

NUREMBERG ACTIONS NEWS

VOLUME ONE, ISSUE ONE

65 ECKLEY LANE, WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA, 94596

OCTOBER, 1988

NUREMBERG ACTIONS: ONE YEAR LATER

On September 1st, 1988, one year after Brian Willson was run down by a weapons train, Nuremberg Actions held an ecumenical service on the tracks with the theme The Resilience of the Human Spirit. Approximately 150 people attended and enjoyed the variety of offerings and music (despite the heckling and blaring of train horns from individuals positioned across the street). The service ended with everyone participating in weaving a giant beautiful rainbow of dozens of fresh flowers in the gate through which the trains now pass.

In addition, radio station KPFA made Sept. 1st Nuremberg Actions Day, with live programming at three key times during the day. We greatly appreciate their ongoing support of the vigil.

SHIP FOOD, NOT WEAPONS

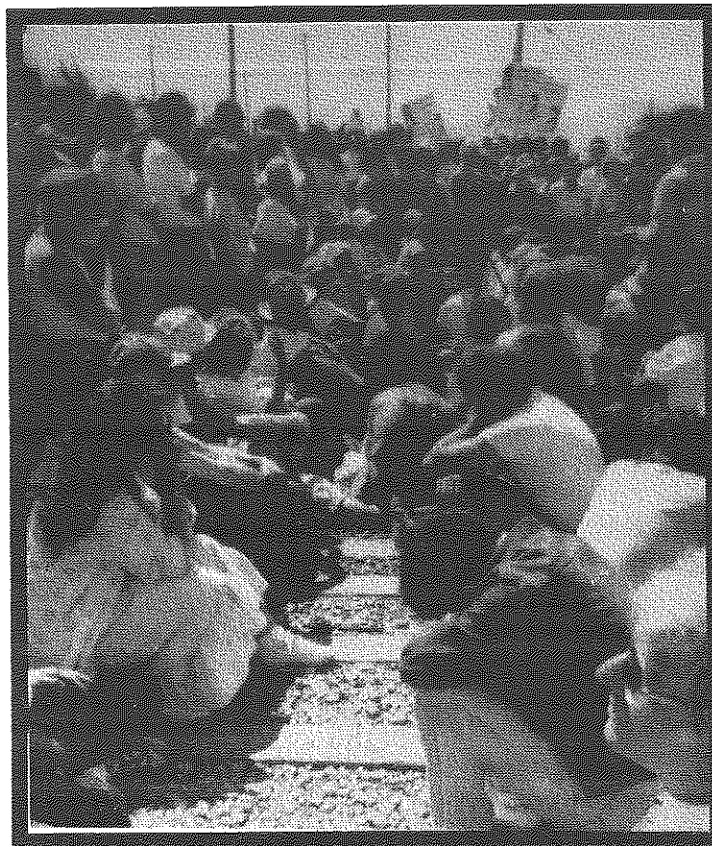
On Sept. 3rd, about 300 people gathered together to celebrate Brian's survival and recovery during the last year, and to celebrate one year of continuous vigil and blockade of the death trains that roll out of the Concord Naval Weapons Station aimed at our brothers and sisters all over the third world.

In celebrating our own first year of sustained direct action, we wanted to join with and recognize other groups of sustained resistance. Many are small groups like ourselves, who have found their own 'tracks' to stand on. In San Francisco, the ARC-AIDS Vigil is about to celebrate its third anniversary. The Women's Camp at Greenham Commons Base in England has been instrumental in achieving the recent INF Treaty by keeping Cruise Missiles in the public eye since 1981.

Many of these groups are whole nations fighting for survival against the policies of our own government. For this rally, we chose to offer support and solidarity to the children of Nicaragua victimized by the war, and to the Native American nations who have been resisting forced relocation since the Navaho-Hopi Relocation Act passed in 1974. People attending the rally brought over 300 pounds of rolled oats for the Nicaragua Network's Oats For Peace campaign, and over 300 pounds of non-perishable foods for Big Mt. residents.

Speakers at the rally included Leslie Simon of the Nicaragua Information Center, Hal Muskat from the Veterans Peace Convoy, and Andrea Carmen from the International Indian Treaty Council. Anthony Holdsworth presented his painting of the tracks to Brian Willson (see Nuremberg Actions 19 min. video). A wonderful variety of music was provided by The Freedom Song Network, U. Utah Phillips, Mark Levy, Vince Travis, and Evelyn Martinez, an actress and singer from Nicaragua. Contra-demonstrators, who appeared to be operating from the Base parking lot, continued their activities from Thursday, but seemed unable to resist enjoying the music.

For more information or to get involved, you can contact Marty Coleski, Oats For Peace Bay Area Coordinator at 415-549-1387, and Liza Gross of the Big Mt. Support Group at 415-549-1743.



NOVEMBER 19TH COALITION FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

Nuremberg Actions is joining a variety of Northern California groups to form a coalition being initiated by the American Indian Movement, The Leonard Peltier Alliance, and the Big Mt. Support Group to organize a large rally in Sacramento on the Capitol steps on Saturday, November 19th from 12-5. With a range of Native American issues as the central focus, activists have the opportunity of reflecting on their own issues and goals in that context, and enjoying the support of groups that they don't often get to work with. The network of solidarity and the wisdom achieved will last far beyond Nov. 19th.

For Nuremberg members, the minerals being taken from Indian lands today may well end up as shell casings in box cars bound for Central America tomorrow. Uranium now deep in Indian soil will add to the nuclear threat of the future for all if it is allowed to be mined. Forced relocation of Native Americans within the U.S. is no different from the Going Home campaign of Salvadoran refugees wanting to farm their traditional lands, or the Palestinians herded together in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The continued imprisonment of Leonard Peltier threatens the freedom of each of us who takes a stand for peace and justice for all peoples world wide.

Help is needed in many ways. If you or your group would like to get involved in any way, please call Sid Welsh (AIM) at 415-362-5071 or Jennifer Viereck (NA) at 415-933-7850.

CONCORD 30 TRIAL ENDS IN HUNG JURY

After almost two weeks of proceedings, the trial of 30 people arrested for blocking trains at Concord ended July 20th with a hung jury. Voting 9 guilty, 3 not guilty, the Contra Costa jurors were unable to agree whether the protesters had broken a law which prohibits people from "blocking a public thoroughfare." All 30 were arrested on Sept. 28, Oct. 5, and Dec. 23, 1987, and charged under section 647c of the Ca. Penal Code.

The Concord 30 are fairly representative of the nearly 650 arrested so far at the tracks. They range in age from 18 year old Dominic Von Zabern, who lives at the tracks to 84 year old Abraham Zwickel, a retired chiropractor and full-time peace activist from the East Bay. Some, like Brown University student Shannah Kurland, 20, and Pam Wellish, a Garberville mother and bookkeeper, "came home" after time away from active participation in the vigil. Demonstrators at the tracks have blocked all but one of the weapons trains (and many trucks) since Sept. 1987, in "civil obedience" to international law. Under the Nuremberg Principles, adopted by the United Nations in 1950 after the trials of Nazi war criminals from World War II, "planning, preparation, initiation, or waging a war of aggression or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements, or assurances" is a violation of international law.

In documents acknowledged as legitimate in testimony by Lt. Colonel John Buchanan (US Marines, ret.) the Naval Weapons Station is shown conclusively to have shipped white phosphorus bombs and other arms to the government of El Salvador. That government relies on more than \$2 million a day of US aid to carry out a bloody war against its own people. Other evidence, including proceedings from the World Court in Nicaragua vs. the United States, shows that the US, by supplying the Contra army, is indeed waging a war of aggression against Nicaragua. The Concord Station is believed to be one of the sources of arms to the Contras.

To substantiate their claims on the basis of international law, the defense presented a number of expert witnesses. In an odd legal twist, Judge Douglas Cunningham dismissed the jury, but listened with rapt attention to the testimony. Dr. Jesus Campos, a former judge and professor from El Salvador said, "I will never forget that first day, when I went to the place on the outskirts of town. I did not see one dead person, I saw 14 dead persons. Fourteen corpses. That was my job during 3 years."

Karen Parker, an expert on international human rights law who most recently participated in discussions with the Soviet Union on Native American rights during the Reagan/Gorbachev summit, gave erudite testimony peppered with personal experiences that linked the horrors Campos and others described to the Concord case. Unfortunately, after 2 days of very moving testimony, Cunningham sustained Deputy District Attorney Dodie Katague's objection and disallowed the expert testimony as not relevant.

Later, Cunningham also refused to allow the jury to inspect any of the defense's evidence, which included books on Central America and a video tape of the events on Sept. 1st, 1987.

The jurors were left to decide whether the defendant's attempt to block weapons shipments constituted a malicious obstruction of the nearby roadway.

Although the District Attorney hoped to hold a retrial of the Concord 30, Judge Cunningham refused, and dropped the charges. In the meantime, the District Attorney's policy toward the protesters seems to have shifted. Recently, many charges (8-12 apiece) were filed against 4 regular protesters. More trials will be coming up in October and November. Anyone who can is urged to attend, and lend support to the vigilers.

During the trial itself, demonstrators at the site blocked three weapons trains and two trucks, resulting in over 15 arrests.

DEFENDANTS FROM THE CONCORD 30 TRIAL



EL SALVADOR: STEPS TO FREEDOM

Nuremberg Actions is participating in the Steps to Freedom Walkathon in San Francisco and urges anyone who can to participate.

On October 15, people across the United States will raise money for El Salvador's movement for democracy and resist the U.S. sponsored war at nationally coordinated protest actions. Walk-A-Thons will culminate in nonviolent direct action at military installations which are directly supporting the war, including massive resistance at the Pentagon on October 17. Every dollar raised will support:

Communities reconstructing their homes in rural areas hardest hit by the war;

Neighborhood organizations providing health care and education in the urban slums of San Salvador;

The UNTS (National Unity of Salvadoran Workers), a broad coalition of trade unionists, farmworkers, and grassroots organizations working to end the war and form a government which truly represents the people of El Salvador.

To sign up, call Jay at the office: 415-933-7850.

LIFE AT THE TRACKS

by Diane Poole

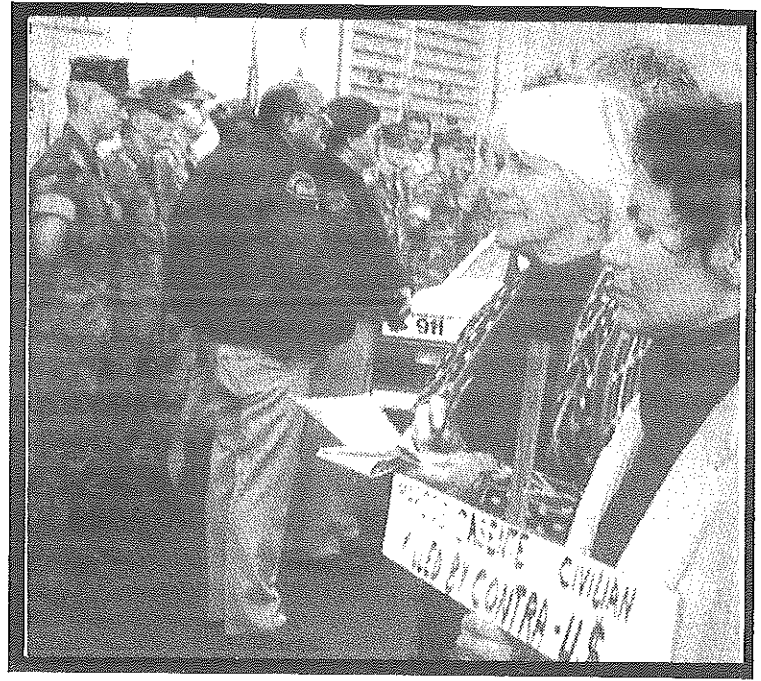
It has now been just over a year since this action began, a vigil to protest and call attention to the shipment of arms from this facility to the Contras, the Death Squads in Central America and elsewhere, and the Air Force in El Salvador. Over the last year, people have come and gone, some for days, some for weeks, a few have remained since the beginning, and throughout the nature of the action has been in continual change. As a member of that vigil since Thanksgiving, 1987, and as a "site person", I would like to tell some of the story of what is going on here.

Actions speak louder than words, and it is with our actions — our blocking of every train, our vigils, marches and reclamation actions, and our sharing of community with one another — that we mostly speak our peace.

FIRST, TO SET THE SCENE:

Port Chicago Highway, which winds northward and eastward from Concord, California, is a two lane country road. Just outside of town, it crosses a pair of railroad tracks. Here, alongside the road on a 30 by 60 strip of asphalt, a community of active nonviolent resistance has sprung up. For many months, this consisted of a loose group of between 3 and a dozen people who lived on the site full time, a larger group who came by regularly, and a small office staff. With our first year behind us, it is clear to everyone, supporters, opponents, and bystanders, that we are not going away. The police harassment and brutality has largely been replaced by a mutual respect and an understanding that we have no choice but to tolerate each other (or at least that's how it is right now) and make the best of it. This process has been greatly helped, I think, by a policy since the early days of communicating our intentions in advance. More than once, visitors to the site have been shocked to see a sheriff's deputy drive up and causally begin a conversation in which one of us will, equally casually, describe in no small detail an act of civil disobedience to take place in the near future. Far from allowing ourselves to drift into a sort of complacent recidivism however, we have also been expanding our actions to include nuclear weapons storage facilities, a Shell oil refinery (to protest apartheid), the San Francisco Federal Building, and more.

Fortunately, the diversity of those drawn to this action has already stretched the original design, and it has proven its elasticity. We are now stronger than ever, having settled into a permanent presence and blockade. The new time and energy has opened up a world of new creative ventures, from screening T-Shirts to making props for street theater actions.



VIGILERS TALK TO MARINES GUARDING A WEAPONS TRAIN THAT PASSES BEHIND

AT THE TRACKS

Trains roll, usually, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, just before 5 am. Our first sign that a train is coming is the police that begin to drive up. We're awake by then of course, the 5 to 10 of us that have spent the night on the site. Some have slept in cars, most in sleeping bags on the railroad tracks — an unnerving experience at first, but you get used to it. Since the only trains using this stretch of tracks are munitions trains that run only during the day, the only real danger is from drunks and irate motorists.

Afternoons are slower. If it's not our "site day", and we're not in jail for blocking a train, we usually drift off to do other things: at the office, at the house, vigiling, blocking munitions trucks (which also means a day in jail), that sort of thing.

Nights are in many ways the best. We share an evening meal, sit in the harsh light of the mercury vapor lights (installed a few months ago to help keep an eye on us no doubt), and discuss things from the peculiar perspective that living along an artery of death gives one. Later we take turns watching through the night.

THIS IS A SAMPLE COPY!

I HAVE ENJOYED HEARING ABOUT NUREMBERG ACTIONS, AND WOULD LIKE TO SUBSCRIBE TO THIS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER TO HELP SUPPORT THE VIGIL AT THE TRACKS

_____ I enclose \$10 to help cover subscription costs. I enclose \$_____ as an additional contribution.

_____ Please send me a copy of the 19-min. video, "The Vigil At The Tracks. I enclose \$15 to help cover costs.

I would like more information about _____ Nuremberg Actions _____ a speaker for my organization

Phone number: _____ Organization: _____

Name: _____ Address: _____

OCTOBER CALENDAR

REGULAR HAPPENINGS

Most likely train times; Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00 a.m. or 2:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY POTLUCK at Peace House, 33 Loftus, West Pittsburg, the 1st Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m.

SPOKESCOUNCIL MEETING every Wednesday (except the 1st Wednesday), at Peace House at 7:00 p.m.

FUNDRAISING MEETING every Thursday at Peace House, 7:00 p.m.

*****SPECIAL EVENTS IN OCTOBER*****

OCT 1 SING A SONG OF PEACE, a singalong with Al Einhorn. Peace songs with a focus on children. Starts at 10:00 a.m.

OCT 4 FRANCISCAN AFFINITY GROUP SERVICE on the feast of St. Francis at 7:30 a.m.

OCT 5 A MT. DIABLO PEACE CENTER FORM ON LABOR AND KOREA CONNECTIONS will take place at the Boilermakers Hall, 2191 Piedmont Way in Pittsburg at 7:30 p.m. Call 933-7850 for information.

COMMUNITY POTLUCK at Peace House at 7:00 p.m., all are welcome

OCT 6 FORMER CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT JUSTICE FRANK NEWMAN WILL COME TO THE TRACKS. The professor of Human Rights and International law will discuss protest as human rights at the tracks at 9:00 a.m. Call Carolyn Scarr at 527-8370 for information.

OCT 8 NONVIOLENCE TRAINING At the Berkeley Friends, Cedar and Sacramento, (2 blocks N. of North Berkely Bart), from 9am to 3pm.

OCT 11 A PRESBYTERIAN PRESENCE AT THE TRACKS at 8:00 a.m.

OCT 15 STEPS TO FREEDOM, walk and then direct action to raise money for the people of El Salvador and oppose U.S. intervention. Meet to car pool from the site at 7:30 a.m. Registration at Long Shoreman's Hall 400 N. Point in San Francisco at 9:00 a.m. Direct action at the Presidio at noon. Call P.O.R. at 655-1177 for details.

THE FILM COVER-UP, ABOUT THE IRAN -CONTRA CONNECTION will be shown at the Diablo Valley College Forum at 7:30 p.m. Other showings the 18th in Walnut Creek and the 27th in Lafayette. Call the Mt. Diablo Peace Center at 933-7850 for details.

A NIGHT OF SOLIDARITY HONORING AMERICAN INDIAN LEADER LEONARD PELTIER at Komotion Klub, 2776 16th St. San Francisco. Call 655-2189 or 362-5017 for details.

OCT 16 RUBEN ZAMORA, VICE PRESIDENT OF EL SALVADOR'S DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONARY FRONT (FDR) will talk at 7:30 p.m. Location to be announced. Please call CISPES at 626-2161.

OCT 20 UNITED METHODISTS LITURGY at the tracks at 8:00 a.m.

NUREMBERG ACTIONS
65 ECKLEY LANE
WALNUT CREEK, CA 94596