the throat of the authorities. That is no pleasant task, but in the circumstances we can think of none better.

As for the territories, the worst of the hunger in the West Bank and Gaza seems to be past, at least for now, because nearly a hundred thousand Palestinians from these places again have work in Israel — building homes for the Russian immigrants. The intifada, as a mass movement, seems to have gone into latency, while small extremist groups take up hot weapons. But the "feel" of the land has been decisively changed. Israelis who do not live in the territories do not lightly there, as once they did — not even into East Jerusalem — and will not again, I think, until they can do so with a Palestinian visa.

Stephen Langfur
Yesh Gvul
Jerusalem, Israel

We were very happy to hear from you. The ACTIVist gives us good insight into various aspects of the peace movement in your country that we shall popularize to the best of our ability.

Notice to subscribers

For the duration of the postal strike, The ACTIVist will not be mailed out. **Paying subscribers** will receive missed issues through the mail at the end of the strike. Others, please pick up The ACTIVist at our office at 736 Bathurst Street, at one of our more than 50 distribution outlets around Toronto, or from your local ACT for Disarmament contact.

I notice with satisfaction that you give prominence to women and their conditions, with this in view I wonder if you could, one way or another, draw the attention of organizations and individuals in your country to our appeal concerning the tragic situation in the area of the Aral Sea.

The United Nations and the world community have acknowledged the fact that the Chernobyl catastrophe and the situation around the Aral Sea are the most important planetary ecological issues of today. Much is being done for the victims of Chernobyl. That is as it should be! As to the Aral Sea I have the impression that the most tragic situation there is, in fact, little known. The sea is drying, by the hour. Its shore is becoming deserted. Many infants live no longer than one year. Infant mortality rate is very high. It is unbearable to see the many little ones born terribly disfigured. Mothers do not give suck to their little ones as the milk is salted to a great extent.

I hereby appeal to you to do your level best, everything in your power, to render any kind of aid to the women and children of the Aral Sea area, or at least draw the attention of those in your country who are in a position to do so.

Ivan Melenevsky
Uzbek Peace Committee
Tashkent, Uzbekistan

As one of the few people who attended the Ramsey Clark forum at OISE in May 91, I was not surprised to find no mention of the event (before or after) in the mainstream media; but I was very disappointed to find no mention of it in any of the alternate media.

I must congratulate your Activist Publication for at least mentioning it; but surely, such a

Turn to Letters, page 15

APOLOGY

In the July-August issue of The ACTIVist, a classified ad appeared connecting Jerry Borins, owner of the Wheat Sheaf Tavern, with the newspaper "Our Toronto", and charging him with supporting homophobia, racism and sexism. These allegations were completely without foundation. Mr. Borins has no connection with "Our Toronto" or its editorial policy and has a long history of support for charities and community causes.

The ACTIVist extends our sincere apologies to Mr. Borins, and to the Wheat Sheaf, for the distress this advertisement has caused.

“The real heroes will remain un-named”

From the Moscow coup diary of a nonviolent activist

By IGOR OVCHINNIKOV
PEACE MEDIA SERVICE

Igor Ovchinnikov, a 28-year-old Muscovite, is active in Golubka, a group which organizes workshops on nonviolence, conflict resolution, group ecology and global thinking. This is an abridged version of a diary he posted via e-mail [computer-assisted communication over phone lines] to friends in Europe and North America.

Monday, August 19, am: I hope this is not my last message but it could be if the phone lines are shut down. We don't know what's going on. We just heard the official announcement a few minutes ago. So stupid! Things are turning sour. It looks like a *coup d'etat*. The KGB, the Minister for Internal Affairs and the Defence Minister seem to be the rulers from now on. We hope it's not over yet. Please try to get through to us somehow. We are not receiving anything. It's a miracle that e-mail still seems to be working. But if you suddenly lose sight of us at least don't be surprised. Let's believe it's not the end to everything. Lots of love.

—Igor the Worried

August 19, pm: This is just a few lines before we Golubka people meet and go to the rally in front of the White House [headquarters of the Russian Federation] to distribute our leaflets with 198 ways of nonviolent struggle. We've been pushing our laser printer hard! Yuri had to find a couple of new cartridges. Later today we hope to send out a "press-release." We've survived for one day and we know time is on our side. So keep praying for us as we will keep praying for you.

—Igor the Direct Actor

August 20: Again this could be our last message but we will keep trying to keep in touch. It's been a long day! As I write the situation becomes even graver. We just heard an announcement forbidding all the communication and mass media means except the "official" media which is flooding the country with lies. So we can be cut off any minute. I'm not going to tell you any news because the coverage in the western media should be pretty good — we've seen all kinds of reporters on the frontlines today. I'd better share some insight and our personal feelings. The atmosphere during the day was changing all the time. In the vicinity of the White House where we were distributing our nonviolence information — which, by the way, went like hot cakes — everybody had a feeling that the junta has only a few hours

before going to jail. But the official propaganda brings much more despair into the situation.

This night may be crucial, especially if they follow the Vilnius scenario. However the good news is that the only independent radio station "Radio EM," although it has been prohibited, is still broadcasting. If they still are on the air tomorrow we'll try to get in touch with them and provide them with some of our materials. Our nonviolence anthology is coming in handy!

We worry that we will run out of communication supplies — especially cartridges for printers and photocopy machines. So far we have a good supply of paper.

It is important that everyone who can tries to influence the media which is now in the forefront of the opposition to the forces of the coup. It is a pity for us that we cannot be in the frontline all

the time but we believe that we are doing the right thing at the right moment. Time is on our side. We shall overcome!

—Igor for Golubka

August 21, 9 pm: At last the first real good news from Russia for the past couple of days! As I am writing these lines my TV is on and is broadcasting free stations' reports about the latest developments in the country. The tanks are pulling out of Moscow. At least 6 of the 8 bastards from the junta have been reported to be arrested earlier today at about 3:30 somewhere on the way from Moscow to the airport. But this is not completely reliable information. By the time you receive this you will have a more precise report. Just a second ago it was announced that none of them has been arrested and all are in the

Crimea. My guess is they're trying to beg forgiveness from Gorbys. It's hard to keep my eyes off the TV screen since more and more information is coming with every minute.

—Igor the Hopeful

August 22: We have won! By "we" I mean the people, the democracy. We have witnessed a historical victory of the nonviolence of unarmed people over the extreme violence of the military and secret police. The struggle still goes on. There's a hell of a lot of work still to be done. In fact we understand that we have to work on nonviolence education five times as hard as we did before. The latest rumor is that people are about to attack the KGB headquarters in Lubyanskaya Square in downtown Moscow. Bloodshed can happen any minute and must be prevented.

We'll probably go there soon although we originally decided to take a "day off" today.

—Igor the Exhausted

August 23, 2 pm: It's difficult to write after a couple of almost sleepless nights and long days when all Moscow Golubka was running around town, photocopying our nonviolence leaflets, then distributing them among people on the barricades. When I wrote that our flyers went like hot cakes, it wasn't an exaggeration.

It was extremely empowering for us to see how crowds of people were gathering around us every time we came to distribute more of our stuff. Maybe it's been the main thing that prevented us from falling into despair. With that comes all the support we've been receiving from friends outside the country.

The hard times are not over yet. But we're all well and everyone we know is okay. What happened has helped everyone to

realize who is who.

People from the west are asking how much credit for the victory should go personally to Yeltsin. He's certainly the most admired politician in this country at the moment. We, too, can't help admiring his decisiveness and courage in organizing resistance to the coup.

But it's obvious to us as well that without the support of the people, Muscovites in the first place, all Russians and people from other republics and all over the world, it wouldn't have been possible. Although Yeltsin was the right person in the right place, presumably it could have been somebody else.

But nobody could substitute for the people who were literally in the frontline and whose blood was spilt in the streets of Moscow and whose courage obviously sobered the attackers.

We'll hear more and more about real and fake heroes of the last three days in Moscow, but no matter what they say about their heroic deeds, most of the real heroes will remain unnamed since they are just average Muscovites who have been defending their legitimate government.

We feel that the uniqueness of the situation was in the unity of the people with their leaders which made it impossible for the junta to suppress the people and purge the government of Russia.

What Golubka did was a "raindrop in the ocean" but we did what we could. Our main achievement was to distribute our nonviolence leaflets on civil defence, methods of nonviolent action and historical examples of nonviolent struggle.

—Igor the Happy



Lithuania plans defence without armed forces

By BRUCE JENKINS
PEACE MEDIA SERVICE

After 51 years, Lithuania and the other Baltic republics have gained international recognition as independent countries. It seemed to come in an eyeblink: independence. But the foundations for freedom took years to lay.

From street rallies to the creation of Lithuanian postage stamps, from political boycotts to human barricades, Lithuanians have employed numerous methods of nonviolent action. Yet these actions have generally been isolated or spontaneous events, lacking in coordination.

Lithuanians suffered greatly after declaring independence from the Soviet Union in March, 1990. The three-month economic blockade in 1990 shut off almost all of Lithuania's fuel supplies. The production of consumer goods fell by half. Goods and materials were seized and key buildings occupied. When Soviet troops opened fire on unarmed civilians surrounding the Vilnius television transmission tower last January, 14 people died. Despite such pressure, Lithuanians remained defiant in their pursuit of independence. On February 9, they were asked in a plebiscite: "Are you in favor of the Lithuanian Republic being an independent, democratic state?" More than 90 percent of eligible voters answered "yes."

Lithuania boycotted President Mikhail Gorbachev's referendum on a renewed Soviet federation. Lithuanian flags and symbols were displayed throughout the country. Employees of Vilnius radio and television stations conducted a rotating hunger strike directed in front of bullet-scarred office buildings that were occupied by Soviet troops. Taking its struggle into the Soviet heartland, Lithuania signed treaties with Russia and other Soviet republics. In April, Lithuanian workers shipped food to striking workers in the adjacent Soviet republic of Byelorussia.

Though the collapse of the Soviet coup attempt has greatly reduced Lithuanian anxiety about a future Soviet occupation, Lithuania remains committed to nonviolent methods as its primary means of resistance. Lithuania is one of the first states to actively pursue a policy of civilian-based defense. For many months Lithuania officials, social scientists and activists have been examining the field of nonviolent action to gain insights for their country's struggle.

As part of their exploration of the nature and potential of nonviolent struggle, the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs invited representatives of the Albert Einstein Institution (in Cambridge, Massachusetts) to Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital. From April 24 to May 1, Gene Sharp, Peter

Ackerman, and I discussed nonviolent action and civilian-based defense with several audiences: President Vytautas Landsbergis; Audrius Butkevicius, the Director-General of the Department of National Defense; representatives of the Lithuanian militia; members of the parliamentary Committee on National Defense and Internal Security; social scientists at the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences; Russian Orthodox Archbishop Khristosom; and activists of the Lithuanian reform movement *Sajudis*. Discussions focused on the nature and the strategic dimensions of nonviolent conflict.

One of the issues repeatedly raised was: Can violent and nonviolent forms of resistance be combined? Although nonviolent resistance has been Lithuania's main mode of defense, in mid-1990 the Lithuanian government began organizing an armed militia, both as a means to assert national sovereignty and to provide an officially sanctioned structure for the thousands of Lithuanian men refusing to serve in the Red Army (9,500 in 1990).

Discussing the question at a meeting in the barricaded Parliament Building, Gene Sharp urged caution. Even limited violent resistance, he said, could disrupt the dynamics of nonviolent struggle. Also, Sharp cautioned, military or paramilitary resistance could undermine attempts to weaken the morale of the opponents' forces through specific methods of nonviolent action. "Troops under fire, with friends dying next to them, are not likely to question their own actions," he said. In addition, military or paramilitary resistance could also vastly increase civilian casualties as well as reduce the likelihood of third-party support.

Another problem-area raised by Lithuanians was how to combat organized terrorist activity directed against nonviolent resisters. The Soviets had supplied arms to certain groups in Lithuania opposed to independence. In Lithuania, the question arose whether normal police functions — with the clearance to use lethal force — could be separated from general non-violent resistance activity. The problem of protecting nonviolent resisters against armed attacks by groups not under the direct formal control of the opponent requires urgent consideration.

Another issue facing Lithuanian defense planners was the threat of a renewed economic blockade. Lithuania imports 97 percent of its fuel — all from the Soviet Union. Lithuanian officials are exploring ways to establish more sources of hard currency and Lithuanian researchers are examining how economic blockades have been circumvented in the past. The country is setting itself on the

road to self-reliance.

Lithuania could well be the first country to implement a prepared policy of nonviolent resistance for defense. Though there is much pressure to employ military and paramilitary forces for specific objectives (a last show of defence in protecting the parliament building). President Landsbergis, Director-General Butkevicius, and the Supreme Council have all declared their intent to pursue a policy of civilian-based defense. They are now confronted with translating this into practice. Their goal is, simply put, to make their country "politically indigestible." ☸



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, August 22, 1991

Peace group demands Barbara McDougall resign over Soviet remarks

ACT for Disarmament will today at 2 pm occupy the office of External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall to protest her statement that she could "work with" the leaders of this week's military coup in the Soviet Union. McDougall's office is located at 21 Vaughan Rd., near the intersection of Bathurst and St. Clair.

"Barbara McDougall was in shady company when she gave tacit support to the Soviet junta," said Stephen Dankowich of ACT for Disarmament. "Saddam Hussein welcomed the coup and the Latvian Communist Party greeted it with 'joy and pride'." Not even the kindred dictators Fidel Castro, Suharto, Kim Il Sung and Augusto Pinochet could bring themselves to back it."

ACT for Disarmament calls on McDougall to resign in favour of a Minister less quick to "work with" military governments. "We hope McDougall will not be arranging any visas for the coup plotters to come to Canada," said Dankowich.

For more information call:
ACT for Disarmament (416) 531-6154

For Peace and Human Rights

Canada to fund Romanian nuclear reactor station

Canada is being asked to pour \$315 million in credits into the controversial Cernavoda nuclear power station in Romania. Officials in the office of Energy Minister Jake Epp said Epp had "reacted favourably" to the request after a recent tour of the half-finished complex.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited began construction of a Candu reactor at Cernavoda in

1980 under former Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. In international observers say slave labour was used to build the reactor and may still be used under the new government of Ion Iliescu.

Opponents of the project fear it could be used in the Romanian nuclear weapons drive. India exploded its first nuclear bomb in 1974, using technology adapted from a Candu reactor. ☸

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Ten years at Greenham Common

By MAGGIE HELWIG
THE ACTIVIST

On August 27, a peace march called 'Women for Life on Earth' left Cardiff, Wales. There were 36 women on the march, and four men. It had been put together in a hurry, had grudging support from British peace groups, and most of the women were not sure just what they planned to do when they arrived at their destination — the American army base at Greenham, in Berkshire, where cruise missiles had been stationed.

The march arrived at Greenham on September 5, and four women chained themselves to the fence. The rest stayed in solidarity — and stayed — and stayed. By the end of the week they were calling themselves a peace camp. They stayed into the winter. On January 20, 1982, the Newbury District Council announced that the camp would be evicted — the women stayed. In early February, they asked the few men in the camp to leave, and declared themselves a women's space. And they stayed.

They stayed through the years; through blockades and arrests, through storms and blizzards, through repeated attempts to have them evicted, police harassment, confiscation of all their personal property, denial of their right to vote, strip searches, hostility, apathy; even through death, when Greenham camper Helen Thomas was hit by a police car and

killed, in 1989 ... the women stayed. And were the first of a chain of women's peace camps around the world, from Seneca Falls, New York to Comiso, Sicily, to the foot of Mount Fuji in Japan.

And whenever any of us have begun to despair, as peace activists who feel we can't keep fighting any longer, or as women told over and over that we just aren't good (smart, strong, numerous) enough to do it ourselves — Greenham Common has been there. It has been hope.

I can't even remember when I first heard about Greenham Common. It feels like I have always known. Like it was always there.

Pictures: A great circle of women dancing at dawn on a missile silo, on New Years Day, 1983, lit up like torches by sunrise and the headlights of police cars.

Women in shelters made of branches and cloth, waiting out the rain, eating from tin cans, smiling.

Women tearing down yards of heavy wire-mesh fence around the base. Women spray-painting warplanes. Women lying in front of bulldozers, transport trucks, military vehicles; walking through military exercises and shutting them down.

Two women lying on the stony ground in front of a crowd of police. They are part of a human chain encircling the



base. They lie facing each other, holding hands, staring with fierce intensity into each other's eyes.

"Greenham has changed the lives of many women. Traditionally men have led home for the front-line of war. Now we are leaving home to work for peace. Peace isn't just about removing a few pieces of war furniture ... it is about the condition of our lives ... We are starting from scratch, developing attitudes and methods that make male domination and opting out unnecessary ... If you ask where in the world women can see other women doing something which they admire and respect and which gives them a sense of their own power and their own value, there are precious few places ... From our alternative reality, the world from which we come seems pale and comfortless. We have to transform it. Not by reforms, but by revolution. The tide is turning because women are making sure it does."

—Barbara Harford and Sarah Hopkins, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*

We have always known about Greenham. We have always known about this space, where women persist, slowly, patiently, tired and tearful and sick and frustrated but unmovable. Where women are with themselves, and know that to be a woman is to be born strong, and to live that way. Where we place our bodies in the way of war, in the way of violence and murder and rape and torture, and say *no*. We say *no*, we say *no*, over and over, until the men with the guns begin to listen.

We have always known.

During the Gulf War, Greenham planes flew bombs and supplies to U.S. troops in the Gulf; while Greenham women spraypainted military trucks and poured sugar into their gas tanks, and blockaded convoy movement.

Just after the end of the war, on March 5, 1991, the last cruise missile left Greenham. After ten years, the peace camp had won.

At least in part. Greenham is still operating as a military base, and the women there are now debating whether

they should stay until it is returned to common land, as it once was (from whence the name Greenham Common). They continue to protest at the base — most recently, on July 4, renamed "Greenham Independence Day." They continue to campaign against strip searching in women's prisons. And 10th Anniversary celebrations are now underway, centred on September 5 and lasting until December; all women are invited to come, to take part in the peace camp, to help think about the future.

You can reach Greenham Common by writing to: Yellow Gate, Greenham Women's Peace Camp, nr. Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 7AS UK; or Blue Gate, Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, Bury's Bank Road, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 7AS UK. ☺

Burmese leader still resists junta

This summer, Aung San Suu Kyi, a 46-year-old woman who is the elected leader of the legitimate government of Burma, begins her third year of solitary house arrest under the country's ruling military junta.

Aung San Suu Kyi, who received 81 per cent of the vote in elections held in 1988, has received human rights awards, is an Amnesty International prisoner of conscience, and has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Czech President Vaclav Havel. The junta has repeatedly tried to force her to leave the country, fearing her power as a symbol of resistance, but instead she remains in detention in her home, the phone lines cut, unable to receive visits. She recently announced that she would leave the country only under four conditions: that the junta transfer power to civilians; that all political prisoners be released, that she be given 50 minutes of broadcast time on TV and radio, and that she be allowed to walk to the airport. Needless to say, the conditions were not met.

Since democratic uprisings were crushed in 1989, repression in Burma has been severe. Ethnic minorities are systematically persecuted to the point of genocide, and all public assemblies of more than five people are banned. ACT for Disarmament plans a protest in support of the people of Burma, to take place in October. Contact ACT for further details. ☺



ACTIVIST DEFENCE FUND

"Solidarity doesn't end when you're carried into a jail cell. It's an on-going thing. We have to build a community of support and resistance."

On March 25, a small group of activists with **Troops Out Now!** shut down the Mississauga plant of Pratt and Whitney, one of Canada's biggest merchants of death (weapons manufacturers). Seven people were arrested for blocking and pouring blood on the doors. They were not let off with a slap on the wrist.

Maggie Helwig faces up to two months in jail and \$2000 in legal fees as a result of this and a similar action at Litton Systems Canada. She has been refused legal aid.

Craig Anderson has been fined \$500 for a single charge of trespass to property — ten times the normal fine for this "offence." Maggie and Craig need your help. Please make a donation to their legal defence fund, set up by concerned Toronto peace activists.

Send donations to: Account #1111, Bread & Roses Credit Union, 248 Danforth Ave., Toronto.

Drums for peace

By JOHN CORCORAN
THE ACTIVIST

Last month's Conservative party convention in Toronto was met with a slew of protests from labour, anti-poverty groups, women's movement organizations, and thousands of ordinary Canadians. The peace presence was represented in a Nagasaki day march to the convention site.

The high-energy march began with speeches and a memorial ceremony conducted by Joanna Manning and including representatives of Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Jewish faiths, at Nathan Philips Square. The marchers paused for a minute of silent remembrance for the victims of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombings, and placed roses in the Hiroshima pool to remember the many other victims of militarism.

The Young Koreans United of Canada provided a little-known perspective on the Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombings. Fifty thousand South Koreans died immediately in the bombings, and more died later from the after-effects. The Japanese had brought these



Nagasaki day marchers on Bay Street, August 9 [Photo: David Webster]

Koreans to Hiroshima and Nagasaki and forced them to work in munition factories and military bases. Only one quarter of the surviving victims have received compensation from the Japanese government.

After the ceremony, the march went down Bay St. and along Front St. to the Metro Convention Center, where the Progressive Conservative Convention was being held. For four hours the Tory delegates and the crowds returning from the Sky Dome were treated to a colourful and cacophonous protest of the Mulroney government's defence

policies. The Young Koreans paraded in front of the main doors playing traditional drums and gongs, while other protesters beat plastic buckets and banged on metal pots and lids. The passing crowds

cheered two larger-than life posters of Mulroney: one showed him dressed as a vampire, complete with fangs and blood; the other had him in a clown suit. ☪



Members of the Young Koreans United at the City Hall Peace Garden, August 9 [Photo: D. Webster]

Oakville on the move

More than 20 participants raised \$3000 from over 400 Oakville residents at the town's first movie-a-thon for peace, held on Sunday August 25. The funds raised will be used to open an Oakville Peace Centre in a central downtown location this October.

"The Centre will be an independent gathering place for people wanting to build a more caring, sharing Halton community," said Asher Ghaffar of ACT for Disarmament Oakville. "The Centre will be many things: a resource library, a place to hold organizing meetings

for campaigns for peace, ecology and human rights, a forum for speakers from a wide variety of organizations, and a place to host cultural events from film nights to

poetry readings to coffeehouses—and a lot more!"

Peace Centre organizers say lots of volunteers are needed for planning events and actions, office staffing, artistic work, group outreach, computer skills, phone fundraising, canvassing and many other jobs. The next event will be a door-to-door drive to raise \$7000 for office equipment. ☪



Grim Reaper meets destroyer

The ACTivist

Big isn't always better.

This Green movement motto applies not only to society in general but to a demonstration held in Midland, Ont., in the early evening of August 4.

Seven people, including an eight-year-old child, showed up at the town dock to protest the presence of a Canadian war ship used in the Gulf. The HMCS Terra Nova, used as an escort vessel during the armed conflict, went on what was billed as a tour of duty through the Great Lakes. In reality, this was a military parade, an attempt to sell Canada's role in the war and to legitimize the use of military force and intervention to solve disputes.

The Canadian military hoped to do the 2,900-ton destroyer as a photo opportunity for the news media. The presence of seven protesters, including a land contingent of five and two canoeists, provided onlookers and reporters with an opportunity to question Canada's role in the war. The Grim Reaper was there to remind people that war means death and that the Gulf War meant the deaths of more than 150,000 people.

The collective reaction of hundreds of people who lined up to tour the Terra Nova was negative and hostile, with the exception of only a handful of sympathizers. The Grim Reaper, who has a day job, was told to get one, and one male activist was referred to as a "Päki" and told to go home. One bystander asked police if protesters could be removed, but was told no. That same person proceeded to tell one demonstrator that military might is needed to preserve freedom and democracy.

The public was treated to an illustration of just how well non-violent conflict resolution can work. One man tried to shove a male activist in the face, but a female activist broke the man's energy by stepping in and stating: "If you want to hit someone, hit me!" The man backed off, started and confused.

Grim Reaper and crew, having made their point, returned home. Lineups to tour the Terra Nova were long, and many of those who waited for their military parade were turned away.

The Terra Nova also visited harbors in Toronto, Oshawa, Hamilton and Goderich and protests were reported in some of those communities. ☪



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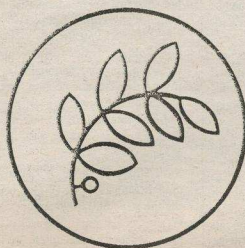
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Get yours!

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"International Peace Bureau" T shirt with IPB logo. Available in white with black print or black with white print. 100% cotton, size extra-large only. [\$15]

"ACT for Disarmament" T shirt with yin-yang logo. White with black print. 100% cotton, all sizes. [\$15]

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"ACT for Disarmament" baseball cap. Blue with yellow print. One size fits all. [\$5]

Books [Price list available on request]

100 Years of Peacemaking by Rainer Santi (International Peace Bureau)

Canadian Woman Studies, special issue on women and peace

FUNU, the Unfinished Saga of East Timor by José Ramos Horta (Red Sea Press)

The True North, Strong and Free, edited by Mel Hurtig (Hurtig Publish. Co.)

The Caboodle Cookbook, by Lisa and Jay Cestnik

A wide variety of peace buttons and posters are also available.

Coming soon!

Peace calendar and appointment book for 1992,
published by the War Resisters League
Reserve your copy today! [\$12]

Get yours at the ACT Peace Centre, 736 Bathurst Street
(south entrance), Toronto. Or call (416) 531-6154



Survival for tribal peoples



Urgent Action

Bangladesh Hill tribes

For the first time ever an independent team has managed to enter the heart of the Chitragong Hill Tracts (CHT), normally closed off by the government, and witnessed the horrors of genocide being carried out on Bangladesh's tribal people. Its report has just been released.

But while April's devastating cyclone has rightly had mass coverage, the media has long been ignoring the avoidable catastrophe that has been continuing for over a decade; the systematic and calculated wiping out of whole peoples and cultures by the Bangladesh government.

The government has kept the region closed to outsiders and journalists since the 1970s. (It is impossible to establish how badly the tribes have been hit by the cyclone, although they will be unaffected by the floods.)

But in November 1990, the Chitragong Hill Tracts Commission, an independent body of experts from countries such as Denmark, Germany and Canada, went to the CHT at the invitation of the government who wanted to counter previous accusations against them. The Commission were the first outsiders to talk to the tribals and some of the 56,000 refugees across the border in India. The evidence against the authorities was overwhelming. The government plan had backfired.

Since the late 1970s the government has moved over 400,000 Muslim settlers, mainly from the plains, onto the lands of the tribal peoples in the CHT — where the main tribe are the Buddhist Chakma. This has swamped the hill tribes, reducing their numbers from 98% (in 1947) to currently under half the total population there. Thousands of the tribals fled to refugee camps in India, or hid in nearby jungles sometimes for up to a year, others have tried to eke out an existence on the tiny areas of land left. A civilian government is now in power, but the CHT is under military rule.

Please write urgently to the Bangladesh Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, Saganda House, PM's Secretariat, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Call for a halt to the army's murder, torture and rape of the hill peoples; call upon the new government to end the policy of genocide of the tribal peoples of the CHT.

Tibet takes a step to self-determination

By DAVID WEBSTER
THE ACTIVIST, WITH
TIBET INFORMATION NETWORK

With Baltic independence from the former Soviet Union a reality, a handful of countries are left as the "last frontier" of self-determination.

One of them, Tibet, took a giant step forward on August 23, when, for the first time in 25 years, a United Nations body passed a resolution on Tibet.

The UN's Sub-Commission on Human Rights expressed its "concern" at "continuing reports of violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms" in the Himalayan realm occupied by China since 1950. These violations "threaten the distinct cultural, religious and national identity of the Tibetan people," the resolution continued.

The vote passed by nine votes to seven, with four countries abstaining.

"This will make a tremendous difference, further highlighting the issue of Tibet," said Lodi Gyani, special envoy for UN affairs for Tibet's Dalai Lama. "But the major credit must go to the Tibetans inside Tibet who have been and still are suffering."

Tibet advocates maintain that China is carrying out a policy of cultural genocide, one that has resulted in the death of a sixth of the population and the reduction of Tibetans to a minority in their own homeland.

International support for Tibet has been on the upswing since the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual and political leader, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize two years ago. The Dalai Lama offered to accept less than full independence, in return for Tibetan home rule over domestic affairs and protection of the fragile Himalayan environment, but China made no move to negotiate with his government-in-exile.

On August 19, the Dalai Lama withdrew the offer, saying only full independence would safeguard the rights of his people: "There is no goodwill on the part of the Chinese government, so my latest proposal is now invalid."

Along with East Timor, Eritrea, the Western Sahara and a few other territories, Tibet is one of the small league of countries occupied by the armed forces of a more powerful neighbour in defiance of international law and the wishes of the population. Self-determination for these countries,

long a goal of peace and human rights activists, has been viewed as a pipe dream. The recent recognition of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, however, is changing all that. With the African members of this group on the brink of peace settlements that would free



Eritrea from Ethiopia and Western Sahara from Morocco, Tibet and East Timor seem to be the last frontier of decolonization.

For the majority on the UN's Sub-Commission on Human Rights, Tibet's right to self-determination is clear. Terms like "national identity" and "freedoms of the Tibetan people" that pepper the resolution are a clear rejection of China's claims.

But China remains intransigent. "The so-called desire for

human rights is a tool for splitting the motherland," according to Tian Jin, Chinese nominee on the Sub-Commission. Resolutions on Tibet are "null and void," China's UN delegation declared immediately after the vote.

The Tibet issue will now join East Timor at the UN's Commission on Human Rights, a more powerful body composed of 53 governments, which meets in Geneva each March. ☺

Fifth year of prison for Vanunu

It is a crime to tell the world about a country which has secretly produced as many as 200 nuclear weapons?

Mordechai Vanunu, the "nuclear spy" who blew the whistle on Israel's nuclear arsenal in 1986, will have been in prison for five years on September 30. Vanunu was kidnapped by Israeli government agents after publishing information in the Sunday Times in England that showed Israel's use of a "peaceful" nuclear reactor as a bomb factory. Vanunu was found guilty of treason, and has been imprisoned in a cell 2 metres by 3 metres, under constant watch by video surveillance cameras, ever since. His jail term has 14 years more to run.

Mordechai Vanunu will be one of the three Honoured Guests in Absentia at the International Peace Bureau Conference.

Free Vanunu! demonstration

Monday, September 30, 4-6 pm
Consulate of Israel,
180 Bloor St. W.,
at St. George

Mubarak Awad

a leading Palestinian peace activist

speaking on

Peace and Nonviolence in Palestine and Israel



Wednesday, September 11, 1991

7:30 PM

Harbord Collegiate Auditorium,

286 Harbord (3 blocks west of Bathurst)

Mubarak Awad is the founder and director of Nonviolence International and the founder and director in exile of the Palestinian Centre for the Study of Nonviolence. He has written on nonviolent resistance in occupied Palestine and has translated into Arabic volumes on nonviolent resistance. In 1988 he was imprisoned and deported by the Israeli authorities who accused him of being a leader of the Intifada. Mubarak Awad continues to work for peace and nonviolence in exile.

Sponsored by: ACT for Disarmament, Canadian Arab Federation, Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation, Jews for a Just Peace, Toronto Universities Middle East Group.



This event is part of the INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 13-15, 1991. For more information contact ACT for Disarmament 531-6154

Conscription as usual

Pronozin detained in mental hospital

On July 24, 21-year old peace activist Alexander Pronozin was called to the office of the district criminal investigator in Moscow. When he arrived, he was arrested and taken to the Moscow Kasenko Mental Hospital, where he was held for three weeks before being released—a relatively quick release he attributes partly to international actions on his behalf.

According to the Soviet authorities, Pronozin was held for examination as part of the investigation into his charges of "evading military service" (see last month's *ACTIVIST* for details on his arrest). On August 28, a final decision on his case was to have been delivered. As yet, we have been unable to confirm if this has taken place, due to events in Russia over the last two weeks.

In response to a letter of protest which ACT for Disarmament sent to the Procurator-General of the Soviet Union, Pronozin wrote

from the mental hospital:

"Dear friends,
"There are a lot of soldiers here who were brought here after their desertion from their military units. All of them say now that they would never have gone voluntarily to military service if they had been aware what awaited them there.

"Thank you very much for your letter to the USSR Procurator's Office. Actually, nothing can encourage me as much as your support. I hope that you also will not forget about the fates of other prisoners for peace in the Soviet Union."

Alexander Pronozin is a member of War Resisters International and the Transnational Radical Party. He publicly refused military service at the beginning of 1989, and his criminal case was initiated in January 1990, but he was not actually arrested until this June.

Because he has refused to take part in compulsory military training, Pronozin, one of the leading young peace activists in the Soviet Union, is unable to attend university anywhere in the country—military documents are required for university entrance. He writes, "I do not want to be incorporated in a military machine of any state as, in my point of view, there is much more effective and human means of the state protection which is non-violent civilian based defence."

The Moscow-based non-violence group Golubka, meanwhile, is initiating a campaign of civil disobedience against conscription, beginning by writing up and distributing booklets with instructions on how to evade the draft.

Alexander Pronozin will be one of the Honoured Guests in Absentia at the International Peace Bureau Conference. ☪



Dr. Yolanda Huet-Vaughn [Photo: Citizen Soldier]

"I am refusing orders to participate in war"

Dr. Yolanda Huet-Vaughn is a small Mexican-American woman of 40, a wife and mother of three children. Until recently, she supported her family by working in two clinics treating mostly low-income people, while her husband stayed home to care for their children, aged 2, 5 and 8. She was a committed peace activist, involved in Physicians for Social Responsibility. She was also a captain in the army reserve, which she had joined in 1977 to pay her way through medical school, and on December 20, 1990, she was called up for active service in the Gulf War.

Dr. Huet-Vaughn reported to Fort Leonard Wood and informed her interviewer that she was opposed to the Gulf War. He told her that if she said so publicly, her medical license would be revoked. She stayed on the base for ten days, long enough to be told—as an army doctor—to the number of casualties that were expected in the war. On December 31, she walked off the base, and held a press conference to announce that she was refusing to serve.

"I am refusing orders to be an accomplice to an immoral, inhumane and unconstitutional act, namely an offensive military mobilization in the Middle East. My oath as a physician to preserve life and prevent disease, and my responsibility as a human being to the preservation of this planet, would be violated if I cooperated with Operation Desert Storm ... As a doctor I know that when there can be no cure, prevention is the only remedy. I therefore commit my medical knowledge and training to this effort to avert war by refusing orders to participate."

For a month she travelled, speaking at peace rallies and giving media interviews, and on

February 2 she turned herself in. She was charged with "desertion with intent to shirk hazardous duty" and was confined to base.

Her attempt to base her trial on international law and to argue that Desert Storm was illegal under the U.S. Constitution and the U.N. Charter was stricken by the government. She was not allowed to call her list of witnesses. She was not allowed to explain to the jury why she had left the base.

On August 9—Nagasaki Day—Yolanda Huet-Vaughn was sentenced to 2 1/2 years in prison. It is bitterly ironic that on the anniversary of the second nuclear bombing of a city (and effectively the end of World War II), a doctor and activist should be sent to prison for refusing to violate the Nuremberg Principles; refusing to obey an immoral order.

"Before," says Dr. Huet-Vaughn, "I did not consider myself a CO. I thought there might be necessary wars ... But now I realize we can't have wars anymore ... We have to figure out how to resolve conflict peacefully. That's the only way we're going to survive. Otherwise we are taking the earth away from our children."

Letters asking for Dr. Huet-Vaughn to be released can be sent to General Daniel Christian, U.S. Army Engineers, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, 65473, USA, or to President George Bush, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, Washington, DC, USA. You can also write to Captain Yolanda-Huet Vaughn, U.S. Disciplinary Barracks, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 66027, USA.

Yolanda Huet-Vaughn will be an Honoured Guest In Absentia at the International Peace Bureau Conference. ☪

The defense of Moscow: a victory for nonviolent action in Russia

Continued from page 1

Russian government occupied an extremely distinct and skillful position. The central message of its edicts and appeals was the total illegality of the junta and the complete refusal to use any form of violence. Following Yeltsin's call for a general strike, a series of organizations in many regions of the country stopped work on the very next day. This happened in spite of a total blockade of independent means of mass communication and the officially announced prohibition of strikes.

In Moscow, employees of eleven leading banned newspapers united to publish a "general newspaper," reproduced on photocopying and duplicating machines. Large quantities of issues of this newspaper, as well as copies of the Russian President's orders and appeals, were pasted to the walls and cars of the metro, at bus stops, and other gathering places. This was important not only to spread accurate information. All over town large groups of people gathered around the posted papers and exchanged opinions about recent events. It had a great psychological impact and added a special mood to the city. The quantity of signs was so great that any attempt to tear them down would have seemed funny and stupid.

Other forms of nonviolent action, such as the surrounding and occupation of government buildings and organizations, were also used. For instance, under the command of instructor Colonel Anatoli Pchelintsev, 101 students of the Moscow Military Institute of the Ministry of Defense barricaded themselves in their barracks



and declared their unwillingness to participate in the overthrow of the government.

In Moscow mingling with soldiers entering the city provided another very important type of nonviolent action. Spontaneous meetings took place around military vehicles and tanks. No one displayed a personal hatred for the soldiers. In fact, their children or friends often served in similar units. They gave the soldiers cigarettes and brought food. The good-will attitude and reliable information that soldiers could not get anywhere else put the "fighting mood" out of commission. Such action created the necessity for a constant rotation of military units patrolling the city. Units successfully persuaded by the local population were taken out and replaced with fresh arrivals.

Barricades were built from trolleybuses, delivery trucks and garbage dumpsters. Of course, they did not present serious obstacles to armored vehicles, but they were completely capable of delaying opponents, if only for a few min-

utes. These minutes could be used to agitate among the soldiers. Protesters who spoke the languages of non-Russian nationalities were chosen to appeal to soldiers in their native tongue while the tanks attempted to storm the barricades. As a result of these discussions, six tanks ordered to seize the White House defected to the Russian side. They hung Russian flags on their antennas and turned their gun turrets 180 degrees away from the White House.

Moscow's response to the announcement of a curfew was significant. On the night of August 20-21 when the curfew was officially imposed, there were no fewer people than usual on the Moscow streets after 11 p.m. Public transport continued to operate. An uninformed individual would not have thought that a curfew was being imposed. Who knows, maybe this collective act of insubordination by Muscovites became the decisive psychological factor that demonstrated to the putschists the futility of their efforts to bring "order" to the country. At least, it was the last night for the junta.

Now in the Soviet Union, some people joke that we should not put the conspirators on trial, but raise monuments to them. In just three days they created fundamental political changes in the country that the democrats had not been able to achieve in six years of perestroika. In that case, they rightfully deserve further recognition. No one before them succeeded so persuasively and graphically in demonstrating the effectiveness of nonviolent defense. ☪

Turtle Island Notes



Chippewas want base back

STONY POINT (Ontario) — Chippewas are holding the Canadian government to their 1942 promise to return Camp Ippewash, a military base on Lake Huron, to the Stony Point band when it was no longer needed for military use. They claim the over 2,000 acres are used mostly for recreation, while they are needed as living space for the growing Kettle Point population nearby.

Members of the Toronto chapter of the National Association of Japanese Canadians joined with the Stony Point band in a demonstration of solidarity in August.

Not seeing the forest for the trees

N'DAKI MENAN (Ontario) — The Supreme Court of Canada rejected the Temagami Anishnabai's appeal August 15, ruling that the nation gave up their rights to the 9,800 kilometres of forest when it accepted 1850 treaty rights (though the Temagami had not in fact signed the treaty in question). However, the Supreme Court did recognize that the Ontario government has not held to its own side of the treaty; negotiations over who will look after the land (the Temagami have been its stewards for at least 125 years) will continue.

Dam Foolish

JAMES BAY (Québec) — Construction on James Bay II, a Hydro-Québec megaproject that would flood a huge area, divert four rivers, involve the building of almost 600 km of roads and three airports, and destroy the lives of the Cree and Inuit in the area, has been delayed. The Cree have promised non-violent civil disobedience should construction begin, and criticism of the project has come from Québecois, Canadians, the mayor of New York City, and the United Nations.

"We look damn foolish," says Parti Québécois leader Jacques Parizeau, who also notes Ottawa could block a federal permit to dredge part of Hudson's Bay for the project. This casts a new light on comments by Ovide Mercredi and Cree chief Billy Diamond that Québec natives may choose to stay with Canada should Québec separate.

Band aids

•Bursaries will be given to help some natives go to medical school; it is estimated that there are now only 30 native doctors in Canada, and increasingly well known that the health of our First Nations approximates that of blacks in South Africa.

•Natives charged with minor offences in Toronto will soon be able to appear in front of a council of elders instead of going to court. Similar systems have been set up in Attawapiskat and Sandy Lake, Ontario.

•The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops was urged to apologize to native people at its plenary meeting on August 22. A letter sent by the Coalition of Concerned Canadian Catholics urged "repentance for the sins committed by the Catholic colonizers of the Americas."

•Indian Affairs Minister Tom Siddon promised changes to the Indian Act that would cancel Ottawa's veto power over how native spend their resource wealth. If three quarters of a band's voters agree to transfer this power to their (elected) chief and council. Prompted by Alberta native leaders, he proposed that such money still held by the government be invested on the bands' behalf by a third party.

After the barricades, an armband of memory

Okanata

Workscene Gallery, 183 Bathurst, Aug 16-Sept. 7
A Space Gallery, 183 Bathurst, Sept. 7-28

REVIEWED BY MARIA ERSKINE

What happened to last summer's red armbands of First Nations solidarity? They're not all gone. Nell's moved from her wrist to her knapsack buckle. Little brother's tied back his hair for a while, then moved to a braid of sweetgrass on his wall, over signs saying "a revolution in motion" and "Oka is all of us." Emma's is also on her wall, become a tear-soaked feather's fall from a bridge, shedding word-association shadows as it spins.

It appears many people have been transforming the red armbands of frustration, shame and anger into symbolic

reminders, into visual art. The mixed media installations of the Okanata exhibit have brought together many artists' reactions to last summer's standoff in the Pines. By chance I walked into Workscene Gallery to see Ronald Cross/Lasagna on a video monitor saying that the Mohawk crisis had, if nothing else, "united all Indian people."

Ironically, though, one can't see this exhibit as a whole; its second half opens September 7 at A Space Gallery.

The video Okanata, by Albert Nerenberg and Catherine Bainbridge, is well worth watching; sadly, it won't be shown after September 7th. Watching this good-looking film, from "inside" Robert McNealy's elemental installation, you have to remind yourself that this is a documentary, not because of the intelligent editorial touches, but because, as one Mohawk says, "It's like the Twilight Zone."

But it really happened, and the works

around the room remind us, saying "don't forget" in native and non-native voices, in different tones of voice: the whizzer of tiny death's-head golfclub chips in Peter B. Jones' sculpture, the shout of Arnold Jacob's "The Real Victims" of the mute testimony of Joe David's razor-wire-surrounded "Sentinel", the Dewdney-esque dissertation of Reinhard Reitzenstein's "Antennella Replica", the pastel hiss of Bob Boyer's F U S Q.

It's good to see that the exhibit has had international visitors; good to see it opening the eyes of Canadians, too, both times I went there. The spirit that informs the Okanata exhibit is heartening. Ben Michel, speaking in another season about another First Nations struggle (using no — or rather, different — weapons) mentioned that "canada" in Innu-éimun means "don't go there." But do go to 183 Bathurst if you can, and may something in it move you, and then move you to realize the next move is yours.✿

Ojibwa block dam

THE ACTIVIST

On Thursday, August 29, the Poplar Point Ojibwa Nation began a non-violent blockade to stop construction of a hydro dam on their land.

The Namewaminikan River feeds into Lake Nipigon, just north of Lake Superior. The Poplar Point Ojibwa have lived by the Namewaminikan for thousands of years. Last year, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources agreed to permit Nipigon Power Ltd. to build a hydro-electric dam on the river. This dam would flood large area of land, and the whole surrounded watershed would be contaminated by the mercury released from flooded vegetation.

Over the last 50 years, damming and clearcutting have caused serious damage to the Lake Nipigon ecosystem. Mercury levels in the lake are already so high that its fish cannot be sold in the United States.

On August 22, the Poplar Point Ojibwa signed an agreement with Ontario Minister of Natural Resources — and Minister for Native Affairs — Bud Wildman. The agreement stated that construction would not begin before a traditional gathering that would allow the Ojibwa to pay their last respects to the river. This agreement was almost immediately broken, and construction was scheduled to resume September 3.

The Ojibwa have stated that they will not cross their barricade, and that they will non-violently resist any attempts to start construction. They are asking other Native and non-Native activists for help in maintaining the blockade. They are demanding a meaning full environmental assessment, and a postponement at least of the construction of the dam.

For more information or to take part in the action, call Chief Theron McCrady, 807-875-2504.✿

Beedaudjimowin

A Voice for First Nations

In Association with the Friends of the Lubicon, Toronto

presents



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(147 Danforth Avenue, Toronto)

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A Columbus Day Benefit for the Innu Nation, the Lubicon Nation, and Beedaudjimowin

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Democracy and Discontent

By JO PEACENIK
THE ACTIVIST

Revolution for the hell of it has come to Moscow.

Apparently, after the coup was toppled and the barricades around the Russian Parliament building began to come down, a group of teenagers camped out in the square refused to leave. They were just having too much fun.

The youths explained to Moscow police that they planned to camp outside the Parliament building forever as a shrine to democracy, and after some negotiations, the police let them stay. At last report, they were still there.

Another, somewhat less inspiring, shrine to democracy is going up at the site of the notorious Checkpoint Charlie, once the guardhouse at the crossing between East and West Berlin. The checkpoint is being replaced by a shopping mall to be filled entirely with U.S. stores and corporate offices.

* * *

There are those who see a whole different "window of opportunity" opening up with the collapse of communism. Grand Duke Vladimir Kirilovich Romanov, claimant to the throne of the Czar of Russia, is offering to return to his family's old office.

"Czardom in some form could be a good solution," said Vladimir at his 74th birthday party on August 30. "I have got information that it could be possible."

He does allow that he would be willing to return to Russia in some capacity other than Czar if it doesn't work out, though.

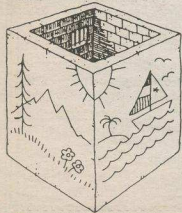
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And, lest the West be forgotten, two sayings to ponder from Dan Quayle:

"This idea of just dropping bombs for the sake of dropping bombs has an impact from a psychological point of view, but from a military-effectiveness point of view, I would certainly question it."

And:

"The question is, are we going to continue to have a relationship with China? The answer is yes. China is the largest country in the world."



Letters

From page 2

momentous occasion deserves more than a little paragraph.

Don't you think it is important to let your readers know that one of Mr. Clark's bases for war crimes charges is the Bush Administration's set-up of Iraq (and Kuwait)? Mr. Clark mentioned that the US had withheld food from Iraq for 6 months prior to the August 2 invasion of Kuwait. He also mentioned General Schwartzkopf's slip-of-the-tongue outburst that he had been preparing for the Gulf Crisis for 18 months. There are countless other examples — several of which were reported as early as October 1, 1990 in Time Magazine.

I would also think that you would consider as extremely important, Mr. Clark's statement about the US motive in this "war" — namely, the fact that Iraq was setting an example for the Third World by demonstrating what a relatively poor Third World country with an independent policy can do for its people. Mr. Clark mentioned Iraq's free medicare and excellent hospitals, its excellent education system with only a very nominal fee at university level, and its very progressive policies towards women. Obviously, it is not in the interest of the Western World for other Third World countries to emulate such policies.

Statistics have shown us that the more informed people were about the War, the more they were against it. While I do commend your magazine for at least coming out against the War, I do wonder about the lack of real information; and I cannot help but wonder if people will ever be properly informed when the victims of misinformation are Arab countries (Lebanon 1982, Iraq and Kuwait 1991).

Lorna Gayle Almaini
Toronto

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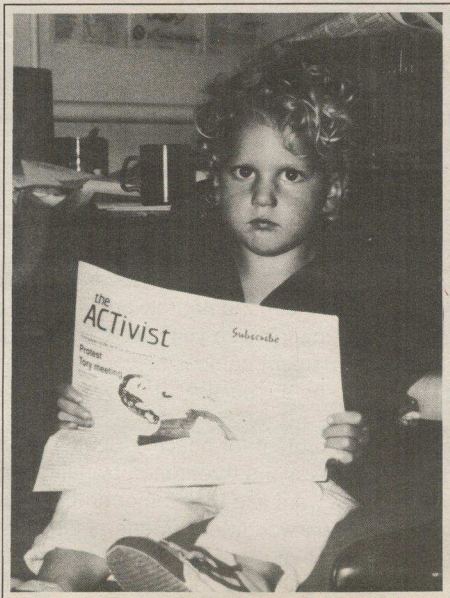
Feminist anti-psychiatry perspectives. Keynote speaker Kate Millett. Sponsored by Phoenix Rising and the Centre for Women's Studies in Education, OISE, OISE Auditorium, 252 Bloor St. W. Saturday, September 28, 6:30 pm. \$8 donation requested. Wheelchair accessible.

The mother of all classified ads. Anyone interested in forming a Russian Orthodox Peace fellowship in Canada, contact Sarah Cho ACT (mail or fax only)

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