

to the visit of the U.S.S. Von Steuben in April of 1983, the Committee began watching for other visits in earnest.

Later in 1983, the Coalition Against Nuclear War, an umbrella organization of various groups such as the YWCA, Project Ploughshares, VOW, Roman Catholic Archdiocese and others, ceased operating. At this point, many decided that the Sub-watch Committee should continue as a focus for local actions. As an editorial in *The Disarmer*, a local peace movement newsletter, said, "Peace workers in Canadian cities such as Winnipeg, Toronto, or Montreal do not have the special responsibility the Nova Scotia peace movement does."

"Fully-armed and ready ballistic missiles aren't the honoured guests of their cities, but they are here."

Living up to this "responsibility" hasn't proved to be easy for the eclectic group of peace workers. With no notice of an SLBM submarine's arrival possible and stopovers limited to three or four days, large rallies are virtually impossible to organize during a sub "alert". When the Shearwater dock becomes functional again, submarines will be kept under tight security, making it difficult to find out whether one is in port or not, let alone discover its name and classification to check against a library copy of *Jane's Fighting Ships*.

"It really is difficult," says Valerie Osborne. "The last one that came in, it just hapened that everyone was in when we called, and it went smoothly. The following week, there was a false alarm, but we started to call people anyway to let them know about it. The first five names we called were out. It's very chancy, and it gets more so during the summer because people go away," she says with more than a touch of frustration in her voice.

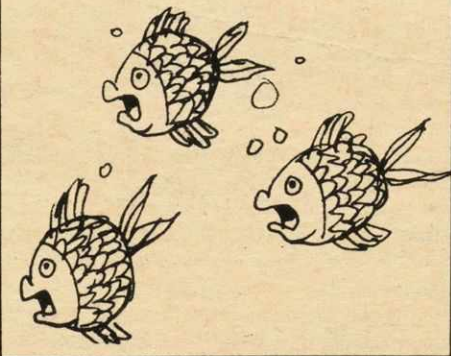
"Official" reaction to the committee's work has been predictable.

In an office tower suite with a commanding view of the harbour, behind security doors and protective glass, U.S. Consul-General Lawrence Raicht ventures an observation as space shuttle photographs gleam from the walls. "I think these protesters are a very small section of society," he says. "Most Canadians in this area are not at all displeased to know that the U.S. Navy

maintains a fair number of ships out there to defend the coast of North America.

"Last year there was a supposed "mass demonstration" against a nuclear submarine. This "mass demonstration" turned out to be seventy elderly people, high school students and housewives," says Raicht, hinting at the

For at least six years Halifax harbour has been a "safe port" for nuclear weapons the Canadian government vowed would never be tolerated within our territory.



esteem he has for those three groups.

Local political reaction has tended to take the same condescending tone—or worse. After the "Tall Ships" proved to be a popular attraction in the port this past summer, Halifax Mayor Ron Wallace issued an invitation to the NATO fleet, presumably including SLBM submarines, to a "Parade of Warships" celebration in the summer of '85. Halifax city council also rejected a 1982 proposal for a referendum on disarmament which would have been held in conjunction with Civic elections.

But then again, given the past and present history of the Halifax-Dartmouth area, any other response would be difficult to fathom. Halifax was created by the British in 1749 as a naval fortress due to its deep, long and sheltered harbour. Ever since that first warship dumped a hold full of settlers and military paraphernalia on the peninsula the MicMac call Chebucto, a large portion of the population has seen the Navy and Halifax as inseparable.

Even today, Halifax is still very much a "base town", providing a home for Canada's Atlantic Coast fleet of warships. According to Statistics Canada, the proportion of Halifax residents who depend on the Department of National Defense for their main paycheque is 25 per cent. And many see peace activists as a direct assault on their way of life. During the Casimir Pulaski visit, when the Halifax *Daily News* ran a series of articles which were pro-Sub-watch Committee in tone, they were flooded with phone calls supportive of the Pulaski's presence in the harbour. The Committee's learned to take this in stride.

"I don't mind negative reaction," says John Osborne. "What worries me more is the sort of stony silence we get. There's an awful lot of non-talking going on—sitting on the subject."

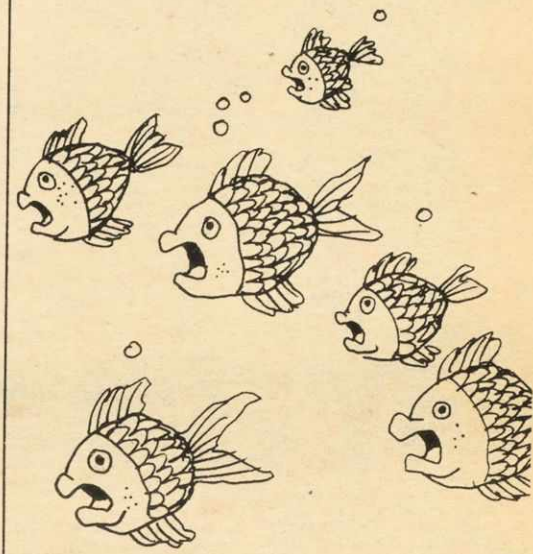
Ian Cook, a first-year student at the University of King's College, Halifax, agrees.

"Halifax people sometimes take their involvement with the base too far," he says. "I wish they could see how far wrong we've gone with nuclear arms."

With the recent New Zealand government decision to eliminate American military bases, including SLBN submarine facilities, and the spreading of submarine protests to Darwin, Australia on September 28, there does seem to be some reason for the Halifax activists to take heart. It seems they are becoming part of a global movement against SLBN submarines as other people realize what is happening in their home towns.

"I mean, here's an avenue where we can change things in our own harbour," Ian says, compulsively running his hands over his head as he sketches out his dream. "When the subs leave and don't come back, they'll have to go to another port. And the people in that city can take our example and do what we did."

"Soon they won't have any place to dock."



Illustrations: Rick Janson, Gazette