

# Bits of the World in Pieces

Fifth Estate Collective

1986

**Although Robert Chechlacz and Tomasz Lupanow remain jailed** as Polish political prisoners, international support for them has grown (See FE Summer 1985). Though only trying to disarm him, the two were convicted of killing a militiaman just after the crackdown in Poland in 1982. Their support group has a newsletter available as well as posters and postcards from Polish Workers Solidarity Committee, Box 284, Main Street, St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada L2R 6T7.

This issue of their bulletin contains information on the creation of the “Fighting Youth Federation” which is the only group in Poland to have supported freedom for Robert and Tomasz. The organization was created by high-school students from Warsaw, but has spread beyond the capital. A national congress was held, according to a Solidarity bulletin published earlier in the year, with youth from several cities in Poland in attendance. The Federation has established links with the Movement for an Alternative Society which publishes the libertarian review, “Homek,” in Gdansk.

**Some people in the peripheral nations** have learned the lessons of Bhopal well. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 1986, more than 100,000 people prevented the proposed opening of a metals processing plant in Phuket, Thailand.

Thailand’s Industry Minister had arrived for a public inquiry into whether the plant, intended to process tantalum, a rare metal found in tin slag which is used to make components for the computer and aerospace industries and which would have used toxic chemicals and produced radioactive waste, would be allowed to open.

The people of the area pre-empted the public inquiry by mobbing the Minister, attacking the hotel at which he was staying and later burning down the \$75 million plant, preventing fire engines from dealing with the fire, which destroyed the plant after a few hours.

**The Trust Group Center Abroad** (foreign section of the Moscow-based peace and anti-nuclear power Trust Group) has embarked on a project to send couriers to the USSR to bring them much needed information.

People in the USSR specifically requested information on radiation precautions (that was lacking in the Soviet press) in the wake of Chernobyl. This was life and death information—not merely an intellectual exercise. To that end a team of Western Trust Group members was sent, and they successfully completed the action.

On August 3, 1986 two Americans, Bob McGlynn and Anne-Marie Hendrickson of New York City, two Britons, David Barnsdale and Peggy Walford, along with a member of the Moscow Trust Group, Nina Kovalenko, were detained in Moscow by the KGB for handing out smuggled leaflets that gave details on how one can protect oneself from radioactive fallout.

Our motivation was Chernobyl, but the action coincided with the atomic bombing of Japan. Our placards read—in Russian and in English—“Peace and environmental safety for all. No more Hiroshimas, No more Chernobyls.”

The action was an unqualified success in that we were able to hand out almost all the leaflets. There was an insignificant amount of repression. There was world press attention, and the attention (as far as we’ve seen) has been objective, not Cold War. A message got across that there is a unity of like-minded peace and environmental activists from both East and West, and that “detente from below” is an objective, positive option. We demonstrated that such actions can be pulled off with careful planning.

This was the first time American and Soviet activists had done such a thing in the USSR. Other Moscow Trust Group members accompanied us. It was a unified action.

The action showed the conservative Western public that there is something positive in the Soviet Bloc (The Trust Group) that rejects Cold War militarism and embraces grassroots contacts; militarism becomes irrelevant as people from both sides join in mutually supportive relations.

The “umbrella of protection” that Western activists provide groups like the Trust Group works. Our many contacts with the Trust Group have prevented the KGB from completely suppressing the Group.

All of the above costs, though! Our “Mission to Moscow” has put us thousands in debt, the main expense being travel and phone. All involved in the formation of this project are either poor or out of work. Money was borrowed and is owed. We do not have the resources that other peace groups have. This is to be an ongoing project, and couriers must be sent at regular intervals.

Please help us. Additional monies can help send others.

Please make checks payable to Bob McGlynn. (Sorry, the Trust Group Center Abroad is still in the midst of getting a bank account.) Please send checks to Bob McGlynn, 528 Fifth St., Brooklyn, NY 11215 (phone: 718-499-7720). If anyone has press clippings on our action please send them too.

—Sergei Batovrin, Bob McGlynn, Anne-Marie Hendrickson of the Trust Group Center Abroad

A pamphlet detailing the activities of the Moscow Trust Group is available from Bob or from the FE Bookservice.

### **Germany Resists Nukes**

Since Chernobyl, attacks in West Germany against nuclear plants, military bases, and other megatech projects have increased. Targets include firms supplying nuclear power stations, construction companies, energy suppliers, technology firms, banks and department stores, the railways and post office, and the army and police. The decentralized nature of the attacks is illustrated by the varied groups claiming responsibility. The Wolfsburg-based “Cut the Crap Now!” threw rancid butter bombs into bank foyers last summer, and shortly afterwards the “Eidelweiss Bandits for the Formation of a Bavarian Guerrilla Force” blew up an electricity pylon near the atomic plant at Grundremmingen. Another group, “Bugs Bunny and the Digger Killers,” set fire to a Caterpillar bulldozer at Muenster.

Apparently, not a week goes by without such attacks, and many electrical pylons have been toppled. One such target is the proposed nuclear reprocessing plant at Wackersdorf, a town in Bavaria. If construction goes on as planned, it will go on line in 1995.

Last spring there were mass demonstrations at Wackersdorf, in which local, ostensibly conservative Bavarian farmers joined with radical ecologists, autonomes, and anarchists in battling the police at the site. On the first day of the demonstration, two to three thousand people gathered and attacked the fence. An electrical pylon was knocked down.

In an account in the anarchist paper, *Black Flag* (BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX England), one participant described the several days of violent confrontations as partially a reaction against Chernobyl, which “had made us angry and gave the police] a bunker mentality.” By noon on Saturday some ten thousand people were by the fence, including a thousand masked militants. As helicopters flew overhead, the crowd approached the fence and attacked about fifty cops, driving them back inside the compound. The account follows:

Right from the start stones flew over the fence. Inside were 40 water/gas cannons...and literally thousands of pigs.

We set out to cut the fence, made of half-inch steel rods, crisscrossed with steel bars and solid metal posts every five meters. The cannons blasted us with water and CS gas mixture, but received a veritable hail of stones, paint, wood, catapulted ball bearings and the odd molotov cocktail in return. Police with bullhorns appealed in vain for the “respectable” demonstrators to split from the terrorist radicals, as local farmers got the stone supply well organized, and while families began masking up to fight.

Piling tree trunks, metal sheets and sheet plastic along the fence, we began to make partial shelters from which those with hacksaws could attack the fence. After a good three hours of this, as holes began to appear in the “invincible” fence, the bastards in charge sent out 200 unfortunate riot police to protect the fence from without. They were attacked by the autonomes and fled in panic, many of them seriously injured.

By mid-afternoon there were a dozen person sized holes in the fence and we proceeded to storm the “police zoo.” A few would slip through whenever a cannon withdrew for reloading, and began building further barricades/shelters beyond the barrier.

But “coordination wasn’t good enough,” writes the informant, and they had run out of molotov cocktails. “Though brave groups danced between the cannons to stone building machinery,” he continues, “little serious damage could be caused.”

The fighting subsided as evening came on, though several hundred masked demonstrators continued to pelt the police as they tried to weld the holes in the fence late into the night. “The good thing,” he says, “was the ‘average citizens’ joined in, they couldn’t isolate and divide us this time. I remember an old granny giving me a plastic bag to carry stones in, and a good piece of metal for digging...or on another occasion as gas grenades thudded down from helicopters all around us, I compliment two old women on their gas masks.”

At the end of the first day 232 cops had been injured, and 200 people (mostly from gas), and 13 had been arrested. The second day, the actions continued.

Very early on Sunday morning some radicals stole an excavator from a nearby village, drove it to the site, and tried to tear down the main gate of the fence. But a water cannon and a helicopter dropping gas bombs forced them to give up, whereupon the digger was set alight. Then more helicopters arrived, flying in hundreds of elite commando police. We began our attacks again at noon, less than the day before, but still cutting new holes. Two police trucks were set afire. The police were intent on revenge, and began dropping gas grenades on everyone, near and far from the fence.

Now the police had the advantage and gas injuries were many, with the cops spraying pure gas from the cannons and even baton charging the Red Cross area, where injured people were being evacuated to the few hospitals which refused to give information to the police. Meanwhile Kohl spoke of “not an attack on [the project] but on the state itself,” and the Interior Minister fumed about “a violent attack by chaoten (chaotics) on State Order.”

By Tuesday most people had left. At 6 p.m. the police surrounded the remains of the camp, as helicopters dropped commando police on top of us. 130 of us were arrested, at least 17 were badly beaten up after arrest. Meanwhile 47 more were captured in the countryside, some hunted down by low-flying helicopters. But there was still resistance. Local anti-nuclear groups, using a telephone chain, obstructed the transport of the arrested! Roads were blocked, tires slashed, and quite a few people rescued, forcing terrified police to draw their guns. That evening 400 people attacked a police station in a nearby town, smashing all the windows (three more arrests). The police began blocking highways as a “preventive measure.”

He concludes that the “best thing” was “to see the cultural mixing (meltdown?) rare in Germany, punks mixed happily with peace movement softies, hippy bureaucrats with black clad anarchist militants.” The police, for their part, are experimenting with more sophisticated gas grenades and demanding rubber bullets.

Over the same weekend 40,000 people demonstrated throughout Germany. 3000 gathered in Berlin and several thousand demonstrated in Bremen, where they tried to squat the cathedral to escape the radioactive rain. After demos at the site for the planned nuke station in Borcken, it was announced that construction has been at least temporarily scrapped. In Bodenwohr (near Wackersdorf) the town hall was set on fire and in Sudetenland (also nearby) a Chemical research center was destroyed by arson. At Hamm, farmers blocked access with tractors to a nuke station for a number of days. There were mass demonstrations and battles with the police in many other cities.

**Thousands of water birds have been poisoned** to death this fall in the marshlands of southwestern Spain on the borders of the Donana National Park. The presumed cause of the poisoning is the indiscriminate use of a dangerous mixture of insecticides by the rice growers in the region.

Among the species affected are gray and golden plovers, grey herons, the common spoonbill, and a large variety of ducks, including the garganey, which is threatened with extinction in Spain and is one of the rarer species that exist in Donana Park. The animals die slowly; their muscles become swollen, and they bleed from the mouth and the anus.

25,000 birds have died so far, and it is expected that many more will die and that the area affected will increase in size as the poisons spread.

Long ago, miners used to keep a caged canary with them in the mines. Its death would signal the escape of dangerous gases and served as a warning for people to flee for their lives. But what kind of warning is a catastrophe such as this? There is no question as to what it portends for all animals, including humans. How pointedly ironic it is that in growing food to sustain humankind, agriculturists all over the world are poisoning their environment with lethal chemicals that destroy the natural balance that would give them sustenance.

**Native American activist Leonard Peltier**, serving two life terms in prison as a result of a government frame-up was denied a new trial in September by a U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Peltier was part of the historic liberation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota and was present during the armed defense of the Pine Ridge reservation in 1975 against a massive government assault team which left two FBI agents and a Native American dead.

Peltier's attorneys presented numerous proofs to the court refuting the government's major contentions linking Peltier to the shootings of the agents. They also showed that the prosecution withheld and possibly tampered with crucial firearms evidence and was guilty of other legal improprieties. This should have been the basis for overturning Peltier's conviction, but the august judges were not swayed.

According to reports, Peltier remains strong and has never placed his confidence in the American judicial system which has always been complicit with the government's persecution of Native Americans. Rather, he hopes for increasing popular support to force his release.

Further appeals and publicity work need urgent funding. Please contact the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, Box 6455, Kansas City KS 66101 for donations and more complete information on the case.

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