

Tales from the planet

Fifth Estate Collective

Erik Larsen, probably the best known military resister to Operation Desert Storm, was released from a Marine brig at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, April 15. He served five months of a six month sentence. Even though many other resisters, especially those of color, remain imprisoned, the Larsen case is a victory, not only for Erik, but for the entire GI support movement.

Initially, the Marines charged Larsen with offenses such as desertion under fire which carries the death penalty, but faced with international protests, the Marines relented to a reduced plea and sentence.

For 41 days during the war, Larsen eluded authorities, appeared at anti-war rallies on two continents, denounced the war on TV programs, threw his dog tags at the White House, and even traveled to Europe to help found a Green Party. Erik says he will continue to “live the life of a conscientious objector” and has recently been involved in abortion clinic defenses even though an arrest could send him back to prison.

His resistance and that of the thousands of other GIs like him are an admirable example of individuals who withstood the will of the state to make killers of them.

A chronology of Larsen’s case can be obtained from his defense committee at 2923 Winchester Dr., Hayward CA 94541.

The attempt to “disappear” the mass opposition to the U.S. slaughter of Iraqis was typified by George Bush’s statement, “There is no anti-war movement.” Belying this contention was the widespread, daily resistance to Operation Desert Storm in the form of hundreds of thousands who participated in demonstrations, and the thousands of military resisters.

The Nuclear Resister newsletter, P.O. Box 43383, Tucson AZ 85733, reports there were at least 225 anti-war actions in 27 states resulting in over 6,000 arrests nationwide during 1991. Numerous other protests, perhaps hundreds more, went unreported to the publication.

For an account of anti-war actions in Detroit and our critique of the conflict, see Spring [FE #336] and Summer [FE #337] 1991 issues. Each in our humble opinion, contains some of our best writing and we highly recommend them. \$1.50 each plus postage.

Alaska’s far-north Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is being threatened by the prospect of oil development. At stake is more than protecting a huge area of wilderness but also preserving the way of life of the traditional people of the area, the Gwichin.

Chevron, Arco, and BP, three oil industry giants have assured the Gwichin that oil drilling can be done without affecting the environment or their way of life. However, experience tells us this is not so.

What the oil companies call the “1002 area” refers to the coastal plain of the Refuge which lies just inland of the Beaufort Sea and leading up to the Brooks Range. This is the calving ground for the porcupine Caribou herd that the Gwichin rely on. The companies strongly suspect that oil lies beneath this area and are pushing for its “development” regardless of the effect it would have on the people and animals who live there. They would destroy the material basis of Gwichin life for a six month supply of oil.

The Gwichin Steering Committee, comprised of the chiefs and people from numerous traditional communities in Alaska and northwest Canada, is attempting to stop this development in order to protect their lifestyle.

Funds are badly needed for the fight against the oil companies. For donations or more information, contact The Gwichin Steering Committee, P.O. Box 202768 Anchorage, AK 99520 (phone: 907/258-6814).

Locally, friends of the *Fifth Estate* are sponsoring a fundraising pot-luck supper for the Gwichin resistance; we urge others to do similar events.

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