

the ACTivist

Ontario's Peace Newspaper

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Woman of Peace

Guatemalan peace activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú visited Canada November 13-15, meeting with native leaders and speaking to an overflow crowd at the University of Toronto. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, however, was "too busy" for a meeting with Menchú, one of the most important figures supporting the peace process and opposing government terror in Guatemala.

Menchú, an indigenous woman, is one of the hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans forced to flee to Mexico; tens of thousands more, including her parents and her brother, have been killed by death squads.

For more on Rigoberta Menchú, and on Guatemala, see stories, pages 2 and 6.

Photo: John Donoghue

Don't worry 'bout the government:

Innu challenge Newfoundland Hydro

THE ACTIVIST

The Innu have developed yet another strategy in their campaign of non-violent civil disobedience against government invasions of their land. Early in November, residents of Sheshatshit disconnected their hydro meters and delivered the disassembled parts to Newfoundland Hydro officials, in protest against hydro-electric projects on their territory.

Copper-wire devices are now delivering electricity to Innu homes. The Innu say

that they will not pay to have their land flooded and otherwise 'developed'.

Large areas of Innu territory, including traditional hunting and burial grounds, were flooded by the Upper Churchill Dam in the late 60s. Many Innu still regard this as one of the worst government crimes against them, especially the flooding-out of the graves of their ancestors.

"The ultimate crime by the government was when they flooded our lands," says Rose Gregoire. "The government, foreigners in our land, flooded the graves

of our ancestors. That is what I call a crime."

The Innu have never received compensation for the lands they lost to the Upper Churchill project.

Now there are plans for further hydro developments on the Churchill River. Though Innu land will not be flooded by the projected Lower Churchill project, nearby lands will, and the environmental impact on the area as a whole has not been satisfactorily studied. "A joint federal-provincial Environmental Impact Assess-

ment was conducted 12 years ago, however, it left a great deal to be desired in terms of comprehensiveness, consideration of cumulative impacts, etc.," says one consultant. And the project would involve stringing power lines across Innu land, again with unstudied environmental effects.

Electricity from Lower Churchill will be exported to the United States.

Peter Penashue, President of the Innu Nation, says that he will be talking to electricity consumers in the northeastern United States to ask them to delay payment of hydro bills, and with bond brokers in New York to ask them not to deal in Hydro Quebec or Newfoundland Hydro bonds.

The 'boycott' of Newfoundland Hydro will continue, the Innu maintain, at least until they are compensated for the damages caused by the Upper Churchill project. ☸

The return of ARMX?

THE ACTIVIST

According to a story in *Frank* magazine, the notorious weapons bazaar ARMX is returning to Ottawa — but in a new and euphemistic guise.

Baxter Publishing, the organizers of ARMX, are now hosting a show called 'Peacekeeping 93', to be held at the Ottawa Congress Centre March 16-17. Like ARMX, Peacekeeping 93 will be essentially a display of weapons for sale.

'Peacekeeping' may sound more acceptable than the openly militaristic ARMX. But it is clear that Baxter — publishers of Canadian Defence Quarterly — see 'peacekeeping' as including armed military interventions, though perhaps under U.N. auspices.

In a statement to exhibitors, the

organizers say, "Some peacekeeping missions ... are expected to reflect the more active interventionist temper of the international community, including accepting the risk of having to use force to achieve the objectives of the mission's mandate. Peacekeeping forces involved in these will have to be more heavily equipped, to fight if necessary, and may include air and naval combat elements."

This is perhaps the most blatant example yet of the way in which the 'defence' establishment has begun to use 'peacekeeping' as a cover for their military adventures.

There are no details available yet as to who exactly will be exhibiting at 'Peacekeeping 93', or who will be invited to view the merchandise. Exhibitors at ARMX included the whole range of Canadian arms

merchants, as well as their colleagues from around the world, and customers included Chile, El Salvador and Indonesia. ARMX 89 was shut down by non-violent protesters, and the show has not been held since.

Meanwhile, External Affairs' annual report on Canadian arms sales abroad reveals that our customers for 1991 included Indonesia (\$28,000 in electronic equipment), Kenya (\$466,500 in helicopter components), Peru (\$89,000 — helicopter components and 'armoured equipment'), Israel (\$23,500 — 'fire control systems' and military vehicles), and Turkey (\$2,800,000 — large calibre armaments, tear gas, helicopter components, training simulators and electronic equipment). All of these countries have a record of serious and persistent human rights violations. ☸

MORE INSIDE

• The Year in ACTION
pg. 3

• Women's Peace
Agenda Project
pgs 2, 4 and 5

• East Timor Update
pg. 7

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Opinions expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of ACT



Is the 'peace' movement really peaceful?

By LISA VALENCIA-SVENSSON
THE ACTIVIST

"Resistance to war, to the use of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy is impossible without resistance to sexism, to racism, to imperialism and to violence as an everyday pervasive reality. There is a very profound relationship between the fact that many women and children are commonly attacked, beaten up, and raped, and that a nuclear war as well as a nuclear catastrophe threatens this entire planet Earth, which has no emergency exit."

— Petra Kelly, *Articles of Peace: celebrating fifty years of Peace News*

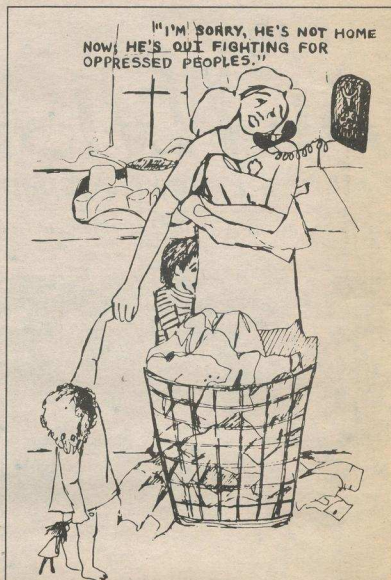
The very real possibility that Petra Kelly, a well-known "peace" activist, was killed by her male partner, adds a tremendous amount of meaning and urgency to her words quoted above. It is to this urgency that I direct my words as well.



I recently attended the Women's Peace Agenda Project conference, organized by ACT for Disarmament. I attended this conference because it spoke directly to me. I am a woman very interested in "peace" issues.

I was first drawn to the "peace" movement several years ago, and, tellingly, was attracted most to the work of Voice of Women for Peace. After spending a few years "diverted" from "peace" issues and focusing inward on issues of racism and sexism (I am a woman of colour), I have now re-emerged to seriously question the traditional concept of "peace".

It seems that other "peace" activists are moving in a similar direction of questioning, and I applaud this development. As Stephen Dankowich wrote in the October 92 *ACTivist*, "a clear consensus emerged [from the Ontario Peace Conference] that the peace movement must get to



the roots of violence and build a culture for peace in Ontario ... disarmament, ecology, native rights, violence against women and human rights were linked together as peace issues of equal concern."

Indeed, there is a real need for the concept of "peace" to be broadened considerably. As we work for "peace", we must continually ask ourselves: peace for whom? Have we achieved "peace" if women are still battered in their homes, if people of colour are still attacked on the streets for their shade of skin?

I offer one definition of peace for our future consideration: "By peace we mean the absence of violence in any given society, both internal and external, direct and indirect. We further mean the nonviolent results of equality of rights, by which every member of that society, through nonviolent means, participates equally in decisional power which regulates is, and the distribution of resources which sustains it" (Birgit Brock-Uine, *Educating for Peace*)

So much for the theory. Let me now move to realities. I was quite disturbed to learn at the Women's Peace Agenda Conference, that, despite paying lip service to the issue of violence against women as a "peace" issue, many of the men involved with ACT for Disarmament and with other "peace" groups have not yet realized that this issue requires more than their passive approval and support. To really work toward ending violence against women, both men and women must turn our focus away from nuclear-powered submarines and defense budgets for a while and toward our own personal lives. The onus lies particularly on each and every man to be especially open to continued critique, by us women, of your patterns of behaviour in interpersonal relationships and in the larger world. Men, you are often abusive to us women without realizing it.

Violence against women is a societal and personal issue. Let me get personal for a moment in order to add some power to these

Turn to Challenging, page 5

The Guatemala cover-up

Rigoberta Menchú has long been recognized as an outstanding advocate for peace and human rights in Guatemala. However, after winning the Nobel Peace Prize, Rigoberta has suddenly become, like the Miami Herald puts it, "a controversial Guatemalan Indian."

Such statements have come as a result of the Guatemalan government's efforts to discredit Rigoberta, accusing her of links with the United National Revolutionary of Guatemala (UNRG). Pressed about these allegations, the Nobel Committee made the unfortunate error of describing their decision as "somewhat controversial."

Opinion

That only played into the hands of a government that continuously deceives public opinion and feigns concern. Undoubtedly, Rigoberta has on occasion met with members of the UNRG leadership or members of its diplomatic team. To imply that she should have ignored the UNRG all along is to say that she should shut the door on conciliation. Even if Rigoberta were to implore the UNRG to lay down its arms, what would be the point? She knows that the army and death squads would continue the repression; to protect the status quo of corruption and exploitation. Instead, she supports a negotiated settlement as a solution to these very problems.

The media must be reminded that Guatemala is still struggling with its process of democratization. Political assassinations have driven the Left out of contention, while forcing a state of submission for the two centralist parties. Conflict between the numerous Right and Extreme Right parties have also resulted in death squad hits. Maya leaders are regularly assassinated or "disappeared", leaving no choice for the indigenous majority, which, in turn, largely refrains from voting. Guatemala's ruling ladinos do not represent the majority of frustrated ladinos that live in conditions of poverty and oppression, and who are largely apathetic towards elections. This leaves a small minority of the middle and upper class, which represent the vote in the Guatemalan elections. In 1991, the evangelical vote was strong enough to carry evangelist Jorge Serrano, a former member of the extremist National Liberation Movement and President of the State Council under the genocidal dictatorship of General Rios Montt. Needless to say, Serrano leads an administration that acquiesces to the hard-liners in the military, while covering up their murderous policies.

An objective media should be able to recognize this. But in examining the Canadian media's response to the Nobel Prize, one has to wonder if the award is "too controversial" for our media to come out in favour. Only a few newspapers have written favourable editorials about the prize. In fact, the Regina Leader Post, after accounting for the Guatemalan government's position, predicted more criticism, since the Prize "requires more justification than a relationship to a historical event 500 years old." Of the few editorials in the U.S. and Canada, most steered clear of Guatemalan politics, opting to recognize the award as acknowledgement of the struggles of America's Indigenous.

This award is more than a recognition of the last 500 years of survival. Rigoberta speaks for all Guatemalans who suffer from poverty and institutionalized violence. From the United Nations to small communities around the world, Rigoberta has played a vital role in establishing the international pressure that is largely responsible for the current peace process and fledgling democratization efforts.

Guatemala's indigenous and ladino alike are very proud to have a voice in Rigoberta Menchú. In Guatemala, it will be the Serrano administration's disparaging of Rigoberta that history will record as controversial. As for the North America mainstream media, there is no excuse for its ignorance at such a crucial time in Guatemalan history.

— Gordon McIntyre, Guatemala Solidarity Committee

ACT General Meeting

Wednesday, December 9, 7 p.m.
736 Bathurst St., basement
all supporters of ACT welcome

ACT 10th Anniversary Party
Saturday, December 12
location TBA

For more information, call 531-6154

1992: the year in ACTion



Street outreach for the Innu, March 28. Photo: Maggie Helwig

- **May 20** — ACT demonstrators unfurl banners and chant slogans at the opening of the Bata Shoe Museum (Bata Shoes is one of the largest Canadian investors in Indonesia).
- **June 7** — Oakville Peace Festival, organized by ACT Oakville and other community groups.
- **June 9** — Street theatre while 'elections' are held in Indonesia.
- **June 17** — ACT protests the visit of General Norman Schwarzkopf to Toronto, with a picket outside the hotel where he is speaking.
- **June 20** — Picket of a Bata Shoes store at the Dufferin Mall in Toronto.
- **June 28** — ACT participates in Lesbian and Gay Pride Day events in Toronto.
- **July 18-24** — Maggie Helwig of ACT attends War Resisters International Council Meeting in New York. ACT becomes a Section of WRI.
- **July 27** — ACT attends United Nations Decolonization Committee hearings on East Timor. Li-lin Gibbons of the East Timor Alert Network is one of the witnesses.
- **July 28** — ACT Women's Collective holds an educational forum on 'Women, War and Violence', with speakers from ACT, Amnesty International and Education Wife Assault.
- **August 1** — Provincial conference of East Timor solidarity groups, organized by the East Timor Alert Network and hosted by ACT.
- **August 7** — Films for Peace night in Toronto, at which four of ACT for Disarmament's Working Groups present films.
- **August 9** — Nagasaki Day protest at the General Electric Nuclear Facility, Lansdowne Ave., Toronto.
- **August 21** — 'No to War in Ex-Yugoslavia' demonstration, calling for non-violent measures to end the ex-Yugoslav conflict, at Tory party headquarters.
- **September 11** — Bata Shoe Boycott (organized by ACT and the East Timor Alert Network) represented at the United Farmworkers' Benefit for Boycotts.
- **September 26** — ACT Women's Collective organizes a demonstration demanding that violence against women be recognized as a basis for a refugee claim.
- **October/November** — Educational forums on East Timor at universities around Ontario and in Montreal.
- **October 10** — ACT Guelph Founding Meeting



Demonstration for peace in ex-Yugoslavia, Aug. 21. Photo: Maggie Helwig

- **February 6** — ACT presents a report to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Arms Exports, calling for an end to all weapons exports from Canada.
- **February 15-17** — David Webster of ACT participates in an international meeting of East Timor solidarity groups in Geneva, Switzerland
- **February 24** — Action at Indonesian consulate in Toronto, while the Indonesian foreign minister, Ali Alatas, visits Ottawa that day in an attempt to get Canadian aid to Indonesia restored to its previous level. Demonstrators set up a wooden cross outside the consulate and lay flowers beneath it. Then two women, Maggie Helwig and Joanne Young, pour vials of their blood on the consulate doors and are arrested. The action is co-sponsored by ACT and the East Timor Alert Network.
- **March 17** — Educational forum on East Timor at the University of Toronto, co-sponsored by the Student Christian Movement.
- **March 25** — Educational forum on East Timor at Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario
- **March 26-April 3** — Three Innu representatives tour Ontario on a speaking trip organized by ACT. They speak in eight different communities throughout the province.
- **March 28** — Volunteers at 18 different locations around Toronto collect about 5,000 signatures on a petition to stop low level flight testing over Innu land.
- **April 3** — Picket at Indonesian consulate, asking that the East Timorese on trial for 'provoking' the Santa Cruz massacre (November 12, 1991) be released.
- **April 4** — Rally and march in Toronto demanding an end to low level flight testing over Innu lands. About 500 people attend.
- **April 15-25** — Leafletting of the Hudson's Bay Company department store during their 'Mysterious Indonesia' promotional events.
- **May 16** — Tenth Annual Spring Protest for Peace, on the theme of 'Peace Now.' About 400 people attend.

This holiday season, give the gift of peace

We've never needed the peace movement more than today. From campaigning for peaceful solutions to the world's dozens of wars, to stopping the wars against native peoples and women here at home, there's more than ever that needs to be done.

ACT for Disarmament has been at the forefront of peace work since it was founded as the Against Cruise Testing Coalition in December 1982. Ten years later, we're still southern Ontario's most active peace organization.

Donations, sadly, haven't kept pace with the ever-increasing demands on our energies. ACT is now several thousand dollars in debt, which hampers our ability to work well for peace.

We are now asking you, our supporters, to make a special donation to mark ACT's tenth anniversary.

Double your donation!

All donations received by ACT between now and December 15 will be matched, dollar for dollar, by friends of the grassroots non-aligned peace movement. That means any donation you make will count double. There's never been a better time to give.

And every dollar will go towards peace campaigns and organizing. None will go to pay staff or produce glossy direct mail. Every dollar you give is a dollar spent building a more peaceful world. Every donation of more than \$10 also gets you a subscription to **The ACTivist**, Ontario's monthly newspaper of peace, ecology and human rights.

Have a peaceful holiday!

NAME _____ PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____

Enclosed is my donation of

___ \$100 ___ \$50 ___ \$25 ___ other

Mail to: ACT for Disarmament, 736 Bathurst St., Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2R4, phone 416-531-6154

- **October 12** — ACT participates in anti-Columbus demonstration, Toronto
- **October 24** — 'Support the Innu' rallies take place in Toronto, Oakville, Guelph and St. John's, networked by ACT.
- **October 31-November 1** — Women's Peace Agenda Project Conference held in Toronto, organized by ACT Women's Collective.
- **November 4** — Oakville Community Centre for Peace, Ecology and Human Rights opens, supported by ACT Oakville.
- **November 12** — Rally and street theatre at Indonesian consulate to commemorate the Santa Cruz massacre in East Timor, November 12 1991, co-sponsored by ACT and the East Timor Alert Network. Demonstrations also take place in Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa, Guelph and Montréal.
- **November 24-December 1** — Maggie Helwig of ACT takes part in the War Resisters International 'Women Overcoming Violence' Conference in Bangkok, Thailand.

AND MUCH MORE TO COME
IN 1993 ...

Lasting peace must begin at home

By KATE SANDILANS
THE ACTIVIST

On October 31 and November 1, a group of women from inside and outside the peace movement (plus two men, for a time) met to discuss issues around feminism and peace. All things considered, there weren't very many of us; about 20, at most. But the small turnout didn't prevent us from discussing large issues.

The first question raised was, "how is violence against women a peace issue?" It was here, more than anywhere else in the conference, that the enormity of the problems before us became apparent. Discussion began with the relationship between militarism and violence against women; how the military-industrial complex is implicated in the exploitation of women in the sex trade in Southeast Asia and North America; how it is part of an economic system that is based on, and reproduces, inequality for women; how it sucks up resources that should go to programmes preventing violence and protecting its victims.

From there, the exchange branched out in a number of simultaneous directions. One aspect of the discussion focused on the ways in which economic issues must be part of the agenda of the peace movement, as poverty is clearly a form of systemic violence against women, both locally and globally — a disproportionate number of the world's poor are women. And why, one participant asked, is building nuclear weapons considered to be economically productive work when raising children is not? Why is women's work systematically excluded and hidden?

Another aspect centred on how violence, especially male

violence, appears culturally, through education, the media, war toys, even sports; and on the "construction of maleness" by way of forms of violence.

A third focus was specifically directed at physical violence, and how issues of economics and culture conditions abuse, and make resistance difficult in a variety of ways ("how can women organize to change the system when they are struggling to survive at home?")

A fourth focus was on how these various problems are experienced on a personal level, how any woman must live in the world in the midst of these violences, which are at the same time systemic and profoundly intimate.

Finally, the fifth aspect centres on broad questions of power and hierarchy as structuring principles of society; on 'empowerment' of the powerless — as well as on the difficulties involved in the cross-cultural use of any of these concepts to describe oppression or resistance.

I'm sure there are others who would collect the threads of that plenary differently; the ideas poured out torrentially, wide-ranging connections among issues were made quite spontaneously; controversies spawned other controversies; questions prompted stories from others' experiences; no one "theme" took over the discussion. The energy level was high, and people were reluctant to break for the wonderful lunch contributed by Angelo Gonçalves, even if the talk continued throughout.

That energy, as well as the breadth and complexity of the analyses, emerged again in other parts of the conference, as people fitted the specific issues under discussion in subsequent workshops into the broad framework provided by the opening plenary. Racism, violence against chil-

dren, poverty, native women's experiences of colonization, women's work for peace in the West Bank and Gaza; all of these were considered in light of the issues raised earlier.

For me, one of the most striking moments of connection came during a small group discussion of women in the Middle East conflict. Our facilitator, Scholmit Segal of Jewish Women Against the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, told us how Arab women political prisoners may be drugged, unconscious, stripped, photographed while being raped, and later blackmailed into silence. Nowhere were the relations among gender violence, the silencing of women, and the need for a lasting peace, made quite so starkly; it is hard to believe, hearing this story, that there are those who do not believe violence against women to be a form of political violence.

But there was also a paradoxical hope that came from the words one woman, seen in the video *Occupied Territories*: "the basic threat to women, that they might be raped or killed by a member of their family, is very much the same ..." — and thus, she says, Arab and Israeli women do have this common ground, from which they can work together.

As the conference progressed, it became clear that there was a very important current underlying our discussions of violence against women as a peace issue: the failure of the peace movement to address the problem at all. Even in the opening plenary, voices were raised suggesting that the peace movement has neglected to go beyond protesting militarism in its grossest manifestations. Time and time again, women maintained that their issues — issues of systemic violence, of racism,

poverty, sexism and physical, sexual and psychological violence — were passed over, marginalized, even trivialized by most peace groups.

Especially on the second day of the conference, in the last two workshops on "strategies for change", it became apparent that the peace movement has alienated women through its neglect of feminist concerns. Even more painfully, it became clear that many women at the conference who work inside the peace movement have themselves been subjected to forms of violence by their co-workers for peace. As the conference drew to a close, it became ever more obvious that the peace movement needs to begin building a lasting peace by cleaning up its own act, by challenging the sexism in its own organization, by including a broader range of issues as "peace" issues, and by making the connections between "mainstream" peace issues and broader problems of systemic violence.

"Peace", then, must "begin at home." That was the parting sentiment of the conference, a sentiment shared by women from both inside and outside the peace movement, and by the two men present at the end. Some practical suggestions surfaced: a number of women suggested that even the fact that the issue had been raised gave them hope for the future of the peace movement, and for the ability of the peace movement to therefore address some of the broad spectrum of issues raised in the opening plenary.

But there's one helluva long way to go. ☺

Women Peace Agency Project

Never a token

By SANDRO GALEA
THE ACTIVIST

As the only man to attend the entire Women's Peace Agenda Project conference, I have been asked to put together a brief perspective on the weekend. Doing so has proven more difficult than I thought it would be. I have just realized that I can't very well give a "male perspective" on the weekend — simply because during the weekend I was never the "token male", "different observer" or any of several potential synonyms. Rather, I was very much a participant in the proceedings — a person among several other persons who wanted to get together for the weekend to discuss issues that mattered to them, and should matter to the entire peace movement.

Our discussion on a redefinition of peace was a classic that I hope none of us ever forget. Violence against women is a peace issue. So are poverty, violence against children, sexism and racism. It is only by first working towards a solution to these same problems as they exist within the peace movement that we can then begin to address them as peace issues in our society.

The weekend was a significant contribution to this effort. I hope that there will be more such efforts and that more women and men will participate in the future. If silence is the voice of complicity, this weekend has broken the silence once and for all. ☺

Moving out of the fringe

By SANDRA LANG
THE ACTIVIST

For the past four years I have operated on the fringes of several social justice movements. I would begin to get involved, only to discover that the activists involved could be just as racist, classist, sexist, heterosexist ... as anybody in the real world. I decided that I did not need the headaches of confronting the inconsistencies I found in peace and social justice movements.

I was quite content in the fringe participating on a modest level. I read *The ACTIVIST* and considered myself quite well informed. When I read an article about the upcoming

Women's event, I put it in my notebook and promptly forgot all about it. A couple of months later I got a call asking if I would like to facilitate a workshop on "Poverty as Violence." I agreed, delighted that poverty and class were actually to be dealt with by the peace movement, and if they were dealing with poverty and class issues, what else might be on the women's peace agenda? I decided to attend as much of the weekend as possible.

At first, I was very disappointed in the low turnout — if these twenty or so women were the only women interested, no wonder social justice movements were in trouble. But as the first session began I found

myself becoming more excited by the excitement of the women around me. And as the weekend continued, I began to think that, as there was hope after all, as women talked about their experiences and respectfully listened as other women related theirs.

We talked about violence and the effects it has on each of our lives — whether it was the physical violence of a battering male, the cultural violence that invalidates our lives and experiences, the economic violence of being the last one hired and the first one fired, the environmental violence that is inflicted on the planet, or the complexity of the state in all types of violence. We honestly talked about why the peace movement has

evolved into the white, male, middle-class movement it has become, and ways it could be more accessible to other groups.

If there was a disappointment, for me, it was that there were not more men present to listen and join in our discussion. Only one man was there for the entire conference, and one other joined us for the second day. I thought that more men from ACT and other peace groups would have been interested in what women felt about their movement. But it still gave me enough hope to move me out of the fringes and start to work on organizing again, so the peace movement can have validity for and be accessible to all people. ☺

men's peace agenda project

Women's aid for women

By SIAN JONES and IPPY
PEACE NEWS

As images of war in the former-Yugoslavia appeared on television, in the papers, the sense of frustration grew. As women involved in the "peace movement", taking action against the military whenever we could, there seemed to be nothing we could do to protest effectively against this war.

This war raised new issues for us, particularly in the ways it affected women, and how women worked in the anti-war movement in a country at war. From writing to anti-war groups in July, we eventually made contact in late August: from there the idea grew that we could take aid. We'd never thought about this before, and indeed, as the project developed, we were transformed, in other people's eyes, from summery "peace women", to "nice ladies taking aid to poor refugees".

Challenging movement men

From page 2

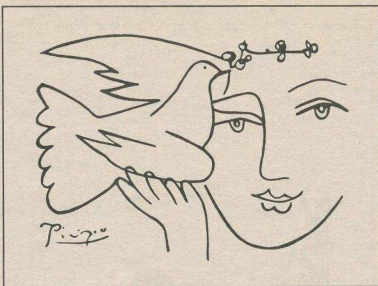
written words, since most of you will not have the opportunity to share with me my many moments of tears and screams, of rage and grief. I was sexually abused/raped by my step-grandfather, physically and emotionally abused by my father. I physically resisted rape by one boyfriend and was physically assaulted as well as threatened with death by an ex-boyfriend, not to mention the verbal harassment that I have been subjected to over my lifetime by men on the streets, in malls, in parks, etc. All of this violence has had a profound effect on my physical and emotional health, needless to say.

This is what violence against women is all about: specific acts of violence by specific men and boys against specific women and girls. You may be surprised to realize how many women have stories similar to my own. It enrages me greatly, yet does not surprise me in the least, that many of you men involved in the "peace" movement have abused your wives, girlfriends, daughters, etc. Let us remember Petra Kelly's death once again.

If men in the "peace" movement are serious about including violence against women on your agenda, then

accept my challenge to come clean to the men and women in your lives and in your organizations about your own history of abusing, and perhaps of being abused as well. Ask women whether we feel threatened or intimidated by you. Talk with other men. Donate, then donate again, to women's shelters, for these are certainly the hidden "peace" movement. Read feminist literature about violence against women in all of its forms. Learn to make the connections between violence against women and militarism, lack of affordable housing, budget cuts to social services, outdated laws, disability, racism, homophobia; the list is long.

These are the concrete steps for you, yes, you who are reading this right now, to take if you are truly committed to getting to those "roots of violence" that Stephen Dankowich wrote of, and building a "culture of peace" (Stephen, what concrete steps have you taken towards this end?). The roots of violence are in our families, our homes, our daily lives. They are not anywhere else. If you still fail to comprehend the urgent nature of this issue, just remember, I might not have survived to share my feelings and thoughts with you today. ☺



But taking aid made us feel we had some legitimacy in going, that we were not just "peace tourists"; it also enabled us to meet and talk with refugee women and women

working with refugees, to bring back their messages and needs, and to act upon them.

In October we took approximately eight tonnes of aid, (a drop

Controlling bodies

By MAGGIE HELWIG
THE ACTIVIST

Officials from Indonesia's much-criticized Ministry of Population and Environment visited Canada during November, looking for "technical assistance" in implementing Indonesia's new Population Law. Their trip was funded by the Canadian government.

Indonesia has for many years pursued a stringent "family planning" program aimed at reducing population growth — a program that is singled out by some women's health groups as a singularly misguided and destructive effort at "controlling population."

This visit, of two Ministry Officials and a representative of the Indonesian Women's Legal Aid Foundation, is funded by CIDA and organized by Dalhousie University, as part of the EMDI (Environmental Management Development in Indonesia) program.

"We work with the Ministry in a vast array of areas," says Joan Campbell, EMDI Project Officer at Dalhousie. She says that Dalhousie is not directly involved in the Indonesian population control program, but provides "technical assistance and advice" to the Ministry in areas they request. "They develop terms of reference for the kinds of expertise they require, or the type of knowledge they need, and we try to provide it."

It is clear, however, that the Ministry officials are unwilling to listen to any voices for which they cannot set the exact terms.

The Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto had arranged a meeting between the Ministry officials and a variety of women's and community groups in Toronto — including representatives of ACT for Disarmament and the East Timor Alert Network. Two days before the meeting was abruptly cancelled by the Dalhousie organizers, "because they heard some people might picket," says Tobe Bryant of the Social Planning Council (in fact, no picket was planned). The tour coordinator also

stonewalled a request from ETAN for a meeting with the Indonesians.

Campbell admits that "it makes a lot of people very uncomfortable that Canadian institutions have partnerships with Indonesian institutions" (she also noted that "when a journalist calls and asks questions, the warning bells go off and the flags go up"). However, she believes that their mandate of providing "assistance and advice" on certain aspects of population control does not implicate EMDI in any abuses of human rights.

Meanwhile, women's groups and others continue to uncover information suggesting that the Indonesian population control program is based largely on bribery at best, and coercion at worst (see *The ACTivist*, April 1992, for details). Ines Smythe, of the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights, notes the frequent occurrence of "unacceptable methods of persuasion... [which] infringe the basic rights of individuals, especially women." These methods can range from delaying the pay of civil servants who use condoms or the Pill rather than sterilization or IUDs, right up to the arrival of the military to deliver Depo-Provera shots or Norplant implantations.

There are also serious grounds to suspect that the most long-lasting forms of "birth control" — Depo-Provera, Norplant, sterilization — are being disproportionately applied against the people of occupied East Timor. Indeed, Indonesian government figures for the use of Depo-Provera clearly indicate that this is the case with this particular contraceptive. Despite repeated attempts, *ACTivist* reporters have been unable to obtain, from the Indonesian government, any figures on the geographic distribution of Norplant.

The Depo-Provera and Norplant programs are indirectly supported by CIDA, not only through the "technical assistance" provided via EMDI, but through CIDA's funding of the Population Council and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, which administer the programs. ☺

in the ocean), including baby food, nappies, sanitary towels, spectacles, shoes and other things which had been requested by refugee organisations in Slovenia and Croatia.

You can see what war is, even outside Bosnia: Slovenia has over 500,000 refugees, and Croatia over 500,000. In both Ljubljana and Zagreb we visited refugee camps. Conditions varied enormously; in some camps women and their children had their own room, in others more than 30 people shared a damp and draughty ex-army barracks. In all the camps there were women who did not know where their husbands were, or whether they were alive or dead. Some had come straight from Bosnia, others had been held by the Serbs, many had seen their houses burn and their relatives killed, and now mostly they were sitting and waiting, though some were themselves working with other refugees. Despite their conditions we were greeted with the most amazing hospitality, and made innumerable cups of strong Bosnian coffee.

Not only do refugees have to endure the absolute tedium and forced passivity of life in the camps; outside, in the cities, as the right wing grows, they face racism as refugees have done for centuries; and Slovenia and Croatia, perhaps justifiably, close their doors and say we can do no more. Many of the women we met in the anti-war movement have focussed on working with refugees, dealing with the consequences of, and opposing war in the most practical way.

At a recent conference in Zagreb, women from anti-war groups all over the former-Yugoslavia called for rape to be declared a war crime under the Geneva Convention. It is estimated that over 50,000 women have been raped in this war. As an immediate source of support we are hoping to fund rape crisis counsellors to go to former-Yugoslavia to train women working with refugees.

We also found that though in Slovenia there is support for women refugees, in Croatia most support work is for children. We therefore also hope to part fund a woman worker to set up support projects with women refugees in Croatia.

We were dismayed to hear stories of peace tourism by so-called peace activists who don't appear to take anything or act on what they bring out with them, and therefore it seems imperative that we do what we can to help refugees and the people working with them. It is also imperative to pressurise western governments and the UN to enforce the arms and oil sanctions against Serbia.

We are planning further journeys with aid in the future. If you want a report on our project or can help financially, or in other ways, contact Women's Aid to former-Yugoslavia, c/o 20 Tennyson Road, Portsmouth, Southampton SO2 1GW, England (tel +44 703 551094) ☺

• Peace News, 55 Daves St, London SE17 1EL, England

Coming home ...

By JOANNE YOUNG
SPECIAL TO THE ACTIVIST

On Friday, October 9, five Canadians left Toronto for Guatemala. We went to check on the conditions of refugees who had returned one or two years earlier from Honduras. Some of these returnees had been given land in Yalpechec, an area of about 125,000 hectares, in the mountains to the north of Guatemala City. Yalpechec was formerly a "finca", a large agricultural estate owned by General Garcia, one of the worst of all the Guatemalan dictators to hold office since the mid 1950's. It had been sold to the Guatemalan government as land to be used to resettle the refugees.

Having heard a great deal about disappearances, torture and murder in a country said to have the worst human rights record in all of Central America, I experienced some feelings of trepidation as we flew over a land almost totally dark.

We stayed in Yalpechec for four days with the refugee families. I stayed with a large extended family headed by two brothers, one a farmer, the other a carpenter. There were about nine children in each family, some of whom had married and had children of their own. They lived in a group of mud-floored, one-room huts made of poles.

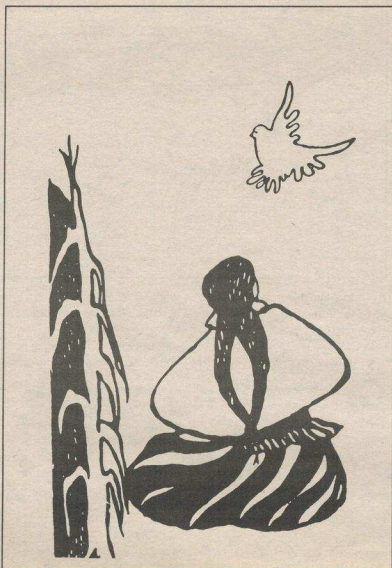
In Yalpechec an agronomist is available to give advice on crops, and a "women's committee" is busy with vegetable gardens, but crops have not been good. Corn, beans and bananas are grown, but land is not plentiful and there is difficulty getting crops to the market.

All three meals consisted of beans, tortillas and coffee — corn is ground by machine, saving a great deal of labour. Even the youngest child drank coffee, heavily sweetened with sugar.

A doctor is in town for about one week each month, but a few could afford his fee. A Franciscan sister kept a First Aid Kit, and there was a bone-setter. A man interested in naturopathy found he could not obtain the materials he needed, such as alcohol. For any illness that could not be dealt with in Yalpechec, there was the long painful trip to the hospital in Coban.

Some people in Yalpechec had outdoor latrines set up for composting, but most used the bush near their houses. While the latrines could be built locally, this required time and materials that were not always available.

There were three groups of people in Yalpechec: first, the people who have always lived there, but these are few since the land was privately owned. Second, there are those landless people, often driven from their own lands, who have arrived in Yalpechec. Third, there are the refugees, returned from Honduras, who were given the land by the government. The clearly conflicting interests of these three



groups have caused some friction, and efforts are being made to help them work together. A two-day workshop was held during our stay to identify problems, and to encourage people to work together for solutions. We were not surprised when the workshop participants concluded that their problems were bad water, insufficient arable land, poor medical care, poor roads, poor prices for their produce, an overcrowded school and an inadequate teaching staff.

These problems also raise the question of the refugees scheduled to return from Mexico in January.

There are said to be approximately two hundred thousand Guatemalan refugees in Mexico, both documented and undocumented. An agreement was reached in early October between the government of Guatemala and the refugees, recognizing certain rights for the refugees on their return. Although many of those who are attempting to help the refugees recognize that the government will not always honour this agreement, and in spite of the fact that the present regime is unable to offer a decent life to these refugees, they are nevertheless being forced to return as the funds which have supported them for many years are cut off by the United Nations. Apparently this money is needed for refugees in Africa and Eastern Europe.

These refugees are possibly being forced to return because they are an embarrassment to Guatemala and to Mexico, but they are most embarrassing to the United States, the country which invaded Guatemala in the mid 1950's to overthrow a democratically elected government and set up a series of increasingly brutal puppet regimes. If the land cannot support the refugees, that is because 2% of Guate-

malans own 72% of the arable land.

We are very much concerned that Guatemalan refugees may be forced to accept factory work in unhealthy, unsafe conditions, at very low rates of pay, supplying cheap manufactured goods to more affluent Americans, under a continent-wide free trade agreement.

The visit to Guatemala has left me in a quandary. Those who encourage these refugees to return to a land that has no place for them, by offering to accompany them and so possibly protect them from the violence of their own government, are doing them no favour. Yet they are being forced to return, and to return alone to live under a hostile government may be worse than returning with accompaniment.

URGENT ACTION

The conditions of the accord negotiated between the Government of Guatemala and the Permanent Commission of the Guatemalan Refugees in Mexico are in danger of being undermined. The government and the United Nations High Commission on Refugees are trying to compel the returnees to make concessions on the agreement, including travelling in small groups, rather than remaining together in conditions of safety; proceeding to government controlled reception centres for "re-education" rather than to temporary settlements controlled by the refugees; and to travel through the jungles.

Write, asking that the original conditions agreed upon be respected, to Miguel Guaduan, Encargado de Misión, UNHCR at Comisiones Permanentes de Representantes de los Refugiados Guatemaltecos en México, Durango 108, Depto 101, Colonia Roma, CP 06700 México, DF, fax 011-525-525-3505. ☐

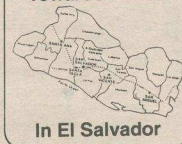
Dilemmas of return

By MARGARET SUMADI
THE ACTIVIST

For 12 years, Salvadorans have been leaving their country to flee a war. Is it time now to return?

This is the question being asked by an estimated 1 million

Towards Peace



exiles. The draw of the 1994 elections is strong, the political balance is changing with the inclusion of the popular-movement-backed FMLN as a political party.

Ten months after the Peace Accords and ceasefire signed by the FMLN and the Salvadoran government, many families are agonizing over the decision.

Salvadorans outside the country informally add U.S. \$1 million per day to the economy, in the form of money sent back to their families. In an economy based largely on outside aid, loans and an elitist business sector, the loss of this income would be significant.

The ceasefire still holds, but peace is an illusion till the freedom and basic human rights of the people are a reality. The daily life of the poor has not visibly improved. There is still no easy access to education, health care, fair working conditions. Union and community leaders are still victimized, and the death squads still operate.

The danger is of a romantic notion that, because the guns have stopped, the country is operating in a state of normalcy. This is the beginning of a long road — that of development, reconstruction and reconciliation, not just survival. Development of an economy based on internal productivity requires solid and long-term planning. This is difficult to achieve at a time when the elite business groups are reluctant to discuss economic reforms which will reduce their power.

On a practical level, the 5.5 million people in El Salvador

cannot easily absorb up to 1 million more. The current difficulties in demobilizing the FMLN and government troops into civilian life are already causing huge strains on housing, education, land allocation, etc. Many Salvadorans inside the country fled to the capital, San Salvador, during the 12 years of war, but are often forced to live in poor shack developments.

Many adults who left up to 12 years ago have raised children in a different culture, that of Canada and the United States. These children have been exposed to a different language, education, socio-economic system. Can they be expected to assimilate into a culture they are familiar with only through stories, traditions and family, not at school, at play or socially? Such children, though very proud of their heritage, will have to adjust to a different set of values, lifestyles, restrictions, etc. Thus a new division looms. Where once division had been between families leaving El Salvador and those left behind, we could now see a division where people return without their children.

Maria and Ernesto both long to return, and, after two recent visits, feel realistic about the situation. But their second son, now aged 19, isn't ready to leave behind friends, lifestyle and training opportunities. His emotional bonds to El Salvador are through his parents and their generation, not direct. Younger children's vision of El Salvador is often romantically linked to grandparents, folklore and their own parents' attachments, and leaving their adopted or birth country for El Salvador can be traumatic.

Philosophically and politically, changes are going to be slow and reconciliation painful, but Salvadorans are anxious to be part of the new El Salvador. ☐

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EAST TIMOR UPDATE

Number 17 — November 20, 1992

In December 1975, just ten days after declaring its independence from Portugal, the tiny southeast Asian country of East Timor was invaded by its neighbour Indonesia. In the decade-and-a-half since, 250,000 people — over a third of the indigenous Timorese population — have been killed. Genocide and massive human rights violations — everything from rape to indiscriminate killings to forced abortions — 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 Indonesia to maintain its occupation.

East Timor Update is a monthly news service edited in Toronto by the East Timor Alert Network. Reprinting is encouraged, but please credit East Timor Update. Contact the Network for more information:

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East Timor massacre remembered worldwide

On November 12, 1991, Indonesian soldiers gunned down a crowd of unarmed Timorese at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, East Timor. According to an exhaustive study undertaken by Timorese activists in Dili and released by the Lisbon-based ecumenical group Peace is Possible in East Timor, 273 Timorese were killed in the massacre, while 382 were wounded and 250 disappeared.

Despite the protests of Western governments at the time, it is now back to business as usual between the West and Indonesia.

The first anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre was marked as a day of mourning and protest around the world.

- In Canada, the East Timor Alert Network co-ordinated a nationwide day of vigils for peace in East Timor. Seventy people picketed the offices of Garuda Indonesian Airlines in **Vancouver**. Another 70 gathered to a weapons dealers' convention at a local hotel, in an event co-sponsored with the Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade. Marchers called on Canada to stop selling arms to Indonesia and other human rights violators. A vigil at the Toronto Indonesian Consulate attracted 35 people from ETAN groups in **Toronto** and **Hamilton**. Vigils were also held at **Guelph** University, **Asamera Oil** in **Calgary**, and the **Santa Cruz parish** in **Montreal**.

ETAN and the Canadian Peace Alliance combined to publish an open letter to the government of Canada on Nov. 12 in the *Ottawa Citizen* and *Vancouver Sun*. The letter was signed by more than 30 organizations (from 8 provinces and one territory) and more than 100 individuals, including Nobel prize winner John Polanyi, writer June Callwood and Timothy Findley, ecologist David Suzuki, singers Bruce Cockburn and Raffi, Maude Barlow, Catholic Bishops Remi De Roo of Victoria and John Sherlock of London, Ont., Canadian Council of Churches president Bruce McLeod, Iona Campagnolo, Ursula Frankland, and 13 members of parliament, including the human rights critics of the Liberal and new Democratic Parties. Representatives of all the major Canadian churches signed the letter.

- In **Malaysia**, Nov. 12 was marked by the first public event of the newly-formed East Timor Information Network, followed by a candlelight vigil. Over 100 Malaysians signed a strong statement opposing their government's alliance with Indonesia, a remarkable feat in a country where freedom of speech is extremely limited. Every Catholic church in Penang, where ETIN is based, dedicated a special mass to the people of East Timor on Nov. 15, the first Sunday after the anniversary.

"We will organize more of such activities to counteract the media blackout which has so far prevented more Malaysians from learning about the unspeakable military atrocities which are occurring right on our doorstep," said an ETIN spokesperson.

- The Free East Timor! coalition in **Japan** presented a petition with 60,000 signatures to the Japanese parliament, calling for Japan to link its aid to Indonesia (Japan is the number one aid donor, giving \$1.3 billion) conditional on Indonesia leaving East Timor. The coalition also held a demonstration at the Indonesian Embassy in Tokyo and launched a speaking tour of three Timorese refugee women.

- In the **United States**, an interfaith service and demonstration were staged in New York City by the East Timor Action Network

which was formed less than one year ago in response to the Santa Cruz massacre. Showings of *Cold Blood*, the documentary of the massacre, were held in several campuses from California to Rhode Island.

- **Portugal** marked the Nov. 12 with a national day of mourning. Every school in the country held a special debate on East Timor. Members of all parties in the Portuguese parliament spoke up for the rights of the East Timorese. President Mario Soares re-iterated his country's demand for a referendum on independence for East Timor. Peace is Possible planted 271 crosses in a Lisbon park to represent the dead, and published their names in *Lisbon* newspaper ads.

- In **England**, an all-party motion marking the anniversary and calling for the British government to back human rights in East Timor was tabled in the House of Commons. The British Coalition for East Timor organized a candlelight vigil and interfaith service in London and many events in smaller centres around the country.

- **Angry protests** were held all around **Australia**. East Timor's nearest neighbour after Indonesia. The largest demonstrations took place in Darwin and Sydney.

- **Tight surveillance** of activists prevented a remembrance in **Indonesia**, but the underground **Indonesian Front for the Defence of Human Rights** made its position clear with an open letter to visiting Australian parliamentarians signed by co-ordinator Saleh Abdullah. INHRIGHT called for a referendum in East Timor and for aid to be linked with human rights. "Welcome to Indonesia," the letter said, "where workers are forbidden to organize, where political and civil rights are repressed, where detainees are tortured, sometimes to death. Welcome to a country where to speak out and to organize means jail."

- **Nov. 12** was also marked in Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland and other countries.

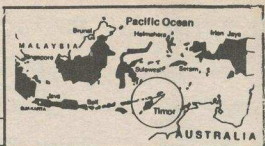
Silent mouths in Timor

Indonesian authorities in East Timor took a hard line to ensure there would be no protests in the territory on the anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre, including a new governor of East Timor. José Abilio Osorio Soares, set the tone by telling an Indonesian newspaper that no-one should have been allowed to escape the cemetery alive last Nov. 12. "As far as I'm concerned, I think far more should have died," he said. "Why did only that number die? Why not all the one thousand?"

Brig.-Gen. Theo Sfyafi, who heads the ten Indonesian battalions in East Timor, is similarly unrepentant. "If something similar to the 12 November event were to happen under my leadership, the number of victims would probably be higher," he said earlier this year.

In the last week of October, at least 1,000 Timorese — some reports say as many as 5,000 — were arrested in house-to-house searches and held for short interrogations. Amnesty International, barred from visiting East Timor in late October, reported that the human rights situation continues to deteriorate. "Torture and ill-treatment of prisoners continues to be both widespread and routine," Amnesty said.

With special permits required to visit the Santa Cruz cemetery and remembrance masses banned by government decree, no commemo-



ration was possible. The silence of the people on Nov. 12, however, was eloquent in itself. "For us the youth, it is an important day, our anniversary," one young woman told a Reuters reporter. "We will remember it but we fear to do so openly."

General flees U.S.

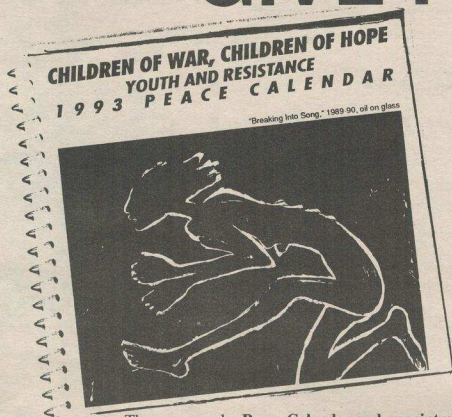
Indonesian general Sintang Panjaitan, who was head of the eastern Indonesian military command (which includes East Timor) last November, has fled the United States rather than face a lawsuit for his part in the massacre. A suit had been brought against Sintang, resident in Boston since he was made the scapegoat for the massacre and dismissed from his command, by the Centre for Constitutional Rights. The centre was acting on behalf of Helen Todd, the mother of slain New Zealand citizen Kamal Bamadhaj, the sole non-Timorese victim at Santa Cruz.

Heap: end aid to Indonesia

Toronto NDP MP Dan Heap has introduced a private member's bill calling on the Canadian government to end all economic aid and weapons sales to Indonesia. In 1991, Canada gave Indonesia \$46 million in aid (third among all recipients of Canadian aid dollars) and made direct military sales valued at \$28,000. Heap's bill is one of many in the House that must be selected from for debate. Letters of support for the bill should be sent to Dan Heap, House of Commons, Ottawa Ont., K1A 0A6 (postage free).

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The ever-popular **Peace Calendar and appointment book** from the War Resisters' League is available from ACT again this year. The theme for 1993 is "Children of War, Children of Hope", and the calendar features excerpts from the writings of young people about their experiences of war and war resistance. Art by Mary Frank, foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.



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