

Squatters endure

by Martin Chester

VANCOUVER (CUP)—Vancouver's Frances Street squats have been destroyed, but the community lives on.

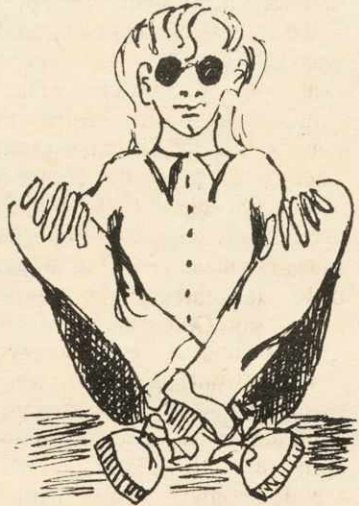
On Nov. 27, 1990 close to 100 well-armed police officers arrested 30 members of the squatting community and destroyed the houses they had been inhabiting for 10 months. A dozen squatters were charged with mischief and obstructing a police officer after being held overnight in the Vancouver city lock-up. They will face those charges in court on Jan. 18.

According to squatter Keith Chu, the community is still together.

"The bonds were formed on Frances Street, but the community has survived that particular location," Chu said.

One of the priorities of the community has been to broadcast their own message. A pair of West German veterans of the Berlin squatting movement have produced a 50-minute video on the squats, including television news

footage of the police action against the squats, interviews of the squatters and candid coverage of the debates between squatters.



Another project is a book to document the Frances Street squats. Chu, who is co-editing the project with fellow squatter Corinne Bjorge, said the book would be in an oral history format, and would consist of interviews with members of the community. "This is an opportunity for us to

talk about the things the mainstream media couldn't deal with," Chu said.

Chu said many issues surfaced at the squats, including levels of resistance and the presence of a drug pusher, which were dealt with by the community.

The pusher was not considered a member of the community and was asked to leave. "A lot of debate was on how to make him leave," Chu said.

Many of those involved in the Frances Street squats will be opening a new, public squat in the next few weeks, although they are not releasing any information at this time.

According to Chu there are two types of squats: underground and public.

"An underground squat hopes to survive by nobody noticing it. A public squat hopes to survive by everybody noticing it, by inviting supporters to come down and by hoping to make it a political issue," Chu said.

The publicity will deter both politicians and the police, he added.

IBM

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school dean Innis Christie said he's confident money can be found to cover the students' March living expense allowances.

The funding agreement would allow black students to concentrate on their studies rather than being distracted by public money squabbles, said Professor Wayne MacKay, the program's interim director.

"The three-year aspect is particularly good because we can guarantee people coming in this year [living allowance] funding for the full duration of their degree," he said.

MacKay said the agreement would "obviously be better than fighting these battles every year." But he cautioned that long-term and better funding is necessary to remove the economic barriers facing Micmac and black students—the point of the program in the first place.

Black activist and second-year IBM student Burnley (Rocky) Jones said that even with the monthly stipend, many students can't make ends meet.

"I have all the responsibilities of raising a family and I'm going in the hole \$500 every month," he said.

Jones added that with the program's summer class requirement,

he couldn't work enough to qualify for a student loan.

Both Jones and MacKay would like to see Nova Scotia pay for a bigger piece of the pie.

"If it [the present situation] continued, you'd find that, by and large, people from the black community wouldn't be able to go at all," said Jones.

Meanwhile, the law school has lowered its original request by \$30,000—money intended to pay for its summer classes, a full-time director and revamping of the law school's curriculum.

"We're not talking about that anymore. I guess we've been beaten into submission," said MacKay.

The school hoped to modify the present law curriculum to "properly reflect the perspective of black and aboriginal peoples." MacKay said the school hopes to find private funding for this "major objective."

Gulf

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room from the DSU, the student Coalition had a considerably lower profile, and the auditorium cost DTOGC \$50. The dialogue was, however, considerably more impassioned.

Paula Clarke, speaking on behalf of DTOGC emphasized "this is a war about oil profits, and oil profits only. To protect oil profits our government is willing to send men and women to their deaths".

Peter Davidson from the Metro Peace Action Network produced a frightening review of statistics detailing the \$1 trillion per year "culture of weapons" at large on our planet. Davidson noted that Arab and Persian countries consume a third of all the weapons sold by arms-exporting nations like Canada.

Bette Peterson, from the Nova Scotia Voice of Women, has played a key role in coordinating the Halifax protest response to the threat of war. She and others have been organizing daily protest vigils at noon in front of the Halifax main branch library. "The peace movement," she stressed Monday night, "is not going to role over and die whether there's a war or not."

Concerned about the social implications of war, particularly as they impact on women in Canada and other countries more directly victimized by wars, Peterson suggests a number of responses to the Gulf situation.

Her suggestions range from simply speaking out against war whenever and wherever possible, whether its "appropriate" or not, joining the peace action movements on campus and in the community, to more "radical" suggestions including civil disobedience and tax revolt.

People concerned about the Gulf situation should call the PEACE ACTION HOTLINE at 435-6165, attend the International Students Association teach-in Monday night, contact the DALHOUSIE COALITION at 422-3090 and, in the event of a war, rally at noon the following day at the Grand Parade.



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