

the ACTivist

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Newspaper of the ACT for Disarmament Coalition • Volume 7, Issue 11 • November 1991 • Pay what you can

Disarmament games

Superpower empires rise and fall, the Gulf War casualties are still being counted while the former Soviet Union dissolves, and the political world continues to tilt wildly on its axis, as the United States and Russia enter into a veritable "disarms race" with each other.

The fate of the Soviet nuclear arsenal was already being called into question as the republics declared their independence. The majority of Soviet nuclear weapons are in Russia itself, but large numbers are also located in Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Ukraine took the first initiative, boldly declaring its intention to become a nuclear free zone and informing Russia it could take its weapons back; it is still unclear whether Kazakhstan intends to become yet another nuclear nation, or what the response of the once-Soviet authorities will be to that.

But all of these questions were overshadowed by the unprecedented announcement by United States President George Bush, on September 28, that he would be making unilateral cuts in the American nuclear arsenal. Cuts announced included all short-range nuclear missiles in Europe and South Korea; all tactical nuclear weapons on U.S. surface ships and attack submarines; and 180 B-1 bombers, 100 B-2 bombers and 450 Minuteman ICBMs, all based in the United States.

Bush also removed U.S. long-range bomber jets from the 24-hour alert which had been permanently in place for the last 40 years, recognizing at last that a sudden Soviet invasion of western Europe is now quite unlikely.

After a brief — probably stunned — silence, Gorbachev's officials announced that they would match the U.S. arms cuts and raise them a test ban. Gorbachev has now declared a one-year moratorium on all nuclear testing in the Soviet Union, and has permanently closed the Semipalatinsk test site, the object of protests for years.

The American Peace Test, which has protested at the equally notorious Nevada test site in the U.S. and worked cooperatively with the Nevada Semipalatinsk Anti-Nuclear Movement in the Soviet Union, immediately called for actions around the country to demand that the United States join the moratorium.

This proved, however, to be one of several sticking points. The
Turn to Dances, page 2



Peace Action 92 ACT sets a new direction

ACT for Disarmament has launched an ambitious new campaign programme for 1992, our tenth anniversary year. Peace Action '92 is aimed at addressing the new world climate following the demise of the Cold war that dominated the eighties.

Despite the "New World Order," the world is not at peace. The need for a strong and active peace movement has never been greater.

Wars still rage around the world, from East Timor to El Salvador. The response of rich states like Canada is not to work for peace, but instead to make a killing on weapons sales to warring countries and massive human rights violators.

The threat of war in Europe is greater than ever, the need for citizen peace initiatives across the former Cold War divide greater than ever.

Companies like General Electric, deeply involved in the military industry, continue to produce nuclear and conventional weapons at tremendous cost to the environment and human life.

People in all countries, from the Soviet Union to the United States, from Israel to Iraq, are persecuted, even jailed, simply for working for peace.

In Canada, the lands of the native peoples, like the Innu of Nitassinan, are increasingly militarized and exploited by the testing of weapons systems and a host of

other threats, 500 years after the "discovery" of the Americas.

Domestic violence, against women, children, lesbians and gay men, does as much damage and claims as many lives as many wars, right here at home.

Peace means more than just nuclear disarmament. We have to

ends its role in the nuclear weapons and nuclear power industry

• **Domestic Violence**, focusing on raising violence against women as a peace issue

• **East-West**, focusing on healing the divisions left by the Cold war and the threat of war in Yugoslavia and other parts of the East

PEACE ACTION



start, right now, to help build a peaceful world.

Six new campaign working groups have been launched by ACT:

• **Native Rights**, focusing on ending the low-level military flight testing that continues over the lands of the Innu people of Nitassinan

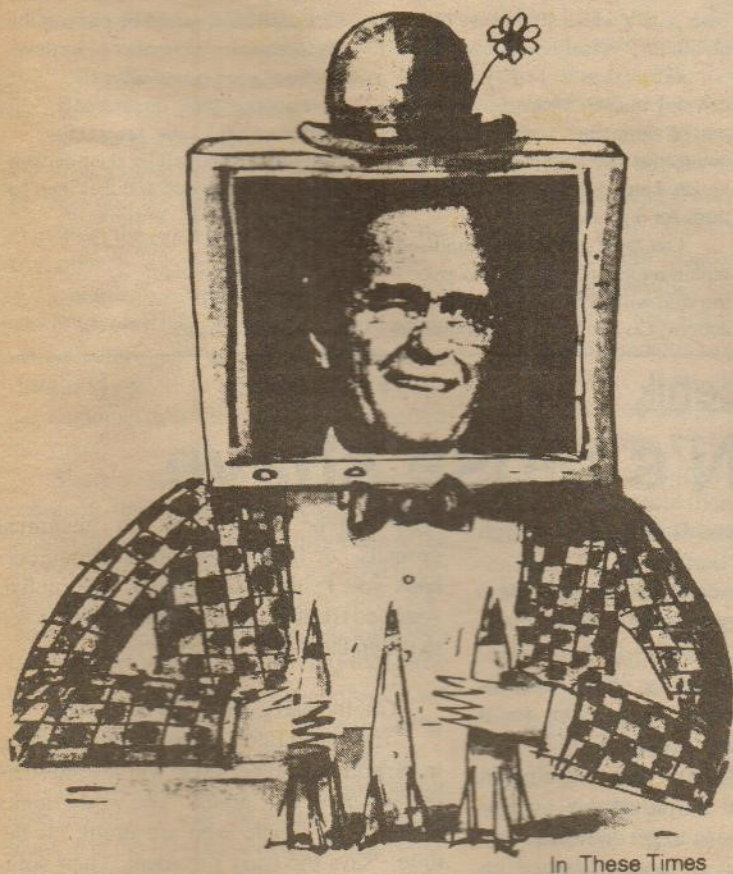
• **Local Wars**, focusing on helping to end the war in East Timor and Canada's support for the Indonesian invaders and weapons sales to Indonesia

• **Prisoners for Peace**, focusing on freeing American and Russian conscientious objectors who refuse to fight for their country's armed forces

• **Conversion/Ecology**, focusing on boycotting General Electric until it

But for all this to be successful, we need your help. ACT is inviting all people who want to work on any of these campaigns to get involved now to make them happen. People are needed for preparing action, regular street outreach, fundraising, outreach to schools, and much more.

Contact ACT for Disarmament if you can help out — or if you just want to know more. Phone 531-6154, or drop by our office in the evening. We're located at the Bathurst Street Centre for Peace and Justice, 736 Bathurst Street (south entrance, through the glass porch). We'll look forward to hearing from you!



In These Times

THE ACTIVIST

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Opinions expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of ACT

Dances with nukes

From page one

United States has refused to consider a moratorium on nuclear testing; they also rejected Gorbachev's proposal that the East and the West jointly declare a "no first use" nuclear policy.

And the cuts, on both sides, still leave the two superpowers with thousands of fully armed nuclear warheads, especially the land-based multiple-warhead missiles which neither side has agreed to cut. The U.S. will retain, among other things, submarines armed with Trident missiles and Cruise-missile-equipped bombers; and plans to develop the Stealth B-2 bomber and the Star Wars system are untouched. It has been suggested that the weapons that are being cut were outmoded and due for scrapping in any case. And certainly the Gulf War proved to anyone's satisfaction that the United States can clobber their enemy of the moment quite satisfactorily with conventional weapons.

Further, Bush has gone out of his way to make sure no one expects a "peace dividend" from all this. Lest anyone suppose that arms reductions might mean more money for social services, national security advisor Brent Scowcroft pointed out that it would actually cost money to deactivate the weapons. And since multi-billion dollar systems like Star Wars are still in the picture, the military budget is not expected to drop.

Nevertheless, very partial and qualified as these initiatives may be, there is still something here to celebrate. It is clear, at least, that the world leaders do not see much political gain in war-mongering rhetoric any more; they may finally be realizing that the world is simply tired of war. This is at least a small step towards a peaceful world (NATO, too, has announced nuclear cuts), and if we continue to make it clear that it is in their own interest to do so, the politicians may yet take bigger steps. For instance, Prime Minister Mulroney could take some initiatives of his own and announce that Canada will no longer allow weapons — from the cruise missile to NATO fighter planes — to be tested in our airspace.

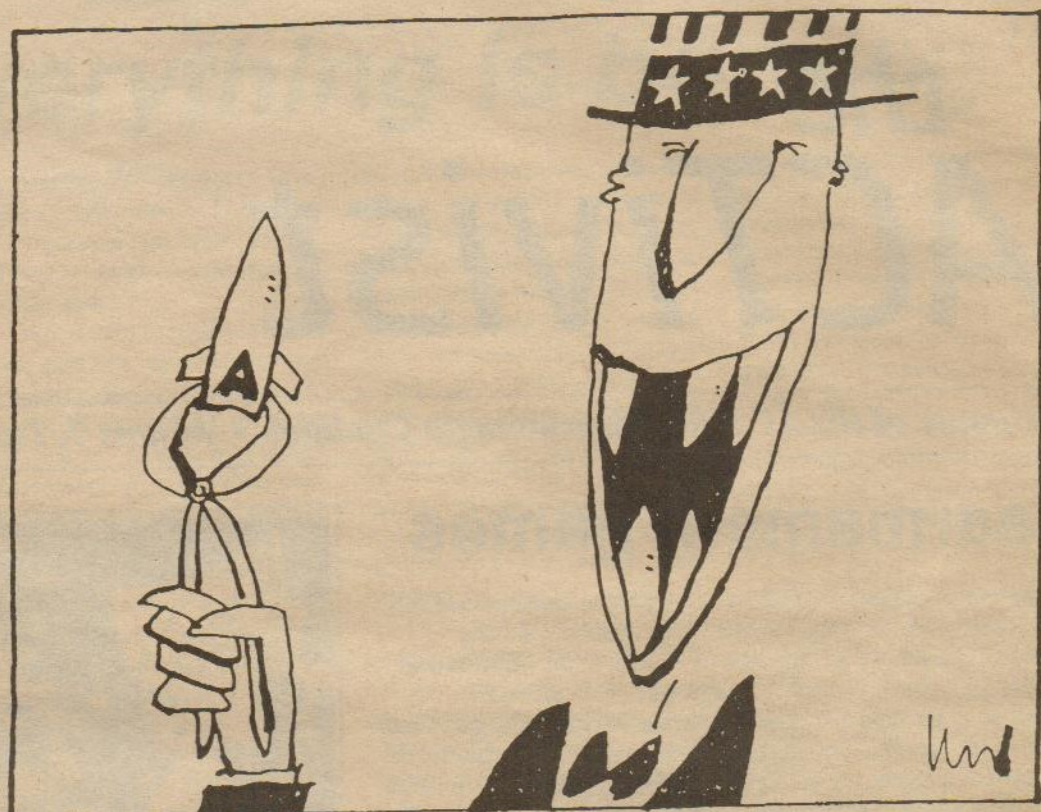
And people — who have nothing to gain or lose but our own lives and our own well-being — can push ever harder, and use the leverage these cuts have provided to move ever closer to a world without war.

— Maggie Helwig

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In the event of another postal strike, The ACTivist will not be mailed out until the strike ends. Paying subscribers will receive missed issues in a bundle at the end of the strike; all others are invited to pick up The ACTivist at one of our more than 50 distribution outlets in Toronto or from your local ACT contact.



Len Munnik/Peace Media Service

Letters



I enjoyed the article "The impossible dream" with the cartoon of President George Bush, in your October issue.

World leaders say they will get rid of some of their nuclear arsenals but keep building and testing new nuclear weapons. Britain is building more nuclear submarines, which are such a threat everywhere they go, and I often wonder if the United States (and other countries) will ever stop testing nuclear bombs and missiles.

Every year the nuclear nations have spent trillions of their taxpayers' money on these weapons — *something which must never be used*, because with all the deadly pollution from just a few nuclear exchanges our whole planet and its atmosphere would be poisoned, eventually killing most of life on Earth. (And the nuclear threat has been no deterrent to war.)

The criminal insanity of the nuclear arms race has been such a nightmare.

The hundreds of trillions spent on these weapons should have gone to farmers, hospitals, and environmental groups.

I wish you all the best in your work and am enclosing a cheque (I hope to give more).

Will try to think positively about Earth being free of nuclear weapons.

Joan W. Burke
Toronto, Ontario

You organised a great IPB conference for which I am very grateful. I found it personally very refreshing and empowering. The wonderful mix of people from such an assortment of backgrounds and interests was something I particularly liked as I come from a country which lacks almost totally any mixture of anything! My only regret was not being able to talk to everyone!

[Afterwards] I received a depressing call from my husband saying that one of the newest U.S. warships was arriving at 5 a.m. the following morning into Cork. This was a major blow to us as we had felt confident in saying that they had stopped because of our ongoing protests during the 80's and we hadn't had any since May of 1989.

The ship was in violation of Irish policy which states very clearly no military vessels are allowed into our ports/waters if: 1) they are carrying nuclear weapons, 2) they are part of a military exercise. On both counts our Government policy was violated and it has serious implications for our neutrality.

Our local group here mobilised within hours and managed to greet the ship with both land and sea actions. On the U.S. side I contacted

as many politicians as possible and got them to send messages of support to our Lord Mayor and City Councillors. People were great ... some expressed shame and anger when they heard our story and many made a commitment to do something about the violation of our airspace, waters and ports by the U.S.

The most positive thing that came out of it was our Lord Mayor of Cork and the City Councillors, for the first time in the history of warship visits, actually passed a unanimous motion calling on our Department of Foreign Affairs to stop the visits. The other consoling point was that the visit of both ships has helped to refocus people's attention on the arms race as the ship in Cork became a national issue for the week it was here.

[Since returning to Ireland] I have been to about eight schools and they are all full of energy and enthusiasm for peace work. We got a phone call during the week from a school I worked with last year and they told us that the students had spent four months working on the project to have their school declared a Nuclear Free Zone and they had succeeded and would be passing the declaration in November ... so there is some 'good news' after all!!!! We have another three city schools working on the same project for Christmas so hopefully their declarations will be passed and the 'inch by inch' process will continue!!!!

Adi Roche
Irish CND
Cork, Ireland

Inside Peace/ by Jo Peacenik

A Lite to the nations, and the UN's close shave

So, world — oops, U.S. — president George Bush is cutting back on his addiction to things nuclear. (Couldn't he go cold turkey? Just say no, George!) A few of his least favourite weapons systems will go. All weapons are equal, but some are more equal than others.

What we have here is arms race lite. Same great taste — but less filling.

What are we to make of the great Mulroney-to-the-United-Nations boondoggle? Our unloved PM, it seems, was in great

demand from the towering intellects on the UN security council, which has the job of reviewing candidates for the secretary general's power seat.

Sane folk heaved a sigh of relief when Mulroney finished in the middle of the pack in a straw vote, trailing such luminaries as an ex-military dictator of Nigeria and a diplomat from top human rights abuser Gabon. Also in the running was Indonesian foreign minister and genocide apologist Ali Alatas.

The decent and capable Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway finished

last, tied with her decent and capable foreign minister. So what else is new?

Meanwhile, friends of the UN ideal gritted their teeth for more embarrassments.

The new darling of the West, Russian president Boris Yeltsin, is spoiling for a fight. With somebody. Anybody.

Reports in a Moscow daily say Yeltsin recently considered a "preventive nuclear strike" against Ukraine to get control of former Soviet nuclear weapons stationed on Ukrainian soil. Nezavisimaya Gazeta noted

drily that he ruled it out on "technical grounds." A little thing called fallout, perhaps you heard about it after Chernobyl. Alarmed Ukrainians, meanwhile, have voted to set up their own armed forces.

Oh, for parties like this in Canada. The Polish Beer Lovers' Party is gaining in the polls and expected to win several seats in parliament this month. "The world thinks of Poles as people who are drunk all the time," says the party president. Their solution? More lite beer, less vodka.

No trespassing

Innu resist bulldozers and bombers

By MAGGIE HELWIG
THE ACTIVIST

It was not so long ago the Innu believed they were powerless, a small nation of "underdeveloped" indigenous people living in the unheard-of territory of Nitassinan (Labrador and eastern Québec); felt that "non-natives always beat the Innu."

That is not so any more.

Since their campaign against the low-level flight testing on their territory, which resulted in the cancellation of a NATO base planned for Goose Bay, the Innu have, through the simple force of their will and the strength of their community and tradition, established themselves as a force to be reckoned with.

Innu Nation president Peter Penashue and his mother Elizabeth, an elder, were in Toronto recently to attend a benefit concert (see below). At a press conference, the two spoke of the current situation of the Innu in their struggle for recognition of their sovereignty. Recently, they have won some significant victories over attempts to "develop" their land for clear-cut forestry.

On September 5, the Innu of Sheshatshit set up a nonviolent blockade to prevent the extension of a logging road on their territory. They erected signs reading "NOT TRESPASSING" — This land has been Innu land since time immemorial. The current generation of Innu people are the living title to this land with the sacred duty to protect it and its bounty for our children for all time," and put themselves in the way of the bulldozers.

"Our position was very clear from the beginning," says Elizabeth, through a translator, "and that is that no development should take place until the land claims negotiations are complete, or an interim protection is put in place. And when we realized that indeed projects were going to be taking place, we blocked the bulldozers and the forestry development from taking place... We asked that an environmental assessment take place on the Forestry Land Unit 19, that's the area that's being proposed for the forestry development. The government promoted and gave licenses to Unit 19 for forestry development, without any consultation with the Innu, the rightful owners of the territory, and also without any management plan in place for the area. At minimum, within their own laws, there should be a management plan in place for that kind of development.

"We wanted to make it very clear to [Newfoundland] Premier [Clyde Wells] that the trees and the land have a different value to us than they have to the Premier and the government. Whereas they see it as wastage if it's not developed, and the value doesn't take place until the actual cutting takes place, we were trying to explain to him that the value is already there because the culture and the continuation of the Innu was sustained by the trees."

Shortly after that, a Newfoundland company that was considering a forestry project in the area spontaneously phoned the Innu Nation Office to ask for a permit to cut birch on Innu land. The Innu, however, decided not to grant the permit, because they felt that there was not enough information on the area, and the potential for environmental damage was too great. The company, consequently, did not proceed with the project.

The success that the Innu are having does not sit well with the provincial government. But the Innu have insisted that no development take place on their land without

proper study, and none at all while their land claim — which they prefer to call Innu Rights talks, since the aim for them is simple recognition of their sovereignty — is in negotiation. They entered the claims process reluctantly, and will make no compromises because of it.

"We said to them, if we're not going to be talking about interim protection, if you're not going to talk about interim protection while we're talking to you, we'll take care of interim protection," says Peter Penashue. "Since then, that's what we've done. They've tried to have a forestry project take place, we blocked it, we stopped it, and it's been cancelled.

"And I get a call from the Premier, he says, you can't hold the province hostage. And I said, you can't disregard the negotiations that are taking place. They have to mean something. You can't just authorize projects left and right, and at the end of the negotiations there'll be nothing left for us. That's not right.

"The bottom line is, in terms of interim protection, there's no one in the federal government, the provincial government, they won't do it. The bottom line is that we have to do it."

As well as forestry, the Innu are concerned about hydro developments in Nitassinan. Though they welcomed, of course, the shelving of the Great Whale/James Bay II project, they fear that this will now mean a

Fire of peace

By SAUL CHERNOS
THE ACTIVIST

Humanity moved a step closer to the Eighth Fire with an exciting concert by 7th Fire and Syren in Toronto October 10.

Syren led off with songs, including Mother Earth, as hundreds of people partook in the festivities, a benefit for the Innu, the Lubicon Cree and the Toronto native newspaper Beedaudjimowin.

Following a dramatic performance, along came the headline band with Allen Deleary, his brother David, Peter Digangi, John Maracle and John Macias.

Flopping about on stage like a fish fresh out of water, lead singer Allen Deleary mixed uplifting antics with powerful lyrics.

The prophecy of the Seventh Fire speaks of a time when a new, light-skinned people emerge and retrace their steps to find sacred ways left behind. If these people are strong enough, the waterdrum will sound its voice and there will be a rebirth of the Anishnawbe people. The new people will be given an opportunity to choose the right roads leading to the lighting of the Eighth Fire of brotherhood and peace.

The audience responded with enthusiasm to the music and the speakers. With 1992 fast approaching, will those same individuals heed the wisdom they applauded and ensure that the appropriate path is taken?



Terence Durrant

stronger push to complete the Lower Churchill dam, which would mean flooding and power lines on Innu territory. Now that Great Whale is on hold, the Québec government may have dropped their previous opposition to Lower Churchill.

And, of course, low-level military test flights go on, still being conducted at the rate of about 8,000 flights year by Great Britain, Germany and the Netherlands. "Last week I had a radio-telephone call from the families in a hunting camp," says Peter, "and they were continuously overflown. And they also told me that a lady who was pregnant had to be flown to the hospital ... It's this kind of continued harassment by low-level flying that's a problem for our people, who practise traditional lifestyle in the country for about six months of the year. That's why it's important to us that low-level flying still be kept in focus, even though the NATO proposal [for a major base expansion at Goose Bay] is scrapped."

The focus for opposition to low-level flights, is now centred on the key date of 1996, when the agreement between Canada and the countries involved in the testing runs out. The Innu stress the importance of keeping the pressure on the federal government, and on the governments of Britain, Holland and Germany, to ensure that when 1996 comes, the agreement is not renewed.

Within the community of Sheshatshit, the Innu are still planning to take over full control of the local school by September 1992, though the provincial government will provide no funding for this. The Innu Nation Health Commission has also opened a Community Clinic in Sheshatshit, which will operate independently of the regional Health Services office. "The opening of the clinic represents another important step in the process of putting self-government into place," says Peter Penashue.

As Sheshatshit Chief Daniel Ashini says, "We would rather not have to spend our days blockading roads and facing jail, but we've had no choice." And, having no choice, they have simply gone ahead and created choices where none were before — choices for themselves, for the provincial and federal governments, and for all of us.

The Innu have chosen independence and their own traditional ways on the land. We can only hope that everyone else will choose so wisely.

Thank you!

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We need your help



Activists getting ready for another demonstration: the annual Spring Protest for Peace at Toronto City Hall.

Jeff Smith



ACT

Phone

Dear supporter,

We need your financial help.

It's been several years since we centre pages of The ACTivist to and we have no one else to turn to. While short, groups like ACT for Disarmament feel the pinch.

That's why we are having to turn Disarmament does not accept government supporters - people like yourself.

At the beginning of 1991, we turned ACTivist, into the monthly publication now. We increased free distribution expanded our coverage of peace and human rights around the world. Meanwhile, the cost of paper skyrocketed because of new postal rates. Now, we need to increase our number of subscribers to at least 1,000 to consider maintaining quality of The ACTivist. Your \$10 donation subscription is welcome; larger donations for peace that much more.

This month, ACT for Disarmament has an ambitious new strategy for our tenth anniversary recognizing the changes in the world since founded (as the Against Cruise Testing 1982. It would be tragic if the peace work and old activists was slowed by a lack of for the work that now, more than ever, needs your support, we can start to build a world community.

P.S. Your contribution really will make a difference. Please donate generously to ACT for Disarmament.

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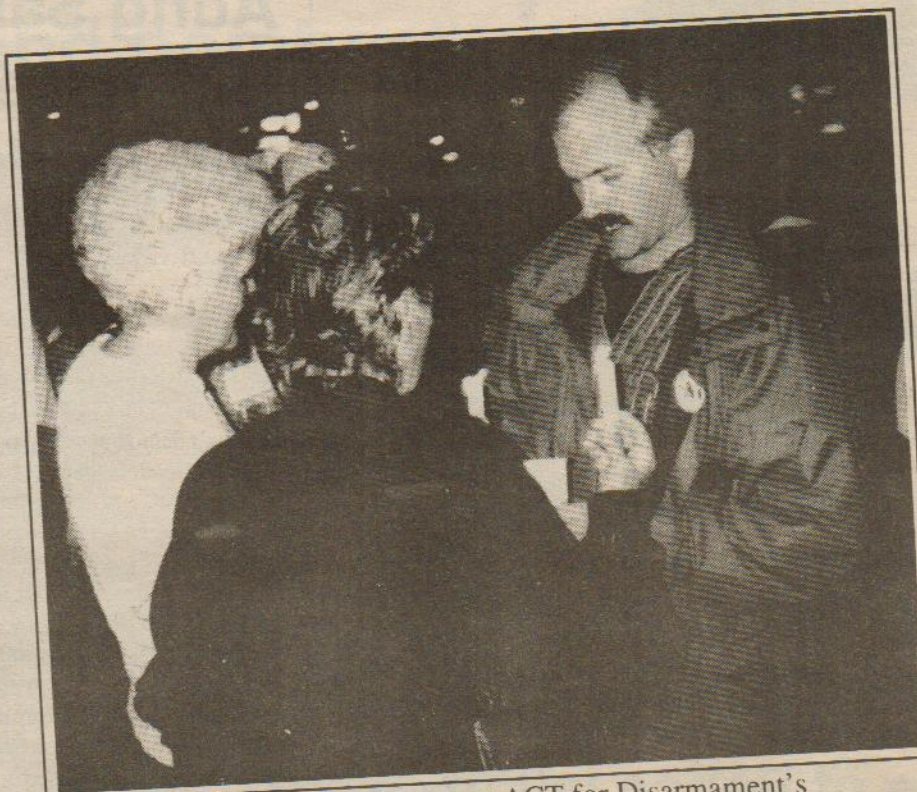
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Mayorality candidate Jack Layton at ACT for Disarmament's
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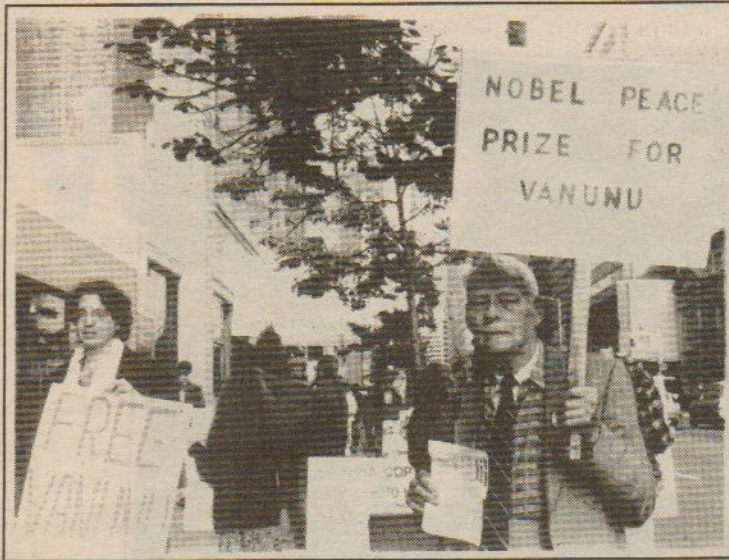
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ACT for Disarmament demonstrated outside the Israeli Consulate on September 30, calling for freedom for Mordechai Vanunu. Vanunu, who blew the whistle on the Israeli nuclear arsenal, was kidnapped five years earlier, and jailed. He is still in prison. (Photo: Vannina Sztainbok)

Voice of Peace jailed

Abie Nathan, a long-time Israeli peace activist, has just returned to jail.

Nathan's crime, repeatedly committed, has been to meet and talk with members of the Palestine Liberation Organization. He maintains that unless citizens can meet face to face, discuss, and negotiate, a fair and lasting peace cannot be achieved. But Israeli law prohibits Israeli citizens from having any contact with the PLO.

Nathan has already served four

months in jail for the same offence, and recently went on a forty-day hunger strike, demanding that the law be repealed. At his trial this October, he was sentenced to eighteen months.

Abie Nathan has not simply met with Yasser Arafat. On his last visit, his talks with the PLO leader led to an official statement that Arafat was prepared to negotiate with Israel and to renounce all acts of violence. Arafat also suggested publicly that the PLO was prepared to recognize the State of Israel. It is such work for peace that has made Abie Nathan so loved and so hated — on his return from the meeting with Arafat, he was met by a crowd of Israeli citizens, some carrying flowers, some carrying nooses (both flowers and nooses were confiscated by the police).

As well as a peace activist, Nathan is a radio personality, broadcasting a pirate station, Voice of Peace, from a ship just outside Israeli waters. The station plays rock music and peace news, and will go off the air while Nathan is in jail.



Classified

Non-violent communication workshops. A model of compassionate communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D., which helps us to make and receive requests, to resolve conflicts, to speak with and listen to one another. We can learn to communicate without violence, value judgments, fear of diminishment or attack. Contact Wendy Simmons at 466-6527.

Introduction to compassionate communication. This workshop will be led by Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D., founder of the Centre for Nonviolent Communication, who will be in Toronto November 13 and 14, 7:00-10:00 p.m., at the Centre for Christian Studies. \$30.00 for one evening or \$50.00 for both. Contact Wendy Simmons at 466-6527 to register.

Work for peace and earn extra cash. ACT for Disarmament is now

hiring phone and door-to-door canvassers. Fundraisers have the option of retaining up to 50 per cent of all monies raised. Call Stephen, 531-6154.

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Stephen Lewis — World Federalist Award recipient — speaks: TOWARD A STRONGER U.N. 23 November. U of T Faculty Club, 7 pm, \$10 (\$50 includes banquet). Tom 944-8671; Bruce 481-4593; Melanie 690-5925. International UN lobby needs Canadian representatives. University education required. Call Tom.

Aung San Suu Kyi, Burmese Nobel Prize winner, feared missing

By MAGGIE HELWIG
THE ACTIVIST

The winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for 1991 probably still does not know she was even nominated.

Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of Burma's democratic opposition, the elected leader of the Burmese government, and a long-time non-violent activist for democracy and human rights, has been under house arrest for two years, kept from all contact with the outside world. Though the Nobel Committee has sought permission from the Burmese government to inform her that she has won the Peace Prize, the government has refused to allow any access to the cottage where she is held. She has no telephone, radio, or other means of contact with the outside world. The last time she was seen was some nine months ago, when she was spotted at a distance gardening outside her cottage. There is some fear that she may no longer be in her home; some even wonder if she is still alive.

Nor has there been any mention of the award in Burma's state-controlled media, but some diplomats fear that, as the news enters the country by unofficial channels,

the brutal military dictatorship called the SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Committee) may crack down even further to repress dissent.

Meanwhile, the World Bank and most of the powerful countries in the world continue to prop up the SLORC. Twenty-five prisoners in a Burmese jail are now on hunger strike, demanding that the World Bank cut all loans to Burma while the SLORC remains in power. When the World Bank did not respond to their letter, seven of the prisoners slashed themselves in protest, and wrote messages in blood on the walls of their cells. World Bank officers would say only that they really hadn't given the SLORC very much money.

In a particularly grim bit of irony, a U.S. State Department official testified to Congress that one of the countries selling military hardware to Burma is Czechoslovakia. It was Czechoslovak President (and human rights advocate) Vaclav Havel who nominated Aung San Suu Kyi for the Nobel this year.

Canada, too, is involved in supporting the SLORC — Petro-Canada is operating in Burma, in cooperation with the junta.

Free Erik Larsen

Erik Larsen, one of the Marines imprisoned at Camp Lejeune for his refusal to fight in the Gulf War, is currently standing trial.

As the Gulf War recedes in public memory, and as the attention of the public turns away from those resisters who would not be sent to kill, their sentences are getting longer — witness the recent

cases of Enrique Gonzales and Yolanda Huet-Vaughn, both sentenced to two and a half years in prison. It is important to send letters of support while Erik's trial is still in progress. Letters can be written to: **The Honorable Les Aspin, Chairman, House Armed Services Committee, Washington, DC, 20515, USA.**

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RUSSIA — The Transnational Radical Party in Moscow has issued an appeal on behalf of two Russian draft resisters, currently in hiding.

Aleksandr Yurievich Chernyaev of Moscow, born in 1971, declared his objection to military service in March of 1990. He explained to authorities that he objected to military service because he could not serve in any structure where unconditional obedience to any orders is required. He was held in a mental hospital for three weeks, where the doctors tried to persuade him to agree that he was 'mentally disabled' in order to avoid prosecution. He refused, and in May of 1990 a criminal case was opened against him for "evasion of military service." He is now living in Lithuania, where he is avoiding all contact with Soviet authorities. He is being searched for, and must conceal the place of his residence. He is seeking political asylum in some country which does not require military service.

Anatoli Borisovich Byahov, born in 1972, is from Kamyshin in the Volgograd district. He refused military service in October of 1990, explaining that he agreed with many tenets of the Jehovah's Witnesses, including refusal to serve in the military. In December of 1990 he was sentenced to two years in prison. He spent several months in prison, then was transferred to forced labour. Three months later he heard that he was to be sent to a prison camp, and escaped. He too is being searched for and must conceal his whereabouts.

Please write to the following addresses, asking for amnesty for Aleksandr Chernyaev and Anatoli Byahov, and asking the compulsory military service be abolished in Russia (as it has been in many of the Republics): **Procurator's Office of the USSR, GSP, Pushkinskaja pl. 15a, Moscow 103793, USSR; Supreme Court of the USSR, ul. Vovrovskogo 15, Moscow 121260, USSR.**

A provision for alternative service in Russia may not be far off. The Supreme Soviet has established a Working Group to draw up draft legislation for alternative service which includes many peace activists. And a recent seminar on alternative service was attended by several Soviet officials and broadcast on Soviet television.

Going with the bullfighter

By ALICE PALUMBO

Toronto's International Festival of Authors has elevated the idea of the writer as celebrity, or at least as spectacular object. Festival Director Greg Gatenby has said that if confronted with two writers of equal gifts, one of whom was "ordinary" and the other "a bullfighter," he'd go with the bullfighter every time. So we, the audience at Harbourfront, get to participate in the idea of the writer as extraordinary being, as actor, as presence.

Nevertheless, a lot of the authors did their best to subvert the idea of themselves as Elevated Entertainers. Marge Piercy did entirely what she wanted when she read, choosing to concentrate mostly on her poetry rather than the novel she was here to promote, rifling through sheets of paper, mumbling, talking to the audience, making the auditorium seem more intimate than it actually was. The iconoclasm of her presence and her poems — "Applesauce for Eve" rejoicing in the Fall from Eden and celebrating Eve's initiative, "Perfect Weather" attacking the plasticine world of network news — made it possible to believe that writing can make a difference in how we live.

Piercy's new novel, *He, She and It*, returns to the science

fiction genre she successfully used in *Woman on the Edge of Time*. The story of an android and his human grandmother, set in a future where corporations run the world (at least, more openly than they do now), and poses questions of individual creation (cut-throat capitalism) versus group creation.

Two later readings, those of Aminata Sow Fall of Senegal and Mohawk writer Beth Brant, illustrated the Festival at its best and worst. Sow Fall is well known in the francophone world, but did not feel comfortable with English. So her reading was given over to a Designated Actor, whose overly theatrical performance was barely adequate. A brilliant, incisive writer was reduced to onstage baggage because she was not up to "performing" at a level the good people of Toronto have come to expect.

But I would recommend Sow Fall's novel, *The Beggar's Strike* (the only one of her three novels available in English) to anyone. This story of a public health official's attempt to clear the streets of beggars surmounted translation and a bad reading to amaze the listener.

Beth Brant, on the other hand, speaks and writes in English, and read brilliantly from her collection of stories, *Food*

and *Spirits*. The story she chose to read, "Swimming Upstream" is about a half-Mohawk woman whose son — taken from her because she is a lesbian and hence "an unfit mother" — has recently died, and who struggles with grief and her attempts to overcome alcoholism (Alcoholics Anonymous proves unhelpful, but a vision had while watching salmon fight upstream finally frees her). Brant made the audience feel the things she wanted them to feel. It's literature as power, as tool for change.

It's readings like Brant's and Piercy's, and the presence of Sow Fall, that give me hope for the festival.



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Yugoslavia: "Everything is burning"

By MARKO HREN

Slovenian peace activist Marko Hren sent the following article when he returned from the 1991 International Peace Bureau conference, hosted in Toronto by ACT for Disarmament. The second part of his account will appear in next month's ACTivist.

The plane I took from Vienna to Toronto — to participate in the International Peace Bureau (IPB) conference — was full of emigrants from Croatia. We all got visas at the Canadian embassy in Vienna. The embassy in Belgrade is too difficult to reach — connections with Belgrade almost don't function and a few days ago telecommunications were also cut.

It is estimated that more than 200,000 people in Croatia have left their homes. Most of them have moved to other parts of Croatia or to Slovenia; many Serbs have flooded into Serbia, and many Serbs as well as Croats have joined their relatives or friends from previous waves of emigration to North America.

The Canadian Embassy in Vienna is far from showing sympathy to a Slovenian travelling to Canada. They ask many questions, despite all the documentation showing that I have no intention of staying in Canada. "For four days only?" And my passport is full. I argue that it is difficult to obtain a new passport because of the non-cooperation between ministries at the republic and federal level.

"And who is this Stephen Dankowich signing the invitation?" Stephen is involved with ACT for Disarmament and has a good record with the Canadian and US intelligence services. One of the best activists — his personality, skills and knowledge are a real example. I love him. But it seems that the Canadian Embassy doesn't.

Finally I got the visa with a comment that they had made a real exception. There was one more check when I passed through Canadian customs at Toronto airport — a half-hour investigation which at the end was said to be an anti-drugs routine. They ask about ACT again,

and I'm really proud for them — it seems they have done such a good job that everyone knows them.

The officer asks me if it was bad over there in Yugoslavia. My answer is that it is also bad in Canada — what difference does it make if it is a Canadian or Yugoslav officer investigating you. He answers he was not a militarist but only doing his job. OK, buddy. I get the impression that Canada doesn't want to hear about struggles for independence and one can understand it. Canada has too many of its own: indigenous people and Québec are all on the list of those seeking more autonomy.

Toronto is hot and humid these days. All the public services seem to be on strike, which makes the city even more hot. I had to ask myself what made me come here. The cost of travel is high, but I thought it might be good to respond to several requests from the organizers for one of our group to join the conference.

It is really difficult to choose priorities in these times. There are so many meetings all over the place: people want to understand or at least hear more about what is all of a sudden going on in Yugoslavia. At the same time, there is much to do at home. Everything is burning and the fire is impossible to stop.

I ask myself so often these days why a peaceful "revolution" was possible in the Soviet Union and what has made it impossible in Yugoslavia. There are only two answers I can find. First, Yugoslavia always had a military culture, with strong patriarchal patterns: there was no education for peace and no pacifist tradition. Second, Serbia and (to a lesser extent) Croatia are extremely unlucky having incredibly bad leaders (read "warriors"). In the Soviet Union, a decisive factor was probably that there was a relatively moderate leadership in all the crucial republics and in the personality of the federal president.

On my first morning in Toronto, the Globe and Mail and Toronto Star had Croatia on the front page. Stipe Mesic, the current president of Yugoslavia, has declared that the military is carrying

out a coup; EC observers have declared their mission failed; the fighting has got heavier; the federal military is openly on the side of Serbian troops.

Whenever I have gone abroad in the past few years, something dramatic has happened in Yugoslavia. When I was in New York three years ago, my friends from Mikro Ada (a computer cooperative) were put in a military prison, and that was the start of rapid changes. Three years? Is it true, that three years passed so quickly? It must be since my son Ram is two and a half now, and he was not alive at that time.

A year ago, when we were in Sweden, for a War Resisters International social defence conference, the military for the first time seriously intervened in Slovenia, occupying the territorial defence headquarters in Ljubljana. In May

this year, when there was a Helsinki Citizens Assembly seminar in Venice, there was the first military confrontation in Maribor, Slovenia, and the first civilian victim.

It is a strange feeling — being far away for a couple of days and knowing that you are returning to a much more uncertain reality at home. When I think about these conferences abroad, I remember all those warnings and appeals we made — and unfortunately it is all becoming true, more than we could ever have imagined.

During the IPB conference we passed a resolution recommending UN member states to find ways of activating UN mechanisms in connection with Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union (in other words, in the multi-state states which are disintegrating). At first the participants voted against discussing the

UN and Yugoslavia as the UN has no mandate to get involved in "internal affairs". But after people heard from the Canadian newspapers that Yugoslav federal institutions no longer work and that the EC had failed in its mission, they dedicated 10 minutes to draft the resolution.

My additional argument was that it would be a lost opportunity if the peace movement was not among the first calling for the internationalization of the conflicts. It sounds crazy but a few days after the IPB conference, the Canadian government was the first to demand that the UN should get involved in the Yugoslav crisis. Who knows, perhaps the IPB even inspired the Canadian government. The whole word seems to be under magical influences, why shouldn't the peace movement try some?



November Peace Calendar

- November 6** — Toronto Region General Electric Boycott Committee meets, 7:30 pm, 761 Queen St. West. Meeting will be followed by a showing of the video "Deadly Deception" at 9:30
- November 9** — Women's meeting to plan a conference on violence against women as an issue for the peace movement, 12 noon, 622 Shaw St. Potluck lunch, all women welcome.
- November 11** — Remembrance Day
- November 13** — ACT for Disarmament General Meeting, 7 pm, ACT Peace Centre, 736 Bathurst St. (basement)
- November 20** — Poetry reading with ACT members James Deahl and Maggie Helwig, Partisan Gallery, 1140 Queen St. W.
- November 27** — ACT for Disarmament General Meeting, 7 pm, ACT Peace Centre, 736 Bathurst St. (basement)
- November 30** — Petition blitz for Dr. Yolanda Huet-Vaughn, prisoner for peace, 12-4 pm. at locations around the city
- December 1 (Prisoners for Peace Day)** — Petition blitz continues, 12-3 pm, followed by a rally and demonstration at the City Hall Peace Garden at 4 pm, proceeding to the US Consulate. Free Yolanda Huet-Vaughn and all prisoners for peace!
- December 6** — Commemoration of Montreal Massacre. International day of protest against violence against women.
- December 7** — 16th anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor

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