

-- In Vancouver this April, 80,000 people joined in the annual March for Peace sponsored by End the Arms Race.

-- In Winnipeg last week 30,000 people participated in the 4th Annual Walk for Peace sponsored by the Winnipeg Coordinating Committee for Disarmament.

-- In Toronto 10,000 high school students took part in a massive peace celebration in front of Toronto's City Hall.

-- In Halifax in June, more than 300 women from Labrador City to Denman Island B.C. gathered for five days at an historic International Women's Conference to discuss alternative ways of negotiating peace.

These are but a few of the examples of the vibrancy of the peace movement of the 1980s in Canada.

Across the country thousands of individuals are involving themselves in a myriad of organizations, expressing their concern that the world has too many arms; demanding that the relentless upward-spiral of ever-more sophisticated and lethal weapons be stopped -- now.

The peace movement in Canada is gathering strength, continuously widening its body of support. In the 1960s, it was often dismissed as being left-wing and radical, representing a minority opinion. But in the 1980s the expanded peace movement -- lead by pioneering organizations such as Project Ploughshares and Operation Dismantle -- cuts across all ages, professions and backgrounds.

Lawyers, physicians, teachers, students, scientists and countless concerned individuals have formed associations so that they might act in concert in helping the public and politicians to understand the threat posed by the world's conventional and nuclear arsenals.

The new, broad-based membership of the movement reflects the universal danger of the nuclear threat and the realization that the debate over nuclear and conventional weapons is something that involves everyone. The Canadian public, through the peace movement, wants to participate in the determination of its future.

Since the early 1980s, coalitions of disarmament groups have been developing and growing throughout the country. Today there are disarmament networks in Montréal, Toronto, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver -- representing hundreds of organizations and tens of thousands of individuals.

The growth of the peace movement has truly been remarkable. For example, the Toronto Disarmament Network which was established in early 1982 with 15 member organizations now includes more than 70 groups. In Vancouver End the Arms Race, established at the same time, encompasses 200 organizations, including churches, labour, community and professional groups.