

Peace crusade

continued

Canadian cities taking a stand

Canada's peace activists have generally split their time between concentrating on American defense strategy, and looking for an issue around which to organize at home.

Two main campaigns have developed. One is the World Referendum on Disarmament, which has seen a wave of cities agree to hold disarmament referenda across the country. The other is an effort to make Canada a nuclear weapon free zone.

A bearded, burly man by the name of Jim Stark is behind an idea that has made its way to Halifax. Stark believes that if universities, cities and organizations all have a referendum on whether nuclear disarmament is desirable, Canada and eventually the whole world will be moved to hold such a referendum, and the vote will be "yes".

Stark's organization is Operation Dismantle. He has worked on his project to near fanaticism, and to date has tallied 117 cities that will hold referenda in their upcoming municipal elections. These cities include Ottawa, Toronto, Regina and Winnipeg, but not, as yet, Halifax.

Halifax city council is reticent to hold such a referendum, as it feels it is not within its jurisdiction to enter the realm of national security issues. The question was still up in the air, however, as city council decided last week to seek the advice of the Attorney General.

The group which has been solidly behind the referendum proposal all summer is the Halifax Coalition Against Nuclear War. The Coalition was created to organize support for a march against nuclear war on May 31. Despite Halifax's reputation as a military town, that event attracted 3,000 people. Cooperation and support came from a wide range of interests in the city. From the Catholic Women's Committee, to the United Church, the Dalhousie Student Union, Halifax District Labour Council, Scientists for Peace and the local chapter of the International Socialists, all divergent types were united in their common cause.

Concurrent with the June 12 rally in New York City, Canadians protested nuclear arms across the country. 4,000 attended the rally in New York, 1,000 marched in Calgary, 4,000 in Edmonton, 1,500 in Winnipeg, and 10,000 Americans and Canadians met at a rally on the Washington-B.C. border.

Viewing the possibility of a nuclear war as an unprecedented danger to the health of its citizens, Toronto city council adopted last year the following method of civil defense:

"There is only one effective form of civil defense, and that is to use the political process to bring about arms control; a reduction in nuclear weapons; a lowering of tension and, eventually, nuclear disarmament..." The Council, along with conducting a referendum on nuclear disarmament, is following the example of Cambridge, Massachusetts city council, in circulating a pamphlet that suggests "the only form of civil defense is to write, phone, and lobby politicians to reduce the danger of nuclear war". The Council resolved to promote international understanding by making sisterly connections with a major Russian city, to oppose the production of components of nuclear weapons in Toronto and to promote nuclear disarmament education.

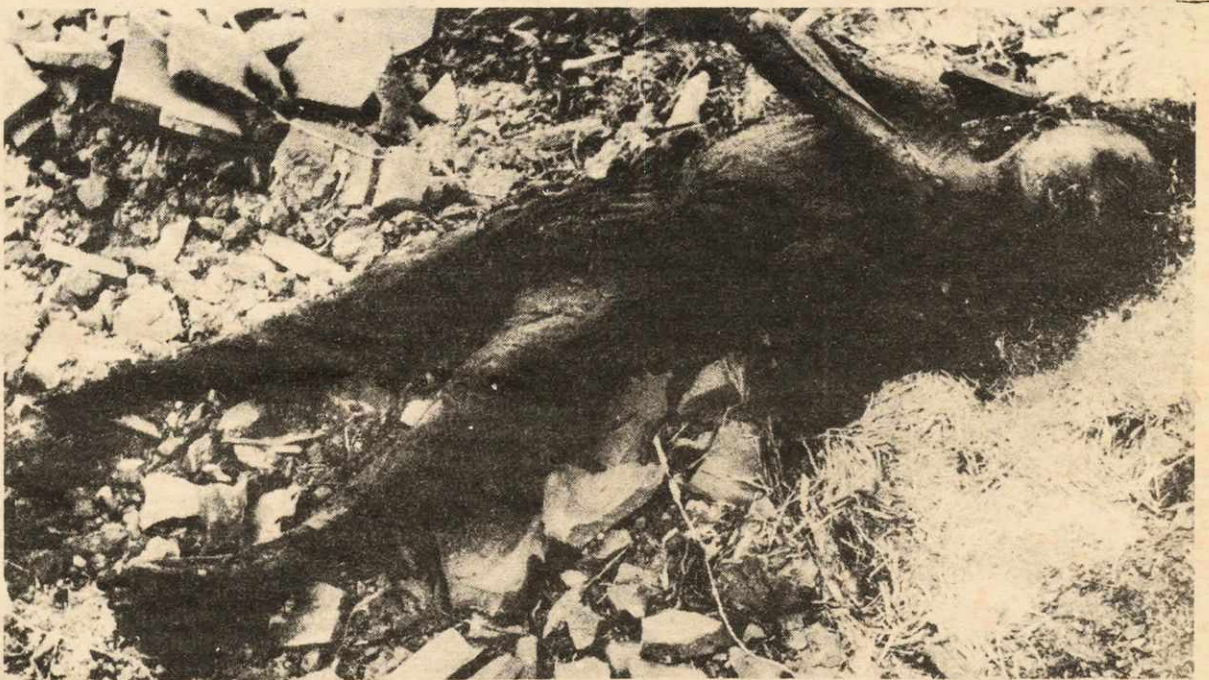
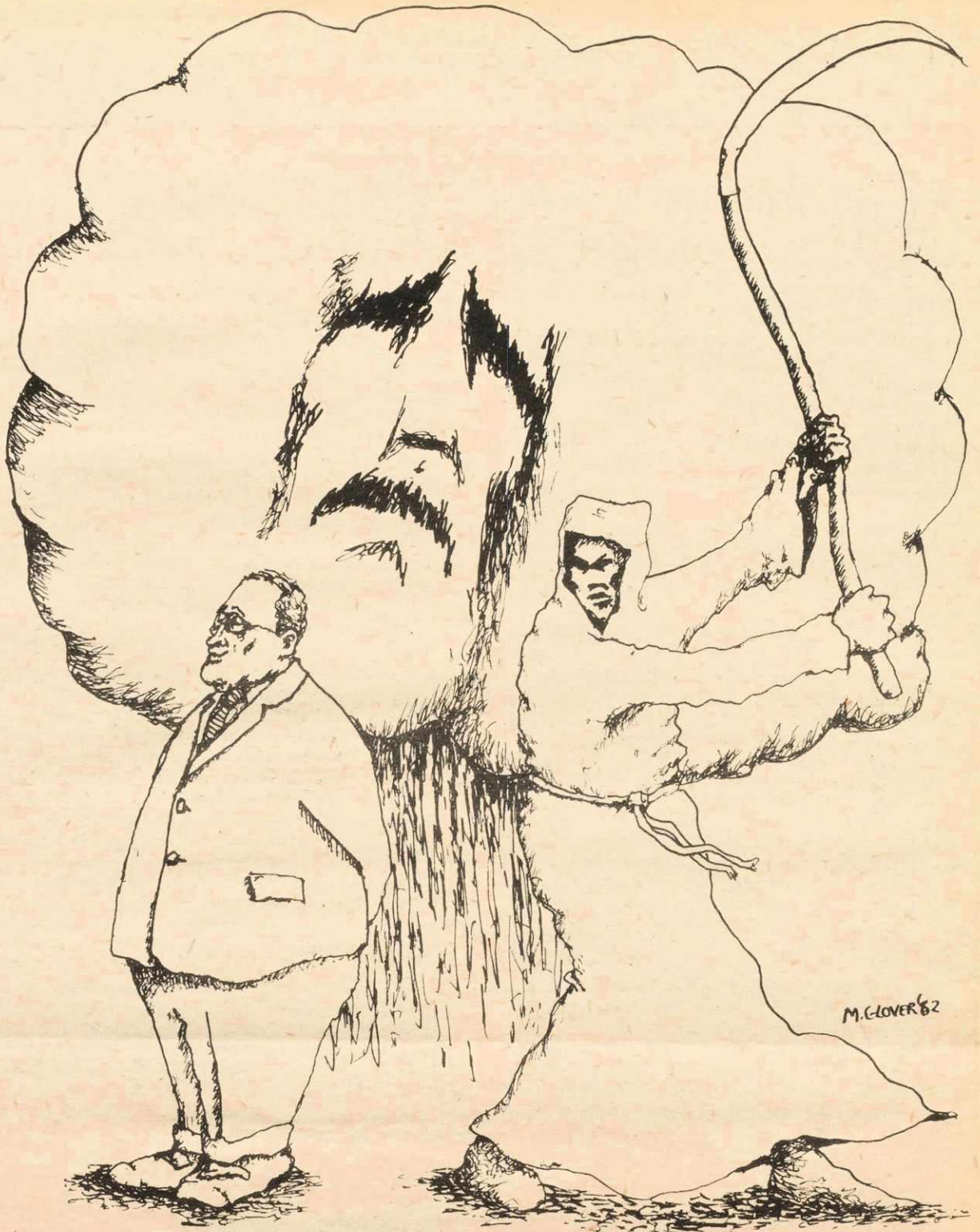
Project Ploughshares, the national peace education organization, is working on a campaign to make Canada a nuclear weapons free zone. Canada should assert its independence from the U.S. and refuse to participate in the American military nuclear system, according to Ploughshares. This would involve ending Canada's industrial contribution as well as not allowing nuclear weapons to be transported in Canadian air, water and surface territory.

This concept hasn't caught as great an enthusiasm as the American freeze movement has so far.

One major focus, however, has been Canada's role in developing the Cruise Missile system.

572 Cruise and Pershing II missiles are due to be deployed in Europe in 1983, as a Nato effort to match similar medium range missiles in the Soviet Union. The NATO missiles will be under the operational control of the United States.

Canadians have been protesting the production in Toronto of parts for the cruise system. The flight testing is also due to take place in Alberta.



●Nagasaki; Afternoon, 10, Aug. 1945

Project Ploughshares points to Trudeau's own words four years ago at the first UN Special Session on Disarmament to be upheld. In his famous "suffocation speech", Trudeau called for the "suffocation of the arms race in the world's laboratories". He pointed specifically to test explosions, banning the production of fissionable material, and reducing spending on new weapons systems. Also to be banned was all flight-testing. Canada's aid in developing the Cruise would seem to go against three of these points, Ploughshares claims.

Trudeau's foray into world statesmanship raised an unexpected amount of support back home. Heralded as the chance for Canada to take a leading role in world

affairs akin to the Pearson era, activists waited impatiently for Canada to become the first country to suffocate its contribution to the arms race.

But that wasn't Trudeau's intention.

As Jon Legg, Canadian Deputy Director of Arms Control, explained, "Trudeau never spoke of unilateral disarmament measures. He called for *agreements*."

"We're not talking about tying our hands behind our backs," Legg said. Apparently Trudeau was simply giving the nuclear powers an idea to chew over.

Peace activists, however, want Canada to make a significant contribution towards world peace. At least, they're working on it.