

# Trudeau: Leader of the peace movement?

by Charles Spurr

With Cruise missile testing scheduled for next month in Alberta, Prime Minister Trudeau is carrying on with his peace initiative. Last week the Gazette asked spokesmen from various peace groups in Halifax for their opinions on these developments.

Ken Burke, Treasurer of the Dalhousie Disarmament Society, said Trudeau "is talking peace and that's better than indulging in the same rhetoric as the other NATO countries." Although

uneasy about the credibility gap in Trudeau's advancement of his peace initiative while his government proceeds to test Cruise missiles, Burke could not say what plans, if any, DDS may have to oppose the Cruise tests.

Charles Gifford, of Veterans for Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament, said Trudeau's initiative "contributes to legitimizing NATO's role," a role he feels has an undeniable aggressive appearance because of the nuclear weapons strategy of the

alliance.

In December Canada opposed a UN resolution advocating a nuclear weapons production freeze, and Gifford said this makes the government's opposition to nuclear proliferation look "hypocritical". He hopes Trudeau's initiative surmounts this by widening the public debate on Canada's role in NATO and generating a "consensus" in favour of "downgrading the role of nuclear weapons." His group has yet to decide on, or form,

any plan of action to oppose next month's Cruise missile tests.

Valery Osborne of Project Ploughshares says her group welcomes the peace initiative. Ploughshares is looking to "make peace a real issue" in the federal elections, but "there is nothing we can do now to stop the testing of the Cruise in March," she said.

Ann Muecke of the Voice of Women was "very pleased" with the initiative. It has been a factor influencing VOW's decision to change "our form of protest". She said the Coalition Against Nuclear War has been disbanded since "marches have served their purpose and are no longer effective."

Ken Persauld, Coalition coordinator, said the Coalition had been going through "internal changes" and was now in "a dormant state of dormancy." He declined further comment.

Tony Seed, Maritimes spokesman for the People's Front and the Halifax Committee Against Imperialist War, said, "Trudeau's peace mission is a global farce. The Warsaw Pact countries' favourable response shows it is not only the Canadian government, the US and NATO that

need this demagoguery as a smoke screen for further arms build-up." Both superpowers need it to provide the backdrop of "discussion and dialogue" behind which to continue their war preparations," he said.

The question of Trudeau's peace initiative also arose at the recent SUNS conference at Dalhousie. A group from Mount Allison University in New Brunswick promoted Trudeau's initiative, citing the value of "a student dialogue on disarmament". The reaction of SUNS was generally negative, with some charging "political partisanship" which disputed the principles of the plan itself.

NSCAD student president Roger Lewis said that his delegation was "not happy with any plan that didn't include a call for Canada to pull out of NATO and NORAD."

Lewis said, "Both NATO membership and testing of the Cruise are examples of U.S. domination of our military sphere."

SUNS arrived at a positive consensus on communicating with other students on the peace issue. However, no resolution was passed.

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