

VANA NEWSLETTER - BC BRANCH



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Web Site: www.vana.ca

Dear Fellow VANA Members in BC:

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Now that the dogs of war are howling in Washington it is extremely important that we all turn out to march on Remembrance Day behind our banner, "LET PEACE BE THEIR MEMORIAL." We must let Ottawa know in no uncertain terms Canada should not join the madmen in Washington in their aggression. Please meet at 10:30 am on Monday, November 11th at the southwest corner of Victory Square. Be sure to wear your white berets and helmets.

VANA's telephone conference call Convention was amazing: It worked! There were thirty-six of us on the line for three hours, 9:00-Midday, Vancouver time, on Saturday 5 October. We never stopped talking, everyone spoke, it was orderly, we completed our agenda, had a rambling discussion on "where do we go from here?" and finally discussed and passed (suitably amended) seven resolutions. Didn't I say that this convention was amazing? Our presidents report's conclusions, election results, the "where do we go from here?" discussion ideas and resolutions passed, appear below .

VANA's future will also be the topic of our **next members meeting: "Where do we go from here?" Come and add your ideas to those from the convention. They will carry just as much weight. This meeting will be on Monday 21 October 2002, 1:30 p.m., at the Fireside Room, Unitarian Church, 49th Avenue at Oak.**

Our torpid media somehow manages to ignore the titanic struggle which is underway today at the UN in New York. The issue is whether the world shall be governed by the Rule of Law (as represented by the UN Charter), or by the Rule of War (as represented by the administration of President Bush.) More on this struggle below. Also virtually ignored by our media are the consequences of war for the people of Iraq. VANA sent its President David Morgan to Iraq in the spring of 1999 and while there he heard how Iraqis felt about being bombed during Operation Desert Fox, three months earlier. David writes about this below in "How can you bomb us?"

VANA's "Hiroshima-Nagasaki & Since" exhibition will open at the **University of Victoria** on Monday 28 October when David Morgan will address the "Armed With Understanding" meeting and then hold a press conference. The exhibition will be there one week and will end on Saturday 2 November. VANA members in Victoria and vicinity will be most welcome to visit the exhibition. It will be located in the Student Union Building. Again, our "Comments & Contact" book there will hopefully put us in touch with some keen student activists who may be willing to help organize CANA, (Canadians Against Nuclear Arms) a successor to VANA.

Do keep sending in your news, information, articles, writing, questions, beefs and bouquets. They are always welcome and will be included in future updates.

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At Large: Emil Grieshaber, Ed Shaffer

VANA's Conference Call Convention

President's Report, Conclusions

We are now moving through a very troubled and dangerous historical period. For the young and middle-aged people of Canada, the sudden onset of international lawlessness and violence is unfamiliar and must be bewildering and confusing. VANA members have lived through such events in the 1930s and 1940s and our judgments and our balance can be of great value to our fellow Canadians. We must try and make these qualities available to our society. They are very much needed. How can we best do this? I see three ways:

First, we must continue as an organization. VANA must go on. Our good name continues to spread and we are widely respected. Speaking as members of VANA we have special status plus the help available in an organization. As individuals outside VANA we lose much of this. Therefore: continue.

Second, we should take Sir Joseph Rotblat's advice about how to put the nuclear issue back on the public agenda, guiding our approach on legal and moral principles. Arguments based on the lawlessness and the fundamental evil of nuclear weapons, coming from veterans, can resonate strongly with a public which we know, in the main, already opposes nuclear weapons.

Third and last, we must build a successor organization. Already, in Vancouver and Winnipeg, the seeds of Canadians Against Nuclear Arms (CANAN) have been sown. There is at present no organization in Canada open to the public and dedicated to the abolition of nuclear weapons. The fertile plowed field is there. We must cherish our seedlings and help them grow and spread.

VANA National Exec Election results:

VANA's former executive, all of whom agreed to be nominated were voted in by acclamation. In addition, two new Members at Large agreed to stand and were voted on to your executive, namely Kell Antoft of Halifax and Walter Josephy of Ottawa.

"Where do we go from here?"

Ideas expressed on the Convention theme of "Where do we go from here?" are grouped below:

**** Major Issues VANA needs to consider**

- The 33-page "National Security Strategy" issued 20 September 2002 by the Bush administration, now openly admits US pre-emptive strike policy, a covert policy since Hiroshima (Ed Shaffer & Ted Mann)
- Militarism expands in US since 911 as shown by military enlistment boom (Colin Clay)

**** "International Law" as one of two anti nuclear themes of Rotblat**

- Challenge Bush's defiance of UN Charter (Harold Bronson)
- Challenge, by Petition, US exemption from World Criminal Court (Cec Muldrew)

**** Getting our message out**

- Organize wave of phone calls to MPs (Ed Shaffer)
- Scott Ritter event (1,000 seated; 1,000 overflow) Vancouver, Toronto bigger, shows anti-war potential audience today (Ed Livingston, Ted Mann)
- We should focus our message on Ottawa where we have some clout (Kell Antoft)
- Small papers and website alerts a useful approach (Ian Cameron)
- Hiroshima Nagasaki exhibitions a success (Bas Robinson)
- Permanent Hiroshima Nagasaki exhibitions, eg: War Museum (Ian Cameron, Walter Josephy)
- Use union publications which reach a big audience (Jean Rogers)
- Use our veteran status better; cultivate media including small papers (Ted Mann)
- Reach young people, eg: Write songs for Raging Grannies (Peggy Hope-Simpson)
- Work in Schools through programs (Eira Spaner)

**** Networking**

- Work with US veterans such as VFP & VVAWAI
- Work with Ploughshares (Eira Spaner, Colin Clay)

5. Resolutions

**** Canada's conformity with International Law**

Whereas The UN Sanctions on Iraq, enforced and maintained principally by the USA and UK, have resulted in the premature deaths of 750,000 Iraqi children, making a mockery of the UN's humanitarian purposes, and Whereas the USA and UK regularly carry out lawless patrols and air strikes in the US-designated "No Fly Zones," in Iraq, totally outside any mandate by the UN Security Council or by other international law, and Whereas the USA, in response to the terrorist attack on New York, has carried out lawless and indiscriminate air attacks on Afghanistan, that are in no way covered by the UN Charter, especially by Article 51 on self-defence, and that these attacks have resulted in at least 3,000 civilian deaths, and Whereas Canada has actively supported this lawlessness, therefore

Be it Resolved that in future Canada acts in full conformity with the UN Charter and only supports and participates in actions mandated by the United Nations, consistent with its Charter, and sanctioned by International Law. CARRIED

**** Review of VANA's "Beyond Deterrence" & NATO reports**

Whereas VANA's positions increasingly appear to be ad hoc, although relevant to current affairs, and Whereas "Beyond Deterrence" and "NATO, Canada and Nuclear War," remain relevant and sound documents, therefore

Be it Resolved that "Beyond Deterrence" and "NATO, Canada and Nuclear War," be reviewed and updated and that a committee be struck for this purpose by the National Executive. CARRIED

**** Canada and NATO**

Whereas Canada, a NATO member, has been asked to join the NATO Nuclear Planning Group, and Whereas three NATO members are nuclear armed, and it is VANA policy that Canada belong to no nuclear-armed alliances, and Whereas NATO, with Canadian Air Force involvement, carried out the lawless seventy-eight-day bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, in total defiance of NATO's own Charter and also the UN Charter, to which it is subordinate, therefore

Be it resolved that Canada now withdraw from NATO without delay. CARRIED

**** Canada and NORAD**

Whereas NORAD is, and any new command for North American continental defence will be, nuclear armed, and Whereas full conformity with the UN Charter and other positive programs for economic justice are part of our defence, and

Whereas it is VANA policy that Canada belong to no nuclear-armed alliances, therefore

Be it resolved that Canada withdraw from NORAD and not join any command for North American Continental defence. CARRIED

**** Militarism and Air Shows**

Whereas public Air Shows in Canada, with rare exceptions, have a military component openly glorify war and militarism and use such shows as a marketing tool to sell weapons and normalize warfare, and

Whereas the public and especially young people are vulnerable to such cynical, pro-war marketing campaigns, therefore

Be it resolved that VANA oppose and protest all public Air Shows with a military component or presence CARRIED

**** US Preparations to Invade Iraq**

Whereas the US is preparing an illegal invasion of Iraq, and

Whereas the US may ask Canada to participate, therefore

Be it resolved that Canada not participate in any way in this aggressive venture.

CARRIED

The Rule of Law, or the Rule of War?

A titanic struggle is underway today, almost totally unrecognized by our “dumbed-down” and heavily biased media. The struggle of course is in the United Nations building where the United States is attempting to bully, bribe and cajole UN members to approve a resolution allowing the US to launch a war against Iraq.

This is a world class struggle; Iraq is merely the issue. It is a struggle on the question of the rule of law or the rule of war. As of this writing, there is surprising resistance to US pressure. Perhaps member states can recognize the possibilities if the rule of war wins, and think: ‘Today Iraq; tomorrow maybe it will be our turn.’

The rule of war flies in the face of everything that the UN stands for. President Bush’s threats of waging a war against Iraq and the authorization give him by Congress to do so, regardless of the UN, also flies in the face of and is an abuse of the US Constitution. The following article, which has been sent very widely to the media, peace organizations and Canadian MPs under the title: **“Criminal President, criminal Congress,”** deals with this abuse.

Murder is a crime. To launch a war of aggression in which many hundreds of thousands will be killed ... ***“is the supreme international crime,”*** ruled the Nuremberg trials of the Nazi war criminals after World War II, ***“differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole.”***

With their country on the brink of war, Americans need to understand very clearly the meaning of the threats of war against Iraq made by President Bush, and last week by the US Congress. They need to know that these threats of war, are clear violations of the U.S. Constitution and the supreme document of international law, the UN Charter. Enormous consequences flow from this.

Consider Article 2 of the UN Charter which states **“All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.”**

All U.S. treaties are “the supreme Law of the Land.” under Article VI clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution which, by his oath of office, President Bush has sworn to “preserve, protect, and defend.” Bush’s defiance of the UN Charter, a treaty signed by the United States in 1945, is therefore, inescapably, a defiance of the US Constitution and makes a mockery of his presidential oath.

Similarly, Congress has voted (House 296133 Thursday 10 Oct'02 and the Senate 7723 Friday 11 Oct'02) to give President Bush the authorization to attack Iraq as follows

"AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES

(A) AUTHORIZATION

The president is authorized to use the armed forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in order to

- (1) defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq; and
- (2) enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq.”

This authorization is a clear threat of war against Iraq. It therefore also violates Article 2 of the UN Charter. The full resolution, of which this authorization is a part, says nothing about obtaining the over-riding authorization from the UN Security Council for any use of armed force, as required by the UN Charter, and is therefore also a clear violation of this "supreme Law of the Land," and also of the U.S. Constitution, which all members of Congress by their oaths of office, under article VI of this Constitution, and by section 2 of the act of May 13, 1884 (23 Stat. 22), have sworn to "support and defend."

The 296 members of the House of Representatives and the 77 Senators who voted in favor of this authorization, have thus also made a mockery of their oaths of office.

These threats of war made by President Bush and supported by Congress, which violate The US Constitution, The UN Charter and their oaths of office, are therefore, clearly, criminal acts. The United States of America therefore, has a criminal President and a criminal majority in its Congress.

What would, Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson have said about such a President and such a Congress ?

Justice Jackson was the Chief American Prosecutor at the Nuremberg Tribunal in 1945 and he spoke very plainly about the kind of war that President Bush wishes to launch

"Launching a war of aggression is a crime that no political or economic situation can justify," said Jackson... *"If certain acts in violation of treaties are crimes, they are crimes whether the United States does them or Germany does them..... we are not prepared to lay down a rule of criminal conduct against others which we would not be willing to have invoked against us."*

Fifty-seven years after Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson spoke these words, the United States is preparing to launch just such a war. When great powers defy international law in this way, a very great international instability results. Germany's defiance led to World War II. The results of U.S. defiance, in this nuclear armed world, may be just as serious.

On the Light Side

Painting the church:

A painter who contracted to paint the outside of a church, cut his costs by mixing the paint with cheap thinner. When the job was finished there was a rainstorm and the paint went all streaky. The priest grilled the painter who admitted what he had done.

"Re-paint," said the priest, "and thin no more."

How can you bomb us?

I visited the "Dijla" secondary School in Baghdad with a group of American doctors and Canadians on Thursday 1 April 1999. One of the school's teachers, an elderly woman, heard that Ramzy, in our group, was from Palestine. She began talking to him very fast and passionately. He translated some of it:

"How could Americans sitting in their houses, comfortable with their children, do this to us, bombing our children? You are an American sitting comfortable in your house; do I come and bomb you? We are all human beings under God..."

We then mingled with the students who wanted to practice their English on us. I became involved in a name-game with them. I told them my name and then asked each one hers, writing it down and reading it back to check that I had got it right. "Ehh.." meant yes, that's right. Then I would read off the list and they would be delighted to hear that I had their names right. Then I moved on to a new group. I collected 34 names like this.

After leaving the school I put together the teachers passionate words and the names of all of the students that I had recorded, into this poem:

How Can You Do This?

Dianah, Niam, Sarah, Doonyah
How can you do this? How can you do this?
Marryam, Maesa, Marwa, Barrakh
How can you bomb us? How can you bomb us?
Azzed, Rozzol, Maes, Athba
You sit in your homes, you sit in your homes
Achlam, Rahadd, Rannh, Millak
You sit with your families, you sit with your families
Sally, Najuan, Hajja, Norass
We sit in our homes, we sit in our homes
Maewa, Tamarr, Ragidah, Halla
We sit with our families, we sit with our families
Nina, Ree, Farrah, Jenny
How can you bomb us? How can you bomb us?
Noorar, Sammar, Miyaddh, Ayaddh
How can you do this? How can you do this?
David Morgan, 1 April 1999, Baghdad

On the Heavy Side:

Not so merry-go-round

War leads to poverty
poverty to peace
then trade will flourish
and riches increase.
Riches bring pride.
Pride is war's ground.
War leads to poverty.
So we go round...

(Francis Daniel Pastorius, a German American, 1651-1719)

VANA MEMBERSHIP

To renew your membership in or to join VANA, please fill out the form below and send, along with a cheque payable to VANA, to Ted Powis, Treasurer, #603-1745 Esquimalt, W. Vancouver, V7V 1R7 The dues are \$30, \$20 of which go to the national office and \$10 to the branch. (You can use the enclosed addressed envelope)

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Address: _____ **Code** _____

City _____ **Prov** _____

Email Address _____