

# Greenpeace misrepresented facts: St. Paul IRA

Members of Greenpeace, the anti-whaling and anti-seal-hunting organization misrepresented facts when they said that St. Paul Islanders agreed to stop their seal hunt in three to five years, members of the St. Paul IRA council have charged.

Greenpeace representatives, fresh from a confrontation with Soviets in Siberia over an alleged commercial whaling station in the Bering Sea, stopped in St. Paul two weeks ago to observe the annual Pribilof Island seal hunt.

While there, three Greenpeace members were arrested by federal authorities for disturbing a beachmaster seal and numerous cows on a seal ground. They also met with St. Paul Elders to discuss the seal harvest.

After the encounter on the island, Greenpeace was quoted in Anchorage news accounts as saying that St. Paul Island IRA member Victor Lekanof said that the islanders thought stopping the hunt was "hunky dory."

But in a telephone conference call from St. Paul early last week, however, Lekanof said those reports couldn't be further from the truth.

Lekanof charged Greenpeace was mixing incidents to suit their own ends.

He said that his "hunky dory" comment was about the disposition of the Greenpeace

encounter on a seal reserve beach, not about the seal harvest.

According to accounts of the incident, two Greenpeace representatives were on the island when their Zodiac boat broke away from its moorings. As the two landed Greenpeaceers ran down the beach, another member from their ship, the Rainbow Warrior, set out in another Zodiac to retrieve the boat.

He managed to get both boats near the seal grounds, and the two on shore ran through the seal area to help him.

Federal authorities arrested them, thinking they were trying to disturb the seals. After a meeting with St. Paul representatives, the St. Paul people were satisfied with the Greenpeace explanation, said Lekanof. That was when he made the "hunky dory" comment, he said.

Michael Zacharof, a member of the IRA council, and IRA chief Doug Melovidov, both said they had investigated the incident and reported comments made by Lekanof and were satisfied those comments were misrepresented by the Anchorage news media. Both stressed their support for Lekanof who said the St. Paul community members were angry with him about the reports.

The feelings don't extend to the meeting with Greenpeace about the continuation of the seal harvest, he said.

Zacharof said that St. Paul can not live up to the three year cutoff as Greenpeace wants because of economics.

Seal harvesting involves almost everyone on the island in one way or another and is the only broad economic base.

"They say once we get the harbor in three to five years there will be no need to harvest the seals," said Zacharof. He was referring to a state project which will build a harbor on the island, allowing it to open up to commercial fishing in the area.

"We say it should continue

because of economic and biological reasons.

"Economically, sealing is the mainstay on the island. The harbor won't be completed for three years and even after that it will take time to start operations. The only payment to individuals is the harvest.

"Even when the harbor is in place and operating there are cultural and biological reasons to continue sealing. After 300 years we don't want to see the harvest taken away."

"I told Greenpeace that there is a personal pride of the Aleut involved in the harvest and he said we should get our pride somewhere else," said Melovidov. "Someone who says something like that has no pride."

Zacharof said "We agreed there is a problem with the Bering Sea food stock... there is a big decline in the bird stock," and questioned the reasons for the decline. He said he believes the Bering Sea waters are 10 degrees warmer than they were years ago and raised the possibility of the Amchitka blasts affecting the stock.

All three were upset with the Greenpeace attitude toward the St. Paul residents.

"We were confronted by Greenpeace. They don't know anything about us or care about us," said Melovidov.

He said that Greenpeace representatives spent two days on the island observing the har-

(Continued on Page Fourteen)

**ment, Barrow, Alaska**

**General Duties:** Responsible for directing, executing, and coordinating a program of Tribal Operations, Natural Resource, Employment Assistance, Social Services, Housing, and Educational Programs together with supporting administrative functions.

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Working knowledge of the policies and procedures of management and supervision; Personal contact with administratives and program personnel of the BIA and officials of various federal, state, and local governmental agencies.

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