

Peacemakers or peace thinkers? That's the question

by Christine Lund

High praise for the recent U.S.-Soviet arms control agreement was given by Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament Douglas Roche, in a recent *CNT* interview.

"It is true that only three per cent of all the nuclear weapons in the world are being eliminated; therefore, we have a tremendous distance to go but it is something concrete," Roche said.

"The summit is the tip of the iceberg—it's everything underneath that is really important. Peace is much more than arms control and disarmament. Security today must be measured in non-military terms, as well as military. By that we mean that there must be economic and social development as a condition for peace with security, stability, justice, and steps made to protect human rights more than they are today...so it [the summit] is a fantastic moment when you put all this together. But there must be much more done in peace educa-

tion to help people at all levels," he added.

When asked about his feelings towards implementing peace studies into the course curriculum in schools, Roche answered positively. "I think high schools ought to be having courses in this subject. It deals with the world as a potentially cooperative place in the interlocking systems—environment, trade, etc. For too long Civics courses have talked about simply the history of war. I think we have to complement the history of wars with help to learn how to build peace...and get into the questions of poverty, environmental degradation, the arms race, population. We need to see how all this interacts."

Roche spoke of how most young people today are being exposed to an overwhelming degree of violence on television. He said that in order to balance this influence there ought to be exposure in the classroom in an appropriate way on how to build conditions for peace. Forming youthful attitudes and raising



Ambassador Douglas Roche and Christine Lund

consciousness is a constructive way to deal with the situation of peace education, according to Roche.

"The whole question of deterrence has got some very severe moral qualities to be examined. These are spiritual questions. I'm not a pedagogue and I don't know how to deal with this; that's not my business—how to do it. I only know it must be done."

Roche discussed his ideas about youth involvement in peace—"I think young people can be free to protest when they want. But I think that there are more creative things than just protesting. I would like to say to young people: Your time is now!"

Because the peace issue in schools is a growing topic of concern, *CNT* also interviewed Brampton, Ont., high school religion teacher and retreat facilitator Terry Gray, in an effort to get an insider's opinion. Gray teaches at Cardinal Leger Secondary School.

In Gray's life, teaching peace is an ongoing challenge but there is

also more to the process than educating, he says.

"Kids learn by hands-on stuff too. It's like immersing a child in water—they might learn to swim. So then by immersing kids in a different experience, by exposing them to walks and demonstrations as a form of education, they learn through the doing. Not all kids learn through the head."

As a teacher who has taken many students to numerous activities directed towards peace and justice issues, Gray states "To protest is creative non-violence. Many kids are looking for ways

to speak out and take a stand but nobody gives them a way. If you are not articulate, like the chosen few, your outlet is through activities like peace walks and vigils. Protests, vigils and demonstrations just require your heart, if that is all you are able to give."

According to Gray, nothing but good has come from activities such as demonstrations at Litton and prayer vigils. From Gray's experience, the results of these activities have been for forming of young adults with consciences.

In response to the large number of young people who worry about nuclear war, Gray simply reinforces what psychologists tell us—that in order to overcome your fear you must face it. By working actively for peace in conjunction with reflecting on experiences, the fear, Gray said, is lessened.

"A person's faith must speak through action. Most adults who say kids aren't ready for protest are themselves the ones who aren't ready. They can't expect the young to sit on the fence, just because they do. Blessed are the peacemakers, not just the peacethinkers."