

# the ACTivist

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Newspaper of the  
**ACT for Disarmament Coalition**

Volume 5, Issue 3 • Summer 1989 • pay what you can

## Remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki

On August 6, 1945, the city of Hiroshima in Japan was destroyed by a new kind of weapon: the atom bomb. Three days later, another bomb levelled Nagasaki, confirming that a new age had dawned.

The "Little Boy" bomb detonated over Hiroshima was 12 1/2 kilotons – small compared to today's nuclear weapons. Even so, it killed 100,000 instantly (and many more later) and left the city as ruin.

Many "survivors" would die over the following years of radiation. Others, not fortunate enough to die in the bomb's blast of the firestorms which followed, suffered burns, crippling injuries, loss of family and friends. Hundreds fled to what they thought would be a safe refuge from American attack – the Christian city of Nagasaki.

They arrived just in time to see the "Fat Man" bomb explode over Nagasaki, killing 50,000 on August 9, thousands more later. The legacy of



Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Leukemia, cancer, birth defects (including the "jellyfish babies" of the Pacific nuclear test ranges), lingering radiation – and a world armed to the teeth with 55,000 nuclear bombs.

Since 1945, the world has been living in nuclear terror. Today, not only the United States and Soviet Union, but also Britain, France, China, India, Israel, South Africa, and perhaps others (Argentina, Brazil, Iran, Iraq, North and South Korea, and Pakistan are suspected to be on the nuclear brink) have nuclear arsenals.

Meanwhile, the world's wars rage on across six continents and nuclear reactors blossom like deadly flowers over Europe, Asia and America, from Chernobyl to Darlington. Canadian uranium still fuels the arms race, as it has since 1945.

Time, surely, that this madness ended.

## Demonstrate!

In Toronto:

Candlelight walk for peace

on the anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki

Wednesday August 9 at 8 pm

Yonge & Bloor

Walk to City Hall Peace Garden

Call 960 2228

In St Catharines:

Hiroshima day concert

Lakeside Park

August 6, 12-6 pm

Bands, speakers, and information tables

Call 684 6233

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## Uranium mining: a dirty business

Our federal government is about to give all Canadians the chance to fuel the arms race, damage the fragile northern ecosystem, and bequeath a degraded gene pool to our descendants. And in the bargain, we commit an unknown number of miners to an early death by cancer. Quite a deal, eh?

All this comes with one single industrial development: the expansion of the already bloated uranium industry in Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories. Despite a glut in the world market, three new uranium developments are underway. Two of them, Cigar Lake and Midwest Lake, are of an extremely high grade which will pose astounding environmental and occupational health problems. The third, near Baker Lake in the NWT, is in the arctic, which will multiply the ecological impact.

Canada has the largest uranium industry in the world, supplying 20% of the Western world's known demand each year. (Officially, the military has no demand.)

What you and I get in our end of the deal, if the three new mines go ahead, is a huge increase in the already substantial radioactive contamination of the north. In Saskatchewan, levels of radiotoxic chemicals from uranium mining in fish, lichen, blueberries, moose,

caribou, and humans double almost every two years.

A uranium mine operates for 10-20 years, releasing radioactive gas and liquid every day of the year. But the problems really only begin with the shutdown of the mine: for 80,000 years, the waste from mining gives off radon gas and liquid effluent containing radiotoxic and toxic metals which accumulate in the local biota and in the food chain. The astonishing volume of these wastes, called "tailings", preclude containment so they are normally dumped into lakes or hollows.

workers by far the highest doses to give in the nuclear industry.

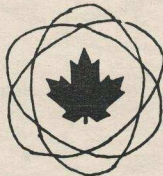
The United Steelworkers of America, the union representing Canada's uranium miners, is so concerned that it has called for a federal inquiry.

An estimated five of every six pounds of uranium shipped to nuclear weapons states end up in military hands; uranium marked "peaceful purposes only" is routinely processed with military nuclear material. Canadian uranium fees up a stockpile trade between the allied nuclear states.

Nuclear technology symbolizes all that is horrifying in our world. It is unsustainable, economically backward, dangerous to ourselves and our children, and destructive of the emerging culture of "stepping lightly on the earth". Nuclear power is technology searching for a reason to be. Uranium mining is a resource-extraction industry wedded to the old boys network of External Affairs and to the terrorism of nuclear confrontation. It gives us excuses: "Just a little pollution, a little accident, a little bomb, a little break in the DNA chain".

• John Willis (Nuclear co-ordinator, Greenpeace)

A longer version of this article originally appeared in *Peace Magazine*.



# China's non-violent movement

Not only did the non-violent movement for democracy in China catch the world by surprise, it coaght most of the participants by surprise.

While observers anticipated a commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the May Fourth Movement (a 1919 campaign for democracy that began on campuses in Beijing and eventually spread throughout China), no one anticipated the dimensions this year's commemoration would assume.

The current movement is a response to institutionalized corruption and nepotism. When Communist reformer Hu Yaobang died in April, the students decided to begin a non-violent campaign to persuade the Party and the government to crack down on corruption and allow a degree of democracy.

Unexpected support for the students came from factory workers, academics and Party members in Beijing. As the initiative took root and the base of support widened, the students realized they were part of a historical movement. This movement has spread quickly to other parts of China and, except for occasional incidents like the burning of a train in Shanghai, has been non-violent. One Beijing student leader said their model was the US civil rights movement and many of the signs in Beijing's Tiananmen Square carried Martin Luther King's message "I have a dream". Surviving student leaders who have escaped arrest have gone underground to continue organizing. Workers are calling for strikes and a new independent trade union has been formed.

Clearly the movement in China is only a beginning. While some army factions have resorted to violence in an attempt to get their share of power, most students and workers seem committed to

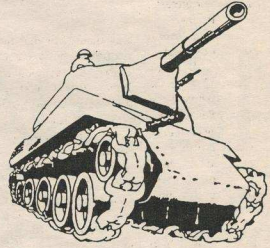
building up a large scale non-violent movement for democratic social change. Despite the killings, the conviction that China can and must be democratized has now taken root in the minds and hearts of tens of millions of Chinese people.

The Chinese movement for democracy is also happening in Hong Kong, where people have responded on an unprecedented scale. A demonstration of 10,000 people is considered large in Hong Kong, yet when Li Peng took control of the Chinese government and ordered the military to disperse

the students, more than 500,000 people took to the streets for an eight-hour demonstration. The following Sunday the number doubled to one million.

The Chinese Canadian community also showed its support for the non-violent movement in force in cities from Vancouver to Halifax. The largest demonstration saw 30,000 parade past the Chinese Consulate in Toronto to mourn the dead of Tiananmen Square.

• **Disarmament Campaigns**



## Martial law in forgotten Tibet

Until a few years ago, the West on the whole remained ignorant of that distant country, Tibet, and of the consequences of its occupation in 1950 by the People's Republic of China. The ensuing isolation imposed upon it prevented the world from learning the true extent of the systematic and brutal dismantling of a culture and a way of life which had survived through

two thousand years, and of the 1.2 million Tibetans who died in the implementation of this final solution devised by China.

With the recent opening of Tibet to tourists, the Chinese government got more than the dollars they coveted: the tourists became witnesses to the oppression of a people and to their desire for independence and a return of their

exiled spiritual and temporal leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Foreign journalists and tourists thrown by chance into peaceful demonstrations turned violent by Chinese guns, brought the world's attention to the horrors that were happening there. But on March 9 of this year, the curtains were drawn once again over Tibet

as the Chinese government expelled all foreigners from the country; a few days earlier, martial law had been imposed on the capital, Lhasa, and its vicinity.

Several groups have sprung up across Canada in reaction to deteriorating conditions in Tibet, and to assist the existing Tibetan associations in making sure that the issue of Tibet is not forgotten. The Canada Tibet Committee was formed a year ago in Montréal and since then branches have been established in Vancouver, Ottawa and, most recently, Toronto.

The groups are autonomous but share common goals and objectives. The guiding principle is the ideals of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and chief among the goals is to work toward helping those suffering in Tibet and to stop the ongoing destruction of Tibetan culture and religion.

For more information on the Canada Tibet Committee, please write to PO Box 62, 260 Adelaide St W, Toronto, M5A 1N0, or call 484-4138 or 233-3540.

• **Rizgin Dolkar**  
(Chairperson, Canada Tibet Committee)



### THE ACTIVIST

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### In the next ACTIVIST:

- Peace ferment in Poland
- Uranium mining at Cigar Lake
- History of ACT for Disarmament
- High School peace network
- Four-page special supplement on the war in East Timor
- and more

When Nato jets resumed their test flights over Nitassinan (Québec-Labrador), the Innu native inhabitants resumed their protests. A spring chronology follows.

**March 18-29** - 6 different attempts are made to establish a protest camp on Defence Department property close to the Goose Bay runways (last year one was maintained from Sept 22-Dec 12). This year the setting up of tents results in immediate arrests - 93 charges are laid and 18 Innu detained for periods of up to 18 days prior to trial because they refuse to sign conditions for their release.

**April 4-7** - The trial of 4 Innu arrested last September is held. They were the only people charged with mischief out of a group of 70 who had walked on the tarmac at CFB Goose Bay. The defence is based on the "colour of right", that the Innu truly believed that the land

was theirs and that there was a reasonable basis for that belief. Elders, the accused and Father James Roche testify for the defence. Demonstrations and vigils from Toronto to Amsterdam support the accused.

**April 18** - The 4 Innu are acquitted. Judge James Igloliorte states in his ruling that "Canada is a vital part of the global village and must show its maturity not only to the segment of Canadian society that wields great power and authority... but also to its most disparate people. The 40 year history of these Innu people is a glaring reminder that integration or assimilation alone will not make them a healthy community. By declaring these Innu as criminals

for crying 'enough!' the court will have been unable to recognise the fundamental right of all persons to be treated equally before the law." Throughout Canada, this is viewed as a landmark decision.

The Crown calls for an appeal of the ruling in mid-May. It will be heard starting October 3.

**April 26** - 70 Innu enter the fenced area of the runway. 44 are charged. 11 are detained for two days. There are now more than 250 outstanding charges.

**April-June** - More than 200 people from Sheshatshiu spend time in the country practising their traditional hunting way of life. In May, Wildlife and RCMP officers confiscate the guns and game of 5 Innu hunters who were providing

food for their families. (See excerpts from Martha Hurley's journal, this page.)

**May 15** - Hundreds squeeze into Toronto's Friends House to hear Innu woman Elizabeth Penasue and Rose Grégoire.

**June 1-15** - 3 groups of Innu occupy the bombing range for varying periods of time. Low-level flying is curtailed and the bombing range closed for much of that time.

**June 21** - The Canadian Minister of Indian Affairs, Pierre Cadieux, visits Sheshatshiu. The Innu, old and young, tell the Minister of their love of the land, Nitassinan. They tell how wildlife regulations and low-level flying will bring an end to their way of life. At the end of the day, The Minister made no mention

of the Innu's concern about the militarization of their homeland. He merely invites the Innu to enter the land claims process and provide more documentation. The Innu feel a different settlement process is required. The land claims cess fails to protect aboriginal rights and redults in 10-20 years of negotiations the military and hydro developments continue unabated. result is a no-win situation for the Innu.

**July 7** - During the Assembly of First Nations annual meeting, nine native groups sign a "Defence Pact" committing themselves to come to one another's aid when in conflict situations. Daniel Ashini, chief of Sheshatshiu, signs on behalf of the Innu.

## Excerpts from an Innu hunter's journal

*Each fall and spring, many Innu families travel into the interior of Nitassinan, living off the land for periods of three to four months. This spring, Martha Hurley and her family were among a group of six families camped at Minal-nipi (Minal Lake). During that time, she kept a journal of reflections and notes. The following are excerpts from her writings:*

We use the shotguns to kill the geese and we bring home the geese to feed our family... They are trying to make it harder for us. They really would like to see us leave Minal-nipi because we are close to the bombing range.

But we are more determined and this gives us courage to stay as long as we can.

...how I felt when the 4 people that were charged were acquitted, by the judge. That was the first time in my life that I ever felt so happy. I showed the Lord on the day... it showed us that we were struggling so hard, and finally the judge recognized what we are saying.

The men left today to go to the bombing range. In the afternoon the military helicopter flew over us twice to the spot which was cleared for a helicopter to land. We thought they were trying to land - then the people all scattered around everywhere so they couldn't land. The children were getting frightened... some were asking

their mothers, "Is my father going to be arrested? Will they find them?"

The men returned home this evening... brought back a small dummy bomb. When I saw it and the young children looking at it and examining it closely, I felt the pain go through me. Gradually, they will learn that our land is being demolished because the military is using it as a toyland.

Today Innu people have shown their anger by protesting, arrested and continue to go to the bombing range. Reason is to protect our lifestyle and continue to use our land. We aren't doing it to attract the media which is what non-natives always say about the Innu.

We always feel too that the government of Canada wants us to live like the non-natives. But we can't, no matter how hard we try it will never work for us because we have our own culture and we will stick to that lifestyle.

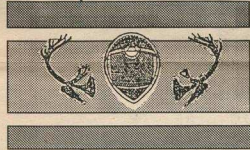
I used to think I was a useless Innu. I felt that non-natives always beat the Innu. But now everything has changed since our protest has begun. I could feel we are more stronger and frustration feelings are let out. And now, Canadians are familiar what is happening here in Nitassinan.

Another thing I want to say, that has always been with me is when one of my children woke up once, screaming in terror saying, "It was the jets!"

We went to check the fishing net. Eric shot two ducks on the way. We saw a beaver dam and the children were really interested... That is when I started to think that young children should be taught what the Innu does in the country for living. It is their culture, so it is very important that we do not lose it.

I will never forget what happened on that day when they (Wildlife and RCMP officers) took the men hunters and seized their guns and geese... One of the men said, "What do they expect us to do?"

1. *U'ihimassiu* [Davis Islet]
2. *Matimecuah* [Schefferville]
3. *Pukue-shipu* [St. Augustin]
4. *Unamen-shipu* [La Romaine]
5. *Nuasshkan* [Nataabouan]
6. *Ekanotshiu* [Miramir]
7. *Manisienam* [Maltoesam]
8. *Uashku* [Sept-les]
9. *Petiamia* [Bersimis]
10. *Eripis* [Les Escoumies]
11. *Piswakamie* [Pointe Bleue]
12. *Sheshatshiu* [Northwest River]
13. *Goose Bay* [Goose Bay]



## Nitassinan Innu homeland

### ACT Toronto holds support vigil

She stepped out of the squad car, wiping her forehead with the back of the hand holding her regulation RCMP cap. She walked slowly towards the group in front of the West German Embassy, wishing she were anywhere else, it was just too damn hot. The group was in several different positions, some lying on blankets on the grass trying to sleep, some sitting talking, some standing with signs. They were about twenty in number. She walked up to the woman standing nearby.

"Which one of you is the leader?" the officer asked.

"We don't have one" replied the woman with a quizzical look on her face.

The Netherlands, Britain, West Germany and Canada have invaded the Innu homeland of Nitassinan with their war tests.

Canada now wants to make Nitassinan into a base for all of Nato's low-level training and testing flights.

ACT for Disarmament Toronto held a 72-hour vigil in support of the Innu on the July long weekend, covering four different locations. We started in front of the Netherlands Consulate at Dundas and Yonge with a rally on the Saturday which was attended by about 50-100 people. On Sunday we moved to the British Consulate at College and Bay, which was pretty cool because it had a rug out front for us to sit on, until security started to get into the fun game of chasing us away.

In reaction we decided to declare all the objects within a half block as belonging to the people. The building's pillars became the people's pillars. At this point we were really getting silly. Next we

moved to the West German consulate where there was grass, and the RCMP who made us keep walking. Being rather exhausted we decided to move on to the Progressive Conservative headquarters.

We occupied the front of this location, encountering the cops on a half-hour basis as well as Shriners and other freaks, until noon the next day.

The vigil was a real accomplishment. It showed that we could really occupy land and make it ours. There was a large amount of native involvement which was really good, since it made it more than just another white group supporting native rights. The press coverage was very good, several TV news shows ran the story, and both the Globe and the Star ran

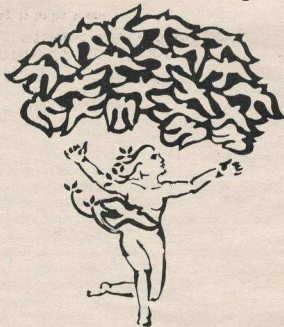
# Spring protest for the planet

According to the latest reports from "Kids-These-Days-Land", young people are materialistic cultural illiterates who think Kent State is a brand of motor oil; the "Huh generation".

Hopefully, the shockingly youthful crowd at ACT for Disarmament's Seventh Annual Spring Protest for Peace (held in Toronto on May 13) may serve as some small evidence to the contrary.

The beautiful weather, not to mention the Innu acquittal and the demise of the nuclear subs, combined to boost veteran activists' morale and inspire newcomers. It also seems ACT's latest educational project is bearing fruit. The group's regular Metro-wide high-school peace meetings are getting peace and justice issues into schools - and apparently getting students "off the sidewalks and into the streets."

Dr John Bacher spoke on behalf of the Toronto Environmental Alliance. He spoke of the longstanding connections between militarism and destruction of the environment, a "scorched earth" policy writ large: "Every tank, bullet, mortar or cannon requires in its manufacture minerals that are torn from the



earth, creating wastes that cannot be buried."

Then native activist Jay Mason reminded the crowd that "the first atom bomb wasn't dropped on Japan, but on aboriginal people's land, during tests. And the uranium for the bombs is mined on native people's land."

A thousand people marched from Queen's Park to City Hall, where Maggie Helwig spoke about peaceful protests that the Alliance for Non-Violent Action and others were planning around ARMX '89. She described the international arms bazaar (held in Ottawa from

May 23-25) as "an obscenity. Some of the arms dealers use promotional brochures showing women in bikinis leaning up against tanks." The crowd booted loudly.

Around 5 pm, a teenage girl who'd been ducking photographers all day was about to hurry home. "My mother would kill me if she saw me in the paper. She thinks I'm downtown shopping." It was her first protest.

How she later explained her lack of shopping bags, or her brand new Question Authority button, remains a mystery.

• Kathy Shaidle

## Innu support vigil

Continued from p. 3

articles (and who wants coverage in the Scum anyways?).

There were at least 50 people involved in the vigil at one point or another. There were some problems related to stress, but nothing major (no one was killed, despite the rumours). The vigil was a very good action, organized on short notice, it managed to get its point across: Niitassin is not Canada and as such it is not Canada's right to build a base there.

• Mac Scott

## Benefit for the Innu September 13-14-15 at the Rivoli \$6 per night, \$12 for all 3 featuring Fifth Column • Plasterscene Replicas • Leslie Spit Trio

All proceeds go to help the Innu people of Nitassinan in their campaign against the militarization of their homeland.

## Donate to ACT - get a tax break

Have you considered making a major donation to ACT but thought you couldn't afford it? Have you decided to make a donation to charity instead, knowing you could get a tax reduction? Now, thanks to the Riverdale Greens, you can make a donation to ACT and get an INCOME TAX CREDIT as well.

The RIVERDALE GREEN CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATION supports our work for peace, and now has a policy of turning over to ACT any donation it receives from people wanting to support the peace part of its programme. With Ontario election laws, such donations are seen as donations to a political party (since the cheques are made out to them) and thus entitles you to an income tax credit for having donated to a political party.

Donations to political parties are better tax write-offs

than donations to charities. This is because the first \$200 gives a 75% rebate on your income tax form.

ACT is composed of members with a number of different political views. The general membership accepted the offer of the Riverdale Greens because it gives people making major donations to ACT some way of receiving a tax benefit for supporting us. *It does not tie us or you to the Green Party.*

Now supporters have two options - sending a cheque directly to ACT, or sending a cheque to the Riverdale Greens Constituency Association with a memo "for peace education". They will send an equal amount to ACT and you will be mailed a receipt for income tax purposes.

We need your support; donations from our supporters are essential for our work to be successful. Thanks to the Riverdale Greens, you can also get a tax break!

ACT encourages all individuals who would like a receipt for political contributions to send a cheque denoting their area(s) of interest(s) to RIVERDALE GREENS CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATION whose policy is to send ACT monies earmarked for Peace, directly, wholly, and exclusively to ACT.

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