

PEACE PROJECTIONS

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A Newsletter of Project Peacemakers

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Twenty Great Years of Peacemaking

By Derrick Martens

Project Peacemakers is wrapping of its twentieth year of operation this year. What began as the Inter-Church Disarmament Project in 1983 soon grew and affiliated with Project Ploughshares in Waterloo, Ontario. Many hundreds of Winnipeggers and others outside the city and province have steadfastly supported our work over two decades; indeed these members and supporters are the heart and base of our organization. We are essentially an organization of volunteers and open to member participation in any project that promotes peace. On October 25, we gathered at Bethel Mennonite Church for an evening of good food, memory-sharing, and encouragement to continue the struggle for a better world.

More than 125 people came to that dinner, including numerous former staff people and board members. Greetings and updates from other former staff people, now scattered all over this continent and abroad, were available for perusal. Dianne Cooper designed several great displays highlighting past actions and programs, and we all thrilled to hear stories from several people, some of which are highlighted below.

Doug McMurtry – Recipient of the Joan Melanson Award

This award is annually presented to a Project Peacemakers supporter to recognize their dedication to peacemaking, and we were pleased to present the award this year to Doug McMurtry, currently on the Finance Committee.

Doug's father, a minister in the Methodist and United Churches, was strongly influenced by the Social Gospel Movement and Doug was immersed in those issues of peace and justice from early on. He recalled the United Church's Young Peoples Union and the impact of discussions on the Christian call to peace in those pre-World War II days. Doug said, "Although we were in the minority, some

of us took the pacifist position, and said we could not support war under any circumstances. I am grateful that I didn't have to face the outbreak of war in 1939 without wrestling in advance with these serious questions."

While studying at the university in Saskatoon, Doug decided to register as a conscientious objector which later resulted in his expulsion but was allowed to go home to be with his ailing mother. He learned of the Quakers (Society of Friends) through the Young People's Union and met Mennonites at university where he learned of their peace witness. He later travelled to China in early 1945 to work as a medical worker with the Friends Ambulance Unit. "Two years of service as a medical and administrative worker; adapting to a new and fascinating culture, at a time when the country was recovering from Japanese occupation; being a part of a Quaker community; these experiences when I was in my mid-twenties have continued to enrich my life, and to provide an education for peacemaking which I could not have otherwise have had, and for which I continue to be thankful."

Melting the Cold War: Karen Burgoyne and the Winnipeg – Kviv Telebridge

In the days before simultaneous satellite hookups were common, Karen played a pivotal role in uniting Winnipeg with Lviv, Ukraine in a live cultural exchange. As president of the board of directors, she oversaw the massive four year planning for this momentous occasion in the midst of the renewed Cold War of the Reagan administration. It was a tremendous opportunity "to share our common humanity and to take one more step forward in building hope and understanding among people." On April 24, 1988 the two cities



Doug McMurtry receives the Joan Melanson Award for his years of peace work. Joan herself was able to attend the Anniversary

shared speeches by their mayors, cultural dances, choir and rock music, poets, students, and warm words by other government officials. Karen notes that the program was so controversial that CBC would not do it, and it fell to Videon Cable to host the first such satellite link up in North America. "People who saw Telebridge felt an incredible sense of awe and really felt the presence of the people from Lviv," she says.

Ruth Taronno – Reflections on the Early Years of Building Peace Through Play

"Over the years I spoke with thousands of parents, and I really did see a change in attitude! When I started, I sometimes felt that I really had to justify what I was saying, I saw skepticism (not a lot of downright hostility luckily!), but as time went on, I felt a real change in how our society perceived violent toys. In the last few years, I felt that the parents who allowed their children to play with violent toys - guns in particular - were becoming less, and those that did either did not want to admit it, or were quite defensive. I found myself in the funny position of trying to "protect" this minority so that they did not

Please see "Twenty," page two.

Twenty Years

Continued from page one.

feel “ganged up on”. I’m not saying that Building Peace Through Play was totally responsible for this change in attitude, but we certainly were educating the public and articulating what seemed to be changing societal norms!”

“Probably the most difficult, challenging and yet moving conversations I had were with a group of military wives who had asked me to talk to them because of problems they were seeing with their young sons. They were concerned because while they were uncomfortable with their boys playing violently with their guns and action figures, their husbands not only disagreed with them, but were soldiers themselves! The women were wonderful, and I really felt for them.”

Sybil Hamm – Nuclear Missile Silo Protests

Sybil recounted two demonstrations at the dinner. The first was at Maida, North Dakota on November 6, 1988. The silo was a concrete lid in a farmer’s field, surrounded by a barb-wire fence. Forty people, young and old, formed a circle around the silo in a pre-Remembrance Day service, singing songs next to one of the 1000 land-based nuclear missiles buried in American soil. She recalls hearing sirens as six jeeps pulled up and soldiers with automatic weapons jumped out, pointing them at the group. The commander told the group to carry on, while another soldier took pictures of the group. A third suggested the group come at a more convenient time so as not to disturb his football game on TV.

The January 15, 1989 visit to the Moorhead, Minnesota nuclear launch control centre was timed to correspond to Martin King Luther Jr.’s Birthday. The action was just part of a weekend of non-violence training. The plan was to have two people arrested for climbing over the fence in order to generate public attention by getting international law to play a role in the American Court system and say that the killing of civilians is illegal, to warn

Peace Projections is the quarterly newsletter of Project Peacemakers. Project Peacemakers, an affiliate of Project Ploughshares, is an ecumenical body of Christians whose goal is to empower people of faith and the larger community to respond to Christ’s call to be peacemakers, to work for justice and the integrity of creation. Your submissions are welcome. Please send them to our office. For more information on any of the stories, call the office. We encourage you to work for peace. A good way to start is to become a member of Project Peacemakers, see page 7.
Editor: Derrick Martens

against accidents, and to notify the world that military documents labeled Manitoban citizens as an “expendable population.” Finally, hundreds of soldiers arrived along with tanks. Their military officer wanted to speak with the protesters’s leader, and couldn’t understand just why the group didn’t have one. They arrested the individuals who climbed the fence while the rest remained to pray.

Lesley Hughes – On Media Activism

Our guest speaker, Lesley Hughes, spoke of the dangers of the corporate media which suppresses dissent and free speech while supporting the status quo. Her own experiences of being fired by the *Winnipeg Sun* for challenging them on their harassment of Cuban athletes during the Pan-Am games, and her subsequent dismissal from the community weeklies she wrote for when an editor from the *Winnipeg Sun* was seconded to the community papers, are strong illustrations of the lengths the media will

go to restrict the rights of its own editors. The Manitoba Human Rights Commission sided with Hughes against Sun Media and declared the *Winnipeg Sun* politically motivated.

Lesley argued that the rightwing, wealthy, corporate media bias is not

harmless. In February, during the Iraq war, she wrote an article on the 40th anniversary of John F. Kennedy’s supporters assistance in overthrowing Prime Minister John Diefenbaker. Editors refused to publish this story of American interference in Canada’s democracy because it might threaten trade relations. She challenged those in attendance at the banquet to, “Know the media, change the media, be the media!”



Photo: Project Peacemakers

Lesley Hughes spoke on media self-censorship and the need for journalistic activism at the Anniversary Dinner



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Dear Friends at Project Peacemakers,

October 25, 2003

It’s a great pleasure to congratulate you on twenty years of commitment and action for peace and disarmament. Your work has broadened and deepened the work of Project Ploughshares in the wider Canadian peace community. We thank you for supporting Project Ploughshares by bringing attention and engagement of peace and security issues in the Winnipeg area.

I know that naming names always omits recognition of many of the people whose work bring life to groups like Project Peacemakers, but I would like acknowledge several people who we know have been particularly instrumental in nurturing your group: Carl Ridd, Beverly Ridd, Ruth Taronno, Megan McKenzie, Jennifer Wushke, Karen Schlichting, and Menno Klassen. We are all the richer for their efforts and for the efforts of all of you who have supported Project Peacemakers over the years.

On behalf of the Ploughshares staff and board, we give thanks for your work and witness, celebrate your ongoing commitment, wish you the happiest of anniversaries, and look forward to working with you in your 21st year and beyond.

With good wishes,

Ernie Regehr
 Director, Project Ploughshares

Free the Cuban Five! Canadian Tour

By Donna Cawker

On October 5, 2003, I attended a public meeting sponsored by the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC), and hosted by the Manitoba-Cuba Solidarity Committee, at Broadway Disciples United Church, Winnipeg. The church was packed to hear Ernesto "Che" Guevara's daughter, Aleida Guevara, a Cuban pediatrician, and Irma Gonzalez, the 18 year old daughter of one of the "Cuban Five" speak of the injustice that has been done through the rigged trial and subsequent convictions and imprisonment of these Five Cuban patriots.

Who are they?

On Sept. 12, 1998, Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labanino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Gonzalez and Rene Gonzalez were arrested by U.S. authorities, held in solitary confinement for 17 months, and finally convicted of "conspiracy to commit espionage" and related charges in a Florida courtroom.

The trial itself was a travesty of justice, held in the extremely hostile anti-Cuba environment prevailing in south Florida. Many potential jurors declined from serving because of fear generated should they find the defendants not guilty. During the jury selection process, all were asked whether they agreed with the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba. Those who did not agree with it were automatically disqualified.

The presiding judge turned down defence motions for a new venue where the Cuban Five might have had a better chance of receiving a fair trial. All Five were convicted and sentenced to long prison terms, three to life sentences. They are now held in five different penitentiaries in various parts of the United States.

Why were they convicted?

For decades, Cuba has been appealing to the U.S. government to intervene against extremist Cuban-American groups located in Miami, who plan and carry out terrorist acts against Cuba and against citizens within the U.S. itself. These terrorist attacks have been recorded in official U.S. documents and media reports. When Cuba's repeated requests to the American government that it uphold its own domestic laws against terrorism went unheeded, Cuba decided to act in its own self defence, by infiltrating some of these extreme right-wing groups in order to be fore-warned of impending acts of violence

against itself or its citizens. In 1998, the information so-gathered was shared with the FBI who three months later arrested the information gatherers - The Cuban Five.

The trial revealed that at no time did the Cuban Five commit any act of violence, seek out classified information, or military secrets, or otherwise threaten U.S. national security. Yet, despite lack of evidence or witnesses, the jury convicted the Five of "conspiracy to commit espionage against the U.S."

The Cuban Five case has been shrouded in silence by the main North American mass media because it exposes the hypocritical and dishonest nature of the so-called "war on terrorism". In the past 40 years, 3,478 innocent lives have been lost due to terrorist acts against Cuba. Both of the speakers referred to this irony in their presentations. Dr. Guevara said that the only "crime" committed by the five imprisoned Cubans was trying to prevent terrorism. Irma Gonzalez, the 18 year old who has committed her life to freeing her father and his compatriots said in part, "...all they did was good, they fought against terrorism. Isn't that what the world is trying to do?... Why does terrorism exist? We cried in Cuba about what happened at the Twin Towers. We want justice. We don't want that to happen anymore."

Gerardo, Rene, Antonio, Fernando and Ramon are innocent and should be free. Their actions required a great deal of sacrifice and personal risk to infiltrate such organizations. They are heroes not criminals.

SUPPORT THE CALL FOR THEIR FREEDOM

Donna Cawker is a member of Project Peacemakers and interested in the Cuban situation.

For more information on this story and how to help, contact:

Manitoba-Cuba Solidarity Committee
P.O. Box 2231
Winnipeg, MB, R3C 3R5
Ph.783-9380 or 793-1456
E-mail: dzack@mts.net

We welcome contributions by members. Please contact the office for details.



Above: Aleida Guevara
Below: The Cuban Five: (l-r) Fernando González (19 years), Antonio Guerrero (life sentence), Ramón Labañino (life sentence), Gerardo Hernández (2 life sentences), René González (15 years), whose daughter spoke here



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Medical Trip to Myanmar and Thailand

By Phyllis Reader

Two weeks ago I returned from a wonderful adventure in many ways. In many respects it does make me sad as I face reality in our society, like the enormous amount of Christmas advertising coming daily with the newspaper, mail and on the television. The false glitz of consumerism, fancy wrapped boxes, the tinsel and decorations everywhere and the huge signs advertising the latest toy or piece of technology.

I was in Mawlamyine, Myanmar with a medical, surgical eye team for two weeks with an organization called Medical Ministry International. It is a non-denominational Christian organization. There were thirty-three members on our team. I was the only Manitoban. I am an operating room nurse and although I retired last December I still work casual shifts in the operating room at St. Boniface Hospital, mainly to keep my skills current as well as to help pay for my international surgical trips.

Mawlamyine is a 12 hour trip by a rough road outside of the capital, Rangoon. It is a city of 400,000 and is on the coast line not far from Thailand in Mon State. Today many Burmese and ethnic nationals living in North America do not refer to their homeland as Myanmar, they called it Burma. There was a brutal military takeover in 1988 and since then the country has been called Myanmar, but for many who were involved in that uprising, witnessed terrible atrocities and lost loved ones it is still Burma.

Along the road ways I saw young girls and women carrying huge blocks of rock to build the roads. This is forced labor, with scant wages, and they are nutritionally compromised because of lack of food. It was truly an emotional sight to see slavery first hand. The average wage in this country is 5000 kyats which is \$5.00 US a month. People are not allowed to travel around the country and there are check points everywhere. Bridges crossing rivers have military guards and steel gates so everyone must stop and report in. Thus, movement is heavily restricted. Our bus with our North American team travelled relatively freely, although we were being monitored.

Our team worked in a Christian Leprosy Hospital. There are 50 leprosy patients that live with their families in a village behind the hospital. It is hard to see leprosy today with people losing their fingers, toes, nose and some facial features that is characteristic of this disease. The stigma is still there that it is contagious

and people still pass the hospital holding their nose feeling that they will catch the disease. I can't imagine the isolation and loneliness of being an innocent victim of this disease centuries long ago.

In eight days our team saw 2,220 patients that had come from miles around. They walked, rode bicycles, took oxen carts, overloaded trunks, cars, and buses to get to the hospital to be seen by our team. If they had an eye condition of any kind they were attended to by our team. We saw eye infections, did eye examinations and eye tests for glasses; finally the totally blind were examined for cataract surgery. Many people in this country have cataracts in their early thirties and have been blind for years. It is not known why but there is some suspicion that this condition is related to diet.

We had two operating rooms for cataract surgery. Most of our patients had been totally blind for 20-25 years. In eight days we performed 255 cataract surgeries. We worked very hard but what a wonderful way to make a difference in a person's life—the gift of sight. I was working with an eye surgeon from San Diego, California. He was so gifted and skilled: he did a cataract every 35 minutes. What a pleasure to work and assist him as a scrub, and circulating nurse. The patients we saw had cataracts that were black because they were so old and termed petrified like stone. Here in Winnipeg we see cataracts that are slightly opaque. People are starting to have difficulty seeing through the lens and surgery is done in a relatively short time.

There is one particular patient I will never forget. We had done her surgery at 1:00 pm the previous day. The next morning the surgeon and I removed her eye patch and wiped off the antibiotic ointment from her eye. She had been totally blind for 25 years. Her daughter had been her care giver all those years and had brought her to us to see if we could do anything for her. As we cleaned her operative eye she began to look around at the ceiling, the lights and new sights for the first time in many years. She looked at the woman sitting next her not recognizing her at all. The woman spoke and she instantly recognized her daughter's voice. She was overcome with emotion and just started sobbing as she laid her head on her daughter's shoulder. She had not seen her daughter since she was 12 years of age and now she was 37 years old. Everyone in that room witnessing this event was weeping with joy for her and her future life. What an incredible feeling to be part of such a sig-

nificant event in another human being's life.

The second part of my adventure was staying with refugees who are friends of mine outside Refugee Camp #1 in North West Thailand outside Mae Hong Son. Five years ago I stayed in that camp but now it is so tightly controlled by the Thai government that you need documentation to enter and pass the three check points. I was in Nai Soi just outside the camp and stayed in similar circumstances to the camp inside. I visited them for almost a week.

My host, a darling, kind and gentle woman Day Day Paw got up daily at 4:15 am to start the fires to cook the rice for the day. She was always smiling and humming to herself no matter about her daily concerns. We spoke of the issues, struggles, and despair of being a refugee with no future and all options and doors closed to her and her family. I have never met a more gracious, considerate people.

She took me to the local Bible school to teach students in their late teens and early adulthood. I ended up teaching three full days. They were starved for information and I just talked and answered their questions. We talked about cancer, lower back pain, sex, sterilization, Aids, child birth, menstruation, menopause, post 9-11, aging, the Chinese Satellite in outer space, what young people think in North America, computers, environment issues, nutrition, chewing beetle nuts which has a euphoric property to them and turn your teeth black, and many more items of interest. I taught them to take their own blood pressure and pulse. I continually said this is just my interpretation of the world and what makes it tick. What a wonderful opportunity to teach and have an impact on young people half way around the world. At the end of the teaching session and I would be flying home the next day, they sang 6 songs for me with their traditional musical instruments and in their Karenni language. Needless to say I was in tears to be in this place, at this time with these people, truly a gift I will never forget.

I have been blessed with one of the most unusual, unique experiences I could ever wish for. In telling just some of my story may I bring out the very best in you that this Christmas season has to offer.

Phyllis Reader is a retired operating room nurse who is involved with refugees locally, co-founder of International H.O.P.E. that recycles clean, usable medical, surgical supplies, and a facilitator for the Burmese Community Organization of Manitoba (BCOM).



Dear Friends,

In this season of peace and goodwill I invite you to include Project Peacemakers in your holiday giving.

When Project Peacemakers was formed twenty years ago the founding group was motivated by the immediate threat of nuclear destruction. We naively believed that when the world realized the danger, the leaders would come to their senses and abolish war as a means of settling differences. I have learned a lot since then about the complexity and inter-relatedness of the military complex, the shortage of resources (especially oil and water), the world-wide refugee problem, greed, violence and power. I still believe that common security and social cooperation is our best hope for world peace, but I also know that peace-making will be an ongoing endeavour. Trying to promote this more complex understanding of security does not seem an easy task.

To remain involved in peace-making takes energy and commitment. To be able to sustain this effort over a long period, I believe, also takes community – a group of people committed to finding alternatives to the use of violence to settle conflicts. This is where Project Peacemakers comes in. As members and supporters we need not feel alone. We know that there are many others willing to give their time, talent and money to work for this vision. We can become informed by reading the **Peace Projections** newsletter, attend educational events, access the resources (print and video) in the Peacemakers library and join with other like-minded voices to express our concerns.

One of our current projects that I am most excited about is the peace resource for schools “Creating a Culture of Peace”. The Middle School curriculum was launched at the SAG conference in October and over a hundred copies have already been distributed and more are on order. The curricula for the Senior Years and Early Years will be completed in the coming year. It is so important to share a vision of peace with our children as an alternative to the violent world they experience in their TV programs, music videos and video games.

We received funding from The Winnipeg Foundation for this project but it is the financial contributions that we receive from members and friends that enable Project Peacemakers to function. We hope we can count on your support once again. Cheques can be made payable to Project Peacemakers and sent to the office at 745 Westminster Ave. R3G 1A5. One of the things you might consider is making a donation in recognition of some significant event in a person’s life. I know how moved my family and I are by the contributions made in memory of my husband Carl. How good to know his passion for peace and justice continues in the work of this organization.

I will close with a quote from Anouk Ride: “The leaders of rich nations are the only victors of war – those who do not have to look in the face of the people they kill, those who cannot recognize their victims. Unless we challenge this kind of autocratic power, unless we contest the violence that lies within our own culture, unless we end militarization and uphold human rights, we will always be chased by fear Peace requires individual and collective commitment.”

Thank you for your commitment to peace.

Bev Ridd, Finance Chair



P.S. A copy of the “Creating a Culture of Peace” curriculum makes a great gift for any teachers you know. It only costs \$15! You can place your order by calling the office at 775-8178.

Update on Canada and the Military

By Derrick Martens

Despite Canada's official non-participation in the recent war on Iraq, we know that Canada was patrolling the Gulf, and had officers seconded to the US military. The following feature from the Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade is part of a painstaking investigation into the Canadian government's investment into American war equipment manufacturers. We also manufacture many parts and systems in Canada, including Light Armoured Vehicles (shown above). In 2000, the US ordered 2131. These weapons are being used in open American copying of Israel's illegal tactics against Palestinians, in Iraq. This is a worrying development; even former President Bill Clinton said from Winnipeg that the US government has "the most far-right" government in the democratic world.

Eye on Canada's Warmonger Canada Pension Plan: Investing in Businesses that Profit from War!

Our government is forcing millions of Canadians into unwitting complicity in war profiteering. The peace and security of our retirement years is purchased at the expense of those at the receiving end of weapons systems in which we are legally obliged to invest. We are dragged into participation in the business of war through mandatory contributions to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). This year, about \$2.5 billion in CPP funds were invested in military corporations, included 15 of the world's top 20 war industries.

Among CPP investments are corporations making anti-personnel cluster munitions, incendiary bombs, field artillery weapons and cruise missiles, as well the prime contractors building dozens of U.S. warplanes, warships, armoured vehicles, missile launchers and battle tanks used in the latest U.S.-led war against Iraq.

CPP invests in the world's highest-ranking weapons manufacturer, Lockheed Martin, which still produces components for CBU-89 "Gator" anti-personnel landmines. Other CPP investments include \$160 million in four other top U.S. weapons manufacturers known to have produced anti-personnel landmines: General Electric, Raytheon, Texas Instruments and Rockwell. The CPP Investment Board may actually be contravening the global treaty to ban anti-personnel landmines.

Despite all this, Liberal MP, David

Pratt, chair of the Parliamentary Committee for Defence and Veterans Affairs, recently defended CPP investments in war industries. Mr. Pratt "said these defence firms are legitimate corporations as worthy of investment as any other. 'Is anybody suggesting that we not have an army?' he said. 'If so then fine, but they're leaving themselves open to ridicule'" (Nepean This Week, Nov. 21, 2003). Pratt's comments are a facile attempt to create a "red herring" to deflect attention away from the embarrassing fact that Canadians are coerced to invest in weapons industries, and profit from a war that they do not support.

The Act of Parliament governing CPP investments specifies that profit is the sole investment criteria. This must be changed to allow only ethical investments.

Most Canadians do not realize that they have been fiscally conscripted. Canadians are now becoming aware of this thanks to a report called "Operation Embedded Complicity: Canada, Playing our Part in the Business of War," published by the Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade (COAT). COAT has also created an online petition to register opposition to CPP war investments. (<http://coat.openconcept.ca>) COAT's report also details 90 Canadian companies and the components they have provided for dozens of major weapons systems used in the latest Iraq war.

Many are shocked to learn of Canadian complicity in this war because they believe our government took a principled stand against it. In actuality, Canada's support probably ranked about third -- just behind Britain and Australia. Other governments, though providing a fraction of Canada's contribution, were honest enough to admit their involvement. Canada's Liberal government, unwilling to be counted among the "Coalition of the Willing," hypocritically pretended to oppose the war. They maintained the party's popular, but illusory, peacemaker image while secretly aiding and abetting this illegal war.

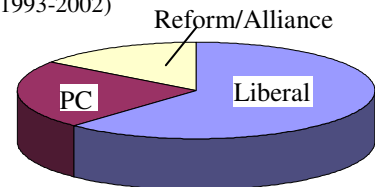
Forcing Canadians to invest in war industries is, sadly, not an aberration in government policy. It is actually consistent with Canada's long-standing tradition of supporting U.S.-led wars while professing to stand for peace. The myth of "Canada the Peacemaker" looms large over our

cultural consciousness. Although shaping how we see ourselves and our country's role in the world, it is largely delusory. To make this worthy dream an actual reality, Canadians must face the ugly truth of our deep complicity in the U.S. war machine. Let's start by stopping CPP investments in war!

Richard Sanders is editor, of Press for Conversion! and coordinator of Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade

For more information, please contact COAT: Email overcoat@rogers.co, Phone 613-231-3076, Web: coat.openconcept.ca

Liberals get Biggest Piece of the Military Industry Pie: Donations from Military Contractors to Canadian Political Parties (1993-2002)



Liberal Party: \$4.93 million (62%)
Progressive Conservatives: \$1.81 million (23%)
Reform/Alliance Parties: \$1.19 million (15%)

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Toy Store Inspections Huge Success!

By Derrick Martens

Over twenty volunteers inspected sixteen toy stores in Winnipeg to determine their level of "toxicity" on Saturday, November 1. This is the fourth year that the Violence Is Not Child's Play coalition has organized these inspections, and the media was very interested in the results.

Violence Is Not Child's Play is a coalition of Project Peacemakers and Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba (Mennonite Church Canada, formerly a member, is no longer able to participate due to funding cuts) that started in response to the Columbine murders and the rising concern over increasingly graphic and horrific video games.

The sixteen stores visited ranged from small, local toy specialty stores, to educational chains, to big box stores. Our goal in carrying out these inspections is to raise awareness about the levels of violence in children's toys and games, and to call on retailers, government, and the wider community to take steps to limit this violence.

Some disturbing trends noticed include the reappearance not only of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, but toy guns in some stores, and increased levels of military toys, such as toy Bradley Vehicles, that emulate the current conflict in Iraq – from a pro-U.S. point of view. There was no sign of UN Inspector Team action heroes looking for non-existent nuclear material from Niger and examining supposed Iraqi mobile biological weapons labs, much to our disappointment. Nor did we see any multi-national protest figures with interchangeable placards. Children, especially boys, are inundated with American, pro-military, macho, and anti-Arab propa-

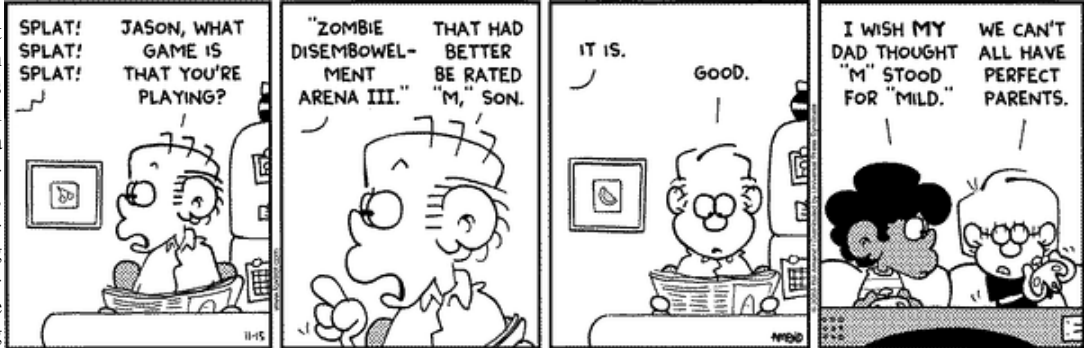
ganda. (Most of the military settings are in a desert-like environment.)

The most disturbing trend, however, is in video games. The average age of gamers is now 29, but most of these adult-themed games also get in the hands of children. Video games now feature incredibly realistic graphics and often give the player freedom to roam

using the gaming industry's American Entertainment Software Rating Board.

The media ran with this story for over a month. We did interviews, news reports, radio talk shows, press stories, and TV spots on almost two dozen occasions, including CBC Radio and TV, the *Winnipeg Free Press*, the *Sun*, the community papers, the other local TV stations and sev-

FoxTrot by Bill Amend



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anywhere, being as brutal as he or she wants to be. Players can now suffocate others with plastic bags, rape prostitutes, kill policemen, and sever body parts. Some stores do now require ID when a game labeled M (Mature – 17+) is swiped at the cash register, but the Toys 'R' Us manager said this works only on the newest games.

Violence Is Child's Play does these surveys for several reasons. They inform the public about problems with violent toys, and lets people know which stores are likely to have great toys and games, and which carry items that should be avoided. Consumers can thus make a choice to support stores that want to be an alternative. The surveys also put pressure on stores that do carry violent toys, and allow the managers to report to their head offices that consumers are upset with the violent content of toys. The managers actually appreciate our input because without complaints, big box store managers

cannot change anything. The surveys also send a message to the government about the need for an enforced, Canadian, government-run video game classification system similar to the Film Classification Board, rather than

eral local radio stations. We even did a thirty minute call-in radio show in Calgary! We are very excited that so many people seem interested in discussing and thinking about the appropriateness of teaching our children how to kill through play, and what some alternatives are.

This year's Building Peace Through Play Festival at Robert A. Steen Community Centre, on November 2, was also a success. This program of Project Peacemakers, led by volunteer Maureen Wilson, featured great acts from the likes of the magician Chris Kapoof, who kept children and adults alike in stitches, great rhythms from Winnipeg Visions Performing Arts drum and dance group, and mask-making by Art City. Scott Erickson led some rousing cooperative games with folks aged four to sixty-four, and Kate Ferris lent her voice and guitar to some wonderful songs. Toad Hall, Ten Thousand Villages, and Child's Play Books had displays of alternative toys, crafts, and books for browsing and for sale. It was a wonderful way to celebrate peaceful play!

A special thank you goes out to everyone who participated in the toy store inspections and joined in the fun at the Play Festival. We look forward to seeing you next year.

We are currently looking for people, organizations, or groups to join the Violence Is Not Child's Play Coalition. Please call the office if you or your group would like more information.

Scholar's Choice
Your Neighbourhood Toy Store!

Winnipeg
Madison Square, 1610 Ness Ave.
just west of Polo Park Mall
(204) 775-4608



DISPATCH

Project Peacemakers News and Upcoming Events

New Board Members Added

Allen Rochon, a longtime Project Peacemakers supporter, and Curtis Wiebe, a local musician and artist, have agreed to join the Board. Kenton Lobe has resigned due to commitments with his work.

Building a Culture of Peace Middle Years Curriculum Finished!

This new peace resource for Middle Years teachers focusing on Peace and Conflict Resolution, Violence in the Media, and Human Rights and United Nations is available from Project Peacemakers for \$15. The curriculum, written by Renee Gillis, will make a great gift for that teacher friend! Call or visit www.projectpeacemakers.org for more details.

A Note about 2003 Donations

Anyone wishing to donate in 2003 please have your payments to Project Peacemakers by the first week of January in order to get your 2003 tax receipt. For those that are waiting for receipts: as soon as we receive the receipts from Project Ploughshares, we will mail them to you.

Renovations to Our Office

Sometime in January we will be temporarily relocated to a different location upstairs at Westminster United Church, due to needed repairs on our ceiling, which is starting to collapse. The renovations are expected to take a week or two, so if you are planning on dropping by, please check around upstairs to find us.

Archival Project Possibilities

Diane Haglund, United Church Archivist at the University of Winnipeg, has approached Project Peacemakers about hosting an archivist student to help archive our twenty years of material. Please bring in your Project Peacemakers papers, photos etc that you no longer need. We are looking especially for items from the earlier years.

Ballistic Missile Defence Event Coming Soon!

We will be hosting a BMD event some time in early February, so be on the lookout for more information! If you would like to help with the organizing and planning of this event, please let us know.

Read Peace Projections on the Internet

Visit www.projectpeacemakers.org to read archived editions of our newsletter back to 1998! We will be posting the current issue to the internet after the ensuing issue is mailed. For members that would like *Peace Projections* emailed to them to help save paper and printing/ mailing costs, we will be happy to email the current issues in PDF format.

New Library Materials

We have acquired some great new materials in the library through the curriculum project and other purchasing. We have the book, videos, and teachers guide to the excellent *A Force More Powerful* series that documents non-violent action against repression in the 20th Century. Another good book and resource is the *Deadly Arsenals: Tracking Weapons of Mass Destruction* and accompanying DVD.

Our Sponsors: Great Christmas Shopping!

We have a few ads in our newsletters to offset the printing costs. These ads are from small, local businesses that are supportive of Project Peacemakers. We encourage you to patronize these businesses whenever possible; those advertising in this issue have items especially suitable for Christmas gifts and are an alternative to big box stores! Please mention to your salesperson that you saw their ad in our newsletter when you make a purchase.

Red River Co-op – Every Little Bit Helps!

Thank you to those of you who continue to fill your cars at Red River Co-op gas stations with our number. It adds up to a couple hundred dollars every year. We gratefully appreciate that extra effort. If you aren't filling up at the Co-op, consider doing so. Our number is **115339**. Remember to use your Red River Co-op Project Peacemakers Card, distributed in the

October newsletter, whenever you need a fill-up!

Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for occasional volunteers to help with such things as stuffing envelopes, making phone calls (from the office or your home), cataloguing old photos, and even baking cookies, for example. Please contact Derrick at the office.

Creator of peace and sustainer
of justice, lead us to this vision
we pray:

Bread
Water
A clean sky
A women's voice singing somewhere
The armies disbanded
The harvest abundant
The wound healed
The child wanted
The prisoner free
The body's integrity honoured
The beloved returned
Labour equal, fair and valued
No hand raised in any gesture but
greeting
All living free of fear
All living free of want
On this blessed earth,
As you would will it.
So be it
Amen

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Action Guide

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