

# THE YOUTH NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT TOUR

*Removing the threat of a world war-- a nuclear war-- is the most acute and urgent task of the present day. Mankind is faced with a choice: we must halt the arms race and proceed to disarmament or face annihilation. ( taken from the Final Document of the First special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, para. 18)*

This statement was agreed upon by every member-state of the United Nations, including the U.S.S.R and the U.S, in both the years of 1978 and 1982. Still, little progress has been made to achieve disarmament, and the arms race continues steadily.

Of all the age groups, perhaps none stand to lose as much as youth. Youth pays the price of the arms race on a daily basis, as our hopes for a life of success dwindle in the darkness of the nuclear shadow. The future seems to hold little or no hope to fulfill our dreams. As international tensions increase, young people feel frightened but helpless. The result is often the apathy which is so common among Canada's youth. Young people are afraid to confront what seems so often to be an insurmountable problem. Statistics show that 67% of Canadian 10 to 15 year-olds foresee a nuclear war dramatically interrupting their futures. These conditions are unacceptable to youth. We have the right to a stable and secure environment in which we can grow to our fullest capacity. Indeed there is hope. We are confident that an aroused and informed public can, and will, abolish nuclear weapons, as was the case with the abolitions of slavery and child labour.

Young people are aware of the nuclear threat, but are unsure of how to confront it. Optimism and empowerment can only be acquired through information, action, and involvement. Young people are beginning to speak out. In the past three years, dozens of young peace groups have sprung up across Canada, the United States, Europe and even the Soviet Union. One of the more successful of these groups is SAGE (Students Against Global Extinction), a nuclear disarmament awareness group based in Montreal and entirely run by, and for, youth between the ages of 13 and 19. Founded in 1983, SAGE has reached thousands of Montreal students through high school presentations on the issue. From a core of only four students, aged between 14 and 17, SAGE has grown into a network of hundreds of students in over 35 schools. However, there are still many other students and communities to be reached. In order to bridge this gap, four active SAGE members have chosen to put their studies aside for a year and have organized the Youth Nuclear Disarmament Tour. Between October 1986 and May 1987, these four committed youths will be touring Canada from coast to coast, with the aim of informing youth on the issue of disarmament and what they can do about it.

## WHAT WILL THEY DO?

With the organizational help of a local sponsor, the tour will be invited into two to four schools per day to give presentations. These will most often consist of the viewing of the National Film Board's Academy Award winning documentary "If You Love This Planet", followed by a discussion animated by the tour participants. The discussion will serve as a clarification of the issues involved, a forum for dialogue and an initiation as to what can be done. Each community should also organize a public presentation in a local parish or community centre, during which the tour participants will present the film "In the Nuclear Shadow: What Can the Children Tell Us?", followed by a discussion. On the last evening of the Tour's visit to each community, a meeting will be held to which young people will be invited to talk about the formation of a local youth peace group, or the networking of activities with other youths.

## AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The Tour hopes to reach between 200,000 and 300,000 youths directly. The aim is to reinforce youth's psychological and political empowerment and responsibility towards the issue of the nuclear arms race. We hope to encourage a better understanding of the daily effects of the nuclear arms race, as well as the threat of nuclear war. Above all, we hope to inspire hope and optimism, through information and action. Young people have a vital role to play; not only as future leaders, but as potential victims, in demanding that today's leaders must "learn to love their children more than they hate their enemies."

OCTOBER 1986 - MAY 1987

## LOCAL SPONSORS

A local sponsorship committee in each community will be sought out to organize the high school presentation, the community presentation, the publicity for the tour as well as other tasks such as the billeting of the participants for each night of their stay, etc.

## THE PARTICIPANTS

### Alison Carpenter:

a 17-year-old graduate of Trafalgar School for Girls (Montréal), Alison has been active in SAGE since early 1984. Winner of the 1986 Soroptimist International of the Americas Youth Citizenship Award for Eastern Canada, she was also a 1986 participant in Forum for Young Canadians, and has been active on her school's debating team, track team and Student Council. Alison, fluently bilingual, also teaches Sunday School and was the founder of the SAGE affiliate group in her school.

### Maxime Failla:

a 17-year-old social sciences student at Collège St-Laurent (Montréal), Maxime co-founded a YMCA international development youth group at age 13, as well as SAGE at age 14. Fluent in French, English and Spanish, Maxime was a participant and organizer of the successful International Youth for Peace and Justice Tour, 1985-86. He was the Zone Leader for Westmount and Notre-Dame-de-Grace during the International Shadow Project, 1985, in commemoration of the bombing of Hiroshima. He received the 1986 Speaker's Award for his contribution to the United Nations Association of Ontario's 32nd annual High School Seminar, and was a speaker and panelist at the November conference "Hope in the Nuclear Age", organized by the Health Professionals for Nuclear Responsibility, the Quebec Chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility.

### Seth Klein:

an 18-year-old social sciences student at Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf (Montréal), Seth founded his school's chapter of Amnesty International as well as Students for Social Concern. He was chief organizer of his school's Ethiopian Famine Relief Bazaar which raised \$3000. Seth also co-founded SAGE at age 15, and has given yearly disarmament workshops at the Reconstructionist Synagogue of Montreal. He received the UNA of Ontario Speaker's Award for his contribution to the 32nd Annual High School Seminar, and was a speaker and panelist for the April 1986 conference "Illusions and Realities in the Nuclear Age", organized by the McGill University Faculty of Education.

### Désirée McGraw:

a 16-year-old student at Ecole Secondaire Classique Villa Maria, Désirée has been involved in SAGE since mid-1985. She has been involved with her school's debating club, theatre-sports team, and Student Council, of which she is the treasurer. Leader of the school's International Relations Group, she won the Villa Maria Award for excellence in student activities and initiative. Fluently bilingual, she is a graduate of the child psychology and leadership course at Mont Boiset.

For more information: Call Maxime, (514) 485-1130

SAGE, (514) 849-5331, Loc 155

or write:

**Students Against  
Global Extermination**

P.O. Box 613,  
Postal Station NDG,  
MONTREAL, Quebec,  
H4A 3R1

A non-profit educational project,  
run by and for youth

