

Peace News

FOR NONVIOLENT REVOLUTION

In cooperation with War Resisters' International

It was expected to be a messy birth. Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tadzhikistan, and Turkmenistan became formally independent between 25 and 28 December, as the federal institutions of the USSR ceased to exist. The need for at least some sort of continuity with the old regime led to the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), a body of dubious and ill-defined — mainly defence-related — functions. Within one week, this new body had fallen into conflict over control of the Black Sea fleet; below, NIKOLAJ KHRAMOV looks at some of the implications of this conflict.

Meanwhile, the assumptions on which the West's nuclear "deterrent" have been shaken. The USA has been increasingly forthright about its willingness to use the nuclear threat against any state, regardless of its nuclear status. On page 12, MILAN RAI looks at the West's past use of the nuclear Big Stick.

Dead dinosaur or sleeping dragon?

NIKOLAJ KHRAMOV

We cannot underestimate the danger of processes which are now going on in the former Soviet Union in connection with the role of the Soviet Army within the newly formed Commonwealth of Independent States.

The controversy around the Black Sea Fleet shows very clearly the tendency of the army to take its own political decisions, without reference to those taken in Moscow and Kiev. Leonid Kravchuk declares that the Black Sea Fleet has to belong to Ukraine, because almost all its ships were built in Ukraine and Ukraine now covers almost all the expenses connected with the fleet. For his part, Boris Yeltsin affirms that the Black Sea Fleet "was, is, and will be Russian".

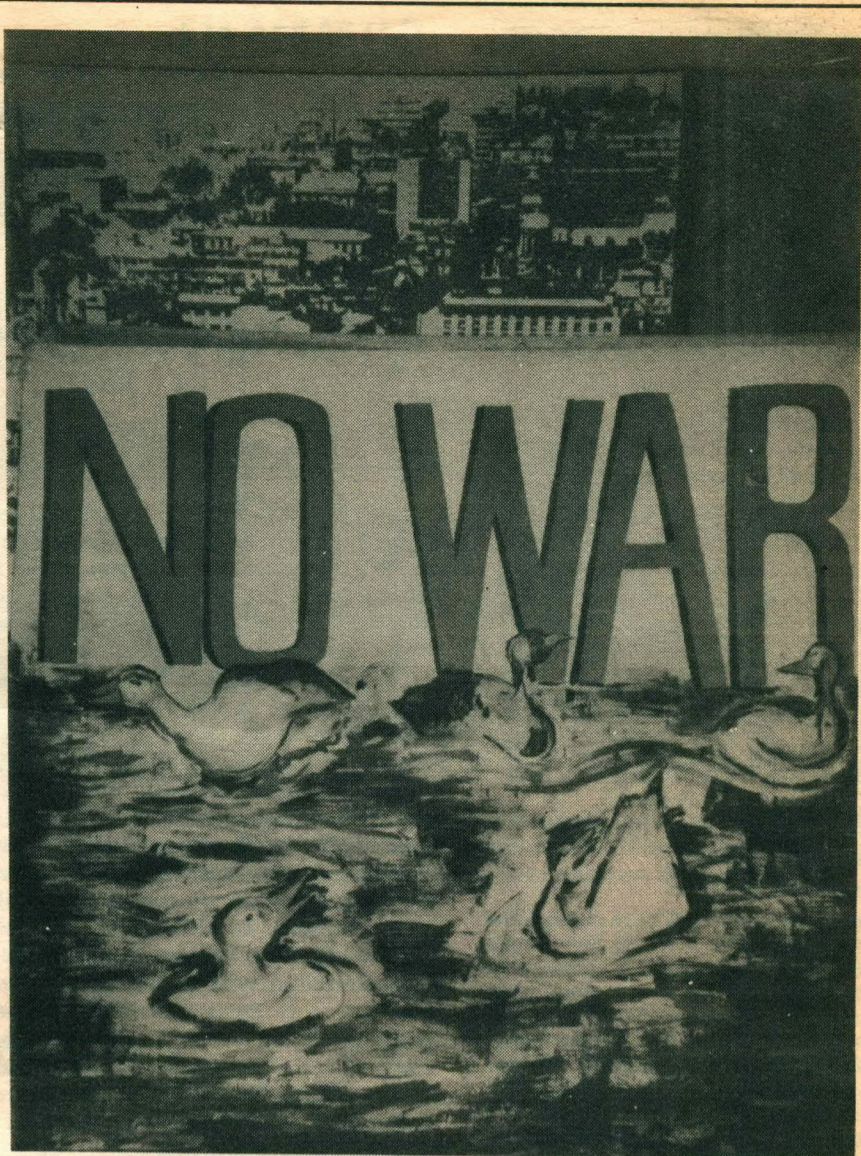
The best-known democratic politicians, such as St Petersburg mayor Anatoly Sobchak, paid similar homage to the "Great Russian" nationalist syndrome. The Russian TV programme "Vesti" noted that the West has watched the navy debate unfold "with incomprehensible indifference". Of course, the military and patriotic outburst by the Russian people to defend the Black Sea Fleet against Ukrainian "privatisation" is almost comical against a backdrop of empty shop counters and pensions which take the shape of 2 kilograms of cheese. But the fact that in this situation the state is still building aircraft carriers at Novorossiysk dockyards is no longer a mere anecdote; it is more like a crime. Behind it all is a "guns and butter" approach to Russia's economic crisis. Give them the guns, and they'll forget that there's no butter.

It seems, however, that the strong initial positions of both leaders does not rule out an eventual consensus. They have already agreed to negotiate on the division of the fleet; chances are that a settlement giving 30 per cent to Ukraine and the rest to the CIS joint command and Russia is imminent.

But what of the third side in the conflict, the military? There are no guarantees that they — the Soviet Army and defence minister Shaposhnikov — will accept a compromise reached over their heads by civilian politicians. Appeals by the military officers of the Leningrad and Odessa military districts to defend the unity of Armed Forces by all possible means have already been published. The demonstration by Communists, national socialists, and out-and-out fascists in Manezhnaya Square, Moscow, on 12 January drew about 50,000 par-

ticipants; among them, the number of military uniforms was very noticeable. The All-Army Assembly of Military Officers, which could provide the personnel for a new putsch according to many journalists and observers, will take place in less than one month.

Of course, we can amuse ourselves by the idea that the cunning fellow Yeltsin is playing games with Russia's "national patriots". But where and when will he cross the line that separates him from the likes of Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic? Moreover, some of those around him — like the butcher of Afghanistan and "hero" of Checheno-Ingushetia Alexander Ruts koy — are already now quite capable of this role. And who knows, how many helicopters with EC observers will it take to cover the vast tracts of land between Moscow and Kiev?



HOWARD CLARK

Over three weeks in December and January, WRI coordinator HOWARD CLARK visited anti-war centres and peace activists in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Slovenia, and the Serbian "autonomous provinces" of Vojvodina and Kosova. In a special four-page supplement beginning on page 5 inside, he reports on the movement to stop the war — and to begin the challenging process of reconciliation and reconstruction.

In this month's information-packed *Peace News*:

One year on from the Gulf War, a look at nuclear coercion

Palestine: has the *intifada* had its day?

South Africa: does De Klerk need objectors' help?

East Timor: Aussie supporters open *al fresco* embassy

El Salvador: peace at last, and now what?

Northern Ireland: parallel peace initiative starts up

Plus four pages out of ex-Yugoslavia: community peacemaking in Kosova, the Good Soldier Canak in Vojvodina, petitions in Serbia, and much more

If undelivered return to:
Peace News, 55 Dawes St
GB- London SE17 1EL

REGISTERED NEWSPAPER — FIRST CLASS

Nan Cross
Johannesburg C056
PO Box 591
KENGRAV 2100, SOUTH AFRICA

2351: See P.2.

By air mail
Par avion



Peace News
55 Dawes Street
London SE17 1EL, England

Peace News is now produced in cooperation with War Resisters' International (WRI) and incorporates the former WRI Newsletter.

tel: +44 71 703 7189 (all depts)

071 703 7189 inland

fax: +44 71-708 2545

071 708 2545 inland

email: (on GreenNet) gn:peacenews
(peacenews@gn.apc.org or peacenews@gn.uucp)

Editorial and production worker:
Ken Simons

WRI staff are:

Howard Clark, Chris Booth, and
Caroline Pinkney-Baird

PN promotions worker (freelance):
Jennifer Doherty

This month's contributors:

Charles Bester would still be in prison if the SADF had had their way! He now works with the End Conscription Campaign in Johannesburg. Nan Cross is national coordinator of Conscientious Objector Support Groups in South Africa. Rob Fairmichael is coordinator of INNATE, the Irish WRI affiliate. Juley Howard is an anti-nuclear and indigenous rights activist, now living in Bristol. Peter D Jones is a WRI vice-chair, soon to move from Canberra to Tasmania. Nikolaj Khramov is a former member of the Moscow Trust Group. A February 1991 PN article by him, "It is raining in Moscow", accurately predicted the August putsch. Alessandro Marescotti is a member of Associazione per la Pace Taranto. Mil Rai was editor of the *Gulf Crisis Weekly*, London. Andrew Rigby is author of *Living the Intifada*, recently published by Zed Press. Sigrid Shayer is active in Women for a Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific, and writes to us this month from Whangarei (Aotearoa).

Thanks this month to Radhika Holmström, our willing proofreader, and all Yugoslav friends.

Deadlines for PN 2352 (available from 21 February)

Display and classified ads 10 February
Events 12 February
News and letters 12 February

Deadlines for PN 2353 (available from 21 March)

Display and classified ads 10 March
Events 12 March
News and letters 12 March

ISSN 0031-3548. Published by Peace News Ltd (registered address 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1; typesetting, editorial, and production 55 Dawes St, London SE17). Printed by Amersham Press, Amersham, Bucks. Copyright © 1992 Peace News Ltd. Permission to reprint unsigned items WITH CREDIT is given to non-profit groups sharing PN's aims; otherwise contact author or artist through PN. Peace News is indexed in the Alternative Press Index.

COMMENT

Requiem for the intifada?

ANDREW RIGBY

The excitement generated by the peace talks in Madrid between Israel, the Palestinians, and the Arab states has dissipated. The third round of talks has been and gone, with no apparent movement on substantive issues. The determination of right-wing partners to withdraw from the Likud-led ruling coalition in Israel — because they feared concessions would be made to the Palestinians — makes a general election likely. This in turn means that we can expect no further movement in the formal peace process for two or three months. By then Bush will be absorbed in the US presidential election campaign, with domestic issues to the fore — so there is unlikely to be any significant leverage exerted on Israel to make concessions from that quarter. All in all the immediate future looks very bleak for the Palestinians.

The pressure on the members of the Palestinian delegation from their own constituencies is intense. They are finding it increasingly difficult to justify their continuing participation in what seems to be a futile exercise of talking peace with Israel — while the expansion of settlement activities continues, another 12 Palestinians face illegal deportation, and the conditions of occupation become increasingly oppressive.

Although the Palestinians have been careful not to allow the Israelis to provoke them into walking out of the talks, pressure from within the occupied territories might force their withdrawal. But if the Palestinian leadership responds to such internal pressure, what alternative options are available? What other forms of pressure, other than diplomatic, can the Palestinians hope to exert on Israel at this juncture?

Some place their hopes on a revival and intensification of the *intifada*, but this reveals a lack of realism. It is over four years since the uprising began. For the first two years it could be characterised as a genuinely mass movement of civilian resistance which boosted Palestinian morale and generated international support for their cause. Since 1990, however, the resistance has become more "professionalised" with

groups of youths continuing to clash with the army while the majority of folk focus on survival rather than active resistance. Since the Gulf War their plight has worsened dramatically. They are tired and weary — and disillusioned.

In such circumstances, and in the context of the re-emergence of factionalism within the resistance movement, there is no immediately foreseeable likelihood of reviving the *intifada* along the horizontal axis of mass unarmed resistance. A more likely outcome is escalation along the vertical axis — in the direction of armed resistance. Indeed, over the past few months we have seen an increase in the incidence of armed attacks on Israeli settlers and soldiers. The perpetrators of such acts undoubtedly have as part of their agenda the sabotage of the peace talks, but they are also responding to the disillusionment and frustration that is widespread throughout the occupied territories.

To understand the limitations of the *intifada* as a resistance movement, it is necessary to focus on three crucial factors:

- Since 1987, the Palestinians have tried to impose nonviolent sanctions on Israel by, among other things, withdrawing their cooperation and their labour from the service of the occupier — only to discover that Israel has a surfeit of labour, with the influx of Soviet Jews, and can manage well enough with only a fraction of the Palestinian labour on which her economy used to depend. At the same time, the Palestinians have discovered the depth of their dependence on Israeli goods and services, so underdeveloped is their indigenous economic base and associated infrastructure; a dependency intensified with the loss of external financial support after the Gulf War and the expulsion of Palestinians from Kuwait. Within such circumstances, the impact of nonviolent sanctions against Israel has been severely curtailed. Indeed, it has become increasingly clear that the Palestinians have suffered far more from their commercial strikes and related sanctions than have the Israelis, their intended target.
- Another factor that helps to explain the limited impact of the *intifada* has been its hybrid character. It has not

been a *nonviolent* uprising, but neither can it be truly characterised as a *violent* one. Rather it can be described as *unarmed* — in the sense that for the most part lethal weapons have been eschewed, although it is true that on occasions stones and petrol bombs have caused death and that lethal weapons have begun to be used with more frequency. However, insofar as it has been neither truly nonviolent nor violent, it has exercised a contradictory influence on the Israeli public in general and the Israeli peace movement in particular. The Israeli dove who is moved by the image of a Palestinian nonviolently confronting the evil of occupation can just as easily be aroused to fear and anger at those responsible for inflicting injury and even death on fellow citizens. The result is the perpetuation within the Israeli collective psyche of the siege mentality, and the perception of the Palestinians as fundamentally threatening — with a corresponding determination not to weaken in the face of pressure, violent or otherwise.

The most significant factor explaining the relative failure of the *intifada* to dislodge the occupier has been the reluctance of the international community in general, and the USA and Europe in particular, to exercise the leverage on Israel necessary to make the exchange of territory for peace a sufficiently attractive option compared with the available alternatives. In the final analysis, it was Bush's refusal to endorse the loan guarantees which forced Israel to the talks.

The only way in which the Palestinian leadership can resist the pressures for an intensification of violent resistance is by their being able to show that the policy of restraint is producing results. The vital test will come on 23 January, when the US Congress is to reconsider Israel's application for \$10 billion in loan guarantees, money which everyone knows will go to the further colonisation of the occupied territories. The outcome of this vote will have a crucial impact on the prospects for peace in the Middle East.

Andrew Rigby's *Living the intifada* was published by Zed Press in November 1991, price £10.95. Don't wait for the review in March's Peace News — get your copy now!

Whites-only call-up embarrasses government

CHARLES BESTER and NAN CROSS

As South Africa enters a time of negotiation to bring about a non-racial democracy, certain telling anomalies remain in place. One of these is the system of "whites only" conscription.

Control of the security forces remains — along with the state radio and television — the government's strongest source of power during the transition. At the same time, the call-up is a growing source of political embarrassment to a government which still claims that apartheid is legally dead while maintaining a racist system of conscription. Indeed, conscripts can claim to be help-

ing the government by refusing to obey a law which is a hangover from apartheid ...

Much of the local media came out strongly on the side of the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) during the January call-up by calling for the immediate abolition of compulsory service. The government responded by saying that the system is still in place and objectors will be "followed up". The ECC called their bluff by challenging them to prosecute the many who are not serving, noting that in June 1991 charges against three objectors were dropped, and that since then the state has declined to prosecute any objectors.

At the same time, some groups on the far right were saying that their young

conscripts would refuse to serve unless they could be used to "protect their own people". However, it seems more likely that most young right-wingers would (and do) welcome the opportunity to get free military training — in a country where the barrel of a gun is still seen by many as the only solution to political problems.

The SADF claims that the response to this year's call-up has been 90 per cent so far. The ECC disputes this figure, saying that on its past record the SADF is "prone to lie", and estimates the true figure to be somewhere around 50 per cent.

Both before and during the call-up period, the ECC office was inundated with calls from anguished conscripts

and parents seeking advice. Some wanted clarification of their position beforehand, and chose to refuse, while others sought to get out after answering their call-up and spending a few days in uniform.

While we don't underestimate the strength of the state and its underhand use of the security forces as a dangerous factor in the transition, we believe that when it comes to the call-up, the government is a grumpy dog that has lost its bite. What remains to be done now is to get rid of its foetid breath.

End Conscription Campaign, PO Box 537, Kengray 2100, South Africa (tel +27 11 836 8423; fax 834 3189)

Outdoor embassy for East Timor in Canberra

PETER D JONES

Following the 12 November massacre at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili (*Peace News* December 1991) the Australian Coalition for East Timor and the local Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Trades and Labour Council began a picket of the Indonesian embassy in Canberra, and established an "East Timor embassy" at the front gate.

On the anniversary of Indonesia's 1975 invasion of East Timor, people from the East Timorese community in Australia joined church leaders in planting a tree at the "embassy"; this now grows alongside crosses marked with the names and ages of those who died during the massacre.

The Indonesian ambassador has made frequent objections to the presence of the picket and the "embassy", which is staffed 24 hours a day by a rota of volunteers from Sydney and Canberra. After a stone-throwing incident by Indonesian embassy officials, during US president George Bush's 2 January visit to Canberra, the Australian authorities made the picket move about 20m up the road.

Police also said they were afraid that the angry Indonesians — deprived of their

rubbish collection and other deliveries by the picket, as well as irked by the sight of banners and flags supporting Fretilin and the UDT (the armed and unarmed independence movements, respectively) — might shoot at the picket. The shooting of a policewoman at the Libyan embassy in London in 1985 was cited as a precedent.

The ambassador continued to protest against the picket, invoking a clause in the Vienna Convention on the "impairment of the dignity of the Embassy". On 16 January, Australian foreign minister Gareth Evans ordered the picket to move again, this time across the road and further away. However, the flags and the "embassy" were to be allowed to stay on a vacant lot and police assisted demonstrators in moving the crosses there.

Evans admitted that he had been under great pressure from the Indonesians and could stand it no longer, although the ACT attorney-general — a fellow Labor Party politician — said that Australia's "cherished" principles of freedom and democracy should not be given up merely to appease another nation.

Australian Coalition for East Timor, PO Box 2543, Canberra ACT 2601 Australia



MICHAEL RANDLE

Meir Vanunu looks through the bars behind a life-size photo of his brother, Mordechai, on 22 December at a vigil in London against the 18-year sentence. A further vigil is planned near the Israeli Embassy in London on 26 January (see "Events")

Putting NATO in the boot

ALESSANDRO MARESCOTTI

NATO is planning a new strategic base for Taranto, the port on the "instep" of the Italian "boot". Nuclear and environmental risks to the people of Taranto are increasing, but the local peace movement has begun to respond as details of the Alliance's plans begin to emerge.

NATO's plans for Taranto have been kept secret for many years. The first inkling of what was going on came in August 1990, with a report in *Il Manifesto*. Since then, the progress of this "secret" project has been carefully monitored.

Dredging has begun at the new naval base, about 3km from the old, non-NATO, Taranto base, in the town's outer harbour. Another "secret" concerns military projects in and around the village of Grottaglie, including an assembly plant for the nuclear-capable Harrier jump-jets which will be based on the Italian aircraft carrier *Garibaldi*.

NATO's plan is for an integrated defence industry on Europe's southern flank. The military benefits of situating

such a concentration of bases and ancillary industries around Taranto are clear — Italy claims the whole of the Gulf of Taranto, up to and beyond the international 12-mile limit, as territorial waters.

The peace and environmental movements in the region have drawn attention to the risks which come with a concentration of nuclear-armed ships and aircraft on their doorsteps. Some of these risks have already been seen; in November 1975 the USS *Belknap* caught fire in the nearby Ionian Sea, flames nearly reaching the ship's nuclear warheads.

The Italian constitution provides for the use of arms only in the defence of national borders. In opposing Taranto, the peace movement has highlighted the offensive — and unconstitutional — purposes to which the new base is designed to be put. With the USA making thinly-veiled threats of another air strike against Libya, the prospect of a nuclear-capable fleet based in one of Continental Europe's nearest ports to North Africa is hardly reassuring.

Associazione per la Pace di Taranto, via Liside 28, I-74100 Taranto, Italy (+39 99 303686)

Recruiting problems for NZ nuke safety committee

SIGRID SHAYER

New Zealand's National Party government has finally named a four person special committee to examine the safety and environmental risks of nuclear-powered warships (*Peace News* January 1992).

The country's popular 1987 anti-nuclear legislation bans nuclear-powered or armed vessels from entering New Zealand harbours and effectively prevents US warships from paying visits. US president George Bush has recently stated that he wishes to see a quick return to normal US/NZ relations now that his government is removing nuclear weapons from surface vessels.

The committee was first mooted after New Zealand prime minister Jim Bolger returned from a meeting with Bush in September 1991, but the 23 December naming of its membership was more than a month overdue. Fran Wilde, Labour Party disarmament spokesperson, said the reason for the delay was that some people had declined to be appointed "knowing their findings

would be used as part of the government's political agenda to let nuclear ships in". Polls say 73 per cent of New Zealanders want no change.

The committee is comprised of three senior academics specialising in nuclear physics, marine science, and engineering risk assessment, and will be chaired by a retired appeal court judge. Its report should be ready in about four months' time; the government has said that it will not, however, be bound by its conclusions.

The committee has taken as its starting point a similar review by the Australian government in 1989. Visits are still allowed there, but Sydney, with its dense population, is out of bounds.

Regional councils in New Zealand are examining whether they could legally challenge a possible nuclear-powered ship visit using environmental responsibilities under the Resource Management Act.

Women for a Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific, c/o Jill Hawkey, Flat 2, St Michael's Centre, Desmond St, London SE14, England

Little good news in new Cypriot CO law

"Cypriot conscientious objectors will no longer be jailed under a new law passed by the House of Representatives in December" announce some of the news agencies. Don't you believe it!

The new law offers objectors the alternatives of 34 months of unarmed service

in military camps or 42 months of civilian service (military service is 26 months). It also has a clause to exclude mass applications in the event of a state of emergency or general mobilisation.

Since independence in 1960, Cyprus has imprisoned some 200 objectors. And the new law will make hardly any difference to the likelihood of more objectors being imprisoned.

CO update: Back in the CIS

Despite the 25 December resignation of Mikhail Gorbachev, which marked the USSR's formal end, cases against young men who objected to compulsory military service in the Red Army are continuing. Alexander Pronozin (*Peace News* July, September, and November 1991) appeared at Sovietski District Court in Moscow on 27 December for a 90-minute hearing. He is defended by Henry Reznik, director of the Bar Institute and a member of the Moscow Helsinki Group, and by public defender Lt-Col Anatoli Pchelincev, who works with Alexander on the Russian republic's parliamentary working group for a new military service

law. The initial hearing — in a courtroom packed with journalists, COs, and anti-militarist supporters — lasted just 90 minutes. The trial will resume on 7 February.

Alexander has actively sought a trial since May, when he gave himself up to the authorities after publicly defying his call-up orders for more than two years. He sees an open trial as the most effective means of highlighting the continued failure of Russian law to acknowledge the right to conscientious objection.

Alexei Skopin is a Ukrainian CO who remains in prison for refusal to serve in the military, despite his republic's recent inde-

pendence and the growing political storm over who controls ex-Soviet forces and hardware on Ukrainian territory. He is a member of the "True Orthodox" church and the Transnational Radical Party, and argues that — regardless of whether he is held under Soviet or Ukrainian law — under Article 18 of the International Declaration of Human Rights, his right to freedom of conscience has been violated.

Alexei Skopin, Geroev Stalingrada prospekt, d.148"V" kv.72, 310096 Kharkov, Ukraine
Representative on Human Rights, Supreme Soviet of Ukraine, Kirov Street 28, 252000 Kiev, Ukraine

Right: Women commemorating the Gulf War with a 72-hour vigil, 15-17 January, outside the Foreign Office in London. Ten women were arrested and charged with "obstructing a police officer" (not this one) and "obstructing the highway". They appear in Bow Street Magistrates Court on 30 January.

N Ireland initiative to hear unheard voices

An additional battalion of British troops has been sent to Northern Ireland and there are renewed calls for internment without trial in response to the latest IRA bombing campaign. The draconian security measures of the early 1970s served to punish whole Catholic communities in Northern Ireland and strengthened the IRA. To repeat these measures now would be to play into the hands of the IRA.

Here ROB FAIRMICHAEL describes an initiative for a citizens' peace process which would break the deadlock of party politics. Unlike the governmental talks, Initiative '92 would involve non-party groups and would not exclude parties such as Sinn Finn connected with military groups.

Many people used to think that Northern Ireland was a European fossil, an anachronism from a distant past. The winding up of the iron curtain and the winding up of iron rule in Eastern Europe has revealed many more European situations of ethnic and national conflict. Some of these, as in ex-Yugoslavia, are boiling much more furiously than the Irish conflict.

There is a universal problem with conservative guardians-of-the-holy-grail-of-political-rectitude, a tendency usually represented to varying degrees by political parties. For some, lives and limbs are subordinated to what they consider to be political purity. Are these people so unsure of their own identity that they stick to a political model of "each to their own kind", increasingly unsuited to a pluralistic world?

How do we get past these "guardians"? In Northern Ireland, opinion polls have consistently shown that the people — the inhabitants of the statelet — are more progressive on issues such as political cooperation and integrated education than the political parties.

Consensus voting systems

Another attempt (unrelated to Initiative '92) to break out of adversarial patterns of community relations has emerged in a recent study of electoral "democracy". The Western democratic model is now woefully out of date, a 19th century model of democracy in a late 20th century world. Majority rule, as a definition of democracy which sweeps aside questions of minority rights, appears to hold more

in common with the ancient Greek *polis*, which included freemen while excluding slaves and women. Are minorities to be "slaves" in a modern formally-democratic state?

One interesting approach to constructing a new model of democracy is given in Peter Emerson's *Consensus Voting Systems* (Belfast 1991). This is the "preferendum" or multiple-choice referendum, developed by

On the other hand, some political leaders are prisoners of their more reactionary followers. They dare not step out of line because if they did, their heads would be on the metaphorical chopping block. How, then, when vested interests are in maintaining a conservative attitude to change, can change be facilitated?

One approach is just getting underway in Northern Ireland. Named "Initiative '92", it is an attempt to mobilise popular voices that go unheard, and to shift the logjam of party politics. One Initiative '92 leaflet talks of aiming for "the widest possible input, not only from political parties and individual politicians but also from groups within 'civil society' traditionally outside the political process." Other material speaks of avoiding taking input merely from the intellectual "chattering classes", who already have plenty of outlets for their views.

Submissions will be taken until July on social and economic as well as legal, judicial, and constitutional issues. There will be a paid secretariat, part of whose job will be to ferret out submissions from community and other groups, plus around seven commissioners (names not yet announced at time of writing) from Northern Ireland and elsewhere.

Hearings will be held throughout the North. The commission's report will be in two parts, the first on evidence received and the second an "analysis of this evidence and such options and recommendations as it sees fit to advance, to such bodies as appropriate".

The principal figures behind the initiative include Robin Wilson, editor of *Fortnight* magazine, and Simon Lee, professor of jurisprudence at Queen's University of Belfast. If Initiative '92 does no more than put the skids under politicians to prove themselves against a non-party political initiative, it will have been worth many times the £250,000 budget (mainly from independent trusts). Even that would not mean a "solution" to the Northern Ireland situation, but it could be a step on a chosen path. We need to make that step.

Initiative '92, Box 92, 2 University Rd, Belfast BT7 1NH, Northern Ireland.

Emerson with Northern Ireland (and other communities) in mind. While not necessarily an end in itself, such a model could be used to develop political approaches and serve as a step on the road to consensus.

Consensus Voting Systems is available for £2.50 from Rhubarb Cottage, 36 Ballysillan Rd, Belfast 14, Northern Ireland.



CAROLINE AUSTIN

El Salvador: beginning the transition to peace

JULEY HOWARD

In an historic agreement signed on 17 January, Salvadorean president Alfredo Cristiani and representatives of the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLN) called off the fighting which claimed 90,000 lives over 11 years and brought El Salvador a savage reputation for human rights violations.

The armed forces, once lavishly funded by the US administration as a bulwark against Communist expansionism, now face budget cuts, the loss of its three police forces (including the death squad linked Treasury Police), and an eventual reduction from 60,000 to 30,000 troops. Ironically, young men of conscript age are now in great danger of being press-ganged into the army — not because they are needed to fight, but because army officers, who lied about troop numbers in order to pocket extra pay, are now worried about being found out.

In the countryside, there is relief that the fighting has stopped but a tremendous amount of reconstruction work remains to be done. In November, I went to Northern Morazán in El Salvador and visited the community of Ciudad Segundo Montes. The people here fled the area in 1980 and lived in exile in a refugee camp in Honduras for nine years. Eventually they felt that the time had come to return. They describe what they found on their return as a "wilderness".

In a year they rebuilt the essential services they had come to count on in exile — health, education, child care centres, drinking water, electricity, barns, pottery, rope, tin and mechanical workshops, carpentry shops. New provisions included transport, shops, communal eating places, a bank, a radio station, livestock projects, and a brick-making project, among others.

The community made a deliberate decision to go back to Northern Morazán rather than to the designated resettlement areas. By living their everyday lives within the war zone they hope to help bring more peace and stability to the area.

The town is named for one of the Jesuit priests killed in the 1989 massacre at the University of Central America, who in his time had referred to the community in exile as "an alternative for the poor of El Salvador".

In 1989, the government launched an offensive, ostensibly against the FMLN, who effectively control Northern Morazán. For a fortnight the military terrorised the people, firing into their homes, rounding them up and shooting above their heads and at their feet, and throwing tear gas canisters, mortars, and grenades. The soldiers — who included members of a battalion responsible for the 1980 El Mozote atrocity, where 1200 in a nearby village died — threatened to massacre the community. Food and diesel supplies were turned back. Several people were injured, and one woman lost her baby. Five hundred chickens, suspected members of the FMLN, were killed.

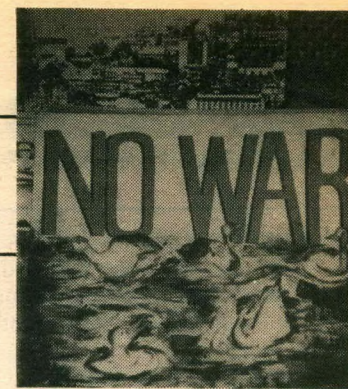
While I was at Ciudad Segundo Montes, the firing and bombing continued in the background as the armed forces tried to gain as much ground as possible before a peace treaty was drawn up. The Red Cross drove through the settlements to collect and take the dead and seriously injured away to the north.

Two women from Segundo Montes took me to Perquin, a small town to the north, which had recently been retaken by the military. They showed me the cooperative and other buildings which had been ransacked and occupied by the soldiers. Murals on the walls of the church, representing the Jesuits killed in 1989, had been whitewashed over by the military and propaganda for the ruling right-wing Arena party was pasted up. The streets were full of youths lolling over their guns, with very few civilian men to be seen (all the people I was introduced to in Perquin were women). Two boys had just been taken by the military — nobody knew where they were being held.

Special permission is officially required to enter Northern Morazán. This is difficult and sometimes impossible to obtain. The object of this policy is to keep out international delegations, particularly from international human rights organisations — the government does not want the international community to see or hear what it is doing in the conflict areas.

Despite continuing problems and government harassment, however, the people I spoke to were optimistic that the peace treaty would be honoured by both sides. Recent reports from El Salvador suggest that, although there are difficulties, this optimism may be well founded.

Over the next four pages of this issue of *Peace News*, HOWARD CLARK reports from the republics and autonomous provinces of former Yugoslavia. Contact addresses for many of the region's anti-war centres appear on page 9 of this issue; or get in touch with WRI at 55 Dawes St, London SE17 1EL.



Poisonous wounds of war

“Vukovar is the truth of this war”, a friend in Belgrade had said. It's a town formerly of 60,000, whose population is now 2,000. Families, both Serbian and Croatian, have left their homes to go to other parts of the country: most still hope to return. It's where Serbian troops have killed each other as they loot the town; it's where pigs are said to have grown fat on human corpses.

I did not get to Vukovar nor anywhere else to see the physical destruction wrought by this war. The wreckage of lives appals — the dead, the maimed, the bereaved and the homeless, bombed buildings and ruined homes. But in a war with so many references to past wars, where all that is ugly in Croatian and Serbian cultures has been reborn, you cannot fail to be aware of the other levels at which war wounds and scars and poisons.

The soldier's war

I did take the bus to Vukovar but, not having official press accreditation, I was ordered off it by Yugoslav military at Šid, 30km away. Šid was swarming with soldiers. The photshop window had a display of soldiers with their weapons. The selection of postcards was meagre: one featuring a Serbian soldier from 1914-18, another of a military monument. Perhaps the street stalls didn't have more war toys than the ones in Belgrade, but somehow I felt that they did; in my imagination too the plastic imitations seemed more like the real thing.

At the JNA military press centre, a wall was covered with photos of dismembered bodies; they gave me a book in English illustrated with similar pictures. Every question I asked there, even about rival gangs of JNA soldiers opening fire on each other as they looted Vukovar, was turned into an oppor-

tunity to tell me of some alleged Croatian “ustashe” atrocity.

This hatred is the fuel of future atrocities and future wars.

The train from Šid back to Belgrade was crowded with soldiers, mostly drunk and rowdy. I knew they'd been in miserable conditions. I knew of many instances of soldiers rebelling against the army on their return from the front. I knew too of soldiers becoming trigger-happy, of them taking grenades home with them, and of how they passed their time at the front making long, murderous knives.

Most of them won't talk about the truth of their war for a long time, perhaps never. At the front, many soldiers seem to be perpetually drunk. A Red Cross official later told me about how scared he felt passing through military checkpoints where gun-waving drunks scoff at the red cross symbol. Nenad Canak (see article page 6) told me that the ration of spirits for four men in his unit was one and a half litres per day.

Back in their home towns, people comment that soldiers returning from the front are often withdrawn and seem depressed. But then there are more alarming stories, for instance from women who work with SOS Telefon, the counselling service for battered women. Nowadays a threat is as likely to be backed up with a gun or even a grenade (available for just 10 deutschmarks on the Belgrade black market) as a fist.

Weapons are treated so casually that staff at one school in Kragujevac didn't question the teacher who asked the army to supply him with a variety of munitions to exhibit to his class. When he banged a shell on his desk and it exploded, it was fortunate that he was the only person killed, although two pupils were injured.

A war on Croatia's future

By the time I arrived in Croatia, the current truce was in force and was more or less holding. Even people who reasoned that this ceasefire too would fail could not suppress a feeling of optimism. When an EC helicopter was shot down by the JNA, at least there were no air raids — and for this relief much thanks. Over the Catholic Christmas, no bombs had been dropped on Zagreb — instead, and not for the first time, JNA jets had broken the sound barrier flying over the city, driving thousands of people into the shelters. What need is there to drop bombs if you can terrorise the population, disrupt their lives and create untold stress, merely by flying a circuit round Croatia faster than the speed of sound?

The main goals of the JNA and the Serbian government in this war have not been to prevent Croatian secession, nor even to gain possession of towns. Far from protecting Serbs in Croatia, the war has made those who live in mixed communities more vulnerable. Normally in war, it is a retreating not an occupying army which destroys bridges, yet in Croatia 16 of the 21 bridges destroyed were demolished by the JNA. And if Serbia wanted to claim the tourist riches of Dubrovnik, why bomb 15 of the city's 18 hotels?

The war in Croatia has been a war to punish Croats, to brand them as enemies and to weaken the new state. Whatever human rights violations committed by the Tudjman government, whatever aspirations for territorial expansion they have proclaimed, whatever the state-building role of war, the people of Croatia have been under attack. The independent anti-war movement has therefore had to develop a long-term view. The Anti-War Centre Zagreb takes up some immediate questions, for instance through their

telephone counselling, and makes its presence felt through publishing *Arkin*, holding public discussion meetings and organising messages for the “peace door”. But they are also equipping themselves for the long haul of reconciliation and reconstruction after the war. They will face a society not only with a swollen military but where paramilitaries and even death squads now proliferate; where there will be mass returns of refugees to destroyed homes; where there will be missing people to be traced, hostages to be returned, kidnappers to be identified; where a legion of stories — and some will be true — of barbaric atrocities between Croats and Serbs; in short, where the seeds of hate will find a rich soil.

The next war

The most obvious dangerpoint where the war in Croatia might spread is to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Already this region is suffering from the war, with a massive influx of refugees combined with reduced supplies, particularly of fuel. Its inhabitants sometimes regard the region as a “little Yugoslavia” and the Sarajevo Peace Centre celebrates its long tradition of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, Jews and Turks, Muslims and Christians, Orthodox and Catholic. But there are pockets of territory which neither Milosevic nor Tudjman has renounced the right to annex and where there is virulent feuding. Western Herzegovina already supplies troops for both sides in the war in Croatia.

But, except in Slovenia, everywhere I went in former-Yugoslavia, and also in Macedonia which I did not visit, I heard more or less plausible explanations about the danger of war spreading to their terrain. Some were along ethnic lines, some were about a split between the two camps in the army — Serbian nationalists and Tito-style Yugoslav socialists.



Women for Peace adopt Picasso. Groups of “Women in Black” hold vigils every Wednesday afternoon in Belgrade and Pancevo. Contact via the Anti-War Centre in Belgrade and Peace Movement in Pancevo (addresses on page 9)

HOWARD CLARK

How to stay sane during an insane war

As you obviously need to be informed, listen only to the absolute minimum of news. When doing so, try to choose sources which can be trusted at least a bit (maybe B92 or Studio B radio programmes). As we live in conditions of absolute control over the media, try to draw your own conclusions; the best thing would be if you could hear “the other side” to compare. Try to avoid the main news, especially TV Belgrade, TV Novi Sad or the 3pm news on Radio Belgrade 1.

Whenever you hear a terrifying piece of information, or see a horrible picture on TV, take a deep breath and slowly breathe out. Repeat it several times until you feel better. Try to avoid TV news, especially when they are showing horrifying scenes of massacres.

Try to listen to all the arguments that someone brings up; do not confront them directly because you will only reinforce their own beliefs by doing so. Try to make them doubt their own arguments. Your answer could be that the war can only make things worse and not better. Show them that there is a possibility to choose. War is not a choice — only peace can be a choice. No conflicts can be resolved by force. Force activates resistance and everything just becomes worse.

Whenever you hear a general remark like “Croats are genocidal people!”, try to remember somebody who belongs to that nation and their good qualities. Keep in touch with people of different nationalities. You can find out something about the problems of the other side by talking with them openly.

Show your solidarity to other people everywhere: in the house where you live, among the people who are with you on the same bus. That way you not only will feel better but you will also be encouraging people around you.

Keep in mind that there is a huge media war going on, a war which is difficult to resist and which keeps destroying your personality. The ultimate goals of this war are to make people accept their ideas, to make them frightened in order to stop all forms of organised resistance. It is better for you to go for a walk or to talk with your friends than to sit in front of the TV.

Choose cheerful, bright colours for your clothes. Try to spend at least one hour every day thinking about the positive solution to the situation you are in. This will encourage your optimism and it will be good for people around you.

There is always “the other side” of the problem. If you know nothing about the point of view of others, you cannot ex-

pect them to understand you. There is no such thing as the one and only truth.

Your positive action represents a possible way out. Talk as much as you can about the possibilities for peace. Many people are against the war but they do not think that peace stands a chance. If you manage to encourage them and to explain why is it important that they personally do something against the war, our chances for peace will get gradually bigger. It is now that these chances are greatest. Have a peace slogan on you, on a badge, for example.

We refuse to be miserable because that is not what we are!

If you are a man, do not let others demoralise you by calling you a coward if you use your own head, want to survive, and do not want to become a killer and if you do not agree with the reason or the need to make war. You have the right to defend your ideas; including the one saying that war is unnecessary, that nothing is accomplished by it and that it will bring nobody any good.

If you have your own ideas about peace actions, try to gather people who share your opinion and start the work together.

Centre for Anti-War Action, Belgrade.

Collection Number: AG1977

END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of a collection held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.