

See also supplement on Irish action for peace in the Gulf

INNATE

NONVIOLENT DAILY NEWS

All the news that will fit on two sides!

Belfast, 19 March 1991

CORRYMEELA SUMMERFEST; LIVING FOR A CHANGE

Corrymeela's biennial extravaganza of religious, social, political and cultural events takes place this year at Ballycastle from Friday evening 28th June through to the following Thursday, 4th July. There are residential and non-residential options. The programme is now available from; Corrymeela House, 8 Upper Crescent, Belfast 7, phone 325008.

COOPERATION NORTH 'PEACE FOR IRELAND' CAMPAIGN

Cooperation North (and Cooperation Ireland as its sisters in Britain and the USA are called) have launched a 'Peace for Ireland' campaign; it was launched by the 4 leaders of the largest churches in Ireland in mid-February and was having its initial climax around St Patrick's day. While it does have a fundraising aspect (money raised would go to QI's exchange type work between people and groups North and South) it also "seeks, not to change people's loyalties or people's deepest roots - it seeks instead to change people's HEARTS". It is intended as a worldwide campaign with particular emphasis on the churches of the English-speaking world. Cooperation North; 7 Botanic Avenue, Belfast BT7 1JG, ph 321462; 37 Upper Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2, ph 610588.

PEACE PEOPLE UPDATE; OPEN DAY, WELFARE, KILCRANNY

The Peace People are organising an open day at Fredheim on Saturday 11th May which will include stalls and displays from a number of different groups in addition to themselves, plus videos and information; it will all be happening from 10 am - 10 pm. The Peace People are hoping to extend their welfare programme with prisoners' families; if you'd be interested in helping with babysitting, organising socials and trips contact Bileen Bell, welfare worker. Meanwhile 4 people from Youth for Peace and 4 from Corrymeela are travelling to Holland with the aim to bring closer links between the two organisations and compare lifestyles and culture here and there. Kilcranny House, the Peace People farm outside Coleraine, has a new project worker, Anne Cummings, from the start of April, replacing Fernando Cordovez running the centre and developing programmes. Finally, summer camp applications for 15 - 17 year olds can be made to Paul Smyth. Peace People, Fredheim, 224 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 6GE, phone 663465.

OBSERVERS OBSERVE OBSERVING

The first meeting of the INNATE working group on observing (as a nonviolent response to crowd and other situations of potential violence) will take place on Tuesday 16th April in the library of Fredheim, 224 Lisburn Road, Belfast; anyone interested welcome. If interested but unable to attend please contact INNATE (address & phone at end).

WOMEN TOGETHER GET IT TOGETHER

Women Together, a long established women's peace movement in the greater Belfast area, now has groups in Craigavon, a second group in East Belfast, Bangor, and in Newcastle (Go Down); previously existing groups are Finaghy, East Belfast, Lisburn and Greenisland. Meanwhile Women Together have received 11,000 entries for their children's 'Poem for Peace' competition (entries are now being judged). Women Together, 224 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 6GE, phone Belfast 662753.

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF CONFLICT

The Centre for the Study of Conflict, based at the University of Ulster, Coleraine, has published its annual report covering the year to August 1990. This includes a list of the twenty externally funded projects based in the Centre, and a list of publications associated with the Centre. Seamus Dunn took over as director of the Centre in January 1991, replacing John Darby (who continues to be involved but whose main commitment is developing an international Ethnic Studies Network). The annual

report is available from the Centre for the Study of Conflict, University of Ulster, Coleraine, BT52 1SA, phone (0265) 44141 extension 4666.

TURNING BACK THE STREAMS OF WAR

'Turning back the streams of war: an exploration into religion, gender and violence' will take place from 24th - 26th May at Emmaus House, Swords, Co Dublin, organised by the outreach programme of the Mount Oliver Institute in Dundalk. Resource people will include Rosemary Radford Ruether and Mary Condren. This will explore the role of religion in arriving at a position of being on the brink of nuclear destruction, the relationship of the construction of femaleness and maleness to this, and grounds for hope in emerging movements worldwide. Costs are £90 residential, £40 non-residential (plus meals). Details from: Outreach Committee, Mount Oliver Institute, Dundalk, Co Louth, phone (042) 71235.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL TRAINING

The Belfast-based Community Relations Council produces an excellent training programme covering a wide variety of useful topics including prejudice reduction, human rights education, facilitating political discussion, sociodrama, conflict and mediation skills, anti-sectarian work, cultural traditions etc. Contact: Fergus Cumiskey, Training and Support Officer, Community Relations Council, 6 Murray Street, Belfast BT1 6DN, phone Belfast 439953.

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING FOR NONVIOLENCE

'De Exeditie' ('The expedition'), a centre for nonviolence training based in the beautiful old Dutch town of Amersfoort, is organising another English-language international training for nonviolence from 17 - 24 August. Rob Fairmichael writes about last year's training in Dawn Train 10 and enthusiastically commends it. Cost variable from 275 - 425 Dutch guilders (about UK£86 - UK£133). Further details from De Exeditie, Schimmelpenninckkade 30, 3813 AE Amersfoort, Netherlands, phone 033 - 753001, or from INNATE. It is intended for people who already have some experience working for social change; facilitation by Magda van der Ende and Abel Hertzberger.

WAR RESISTERS INTERNATIONAL TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE - PEACE ON THE MOVE

The 20th WRI Triennial conference will take place from 28th July to 2nd August at La Mariagne, near Namur, Belgium. Nonviolent activists are expected from 30 countries and all continents; the open conference runs for the first 4 days and is a great opportunity to get in touch with people committed to nonviolence and creating a world without war and oppression right around the world. INNATE is affiliated to WRI. Further details from WRI Triennial, 55 Dawes Street, London SE17 1EL, England.

PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL - SRI LANKA VISA REFUSALS

The future of the PBI/Peace Brigades International work in Sri Lanka has been put in jeopardy by problems in getting their 7 volunteers' visas extended. PBI has been working mainly in the south of the island in a situation where many thousand people have disappeared in the violence there. PBI is asking people to write or send telexes in support of their work. Information can be had direct from PBI (Joy Boustred), 1A Clarendon Place, Halifax HK1 5EF, England, phone (0422) 351386 or from INNATE.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: LEARNING AND DOING

'Development cooperation: learning and doing through trade relationships' is the title of a special development education weekend as part of the world conference of the International Federation for Alternative Trade. It will take place in Kilkenny from 26 - 28 April (the overall event is from 23 - 28 April). Details from Carol Bergin, Newtown, Newpark, Kilkenny, phone 056 - 63733.

HILDEGARD GOSS-MAYR RECEIVES NIWANO PEACE PRIZE

Hildegard Goss-Mayr has been awarded the eighth peace prize of the Niwano Peace Foundation based in Japan, an inter-faith prize for furthering world peace through interreligious cooperation. Hildegard is known in Ireland for her visit and work, along with her husband Jean, 3 years ago (also 30 years ago!). In accepting Hildegard Goss-Mayr said it belonged to all women and men committed to justice and peace through the power of active nonviolence; she spoke of the necessity of believers in the world religions overcoming the forces of death at this crucial moment in history.

----- Nonviolent Daily News is produced by the Belfast networking group of INNATE (an Irish Network for Nonviolent Action Training and Education), 16 Ravensdene Park, Belfast BT6 0DA, phone Belfast 647106. Short items welcome for possible inclusion! Send postage to receive this newsheet and/or further information on INNATE.

SMALL BUT RESILIENT

A round up of positions, events and statements, compiled by Rob Fairmichael

Irish opposition to the Gulf War, both before and during, was small but resilient in the face of overwhelming propagnada in the media and from western governments that war was the only way to get the Iraqis out of Kuwait. Events were generally small but it is interesting to note the often favourable public reactions to opponents of the war in Belfast, a difficult city for any brand of peacemakers.

Many people had no wool pulled over their eyes by the American and British disinformation machines which could portray what proved to be a 1 to 500 killing ratio (1 USA & allies life lost for at least 500 Iraqi lives) as a policy of 'saving lives'. The peace campaign was, as usual, accused by right wingers of being anti-American - this despite a highly disproportionate number of Americans living in Ireland involved in the campaigns for peace in some places!

This article merely seeks to summarise, in a fairly cursory manner and without any pretence to be comprehensive, some of what was going on around the country in the broad based campaigns and political scene.

Initial statements from many groups condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Gradually peace and green groups began to warn of the dangers of war. A Pax Christi (Ireland) statement at the end of August, as well as condemning the invasion and welcoming UN intervention, said; "Concern should be expressed at the obvious double standards of the big powers - the U.S., the U.K., France, Germany and the Soviet Union - particularly in regard to their silence on the fate of minorities in countries such as Indonesia, or Tibet or indeed the Palestinians on the West Bank of the Jordan who are held hostage by the United States-backed Israeli occupying forces."

Over time broad-based peace campaigns emerged in Belfast, Cork, Derry and Dublin including peace groups, some trade unionists, some religious groups and figures, green groups and some politicians, and in various degrees the smaller socialist groups who in some instances (Belfast, Dublin) had their own umbrella organisations as well. Relations between the broad-based campaigns and the socialist groups varied though there was sometimes tension over the perception that some groups were more interested in promoting their own particular ideology than in cooperating with others in a larger cause; and in fact some of the socialist groups supported Iraq as the 'anti-imperialist' side.

As deadlines drew nearer, so action became more concerted. Numbers remained small; the maximum at any event would have been around the 1,000 mark in the case of a Dublin demonstration organised by the Gulf Peace Committee there. In Belfast several hundred attended a candle-lit vigil for peace; other vigils for peace were held elsewhere, including Armagh. There were weekly demonstrations or vigils in Dublin, Belfast and Cork, and daily vigils in Belfast and Derry once war broke out. Groups in Waterford and Wexford also organised activities.

A series of vigils and a demonstration were held at Shannon, organised by a local group with support from elsewhere, one demonstration was attended by a couple of hundred people. There was a late night vigil as US Secretary of Defence, Dick Cheney, and General Colin Powell stopped for refuelling en route to Saudi Arabia; a letter was given to security men to pass on to them.

Shannon had become a focal point regarding the Irish Republic's stance in relation to the Gulf. The government permitted military overflights as normal and re-fuelling to or from the Gulf. There were 704 overflights and 24 landings in November; 857 overflights and 15 landings in December, numbers perhaps double on the similar period the previous year. In addition, some US forces passed through on civilian aircraft.

The government pretended that this was merely in support of the UN and did not affect Irish neutrality. Article 28(3) of the Irish constitution states that "War shall not be declared and the State shall not participate in any war save with the assent of Dail Eireann." Fine Gael, Labour and the Workers Party all claimed that assent was necessary for overflights or refuelling at Shannon, Fianna Fail and the Progressive Democrats disagreed (though Fine Gael supported refuelling).

When it came to the vote in the Dail, all except Labour, the Workers Party and the Green deputy (2) in all against 122) supported the war. Charles Haughey said the government policy on Shannon was not participating in a war but merely "a policy decision in the field of external relations." Other commentators felt that neutrality was overridden by obligations to the UN. Having spoken of war as "unavoidable", Charles Haughey admitted a fortnight later that sanctions had not been given enough time. Around the time of the vote in the Dail two women and one man shouted anti-war slogans from the public gallery before being escorted out.

SDLP deputy leader Seamus Mallon was one of 57 Westminster MPs who voted against the British government in relation to the forthcoming outbreak of war (the others were Labour MPs and Welsh nationalists).

An 'Irish Times'/NRBI poll in the Republic, published on 26th January, showed 61% support for UN military actions; 70% identified Saddam Hussein as the prime cause of the war, 15% blamed western oil interests and 9% blamed President Bush. Of the 69% who felt Ireland should be neutral, 27% were in favour of providing refuelling facilities at Shannon. Women were more in favour of peaceful options than men.

Attention was also drawn to the Gulf Peace Team which had Newry man Mark Chapman as a member. The Cork based campaign, including CND there, had links with the Gulf Peace Team too. Cork also had a 'Women against war' group active, associated with another group in Dublin.

In Belfast a 'Statues for peace' group gave some of the statues a hand to 'come out' for a nonviolent resolution. Unfortunately the group, which also did shadow painting on the streets, came up against Belfast security and one person was arrested climbing up Queen Victoria outside City Hall.

The day the war started, Santa Claus appeared at the US Consulate in Belfast contrasting the 'peace and goodwill' of a month previously with the current 'obliterate then' approach. Nobel peace prize winner Mairead Maguire spoke to the US Consul and began a 40-day liquids only fast.

Four Christian peace groups issued a statement in Belfast pointing to the absoluteness of the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill'. Pax Christi and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, in a statement prior to the outbreak of war, analysed the situation in terms of Christian thinking on the 'Just war' and pointed out that war would not be in accord with this doctrine which was, they said, in itself a departure from the nonviolence of the early church. A statement from the Nonviolent Action Training project, Belfast, outlined some of the stages necessary in conflict resolution and pointed out that none of these had been tried.

With the exception of a few Catholic bishops, church leaders had nothing much to say or where they did, as in the case of Northern Protestant church leaders, it tended to be in support of the war. Archbishop Cahal Daly spoke out well, saying "The terrible destructive capacity of modern weaponry makes it impossible to apply the criterion of the Just War"; and also "We begin to talk of surgical strikes and we forget about the gore and the grime and the mangled bodies on the ground, as well as the misery and fear inflicted on innocent people which is an unavoidable consequence of modern weapons, however precise they may be thought to be." Bishop Eamonn Casey contrasted the criminal waste of resources caused by the war compared to dealing with the appalling famine in Africa. Cahal Daly pointed out that the cost of one Stealth bomber would provide grain for 2 million starving Africans for a month.

There was some trade union backing of peace campaigns. Terry Carlin of the Northern Irish Committee of the ICTU spoke at a Campaign for Peace in the Gulf press conference in Belfast, along with Jack McDowell of the Green Party. Belfast Trades Council organised an information day and the ICTU organised an outdoor public meeting in Belfast in support of the Campaign for Peace in the Gulf. Greens from North and South, and from various organisations as well as the Green parties, warned of some of the ecological disasters that could happen through war - some of which came to pass in fact.