

Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki, August, 1945- 2013

By Theresa Wolfwood

On August 6, 1945 the USA dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima; on August 9, another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. British pilot Leonard Cheshire, on board the plane with that bomb, described the bombing as, "*Obscene in its greedy clawing at the earth, swelling as if with its regurgitation of all the life that it had consumed.*"

200,000 people died immediately & within days of these bombings; 68 years later people continue to die from the radiation effects of these toxic bombs. Canada provided the uranium for those bombs; the native people who worked at the uranium deposit died and continue to die from radiation-caused cancers to this date. The life of the Déline, NWT residents and the effects of their unwitting role of hewers of uranium ore is told in an excellent film VILLAGE OF WIDOWS produced by Peter Blow, Lindum Films, Peterborough, Ontario. (reviewed on this website)

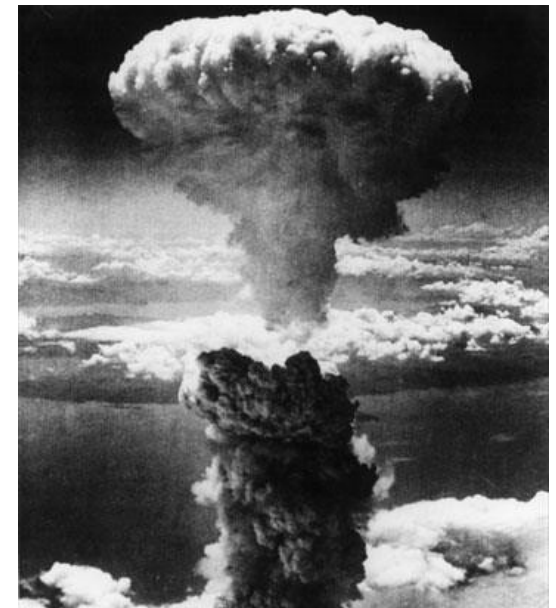


Few Canadians know that Canada provided most of the uranium for the bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Even fewer of us know the devastating effect that the uranium ore extraction had on the Dene people of Great Bear Lake. Peter Blow travelled to the north to record their story. White men came to the Dene land and found the "money rock" as the residents called it. In the 1940s they started mining it using local people for labour. At the same time the Dene gave them caribou, moose and fish. "*They were strangers living among us on our land so we took care of them.*" In return, the local workers helped extract and transport the deadly ore with no knowledge of its dangers. The southern miners left the people with toxic waste dumps in their community and radiation ticking in their bodies.

A new mine is now scheduled for Baker Lake in Nunavut and is opposed by many local residents; one said that uranium mined here can end up in bombs; in spite of assurances otherwise; we have no control over its use.

Today – USA, Russia, China, Britain, Israel, France, India, Pakistan (and maybe others) have nuclear bombs, many made with Canadian technology & materials. Canada continues to be complicit in nuclear development by selling uranium and technology for nuclear energy (which also contaminates the world with harmful radiation) and for bombs. Canada also provides so called & highly radioactive 'depleted uranium', used by 22 nations for weapons – bomb casings, guns, tanks and other steel-hardening military uses. Depleted Uranium weapons were tested in Panama and used in Iraq, Afghanistan and former Yugoslavia. Canada continues to be one of the world's biggest exporters of uranium. Canada Pension Plan, mandatory for all working Canadians, invests our contributions in the 5 largest arm makers in the world which make nuclear- and non-nuclear weapons which are sold and used in many countries again civilian populations.

Nuclear weapons and radioactivity continue to threaten the health of all life systems and undermine the security of human society. Wealth and resources wasted on war-making are needed to create a peaceful and sustainable life for all humanity. Remember Hiroshima & Nagasaki where it all started with 'tiny'



bombs compared to the enormous destructive power of today's nuclear weapons which are still produced and stockpiled around the world. It is time to call for nuclear disarmament and a moratorium on uranium mining; to call for cuts in our military spending and an increase in social, health and education budgets. Our precious resources and energy should be directed to the creation of a peaceful, just and healthy world.

The famous radiation expert, scholar and peace activist, Rosalie Bertell, said, *“The continuity of life, the call for making things better for the next and the next generations blots out all hesitation... We have to be part of something larger than ourselves, because our dreams are often bigger than our lifetimes.”*

Please join Victoria Women in Black at their monthly vigil to remember Hiroshima-Nagasaki and call on Canadians and people globally to work for peace and disarmament. All those who support our goals are welcome, including men August 6, noon to 1 pm At the INNER HARBOUR, just below the Tourist Office, across from the Empress Hotel. Contact: [bbcf\(at\)bbcf.ca](mailto:bbcf(at)bbcf.ca)

Bomb image from internet. Artwork by unknown artist, in Lupo Azul restaurant in Oaxaca, Mexico.