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# The Intruder

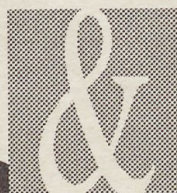
Year 1, No. 2  
October 1991

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### Media for Peace

The Intruder is riding the Arc, the Arc rides the Intruder. Both are riding the keyboards. Towards more awareness of peoples power to abolish the roots of war. The current issues of **THE INTRUDER**, a paper (in English language) of *The Movement for The Culture of Peace and Nonviolence* in **Ljubljana** and the **ARCzin**, a paper (in Croatian) of *Anti War Campaign* in **Zagreb** are both edited at the same time. Rainy nights and falling leaves of the autumn, the sound of powersupply, an open phone line, jokes and laughter coming out of our enthusiasm and friendship are mixed with pain and sorrow of the brutal reality in the Balkans. We feel like doing a good job and we send you good spirits with this papers!

Iako je u Hrvatskoj rat a Slovenija miruje iza novopostavljenih granica pokreće nas isti motiv - čežnja za mir i svjetom bez nasilja. Voljeli bismo da ovakvih fanzina bude što više i da se energija što više ljudi usmjerava prema miru.

### Editors

Zagreb, Ljubljana, 19. October 1991  
Vesna Janković, Zoran Oštrić, Dominique Cauchard,  
Marko Hren, Macintosh



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### The Intruder\*

Year I, No. 2., October 1991

Issued by: The Movement for the  
Culture of Peace and Nonviolence

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& Demilitary Publishing  
Password: Stop the War

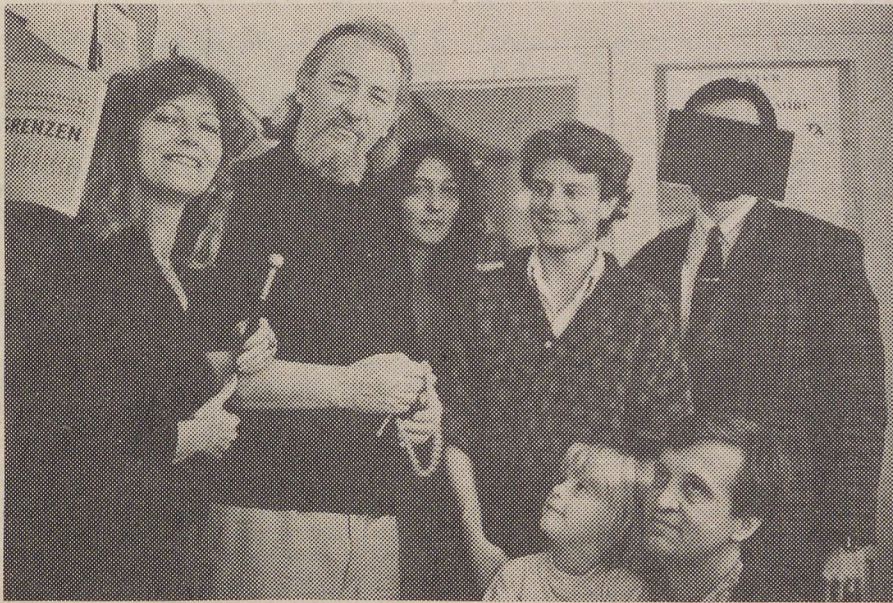
\*The Movement for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence is issuing information abroad from 1984 and has been publishing newsletters in English language from 1985 on: during the years 85, 86, 87 titled **Information Bulletin** of the Peace Movement in Slovenia and during years 88, 89, 90 **The Independent Voices** from Slovenia. Within the last 15 months there was no issue published, only some circular letters were sent to the friends of the peace movement. We all hope that **The Intruder** will remain in the manifestation. With your help too. Please keep in touch, send us a note, feedback, letters, money, love! If the stars will feel OK, the next issue will be out before the end of the year (1991 of course).

## Editorial

Sufficient to say that we are well aware of our limits producing this issue. Our human and technical resources are far from what we would want them to be. Communications with Serbia are cut; it is impossible to travel over Croatia and it is almost impossible to establish a phone line. Each exchange of information within the former Yugoslavia therefore requests much more effort than it normally would. We nevertheless do have a daily contact with the Anti War Campaign in Croatia. All other information only comes through indirect channels or via people who left their homes as refugees or because of their resistance to war.

The only hope for the turn in the resolution of various conflicts in former Yugoslavia is in peoples resistance to war. People who resist war and who want to work for peace and trust-building came to surface during the past few months. This is maybe

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Jevrem Brković (Montenegro), family Orašćanin (Bosnia), Ida Radan, Marko Hren and police agent securing Mr. Brković in the Center for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence in Ljubljana

you to republish  
in this issue of  
TRUDER and to

information from our office or at any address of anti war movements in other parts of former Yugoslavia.

We would like to express all appreciation and gratefulness to all activists, researchers, journalists and other people who traveled to different regions of former Yugoslavia in order to learn and help. They are of great moral support for all of us and even more for all those war resisters who suffer repression or are daily faced with war conditions. We can never mention all of them. Dominique Cochard (Nantes) has been with us in Ljubljana for 6 months and offered us really great deal of help and good spirits, Christine Schweitzer, Howard Clark and Jean de Wandelaar (Köln, London, Bruxelles) from War Resisters International have spent enormous time and energy in Yugoslavia and in their offices at home to help us growing the awareness and spreading the information around, more than two hundred people have joined the Peace Caravane - organized by Helsinki Citizens Assembly - visiting some of the towns in Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Serbia, several journalist are constantly in touch with us (i.e. Christian Le Meut from Nonviolence Actualite), Eric Bachman have been with the Anti War group in Zagreb for couple of weeks for the training in nonviolence and visited Ljubljana and Belgrade as well, dozens of peace bureaus are contacting us daily and we can never answer all faxes, phonecalls and letters, dozens of activists are organizing speakers tours and fundraising in their own countries etc. We could never finish the list but let it be enough to say that we appreciate fully your consideration, love and solidarity. We can not meet all of your expectations but we do our best. Establishing a Peace Center in Zagreb and gradually also in other regions we hope to be all together much more efficient.

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Marko Hren

# STATEMENT

## LESSON FROM YUGOSLAVIA

By The Movement for The Culture of Peace and Nonviolence  
Mestni trg 13, YU-61000, SLOVENIA,  
Tel. and fax. +38-61-224666 (to fax call first).

To the European Nuclear Disarmament Conference  
held in Moscow, August 10th 1991.

### 1. GUIDLINE

The recent events in the Yugoslav republics demonstrates that the disintegration of the old monolithic structures is a complex process in which democratisation in states of former real-socialism is one aspect, and the revival of old, and the emergence of new national problems is another. In this light also the dissolution of Warsaw block can be viewed as an initial step towards further disintegrations within Soviet union. International community should learn a good lesson from what happens in Yugoslavia to seriously consider the processes which are before us also on larger international scale.

The disintegrative tendency is accompanied by uneven developments in particular areas, republics and regions, depending upon which different political, economic and social forces prevail. This is not the time, therefore, to pass general judgements or to try to fit events into a schema. Instead we hope to stimulate an understanding of the real diversities in the countries concerned. For these countries, the disintegrative process is largely understood as a precondition for the process of (re)integration with the international community on the basis of newly defined relations and qualities.

Our main concern and appeal is for the international community to try to understand and learn about diversities. The dynamics of social, political, religious, national etc. life in Slovenia are very different from that in Croatia or in Serbia. It is impossible to arrive at a constructive solution without taking differences into consideration. We do not agree, for example, with a simple condemnation of the politicians of all republics on an equal basis. The politics and dynamics of social action in Slovenia and in Serbia are far too disparate for both to be interpreted with the same words. We encourage you to read more about the differences in the analysis attached to this statement.

### 2. THE Movement for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence IS A PEACE MOVEMENT

We are aware that there is no single political solution for Yugoslavia. That is why we are particularly interested in finding democratic and peaceful ways to deal with different interests and positions. Our political proposals concern **processes** more than the solutions which should result from the processes. It is not in our particular interest to promote any of the state forms suggested (confederation, federation, union of sovereign states, separate states). Any discussion about new borders in the geographical sense, or new relations between states should be put on agenda only after the processes, the parties concerned, and their different interests have been successfully defined.

**2.1.** We are aware that there are different views on the right to self determination and the existence of collective rights. In our view, although the "right" to self determination may not constitute a right in the sense that human rights attach to individuals, it can represent a basic principle in conflict resolution. The guarantee of self determination to all individuals, peoples, ethnicities, nations or minorities that require it, in the first place provides recognition of the entity which struggles for its rights and it further includes the legitimacy of its interests. The recognition of the right to self determination does not automatically mean the recognition of a new state and does not alone give legitimacy to separatist or nationalist movements as is usually suggested. However it provides entities with a sense of autonomous identity out of which they can negotiate. Without recognizing fully all parties in conflict it is impossible to seek solutions.

**2.2.** We insist upon the guarantee of equal recognition and that democratic and nonviolent processes will be used by all parties involved in negotiations. The greater degree to which parties feel recognized and the more they have democratic means available for negotiation, the less necessity there is for secession and separation. Slovenia offers a good example. The armed conflict started because neither the Yugoslav state nor the international community recognized Slovenia as a partner in dialogue. Having failed in its attempts to reform the federal structure, Slovenia was forced towards unilateral measures to achieve independence. We do not justify these measures, some of which were selfdefeating, but we present Slovenia as an alarming example of what can happen when the principle to self determination is not respected. The international community should have been alarmed by the fact that, long before the escalation to military conflict, there was no framework for democratic discussion in Yugoslavia. (The Federal Presidency for example did not exist for two months). Implementation of the principle of self determination (which can always be forcibly and unilaterally implemented if an entity decides so) without democratic and peaceful framework for negotiations can lead to xenophobic and chauvinist attitudes. Opposition to these attitudes ca not be translated into fight against self determination. Rather it should be converted into a struggle for democracy and peaceful negotiations.

### 3. THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

This is why we appeal to the international community to learn from both the good and bad aspects of the Slovenian experience and to:

- Recognize all parties in conflicts as legitimate partners for negotiations before they enter armed confrontation.
- Request particular state authorities to assure and exercise democratic and nonviolent procedures in the process of negotiations. The international community should apply nonviolent sanctions to make parties sit down and talk before they engage in armed conflicts.
- Insist that the federal army is brought under civil control since now it represents a power by itself and on its own.
- Demand that parties in conflict should be obliged during negotiations to elaborate plans for social reconciliation and cultural, scientific, economic etc. cooperation to eliminate hatred amongst people and establish a basis for long lasting peace.
- Ban all weapons export into the areas of conflicts and where possible, prevent the huge black market in weapons.
- Envisage and support the creation of peaceful and completely demilitarized zones in the areas of conflict, including the disarmament of all paramilitary forces to a paramilitary authority. We draw the attention of the international community to a long on going discussion in Slovenia concerning the abolition of the army and the creation of a demilitarized zone in the area. The idea is widely supported in the society and also met with recognition from the highest officials of the state of Slovenia (president Milan Kučan, former president of Yugoslavia dr. Janez Drnovšek, and several others).
- Continue sending observers, offering good offices and mediation. The presence of the international community in the area represents a permanent request for all parties to remain in negotiations.

The international community should leave all options for future political arrangements open and insist upon a fair and peaceful process. It should take into serious consideration all those conflicts which are "waiting" on the stack. In the case of Yugoslavia it is clear that after the cease fire in Croatia, the Bosnian question and the question of Albanians living in Kosovo (Serbia) will (re)open. Albanian people are known for their years long nonviolent resistance against the Serbian state, which removed their last bits of autonomy last autumn. The international community should point out this unresolved problem and insist that the Serbian state immediately recognize the rights of Albanian people, enable democratic elections under the observation of international bodies and call for fair negotiations leading to new relations between Serbs and Albanians. If this does not happen, there is the grave danger of further armed conflict with a high probability of escalation to an international crisis, involving Albania itself. We have to stop the chain reaction in reproduction of the military logic. Kosovo is a good place to do it.

The involvement of the international community in Slovenia proves that international mechanisms can be effective in stopping a war. If they were effective at such a late stage in the crisis, they could be even more effective when applied earlier. In the case of Slovenia, international attitudes changed dramatically only after Slovenia "had payed a high enough price". Croats and Serbs continue to pay this price. Does international community still require victims to change its attitudes or can something be learned from these experiences that can be applied to Albanians in Serbia, Hungarians in Romania, Ukrainians in Soviet union and many others. Europe is developing new security policy over the case of Yugoslavia. The question is will this security policy define new relations between nations and successfully conclude the era of traumatic divisions deriving from the second world war or will it, through failures of initiative and understanding lay the ground for the third world war.

The task of the international community is not to come up with new political maps but to define principles and values and request their implementation. The task of international community is to make initiatives and act and not only to run after areas of crisis and re-act.

## 4. THE APPEAL TO PEACE MINDED PEOPLE

The Movement for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence in Ljubljana is fully concerned with the future developments in both Slovenia and Yugoslavia. Its main activities are:

**4.1.** To develop a peace culture in Slovenian society and to push Slovenian politics towards demilitarization and peaceful, cooperative politics. We urge international peace movements to join us in the campaign for Slovenian Demilitarized Zone: a zone without an army and with no military industry. The federal army has agreed to move out of Slovenia by October 1991 and we have to argue the case for Slovenia not to replace it with its own national army thus reproducing the history of new states militarizing their societies. We are campaigning for Slovenia to become an incubator of peace, environmental and cooperative projects. We are working for social justice and balanced relations between North and South. We do not want Slovenia as a tampon between the Rich and the Poor. We are campaigning for reconversion of military barracks for civilian purposes which will not endanger the environment. The project is real-utopian, as our friends from Switzerland declared some two years ago, when preparing a referendum for Switzerland without an army. The opportunity in Slovenia is even greater. We need your help to promote this option in the international community.

**4.2.** To cooperate with all peace and antiwar groups currently emerging all over Yugoslavia and to work with them in building nonviolent attitudes in their societies. In this regard we invite international peace minded people to inform us in what ways they can offer cooperation and help (nonviolence training, volunteers, researchers, spreading information, fund rising) and resources (people, finances). Send us as concrete data as possible.

The Center for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence in Ljubljana as well as Peace Institute in Ljubljana are maintaining communication with a number of antiwar groups that are fortunately appearing now throughout Yugoslavia and we also maintain coordination for common actions and projects. We want to offer our capacities, office space, further contacts etc. to everyone willing to help us towards nonviolent resolution of the diverse and manifold problems in Yugoslavia. Get in touch for more details.

### THE CENTER FOR THE CULTURE OF PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE

Mestni Trg 13, YU-61000 LJUBLJANA, Slovenia, Tel. and Fax. +38-61-224666

is connected with *WRI - War Resisters International*, *HCA - Helsinki Citizens Assembly*, *AAA - Alpe Adria Alternative*, *IFoR - International Fellowship of Reconciliation*, *Pax Christi International*, *IPB - International Peace Bureau* and several others peace and human rights organizations.

# A Statement concerning the end of Moratorium\*

After the conflict in Slovenia ended due to Brioni agreements, the armed confrontations in Croatia escalated into an open war where the remaining structures of former Yugoslav army together with Serbian and Montenegrin units systematically destroy people and material as well as cultural wealth in Croatia. Croatia suffers a brutal war without any comparison in nowadays world. We are conscious of the fact that decades long frustrations and accumulated anger are at work, resulting in blindness and lack of at least minimal respect of the other side, which could make the dialogue possible. We are further conscious that the civilian population - caught in a trap of hatred and wildness of generals and politicians - suffers most. Many people are forcibly mobilised or remain victims of permanent psychical and physical violence.

We therefore declare solidarity and full support with all people - and particularly with those in Serbia and Montenegro - who refuse and renounce to military intervention of the "Yugoslav" army and Serbian & Montenegrin units in Croatia and Bosnia. We particularly solidarise and support all those who have enough strength and courage to refuse mobilization. The practice of Court Marchal introduced recently in Serbia is making their position much worse and life-dangerous. We call upon domestic and international human rights organizations to engage fully against this practice. We are conscious of the fact that many people have been executed already for refusing to obey orders and at the same time we are aware that THESE ARE THE PEOPLE who can contribute most to a possible turn in Serbian policy. They bear the responsibility to stop the cultural catastrophe which Serbian nation is facing under the rule of Milošević on the turn to the third millenar.

As concerned people we express our deepest solidarity and moral support for all citizens in Croatia and Bosnia who got trapped in war and specially for those, who had to live their homes to save their lives. We call upon them to - despite this heavy experience - resist ennemy images and avoid generalized judgements of Serbian and Montenegrin nation. This is the only way to possibly allow space for the support to those individuals and groups of people who renounce to hatred. This is also the only way to enable the process of overcoming the hatred and creation of conditions for co-existence of people of different nationalities after the savage period is over. The Movement for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence insists on cooperation with all peace and specially with all nonviolent groups all over yugoslavia and particularly with AntiWar campaign from Croatia. We do want to contribute everything which is in our disposal particularly to organize workshops and other means of education for reconciliation, conflict resolution, mediation, trust building and local organizing of groups which would do such work. The first workshops already take place in Zagreb - despite difficulties due to war conditions. To spread workshops and to provide continuity of the peace education process we contribute to establishing of Peace center in Zagreb which would coordinate the work. We appeal to all citizens and movements in Slovenia and abroad, to actively contribute for the projects of help for people in croatia and particularly to help refugees the number of which is already beyond 300.000 - amongst them over 15.000 came to Slovenia. Those who would want to support the creation of Peace Center in Zagreb are invited to contact our office.

Last but not least we appeal to the Parliament and to the government of Slovenia and to the local authorities in Slovenia as well as to all citizens of Slovenia, to abstain from any decision which could - in the period after moratorium is over and many problems are possible to occur concerning the final withdrawal of "Yugoslav" military troops from Slovenia - serve the highly irritated and imprudent "Yugoslav" army as a reason to intervene again in Slovenia.

Ljubljana, 6. October 1991

*Sašo Gazdič, Marko Hren, Vlasta Jalušič, Tonči Kuzmanić, Tomaž Mastnak*

\*A three months moratorium concerning the further steps towards achievements of independency of Slovenia was agreed by signing Brioni declaration on 7.th July 1991. This was a decisive document signed by Slovenian and federal authorities under mediation of EC with which the 10-days military confrontation in Slovenia ended through negotiations and not through millitary victories.

# INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ABOUT PEACE EDUCATION FOR TEACHERS OF THE ALPE-ADRIA REGION

*Report by Nace Kalin*

The seminar was held in Tolmin, small town near the Italian border, from the 21st to the 26th of August. The main aim of this seminar was to establish good relationships between teachers in the Alpe-Adria region for a closer cooperation in the future. Despite the dangerous situation in Yugoslavia, about 15 participants from Italy and Austria with their families (plus two participants from Berlin) took part.

The first two days, the participants discussed about the crises in Yugoslavia.

After the presentation of the school systems and peace education in all three countries, the participants introduced some peace projects and their point of view about peace education.

All the time, in parallel, was going on a workshop called "social games" in which the teachers have been learning how to solve relational problems through games.

During the two first days (introduction, presentation, and reports on peace education), the seminar was tri-lingual. The seminar was combined with excursions in the nice surroundings of Tolmin and valley of river Soča. A peace garden, based on Sommerhill experience, was organised. At the plenary session, all the participants agreed, that they should work in closer cooperation on the problems of peace education. For the first task of their future cooperation, they decided to make a bulletin of this seminar.

## HCA and the Yugoslav Crisis

We believe that citizens' initiatives and social movements are an indispensable part of public life. Without their activities complementing or correcting policy and politics of societies we live in, nationally and internationally, democracy is inconceivable. In this context, we understand the Helsinki Citizens Assembly (HCA) to be an institution of great importance as perhaps the sole unspecialized international nongovernmental network of concerned citizens presently existing. We have been involved in the HCA process from the very beginning and have played a part in creating its structures and identity. Our special concern was that an organization which pursues democratic goals was itself democratically organized. In particular, we insisted on the equal representation of women, on the respect for differences and diversities in the work of the Assembly, and on the rights of minorities - last but not least, in HCA process itself. Our insistence on mentioning, in the context of the rights of minorities, that the Assembly considers one of its principles the respect for sexual differences, too, caused many a heated debate.

Not all of our experiences with the HCA were completely happy. However, the role it played, as well as the way it functioned, during the last two months of the Yugoslav crisis, have deeply disappointed us. We feel we should discuss some of the problems publicly since our attempts to address them in the HCA framework have not been

particularly satisfactory. We hope we could thereby contribute to the Assembly's better work in future. This paper is therefore meant to reflect the HCA process - it is therefore not meant to analyze or inform about Yugoslavia and its acute problems - but understanding of the HCA problems displayed below might also help to unveil the biased pictures concerning Yugoslavia.

We have no intention whatsoever to question good intentions of the persons presently leading HCA. We think, however, that their understanding of the nature of the Yugoslav crisis is not likely to effectively contribute to its resolution.

The starting point for any successful peace effort in Yugoslavia is the understanding that conflicts in its constitutive republics and autonomous regions are of different nature; that there is, consequently, not a single truth about the situation and no single solution to the crisis. Instead of taking the existing differences into account and recognizing the legitimacy of different and also conflicting views, HCA has, unfortunately, promoted one of them and presented it as the view of the Yugoslav National Committee (if not of HCA as a whole). The problem is, however, that a Yugoslav National Committee does not exist. What functions under this name is the Belgrade group which should properly call itself the

Serbian Committee. Those who hold differing views, mainly in Croatia and Slovenia, have been alienated or feel excommunicated. The fact that the Belgrade group calls itself the Yugoslav rather than the Serbian Committee is to be seen as a parable for Yugoslavia such as it existed until recently - and generated so many troubles.

We do not claim that our understanding of the situation is right; what we demand is that, in the HCA process, views are treated equally. If consensus is not reached, dissenting views should be presented in HCA documents along with the prevailing one. The situation in Yugoslavia is too grave to run the risk of suppressing even one element which could contribute to its better understanding and thereby bring us closer to peace we long for.

We perceive HCA's unwillingness to condemn the military aggression of the Yugoslav federal army against Slovenia and the war waged against Croatia by Serbia and the Yugoslav army its gravest failure.

None of us was an advocate of the breaking up of Yugoslavia or called for secession. Yet we find no excuse for the use of military force against legitimate national aspirations. Our criticism of the Slovene government was, and continues to be, at least as strong as that of our Belgrade friends (and it certainly is stronger than their criticism of their own authorities), yet the criticism made by arms of the Yugoslav army could only be condemned.

The general condemnation of all violence in Yugoslavia made by HCA was, to say the least, misleading. With regard to Slovenia, it suspended the difference between military aggression and national self-defence. We may regret that the self-defence took up a violent, rather than nonviolent, form, yet we do not feel we could contest the right to self-defence. In the most difficult days we received help or support neither from HCA nor from its "Yugoslav" Committee. We were only advised from Belgrade to organize an anti-war demonstration in Ljubljana at the time when its population was in shelters. Had we done this they would have considered organizing a demonstration in Belgrade. This was the general formula at work: an all-Yugoslav action or nothing.

As to Croatia, no general formula applies, either, and peace movements have different agendas, too. In a recent interview, Slobodan Lang, a leading Croatian oppositionist and an HCA member himself (unfortunately, he seems not to want to hear about it any more), finds the Belgrade view that all groups should stop fighting and disarm, mistaken. This view turns a blind eye to the fact that the fighting is taking place on Croatian territory. Lang argues that the peace movement in Serbia is to attack their government for colonizing Croatia and to demand them to withdraw from Croatian territory, while the peace movement in his own country is to

challenge the Croatian government for not treating all the people equally, and to support the Serbs living in Croatia.

One has to understand the nature of a particular conflict, if one wishes to resolve it successfully; and to know the root of violence in each given case, in order to resist it effectively. If this condition is not met, peace making efforts will be abortive or may even aggravate the situation. All-Yugoslav actions, applying some general formula, may be a consolation to those who still believe that Yugoslavia as a common state exists, or desire this was so, they are, however, of little help to those who suffer, or strive for their freedom and rights.

The tendency to see all, and especially the Serbian, Slovene and Croatian, governments as equally bad and equally responsible for the crisis and, finally, the war, is fallacious. There are substantial differences between the three republics, and this fallacy plays into the hands of those who have actually brought the country to war. There is only one common denominator of the Yugoslav crisis, and that is, that Serbia is involved in all the conflicts, and it is involved in conflicts with all other nations living on the Yugoslav territory. These conflicts have nothing whatsoever to do with the defence of human rights. The apartheid in which the Kosovo Albanians are condemned to live tells us best what the Serbian authorities' mean by the rights of minorities. What generates these conflicts are Serbian territorial claims. Milošević is executing the plan, formulated back in 1985 by leading Serbian intellectuals in the notorious Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences, to create a Greater Serbia: a state which would encompass all the territories on which Serbs live today or have lived in the past. This idea is anchored in a clear cut *Blut un Boden* ideology, and has no parallel in today's Europe, including the Soviet Union.

The major victim of the Serbian regime are the Serbian people themselves. They are subjected to an authoritarian communist regime with an unmistakably fascist ideology. They have been bereft of their own libertarian and democratic traditions. They are denied the liberty of press and freedom of thought. They are the victims of hatred inflamed by their authorities: they have been taught to hate all others and they are hated by all others in turn. They are drowned in self-pity and lies. They have been dragged into an ever increasing impoverishment which cannot be elevated by all the plundering of the occupied Croatian territory, the stealing of money from the Kosovo Albanians, the confiscation of the property of Slovene and Croatian firms in Serbia, or the uncontrolled printing of money. Milošević's regime has destroyed their prospects of material and cultural welfare and substituted them by the vain hopes for a better life in the Greater Serbia. Milošević needs war to preserve his authori-



tarian regime and to prevent democratic changes from occurring in his republic. As long as he will be allowed to expand he will stay in power.

HCA has been more anxious than the EC diplomats not to point at the Serbian imperialism as the main destructive force in Yugoslavia. HCA talked about the 'possibility of war' in Yugoslavia when there already was a war; about a 'civil war' when the war was all but civil; about ethnic strife where there was a military aggression; about ethnic minorities as the most threatened groups' where the most threatened groups were not ethnic minorities; etc. It talks about keeping Yugoslavia together and refuses to recognize that the Yugoslav state ceased to exist some time ago, and to acknowledge that the insistence on keeping this non-state together has only bred hatred, violence and destruction.

In our opinion, HCA is not likely to define a sound policy regarding Yugoslavia until it prefers desires and illusions to factual analysis. A sound policy cannot be founded on the intellectual insincerity and confusion, and double standards (HCA opted for the recognition of the Baltic States and failed to apply the same criteria to the independence seeking Yugoslav republics). An effective policy cannot be founded on the religion of civil society. ('Civil society' simply cannot be equated with everything nice and democratic!) And, in order to define a sound and effective politics (not only in Yugoslavia but elsewhere, too), HCA will have to elaborate a more complex and subtle notion of nationalism.

We also do not think the HCA's discussion on Yugoslavia has been conducted 'openly and honestly', without 'all forms of authoritarianism and exclusiveness'.

On July 7, there was an international HCA meeting organized (self-evidently!) in Belgrade. The guests (from Slovenia, at least) were asked not to prepare papers in advance, so that there was time enough for discussion. Yet, the meeting was opened by intellectuals from Serbia giving papers, and there were more people from Serbia speaking than from all other republics, including provinces, taken together. Marko Hren who could not attend the meeting sent in a letter "To the participants of Belgrade meeting" explaining the differences of opinion between Belgrade and Ljubljana. In addition he sent 10 pages of documents released by The Movement for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence during the military aggression against Slovenia. He asked the organizers to circulate the letter which did not happen. The report on the meeting was drafted after participants from Slovenia had already left home - and was accepted unanimously. We know of three written comments on the report asking for amendments to be made, yet the final report has not been substantially changed.

The HCA Information on Peace Activities in Yugoslavia, published by the "Yugoslav" HCA, has not reported on peace activities in Slovenia although the informations were sent to its editor.

Materials sent to the HCA Secretariat in Prague by the group in Ljubljana were not distributed, and one of the chair persons explicitly refused to distribute them arguing that we were devaluing 'the Belgrade meeting and consequently peace initiative we proposed there'.

In the framework of the END convention in Moscow, HCA organized a round table on Yugoslavia. Sonja Licht and Milan Nikolić, introduced as the persons behind the peace movement upheaval in Yugoslavia, talked in the name of the Yugoslav HCA Committee while Dominique Cochard, who represented the movement in Slovenia, was only allowed to intervene as a discussant from the audience.

Last but not least, we do not see which purpose it serves to claim that HCA is behind the peace movement in Yugoslavia while we definitively know that the great majority of new groups emerged autonomously and act independently of HCA and its "Yugoslav" Committee. We certainly do not wish to diminish the work our friends in Belgrade have really done and we do appreciate their efforts. All we ask for is realism.

*People for Peace Culture  
Ljubljana, 29. August 1991*

*Marko Hren, Tomaž Mastnak*

# The Peace Caravane in Yugoslavia

By Marko Hren

The following reflection concerning the action organized by Helsinki Citizens Assembly (HCA) in Yugoslavia late September 1991 must be understood as a personal view of an activist who was involved in preparations and the foundation of the HCA and who was involved in the peace movement (the only one) existing in Yugoslavia before the events started within the last year. The Movement for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence from Ljubljana (MCPN Ljubljana) was quite for some time the sole contact for HCA in Yugoslavia. Its members and at the same time protagonists of HCA idea had recently lost enthusiasm to invest their energy into HCA process. This was particularly due to lack of response-ability of the structure of HCA in relation to diversities, minority views, requests for more inner democracy and sensibility of situation in different parts of Yugoslavia. The HCA has not responded or responded in our view contraproductively during the times, when MCPN and civil society in Slovenia needed response most urgently - during the times of military aggression of Yugoslav army in Slovenia. The peace caravane in Yugoslavia was just one of the experiences which made activists of The MCPN Ljubljana fed-up with HCA process. Personally I can't avoid being emotionally concerned with this issue since I just contributed too much life force to HCA process to remain only rational and to keep distance. Besides, I could never agree with the opinion (quoting here Vedran Vučić, Prague secretariate of HCA), that we should "*leave emotions to women*". It is to say right at the beginning that there would certainly be a good number of people all over Yugoslavia who would comment the Peace Caravane with much more positive attitude.

The idea to organize a peace caravane was without any doubt an excellent one and hundreds of people have really shown good will to come and learn about the complicated situation in different parts of Yugoslavia. We all agree about that and this was also a commonly expressed appreciation during the evaluation meeting of peace initiatives from Slovenia after the Peace Caravane have passed (rushed) through. Sufficient to say, that the main support we have been for years asking the international public did match exactly the idea of the Caravane - for people to come to the spot and try to understand the diversities of conflicts in different areas in Yugoslavia. We strongly believed, that there was no sense to discuss political solutions, approaches for conflict resolution etc. until certain level of communication and understanding is reached. We wanted to initiate the work on the process of decision making and not on solutions. At the same time we were strongly aware of a danger of simplifications and generalisations which easily create biased pictures

about Yugoslavia. But exactly this kind of information were spread due to a lack of time taken for getting understanding of the conflict(s). Lack of ability for selective approach towards different areas in Yugoslavia and generalisations of political contexts ("*all republics of Yugoslavia are ruled by post-communist and nationalist elites which draw people in inter-ethnic conflicts*") was also our main criticism of attitudes of Sonja Licht from Belgrade, a chair person and main speaker of HCA. Movements as well as political decision makers in particular republics are in completely different and uncomparable positions and one can not apply the same argument to all. Just note that Slovenia was under military aggression and successfully avoided bigger disaster, that Croatia is getting brutally destroyed by Serbian extremists (of Milošević post-communist and Šešeljs nationalist type) and the federal military and that the main problem within Serbia is not suffering the war on its territory but lacking democracy.

This is why we were looking forward for peace caravane to visit different places and for participants to be able to learn diversities. At the same time we expected that we would be - as hosting country and co-organizer - involved in planning and organization at earliest stage possible. By the way - the plan for the Peace Caravane was distributed in Moscow, Prague etc. far before it reached us - in Slovenia and Croatia, the countries which suffered military aggressions most. The schedule finally given (imposed) to us was not allowing much hope for such a result. The tour was scheduled similarly to a three days tourist "instant-once-in-a-life-visit" to Europe for Japanese tourists. Even if there would not be a state of war in Croatia, it would be impossible to make good exchange in such a short time. Everyone who tended to seriously understand what is going on in Yugoslavia knows, that one should take quite some time to at least grasp some idea about what is going on. Having people for some hours in Ljubljana and a couple in Zagreb could not give us opportunity to explain much. Short statements can be even contraproductive, since they can remain unexplained and therefore can be easily misinterpreted. This is why we proposed a different concept of the caravane, where people would be able to stay longer time in one area. The organizers did show no flexibility to change the plan. The Zagreb and Ljubljana peace groups agreed about alternative proposal but met no response. On contrary, HCA quickly chose another partner with whom they could realise their concept. Instead of discussion with their constituent partners they have chosen partners which agreed to join the project without discussion. Eventhough the idea behind the Peace Caravane was to strengthen and give support to peace movements, HCA has turned its back to some of them - at

Opposition in Slovenia was united for the first time already before the trial against Janša, Tasič, Borštnar and Zavrl (Fall 1989). The first initiative to draft a declaration on democracy and pluralism came from the coordination of social movements in early 1988. The Committee for the protection of human rights had continued this work as a first round table framework for the resistance to Belgrade regime. After the release of all three the round table was joint by Slovenian officials who in the mean-time got rid of hard liners co-responsible for the "trial against the four". Peace movement and in general the ideas of peace education, demilitarisation, right to Conscientious objection were widely supported by Slovenian public and also by politicians.

It is not by chance then that one of the first measures of Slovenian government elected April 1990 was to recognize CO and to put an end to sending recruits to YA. One after another the concrete steps were made to separate territorial defence structures from any rule of Belgrade and to increase the degree of sovereignty of Slovenia also on military/security field. The struggle for the authority over the stocks of military equipment began and late 1990 the supreme commander of territorial defence of Slovenia arrived in conflict with Slovenian authorities because he was loyal to the rule of Belgrade. He was soon replaced but before that - in October 1990 a first military action happened in Ljubljana when the headquarters of Slovenian territorial defence were occupied by federal troops.

The relation between Slovenian and Yugoslav hierarchies were becoming worse and worse to finally manifest in violence in May 1991 in Maribor. The event during which one civilian person died happened after Slovenian territorial defence called the first set of recruits to be trained in a training center in Maribor and federal military had surrounded the training center which provoked large resistance of civilian population. The conflict was successfully negotiated but the accumulated tension on the spot has led to a first victim of "Slovenian Independency". One-sided measures of Slovenian government made military hierarchies nervous and they planned worse possible scenarios. Slovenian authorities were, as it seems now, fully informed about those plans, and prepared well for 26. of June (when they planned some crucial measures of independency) follow-up.

Croatians did also think about their own defence system, but they mainly recruited people into special police forces, forming also units of National Guard. Slovenian authorities have throughout past decades strived to keep territorial defence under authority of Slovenia and were actually conceptually ready to take it into their hands completely. It was not the case with Croatia. Territorial defence had much less structural value elsewhere in Yugoslavia as it had in Slovenia. At the same time in nationally mixed areas in Croatia and specially in regions where Serbs form majority, units led by Serbs were formed. From August 1990 on, starting in the area of Knin (the main communication point between Zagreb and central Dalmatia) more and more paramilitary troops came into existence to protect Serbian minority against Croatian rule. There is no doubt that Croatian policy towards Serbian minorities was if not oppressive at least passive and as such allowing the rising fear of possible discriminations. Most probably nobody has yet counted all different and independent paramilitary forces, police troops, armed civilians, terrorist groups etc. on the territory of Croatia and Bosnia. A full page of such forces could be listed here. Each town can be a case on its own. Yugoslavia is highly militarised on all levels: federal state, each republic separately and civilian population.

#### The blame of YA

Intervention of YA in Slovenia after 26. June was a blamage. Not only that the military had proved that it is willing to act against its own people, but they did it in such a naive and clumsy way that they met mistrust of large portion of public opinion also outside Slovenia. The "war" in Slovenia was one big mistake of all parties involved. Fortunately they all got soon aware of it and had stopped it. Many people elsewhere in Yugoslavia got aware that their sons and brothers are dying in Slovenia for one only reason - to keep the STATUS QUO in Yugoslavia. Many recognized that the YA was nothing else but an instrument in hands of totalitarian regime - or better saying - is a totalitarian regime by itself.

#### Yugoslav army is no more Yugoslav and no more Peoples

Federal army is ideological (antidemocratic) and centralistic (pro-Yugoslav). It was structured under proportional rule - each unit was composed by people of different nationalities. It is a powerful body which struggles for survival of its employees. Its problems are - the budget, lack of recruits and strategic miss conception after they have to fight against its own people who are doctrinally a basic part of its system. Now they are only recruiting people on the basis of hatred against Croats, Muslims and Albanians. Slovenians, Croats and Macedonians disobey to get recruited. Many Serbs and Bosnians as well as Montenegrins do as well under a threat of punishment and Court Marshal. Slovenia initiated the final destruction of the Yugoslav army by not sending recruits any more and by putting an end to the budget. During the intervention in Slovenia, federal military largely dissolved - thousands of soldiers and officers quit the army. This was a big test of YA and an experience through which YA learned how to restructure and how to behave in the new conditions, where it is no more Yugoslav and no more Peoples army. It became a military force of pro-Great-Serbian project. *Vuk Stambolović*, an outstanding anti-war activist from Belgrade explains that three biggest forces have joint into war machinery trying to meet their common goal - a creation of new, big empire: Post Communist elites in Serbia and Montenegro who wish not to lose their power, Federal Military personal and lobby which need a big state to feed their needs and Serbian extreme nationalist wing which dreams of Great Serbia.

After recognizing that it can not be effective in Slovenia since the consensus in population is clearly showing the will of the people not to nurture it any more, the federal military is now living Slovenia. The decision was made soon after the end of aggression in Slovenia (early July 1991) and we were aware that the decision was largely influenced by the rising crisis in Croatia and by the fact that YA could not control such a quantity of problematic regions as are represented by Slovenia, Croatia and Kosovo. The military simply moved from Slovenia because they badly needed all forces to act in Croatia and elsewhere.

The combats in Croatia were going on localised in particular areas throughout the past 12 months.

Most usual pattern of the conflicts at the initial stage was the following: the right wing policy of Croatia created a lot of political tension, Croats even replaced people in some police stations in towns where Serbs form majority. This created resistance and bad feelings, provocators and Serbian extremist used it to make propaganda for violence and sooner or later Serbs decided to occupy the police station, Croatian guard would then intervene, the armed confrontation would begin and YA would enter the conflict as a neutral force. The result would always be, that Serbs would win some territory. Gradually the official corps and the population armed themselves to a high degree, and the political clima got ready for a general confrontation. After the aggression in Slovenia, the atmosphere reached the boiling point and it was not difficult to find an occasion for fights on all territory of Croatia. (editors note: more about the scenarios of war read in the interview with Vasvija Orašćanin).

#### Final remarks

Yugoslav army is an army on its own, with strong support from Serbian and Montenegrin leadership. It would be impossible to say that it has popular support in any of the societies. Most of the officers are Serbs with the exception of the navy and aviation where Slovenians and Croats are (were) predominantly recruited. Most probably the assumption that Croatian officers in JA navy forces still fight against Tudjman's army because of aggressive anti-communist attitudes of Croatian authorities during the last year is to be considered important.

Yugoslav army have proved again that each army turns against its own people. When a JA helicopter was shot down in the middle of Ljubljana, a pilot of Slovenian nationality was found dead in it.

The wars in Yugoslavia offer a huge field of references for antimilitarism and abolition of all armies. Its brutality bombing Croatian cities, its open turn on the side of Serbian political line and on the side of Serbian minorities in Croatia confirm that no army can be neutral - neutrality was what Yu army had always claimed. Army is always on one side - on the side

of oppressor, on the side of dictators. Yu military is now playing with those, whom they think they can win with.

Bosnians until very recently could not understand why Slovenians struggle so much against YA. Now they understand and feel betrayed by YA. Also some circles in Belgrade gathering around AntiWar Campaign publicly pointed to the real problem of Yugoslavia lying in the existence of pouchists army which is at the same time strongly supported by Serbian political line. This assumption of Belgrade group was made after one military plane has bombed one village in Serbia near Croatian border apparently lost in the fog and several people were killed. The mere existence of the powerful military lobby is a problem in any state and specially in the state which is more and more poor and under stress. Beside, the YA depend on ideology upon which it has been built and through which all of its members were drilled during past decades. One could even suggest that many officers in YA most sincerely believe, that they are defending brotherhood of YU nations and that they struggle against extreme nationalist regimes in particular republics with all justification.

It is therefore impossible to simply speak about civil war in Yugoslavia. The overlapping of ethnical struggles on nationally mixed areas with inter-state conflict (Serbia, Croatia) and with the conflict due to dissolution of The Military/ideological/political trinity makes it impossible to apply any general picture on Yugoslavia. This was our basic argument also in communications with some of our friends in Belgrade who tended to make an overall and general judgement about Yugoslavia as a state which is in civil war due to ethnical problems and extreme nationalist regimes installed after the fall of communist regime.

### Perspectives

Federal military is rapidly becoming a Serbian army. Moving its arsenals from Slovenia and Croatia mainly to Serbia and Bosnia, Serbia with its allies Montenegro and territories that it tends to occupy in Bosnia and in Croatia is becoming the most militarised, and the most well armed (per capita) region in Europe. Milošević can only maintain in power until the wars are faugt.

Long on going low intensity warfare in nationally mixed regions will go on for years. Extreme right wing forces will institutionalise in extremist political parties and in guerilla forces in Croatia as well as in Bosnia and in Kosovo. In Slovenia and in Croatia republic armies already exist and in Macedonia it will most probably be installed soon. No change of borders or of formal political arrangements on the todays territory of Yugoslavia can bring solutions, only the change of relations can - and that is where the opportunities for peace and antimilitarist movements are.

### Note of a pacifist

When asked for the opinion about different military structures now in Yugoslavia, asked about whether I justify any of it and whether any of struggles can be described as a just war, I often recall a common story of rape - when a man violates a woman after the woman was behaving in provocative way in a bar. Some people argue there is no ground for prosecution in such cases. The only way to deal with such cases is to separate the discussion about the "crime" of the particular side. The crime of a woman who acted or behaved in a provocative way is incomparable to a crime of a violator. The crime of Slovenian government taking unilateral and provocative measures rising its degree of sovereignty is incomparable to a crime of federal army making an aggression. The crime of Croatian authorities lacking active approach towards guaranties for the Serbian minority within Croatia is incomparable to destruction that YA is performing all over the Croatian cities. No violence of a parent against a child can be justified. Even if a child is nutty and provoking it doesn't give a right to a parent to exercise brutality. No brutality can be justified. Of course it is true that all armies are bad - antimilitarists and pacifists should not take sides in any armed conflict - and it is most often true that all sides are at least in some ways responsible for the conflict. But when imperialistic wars are fought or when genocide has been performed the abstention in taking sides is no more relevant. When we tend not to justify any violence we have to - at the same time - differentiate between the attitudes of the different sides and avoid generalizations. We can just not say that both a victim and a violator are guilty for the rape in the above

mentioned story. Federal military and Serbian forces fusing into one force are to be taken as a most serious danger for the Balkans. The problem of Serbian expansionistic policy has to be approached as an isolated phenomena and it doesn't help much if we would say: "well, Croatian side is comiting crimes too". We have to use different words for different cases and violations of human rights. Federal military and Serbian forces are lurching the only imperialistic aggression currently on the planet. The Serbian politics performed cultural genocide in Kosovo during the past few years and is potentially dangerous to continue it also on the physical level.

The biggest problem we will have to deal is how to prevent the creation of highly militarised Serbian empire. Serbian regions in Croatia are only used as a tool and as a motivating item. Croatian authorities made a big mistake not fully and actively promoting democratic principles for the minorities and this way demobilise that tool. The violence committed by Croatian side has to be approached with different means comparing to the violence lunched by Serbian/military side. This is important to know since we are constantly put under the pressure to justify violence (justify wars) and to take sides. I'm strongly of the opinion, that none of the two is necessary and can be overcome by differentiated approach towards particular sides comiting violence. All sides deserve criticism and need an active approach to change their policy. But all sides are not at all equal.

## 2. Antimilitarism and peace activity

### Past

Civil society in general in Eastern European countries was not structured. Maybe the only exception is Solidarity in Poland. At the same time civil society in these countries created a false image of powerful entity and many observers commented it as "civil society in Eastern Europe is strong". This bias was due to the fact that civil society was relatively united around the idea of a necessity for the change which in other words meant it was united to withdraw the monopoly of the totalitarian regime in power. People will always struggle against authority which doesn't yet mean that they will at the same time struggle to build something new replacing the old authority. To put it more clear. The idea to withdraw party monopoly and install democracy was not enough. Democracy without structures of civil society (independent thinking, movements, independent lobby organisations, NGO's etc) can easily divert into another totalitarianism. Newly installed Democracies in former real-socialist countries have swallowed most of organized civil society (opposition). The rest (the most) of civil society yet remained desorganized and powerless. The non-existence of structures of civil society is the biggest problem keeping alive the regime in Serbia and is the principal obstacle for promotion of peace politics in the areas of crisis. We could not expect the conflicts to be solved in nonviolent way when there was no visible pacifist tradition in Yugoslavia except for the work done in Slovenia in the 80-ies. In the moments of such a stress as we are experiencing in Yugoslavia today, the deeply rooted cultural patterns manifest. The cultural space in Yugoslavia was dominated by military and patriarchal patterns, a kind of macho mentality comparable to Central American one. Slovenia deviated enough from this pattern to be able to go beyond massive use of violence and allow space for negotiation and peace politics. We could risk a following hypothesis here: the conflict between Slovenia and the federal state was resolved relatively peacefully and quickly due to the peace culture developed through years of promotion of the issues of peace education, conscientious objection, demilitarisation and active peace politics. Let us give a little closer view on the peace activities in Slovenia in the past few years.

The peace movement came into appearance in Slovenia in early 80-ies, together with growing (sub)cultural activity, independent media and other social movements. Its projects and activities were from the beginning focused towards consciousness rising and therefore towards formation of the new cultural paradigm. The fields of action were varying from education in kinder gardens through school systems to the relations towards military and political hierarchies. Peace movement demanded democratisation of life, demilitarisation of society and of political structures and deideologisation of the same. Peace movement in Slovenia maintained close contacts and cooperation with Eastern, Western and other peace, human rights and solidarity organizations. It was always cosmopolitanian rather than national-state oriented. It met vast support in population. The idea to recognize conscientious objection as a basic

human right was largely supported in the second half of 80-ies by all levels of political and public life in Slovenia though the idea was strongly opposed by regime in Belgrade. In The education system we successfully abolished all military subjects and the project of Slovenia without an army met a large support even early this year. According to public polls made in February, more people supported Slovenia without an army than Slovenia with its own army. With a global strategy of the project for Slovenia without an army we successfully promoted the issue of demilitarisation and active peace policy in public as well as on the level of state diplomacy. The idea was promoted in civil society and more than hundred groups in Ljubljana alone joined in the campaign for reconversion of military barracks for cultural purposes in the town. We did systematic lobby for demilitarisation and promotion of peace policy amongst all political parties which came into appearance in 89/90, we achieved that 5 political parties (one of them forming governmental coalition and two of them in opposition) have joined the idea of Slovenia without an Army and we achieved that an Interparliamentarian Commission for Peace Politics was established in Slovenian parliament. The issue of alternative security concept for the state of Slovenia, including the option of Slovenia without an army was repeatedly discussed in the highest bodies of the republic responsible for defence, but most intensively in the Council for security at the Presidency of Slovenia. In February 1991 a Declaration for Slovenia without an Army has been widely distributed and more than 25000 signatories collected. The Declaration was signed also by president of the state, mr. Kučan, three other members of Slovenian presidency, member of federal presidency Dr. Dmrovšek, several ministers of the government of Slovenia and a number of known figures in Slovenia.

Now it is more and more clear that Slovenian pacifist posture was understood mainly in the relation to Yugoslavia. Its antimilitarist notion was understood as anti-Yugoslav army, the peace education was understood as comparative to patriarchal militaristic south, conscientious objection was understood as objection to Yugoslav army. When slovenians now have the opportunity to reflect their own army, the antimilitarist thinking is getting more and more lost behind the veil of national euphoria, ego(nacio)centrism, elitism and run from the poor south (joining the rich). As far as we can see today, Slovenia is loosing rapidly the opportunity to promote itself as an outstandingly peaceful community, though it was successfully promoting its difference in comparison to other Yugoslav states.

#### **1991 - a variety of peace and anti-war movements arise all over the country**

Unfortunately the peace minded people in Yugoslavia did not manage to open enough space for their activity before it was too late. There were some movements and initiatives which also included pacifism and antimilitarism on their agenda. In the mid-eighties this was Svarun movement in Croatia (joining environmental, feminist and spiritual issues) and some predominantly environmental movements in Vojvodina. Other movements dealt mainly with the issue of human rights and democracy. In 1988 the peace movement in Ljubljana, which was at that time the only "specialised" pacifist and nonviolent movement in Yugoslavia, initiated a process of signatories to the peace treaty amongst citizens of different nationalities in Yugoslavia and gathered hundreds of people around the country but there was not enough strength for an effective network to manifest. Later on a Peace and Democracy circle appeared in Belgrade and together with some people from old Svarun movement which reappeared as Green Action group we together contributed to the Helsinki Citizens Assembly process. Unfortunately also this connections did not result in any effective activity and did not meet any large support amongst people. Civil society was therefore completely unprepared for the period of crisis. The new democracies installed in particular republics were even less prepared for any constructive approach to the subtle and dangerous transition period before Yugoslavia.

A first popular movement which dealt with the issue of military was initiated by parents of soldiers in Slovenia early 1991. At that time Slovenia already decided not to send recruits any more to Yugoslav army, but a number of recruits from Slovenia were still serving their military duty all over Yugoslavia. Parents were specially worried about the soldiers serving in the areas where the crisis was more and more reaching the point of escalation. The main demand of parents was for their sons to come to

Slovenia and complete their duty in Slovenia. This was not an antimilitarist idea and parents explicitly rejected any discussion about pacifism, nonviolence and peace policy. They said they didn't want to discuss ideologies. After the aggression of federal troops in Slovenia many similar movements appeared all over the country. They expressed themselves in different way but official demands they had in common - soldiers should serve their term in their own republics. This strategy of parents not rising anti-militaristic arguments, made it possible for right wing forces to manipulate the movements and use them to promote national campaigns. Meeting of mothers in Serbian parliament during the aggression in Slovenia for example ended with demands for Serbian soldiers to return from Slovenia and fight for Serbian thing and not get victimized in a war that Serbia has no interest in. Antimilitarists in most cases lost the opportunity to bring their issue into these movements.

A number of initiatives were taken all over the country by women circles and movements, spiritual groups and special profession like medical doctors and psychiatrists. The movements and initiatives are joining together on different basis - groups in Vojvodina and in Belgrade joint for example in Centers for Anti War Activity. The only initiative which is trying to link all groups throughout Yugoslavia is The Anti War Campaign from Zagreb. The first meeting was held in Kumrovec in the mid- August and basic principles for the activities were agreed. Amongst them, the affirmation of nonviolent methods and the emphasis on the process not on political solutions are outstanding. The meeting also agreed to focus activities on long term basis being aware that the conflicts are of long on going nature. There were some actions on all-Yugoslav level already before - like the first Helsinki Citizens Assembly meeting of partners from Yugoslavia in Sarajevo in May 1991 and the meeting for peace upheaval in July 1991 again in Sarajevo, but none of the two provided concrete follow up activities. The problem really lies in the fact that local groups do not have neither a policy nor a good inner structure. A lot of time and resources will be needed to develop local movements in such a way that they will be able to offer continuous work.

At the moment the peace initiatives in Yugoslavia have some symbolic value. Many of them clearly show that we, the people, don't want to play the game of power elites. There is a large number of people who respond to this call and object to conscriptions and mobilisations. People in all republics came to awareness that military is against them: examples of Belgrade spring, Kosovo, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia have clearly shown that military has no other goal but to preserve its interests in the power game. The peace initiatives are in many cases targets of extremists in their own societies, since they are understood as opponents to the main stream national struggles. Specially in nationally mixed areas in Croatia and Bosnia this is the case and a number of moderate people who advocate dialogue and reconciliation had to leave their homes to avoid prosecution.

In the time of escalation it is very difficult to come up with pacifist notion. The power of extreme mainstream is just too strong. Nevertheless there were successful cases of resistance to the military specially in the rows of federal army during the aggression in Slovenia and nowadays amongst mobilized rezervists in Serbia, who rejected to be transported to Croatia and Bosnia. Although it is not to forget to grow resistance as an immediate response to growing violence, it is impossible to grow too much hopes concerning the success of resistance in stopping war. There are just too many different armed groups created in the area and the culture is just too militarised for the violence to be overcome with small number of resisters. We will have to invest much energy to prepare for a long on going work on local level. The peace movements will have to train a number of people for local organizing and actions directed towards trust building, reconciliation and nonviolent conflict resolution. The awareness of possibility of successful negotiations on local levels is essential, since experiences show that developments in different areas largely depend on local authorities (military as well as civil) due to the fact that central authorities do not function effectively neither on federal nor on republic levels. A good example for this was laid down during the conflict in Slovenia, where a large degree of conflict was solved by negotiations between representatives of local communities and the army officials from the barracks in the affected area. The regional approach in conflict resolution is even more to be taken seriously concerning the fact, that Croatia is by its traditional unexistence of homogeneity or central authority, a set of relatively auto-

mous and culturally very diverse units; namely, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Dubrovnik area, Istria and Zagreb area have never in history formed a common, sovereign union.

### Conclusion

The creation of peace culture is the only way for assuring lasting peace. People in Yugoslavia will hopefully learn this after the experience of this year, when there was no external factor drawing them into violence (as it was the case in the past). Hopefully the movements and individuals which appeared during the past few months will systematically continue their work and spread qualities of nonviolence and anti-militarism. A lot of work will be needed to empower and train people for their individual action for peace and reconciliation. The extremely high concentration of weaponry in the area will have to be approached by processes of demilitarisation. Particularly this would be desirable for the areas of most difficult demographic configurations and specially for the areas which request more autonomy (for example the republic of Slovenia, the Knin area, the island Vis, the area of Dubrovnik, Istria etc.). With the help of international mediators this could be put on the agenda of negotiations. On the level of civil society the crucial point is the creation of independent structures through which the movements will articulate and spread their ideas. But all things mentioned above will meet no success until the demands for democratization of life in Serbia are fulfilled and opposition will be prosecuted.

### Footnote

The contribution was written in a lack of time for deep analytical reflection and is therefore to be taken as an essay contributing one angle of the story. It does not pretend at all to cover all crucial arguments about the topic and

it did consciously avoid the ambition to name all initiatives which took place for peace in the territory of Yugoslavia. Many important examples were left out, like the actions of women from Bosanska Dubica organizing a march to Zagreb and to Belgrade, but there will be enough time to make history. Let me only conclude, that we are well aware of the fact, that we were too late in approaching the growing violence in Yugoslavia. We did our best in Slovenia, to create enough peace culture to resist the totalitarian regime with the power of pride and nonviolence. We could prove that we had some success. There was no similar activity elsewhere in Yugoslavia and we know that there is no other way but to start hard work with people. Only a new paradigm determining the culture can replace the patterns of violence and military. There is enough experience, a lot of people of good will and a lot of strength to go for the job. The international peace community can play a great role specially in giving moral support to peace initiatives in Yugoslavia, visiting them and trying to understand the diverse local problems. Yugoslav complexity can not be understood and can not be approached with "digest fast" method. Understanding diversities is of primarily importance. Only then we can discuss what approach and what kind of cooperation we can have in certain region. If not done so even actions of very good purpose can turn contraproductive. The presence of international community is therefore of crucial importance for it gives power to the activists, brings in knowledge and experiences from other parts of the world and (hopefully) makes people come back home with more understanding of something, which is so hard to explain and was for years mysteriously called Balkans.

Ljubljana, 1. October 1991

# People Crossing the Bridge

A story of peoples power in war zone on the border between Croatia and Bosnia

## Interview with Vasvija Oraščanin

*Vasvija Oraščanin was a leading figure of Peoples Peace Movement of Yugoslavia, coming from Bosanska Dubica, a small town in Bosnia on a border line with Croatia. She is the author of the most powerful story of peoples resistance against war - being a witness of the wave of hatred and violence arriving to her nationally mixed region, being well aware of the war scenario and of the propaganda machinery, she led people to renounce enemy images and show their willingness to live together peacefully. Thousands of people had followed and crossed the bridge over the river, separating two villages -Croatian and Bosnian Dubica - when two opposite armies allowed no more transpassing. This was in August and in September the war has destroyed all hopes of these people. Most of them moved from the area and Vasvija had to escape with her 5 years old daughter Ada, due to threats and pressure. She is now in Ljubljana and works with the Movement for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence. Her experience together with her explanation of War Scenario in Croatia follows in an interview by Marko Hren recorded on 16. October 1991, the day after Vasvijas' husband joint the family in exile. First published in THE INTRUDER, a magazine of the Movement for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence from Ljubljana, Slovenia.*

**Intruder:** How would you explain the existence of such a potential of brutality and militarism as it manifests now in Balkans?

**J. Brković:** *The violence on this territory appeared always in the history in waves. The recent violence got its forms and structures already during the time of popular meetings initiated by Milošević in 1988. This meetings were hiding - under the camouflage of ant-bureaucratic revolution - within themselves a potential of incredible violence. At that time violence manifested on verbal level, on the level of "speech". This meetings were actually only preparing the public opinion and were at the same time recruiting people for future armed corps which were to win territories. From the very beginning the goal of meetings was also concerning territories. I identified this militaristic psychology of masses at the very early stage. I did warn about that and also about the role of Milošević. I did that publicly several times. This potential violence now escalated in the most dirty war ever fought in Europe. I could envisage this form of violence and even more, I think that it will go further, towards even more brutality specially when Bosnia and Montenegro will get involved in escalation. This will be the climax and Europe will be no more in position to allow itself to tolerate it. The great Serbian policy will inspire war with Greece, Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria involved.*

**Balkans is a deposit of violence, each generation only left more tension in the area and there was no civilizatory progress left behind them. Just take the example of Slovenians. For centuries it kept its culture in the context of middle Europe. But in the context of Balkans it got its confirmation only when it got involved in war. Seven days of war draw the conscience of other balkan nations to take Slovenians seriously. Seven days of warfare in Balkans brought Slovenians more then seven centuries dump in germanistic see where it preserved its culture, language and all the rest. This might be an interesting point to further explore. This militaristic spirit of the balkan space could only recognize another militaristic expression.**

**Intruder:** How much space do the anti war initiatives have?

**J. Brković:** *Already for couple of years Montenegro is an occupied state. Me and my adherents were practically pushed under ground. Only with a help of media from other republics we could communicate with our public at home. I had no chance to publish my statements at home. We had circles of liberal thinkers in our homes. During spring last year we organized successfully some public meetings which inspired young people. Montenegro is*

*one big prison now and the leaders of the republic are its directors. But resistance is spreading from one village to another mainly through young people. They are organized as the Peace Movement of Young Montenegrans and other antiwar organizations like Anti War movement of Montenegro and Liberal Union of Montenegro. There is also The Guard of Lovćen which is getting ready to protect the most precious monument of Montenegro (the Mavsoleum of Njegoš in Lovćen) in the case of Četniki violence spreading to the area. I'm a president of this Guard and this is not a militaristic formation. It will use violence only to protect the monuments against vandalism.*

**Intruder:** This is a common question; what would you expect international community to contribute to the processes you just explained?

**J. Brković:** *We are witnessing an end of all ideologies. During the funeral, all repression, torture and other negative aspects resulting from mere existence of these ideologies manifest. This is happening from Peking to Igal. The war is without any sense and people must recognize that the only way is to give birth to peace paradigm. We will all enter the next century with only two feelings: feelings towards national and economic identities and above (or between) them a feeling towards environment appears bringing in ecological questions. The death of ideologies brings in ecology, nonviolence and the end of militant psychology. **The international community should be alert to built the potential of those forces which grow beyond war ideologies** Montenegro can not for example advertise itself as ecological country, having thousands of tanks on its territory. The cooperation and coordination amongst these kind of forces is essential. **The only solution is fanaticism, obsession with peace, peace as the only prosperity for civilization and for the environment.***

Ljubljana, 20. 10. 1991

P.S. Nobody here dears to translate Jevrems' original documents since we could destroy the beauty of the rich language of a great poet. I also have to admit, that the translation of the recorded speech is beyond any comparison with the original phrasing of J. Brković.

# PEOPLE'S PEACE MOVEMENT OF YUGOSLAVIA

Initiated in Bosanska Dubica, Bosnia and Hercegovina

*Dear Lord Carrington,*

beside the two parties, fighting in Yugoslavia under ruins, there is another party to be considered - it's the people! Peace organizations are operating in all the republics and provinces. We are working jointly with the same goals - we want to stop armed conflicts, to restore trust among nations and to reestablish the freedom of travelling, trading and communicating. We have organized numerous peace manifestations which gathered thousands of people of all nations and confessions who wanted to send their voice out into the world and say that they refuse war, and that we all desire to live in peace, to work and bring up our children in peace. Desperate and terrified of the arriving catastrophe, people were coming together: we were crossing forbidden, well guarded bridges, we carried The Peace Manifesto to Mrs Milošević and Tudjman, we asked both the Serbian and the Croatian armies not to shoot at us but to help us overcome the present crisis without using violence. For - we are not enemies, we do not hate each other, this horrible war is not a civil war, they are misleading you, highly esteemed Lord. We have to admit, it is our duty towards truth and our conscience, that our Peace Manifesto was signed only from the Croatian side. As regards Mr. Milošević, the federal army and their adherents, they roughly rejected us, peacemakers were declared traitors, many of us were beaten or put on the liquidation lists. Such cases were reported to the police who, unfortunately, cannot neither help nor protect us. Our peace organizations work under extremely difficult conditions, in some republics even without material or any other support, while the hopes of the unarmed,

scared and desperate people were put into our efforts. We have recorded all the evidence that the Yugoslav people refused war, that we gave not even the slightest reason for all this destruction and killing that fell on us like the hardest malediction. They are misleading you, Lord, saying that this war is carried out in the name of the people, for our photos will show you clearly what was the people's will. To our great misfortune, our desperate calls for peace were answered by tanks which primarily struck the civilians. Even the refugee caravans were shot at.

Dear Lord Carrington, we have felt on our skin the whole scenario of this dirty war from its first day, for it is we, civilians, who are the greatest victims of the sick ambitions of politicians. We were expecting a lot of the conference in the Hague and afterwards felt very ashamed because of deceitful signatures which brought about even stronger attacks.

Dear Lord Carrington, there is one truth about the Yugoslav war and we implore you to be so kind and urgently receive the delegation of peace movements who have to continue their work in order to save and bring together our unfortunate nations. Regardless of the political solutions, please give us a chance and hear our testimony. We shall be very grateful to you.

*Vasvija Oraščanin*

*Ljubljana, 21 October 1991*

***Peoples' Peace Movement of Yugoslavia***  
(Narodni mirovni pokret Yugoslavije)

c/o Center for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence  
Mestni trg 13, Yu-61000 Ljubljana, Slovenija  
Tel. and Fax. +38-61-224 666

The following peace organizations are supporting and joining the request of the National Peace Movement of Yugoslavia from Bosanska Dubica that the Presiding of the Peace Conference in the Hague, Mr. Carrington, receives the representatives of the Peace Movements from Yugoslavia for discussions.

***Union of Peace Initiatives from Slovenia***  
(Kordinacija mirovnih iniciativ iz Slovenije)

***Committee of Anti-War Campaign Zagreb***  
(Odbor antiratne kampanje Zagreb)

***Center for Peace Sarajevo***  
(Centar za mir Sarajevo)

***Center for Anti-War Action Novi Sad***  
(Centar za antiratnu akciju Novi Sad)

***Center for Anti-War Action Beograd***  
(Centar za antiratnu akciju Beograd)

***Citizens Committee for Peace Titograd***  
(Gradjanski odbor za mir Titograd)

***League for Democracy Skopje***  
(Liga za demokratiju Skopje)



A B S O L U T E

# FOCUS

THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAV ARMY  
IN THE HANDS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, CULTURAL GROUPS, ARTISTS  
JOINT IN THE NETWORK FOR METELKOVA

**26.October 1991 - Action in Ljubljana**  
**People Announcing The Occupation of The Military Barracks**  
**The Network for Metelkova Paints the Fence of The former Military HeadQuarter**  
**We Request The Government to replace military with Culture**

On the 25th of October, the last soldiers of the former Yugoslav Army are leaving Slovenia. Headquarters will leave the last - from the central Military Barrack in the future down-town of Ljubljana. Over a hundred of groups and individual creative persons of Ljubljana had followed the initiative of the Movement of the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence and joint in the project for conversion of this military barrack for the purposes of culture, education, fun, creativity ....

More than a year ago, when The Network for Metelkova started, most of the people did not really believe that Yugoslav Army would really live Slovenia. Now soldiers are living and we do not want the soldiers of new

uniforms to enter the town. There is no space for military in urban cities. The struggle for the former headquarters of the Yugoslav Army in Ljubljana is more than a struggle for the infrastructure for the cultural and social groups and individuals. It is a symbolic struggle for reconversion of military mentality.

All property owned by former Yugoslav Army is now under the authority of The Government of Slovenia and its Defence Minister Mr. Janez Janša. In the next few weeks the property will be re-distributed. It is a unique case for conversion projects to be elaborated. The Metelkova Network has prepared one such study in a more than a years long extensive work.

Our address:

Mreža za Metelkovo / A Network for Metelkova  
Mestni trg 13, YU-61000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

## Support our struggle !

Write to the:

Government of Slovenia  
president, Lojze Peterle  
Prešernova 8, Slovenia, YU-61000 Ljubljana

Slovenian Parliament  
president, Mr. France Bučar  
Šubičeva 4, Slovenia, YU-61000 Ljubljana

# CREATION OF A PEACE CENTER IN ZAGREB

By *Draženka Dobrić, Vesna Janković, Zoran Oštrić*

## PEACE MOVEMENT IN YUGOSLAVIA

For the last ten years, the peace movements have a relevant history (tradition) only in Slovenia (Movement for the culture of peace and non-violence). The group known as "Svarun" has worked in Zagreb in the period 1986-1989. It gathered activists from ecological, peace and women movements. Similar tries were noticed in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Sarajevo, and elsewhere.

## THE ANTI-WAR CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE (AWCC)

It was initiated by "Green action Zagreb" and "Society for improvement of quality of life", also from Zagreb. These organisations are part of ecological movements. Up to date the AWCC was joined by 50 groups from Republic of Croatia, around 20 from other republics and 10 different citizens organisations from abroad. The AWCC has organised several public manifestations and initiated different projects. It has been pretty much involved in establishing a network which would connect groups in all republics (restoring continuous contacts, creating computer data, publishing the Bulletin). The committee is depending on voluntary work of its members and their modest financial resources.

The inner structure of the committee has been defined recently to improve our efficiency; we created "coordinative committee" gathering leaders of actual projects and those permanently employed by the Peace center.

## PEACE CENTER: MAIN IDEA

To ensure consistent and efficient work of AWCC it is necessary to assure materials and financial basis. Yugoslav republics and nations are storming into the longlasting war, but strong wish for peace is also present. While hundreds of people professionally work on spreading the hatred, peace movement activists suffer, often unable to cope with elementary necessities such as travel expenses. This is why the issue of establishing an office arouse as a professional, administrative and informative service for the AWCC and other peace groups and movements. The Peace center should have a full-time employee, certain equipment and financial resources. The center will also work with volunteers and part-time employed professionals.

We consider Zagreb as the most suitable location for such an office, having in mind many people experienced and familiar to this line of work, their ability to work hard and effectively. Besides, the war is led on the territory of the croatian republic. One of the main interests of this center would be to initiate such centers in other cities, particularly in Sarajevo and Belgrade.

## PURPOSES OF THE PEACE CENTER

- Promoting general ideas of AWCC, particular actions, and informing about the work of AWCC.
- Servicing and giving infrastructure to projects within AWCC (office facilities, computer, library, correspondance...)
- Coordinating different projects, collecting and developing ideas for new projects

- Restoring continuous contacts with other peace organisations, either in the country or abroad, coordinating mutual projects.
- Establishing a computer network among different groups in Yugoslavia and abroad.
- Working in public relations in the country and abroad
- Analysing work of medias, and war propaganda
- Raising funds for particular projects
- Helping to organize such centers in Yugoslavia
- Educating volunteers for missions of mediation and negotiation
- Organising expertises, seminars, workshops etc on the subject of peace and non-violent actions
- Contributing to develop the civil society
- Promoting democratic and non-violent ways for conflict resolution
- Collaborating with the government in creation of peaceful politics
- Publishing activities (bulletin, books, brochures...)

## PUBLISHING

It was settled that "Arkzin" (the bulletin of AWCC) would be published twice a month in 1000 copies. We also planned to translate and publish books and brochures which would be distributed in all republics and abroad. Due to probable difficulties of distribution, we don't think that we will be able to cover the costs with the sales.

**TRAVEL EXPENSES** could amount to high sums, journeys being undertaken in difficult circumstances of war. Nevertheless, we think that personal contacts with people in other republics or countries is very important, even connected with considerable risks (being caught in the middle of the actual fights, taken hostages, imprisoned, or unable to proceed the journey)

## COVERING THE EXPENSES

We have some hopes that we may get support from city authorities and the government. If we get premises, and (or) telephone connections for free, that would considerably lessen our expenses, but we cannot rely on that. From sponsors and donators we hope to collect some financial means, and also to extract some from our own activities, but that would probably cover only smaller part of our needs. **So, without considerable help and financial support from abroad, this idea of Peace Center is unfeasible.**

The entire budget proposal is available from:

**Anti-war campaign Zelena Akcija  
Radnička c.22 p.p 876  
41000 ZAGREB-CROATIA  
Tel. 041-610951  
Fax. 041-612615**

## Constitutional Assembly of Anti War Committee Croatia

On 12th of October in Zagreb was held the constitutional assembly of the **Anti War Committee Croatia (AWCCC)**. The Committee is established as non-government, non-party and non-profit organization. Its founders are 11 previously existing organizations, founded on the same principles: Society for Wholistic Development of Humans, Society for Improvement of Quality of Life, Society of Walfdorf Pedagogy, Young European Federalists Croatia, University Society of Ecological Public, Independant Union of Women, Croatian Union of Greens, Croatian Union of Women, Youth Parliament Zagreb, Green Action Zagreb and Womens' Help NOW.

As you can see these are ecological, women, spiritual and youth groups and most of them had been established in last few years and this is the first time that they appear together. The committee is not only a peace movement but also a movement for human rights and autonomy of civil society. AWCCC started at the beginning of July as an unofficial coalition of nearly 50 groups and several hundred individual members from Croatia, other Yugoslav republics and from several European countries. At that time the severe armed conflict already escalated in Slovenia and Croatia into the brutal war. The idea of creating the AWCCC was initiated by several groups and individual members. Increasing number of new members and new projects made a certain formalization of work necessary. In its inner structure the committee will retain network system. The main work is done by different project groups, in which members choose to join in. Projects are of permanent or temporary nature, and their leaders form the coordinative council. Non-croat members will be represented in the council of AWCCC. Among them are Greens from European Parliament, Worlds Esperanto Movement, German Greens, Movement for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence from Slovenia, Peace Center Sarajevo, Center for Anti War Action Belgrade, Citizens Committee for

Peace Montenegro etc.... According to the constitution the general aim of the Committee is development, promotion and application of nonviolent methods of conflict resolution, and general demilitarization. The particular aim is application of these methods to stop the war and armed conflicts in Croatia and in other republics and to attain conditions for lasting peace. The progress of democracy and protection of human rights and liberties are by AWCCC considered as key issues in obtaining the lasting peace. All the activities are strictly of non-party character. The AWCCC does not promote any particular political solutions, but the principles of peaceful, democratic and fair conflict resolving.

At the constitutional assembly numerous on-going and future projects have been presented by project groups. The pilot edition of our bulletin **ARCzin** already came out and the first regular number is due by 22nd of October. Different promotion happenings, like concerts of spiritual music for instance are held regularly. The introducing workshop for nonviolent actions and peace-mediation was organized, and we work on continuous educational program. We also prepare missions to some areas in conflict to investigate the situation and explore possibilities for our activity. At the moment the priority is to establish the Peace Center office in Zagreb, as an administrative and professional service for peace movement in Croatia and republics of former Yugoslavia. The office would facilitate the execution of different projects and enable us to professionalize our work.

Considering great number of people participating in this or similar initiatives peace movements have their chance to really contribute in resolving Yugoslavian crises in the following years.

Zagreb, 11. October 1991

Zoran Oštrić, Zagreb

English version by *Draženka Dobrić*

# ANTI-WAR ACTION IN BELGRADE

Caught in the midst of a senseless war, a war which the majority of citizens does not want but is unable to effectively resist, we have established the Center for Anti-war action. the founders are the European Movement in Yugoslavia, the Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative(UJDI), the Women's party, the Yugoslav Helsinki Committee, the Helsinki Citizens Assembly...The center was founded in Belgrade on July 15th 1991.

The center strongly believes that no greater evil can be imposed on people than the affliction of war, and only because three national leaders- Tudjman, Milošević, and Kučan- refuse to agree on a peaceful settlement to the Yugoslav crisis. Why should we pay for their intransigence and ineptness in human life, destruction, poverty and alienation from Europe and the developed world? we do not feel obliged to abide by the laws and rules set by such people and such authorities, for they have given us nothing but iniquity and dirty war. We represent those who do not see this as their war, those who know well that ethnic states can not be established in the Balkans, even at the highest possible price- human life.

Invoking the right to life and the right to civil disobedience to irresponsible authorities-irresponsible because it is solely concerned with its own position and disregards the law and our well-being- we shall fight against this disgraceful war and its escalation, finding support in the citizens and organizations opposed to war.

The goals of the center are to avert war, to mitigate its effects where fighting is in progress,



to spread anti-war propaganda and to promote the efforts to demilitarize Yugoslavia.

We propose to do this by:

- extending legal assistance and counsel to those who refuse conscription and mobilization into any units involved in this civil war.

- defending conscientious objection to bearing and using arms.

- lobbying for peace with all possible means, staging anti-war demonstration, peace concerts and the like.

- monitoring and registering inciters of clashes, irrespective of which military formation is involved, with a view to calling them to account.

- uncovering all those violating humanitarian norms and international conventions and initiating proceedings against them.

- collecting evidence on mass media misinforming the public, committing the criminal offence of inciting religious and national hatred and engaging in war-mongering.

We appeal to all citizens, irrespective of their national and political affiliation, to join us by setting up anti-war centre in the country.



Contact:  
Stojan Cerović,  
president  
Prote Mateje br.6  
11000 BEOGRAD  
Tel. 38.11.431.298

# ARE THE PEACE MOVEMENTS ABOVE PROPAGANDA ?

REPORT FROM A MINIATURIZED PEACE CARAVAN WITH SELECTED PARTICIPANTS

BY Dominique Cochard

**Warning:** due to technical problems at that time, I was not able to record the following interview. The words reported below are not the exact ones used by the two interviewed persons. Therefore, the meaning might have been betrayed, my perception, memory and understanding having interfered.

*During three weeks in Zagreb, Eric Bachman, with Anti-war campaign group, has been running a training on Non-violent conflict resolution, helped in this task by Christine Schweitzer (WRI), who previously spent several weeks in Ljubljana this summer.*

**Intruder:** Was the reality of peace activities in Belgrade in accordance with the previous image you had in mind?

*Both felt necessary to visit peace groups in Belgrade in order to step further towards understanding. They were very well informed by the slovenian and croatian peace movements, and had experienced everyday life in Zagreb through alarms, shelters and detonations.*

before, also the likeliness of it helped me to believe easily.

**Intruder:** My belief is that rumors in general take roots in actual facts which are then amplified, transformed through the chain of communication.

**Christine:** No, on the contrary. The picture I had in mind was the one of few

isolated individuals trying to rise their voice against the government line and the war, constantly threatened, if not hidden to avoid the definitive punishment. I remember rumours circulating in Ljubljana confirming these a priori ideas, ending up being convictions, because of the likeliness of their nature. The reality we found through our contacts with the Center for Anti-war action\*, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, and Gama (citizens action for peace) was pretty different from the pessimistic picture we figured out. Instead of the complete silence or underground activities we were expecting, we witnessed during our three days stay in Belgrade, vigils for Peace every evening (from 8.30 to 9.00) in front of the Parliament, joined by more and more people and kindly watched by a non-intervening police; we participated in a demonstration organized by the newly born group "women in black". Shortly beforehand, the Center for Anti-war action managed to gather around 3000 persons for a demonstration called "Let stop the hate and we will stop the war", including a petition signed by 2000 persons appealing to stop military intervention and ban weapons. All together, the Center for Anti-war action has been initiating 4 important actions since the 25th of July.

**Intruder:** What or who did build up the previous pessimistic picture of the situation?

**Christine:** My conversations with the people from the peace movement in Ljubljana, from Anti-war campaign in Zagreb, and the TV channels in these respective towns. Mostly Ljubljana's peace activists, or, at least earlier than other sources. As I said

Would you say, concerning the ones you heard in Ljubljana, that they have been made up of nothing?

**Eric:** No. Pressure, oppression are still recorded, such as the physical attack perpetrated on a team from Street News (an alternative TV channel) by a fascist group "serbian brotherhood"; also the fear of repression is operating, sometimes sufficient to prevent people to organize demonstrations. But there has been no violence in the ones we have been participating in; on the contrary, lot of passers by were showing an interest.

**Intruder:** If I understood well, the main activities of the peace groups in Belgrade are demonstrations? What strategy do they define out of them?

**Eric:** According to a poll realised by the university, 80% of serbian people declared themselves against the war. But in most cases, they keep being silent. The purpose of the demonstrations is then to make them join and speak up, until the people's power will be sufficient.

Anti-war action is also providing help and informations to resisters and desertors. For that purpose, they established a SOS phone line.

**Intruder:** What is their position towards their government? What is their understanding of the conflict?

**Eric:** We didn't really have time to discuss largely their analytical

view. What appeared clearly is that they totally condemn the serbian government, and strictly recognize the difference aggressor/aggressed.  
**Christine:** One of the interpretation I heard was that they see three parties involved in the conflict:: the army considering that a big army needs a big country, the nationalists, and Milošević who doesn't want to loose power. Again, their statements have been denying my conviction according to which the serbian peace movements were pro-yugoslav.

**Intruder:** What do Belgrade's activists think about the peace groups in Ljubljana and Zagreb?

**Christine:** They are mainly reproaching the people in Zagreb not to criticize their government enough, neither to encourage young men to resistance and desertion.

It really seemed to me that this misunderstanding between Zagreb and Belgrade was caused by a lack of exchanges between the two groups. People in Zagreb claim for example that people in Belgrade can't understand the situation of war, because they don't live it on their territory. Therefore, we proposed them to exchange visitors with Ljubljana and Zagreb, in order to elaborate further collaboration. They were quite enthusiastic about the idea.

**Intruder:** Finally Christine after your several travels in ex-Yugoslavia through the summer what is your own understanding of the situation?

**Christine:** I would say that my understanding had changed a lot during my last stay, and was improved noticeably. But, it is still at the level of intuitions, and I wouldn't be able to give any rational explanation. Furthermore I only visited Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade, none of the battlefields, and mainly spoke with peace activists. Therefore I don't think I have all datas necessary to produce clear explanations.

*Many thanks to Christine and Eric to make us aware that we have been spreading wrong informations through our blind "a priori"; that pretenting to be beyond propaganda was not only a mistake and a proof of arrogance, but unfortunately allowed us to spread it without any feeling of guilt; that, if we have any intention to contribute to put an end to this war, then we need to cooperate closely with all peace formations on the geographical territory called Yugoslavia.*

*Nevertheless, we have lessening circumstances (there always are), due to the fact that the only recorded peace group in Belgrade until late July was the one represented by Sonja Licht, then, shortly after the birth of new ones, phone connections between Ljubljana and Belgrade were cut.*

*Still, this is a "mea culpa", and this might help you to understand why this issue of "The intruder" is so much oriented towards the peace actions or situation in the different republics.*

\* you can read the presentation of the center for Anti-war action in this issue.

# WAR! WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR? ABSOLUTELY NOTHING! SAY IT AGAIN!

By Draženka Dobrić- Anti-war campaign, Zagreb

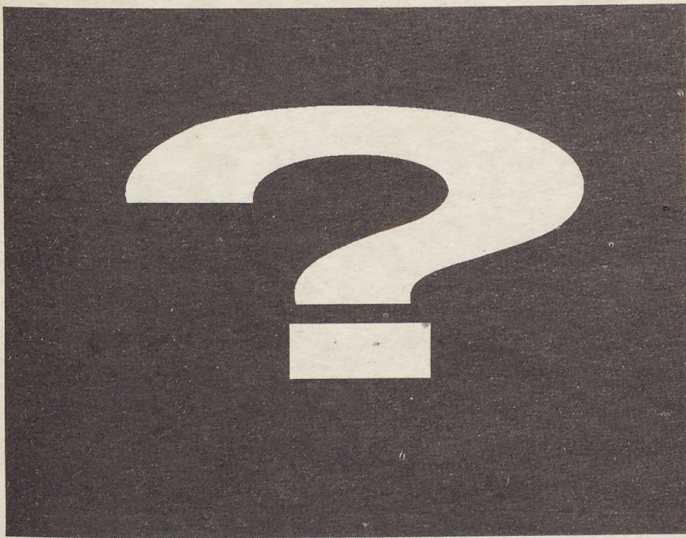
It seems that it is always too late, when one realizes the absurdity of the reality one lives in and one shares with others, fellows in suffering. It also seems that many of us, only when facing close perspectives of death, remember all the good and right things we could have done but haven't. Suddenly we are reminded about human rights, we regain our human consciousness, we talk about justice and freedom. As it was never so clear before. Why? Does war make the crucial difference? Awakened, scared and helpless, we rebel. We accuse our governments, we are desperately looking for someone to blame, we demand answers, we seek justice...

Isn't it just a bit too late for that?

And why do we, most of us quiet and obedient sheeps in the flock, have to be pushed so far to refuse them the right to push us even further. It is because war is a total denial of any individual, human or civic rights, its nature itself being denial of life. War abolishes everything, except itself, and only then we become aware that we are not blind, deaf and dumb- the role we all play so well most of our lives.

There is something which should be called responsibility towards life. something we neglect or even are totally ignorant of. Democracy and its (conditioned) freedom don't come easily and it is not given by any leader or government.. It is won by people and their determination that they will themselves make all decisions concerning their lives, their rights and their needs. but, as much as privilege, democracy is also an obligation of each of us. If we do want things to change, to improve, it is us to say it.. We can't expect other people to do it for us

*Draženka Dobrić*



# IS WAR A TIME FOR NON - VIOLENCE

*By Christine Schweitzer*

Many pacifists and antimilitarists share one opinion with people who are neither of the two: that war is no time for non-violence. It is said to be either too late, or that non-violence could be tried later, to prevent the next war, not the one which is going on. My conviction is that those statements are wrong.

Saying this, I do not refer in the first place to what I consider a human right as well as a political option even in a country that is attacked by another one: namely, the right to refuse to take part in the killing. From a moral point of view, it is at least as legitimate as taking part in the armed defence, and there are almost always non-violent alternatives to using weapons. Primarily, I refer to what I would like to call a maintenance of a civil space in war-time. Peace is more than the absence of war. That is maybe even more valid for Croatia than for Europe during the cold war, the period during which that statement was first made. but war is also more than the actual fighting, bombing and air raids. War affects the ways of thinking and acting in private, as well as in political life. Militarism, brutality, hatred, fear to express divergent opinions and despair are natural, but not inevitable components of war-time. since they are found everywhere, not only in the battlefields, it is also possible to fight against them everywhere. reconciliation, speaking and acting against hatred, confronting propaganda with information and truth, stopping violence, wherever it is possible, by non-violent interventions and expressing the firm will to have peace can be as the tasks of peace movements as well as of every single individuals in war-time. This alone will probably not stop

the war, but it definitely contributes to put an end to it and it is vital for achieving real peace.

It is a strong conviction of peace activists that both partners in a conflict bear responsibility for its evolution and its course. I also think that it is true for this war even though it is easy to differentiate between the aggressor and the attacked. To give but a few examples: on both sides, military and paramilitary troops are operating uncontrolled by any civilian institution; both sides apparently are responsible for a large number of so-called war crimes, as hospital staff in Serbia and in Croatia confirm (so-called because war itself is a crime); both sides at times have had an interest in an escalation of the conflict; and so on.

Nevertheless it would be much easier to stop the war from the Serbian side. the peace movements in Serbia, especially in Beograd, could play a decisive role. According to a poll made a short time ago, 80% of the population in Serbia is against this war. in Beograd, only 15% (in all Serbia 50%) of the young men called up went to the army, the others went into hiding, or left the country! If it would be possible in Serbia to mobilize the people who now silently disagreed, it might well be possible to force the Serbian government to change its course of action.

Hatred and destruction spread easily, as can unfortunately be seen, not only in this part of the world. but the idea of non-violence and democracy is contagious as well and powerful enough, as was most recently proven again by the people of Moscow in their non-violent insurrection against the putsch in August. All times can be times for non-violent action if people choose to act non-violently.

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