

# MAKING PEACE IN TORONTO

## Timeline of City of Toronto Actions & Proclamations

**“As citizens of the world, we have a duty to alert the public to the unnecessary risks that we live with every day, and to the perils we foresee if governments and societies do not take action now to render nuclear weapons obsolete and to prevent further climate change.”**

*~ Stephen Hawking, renowned cosmologist*

On January 14, 2010 the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moved the hand of its symbolic Doomsday Clock back one minute from five to six minutes before midnight, citing a more "hopeful state of world affairs" in relation to the twin threats posed by nuclear weapons and climate change. However, the dangers of "a second nuclear age" in which 50 of today's 20,373 nuclear weapons alone could kill millions and cause catastrophic environmental disasters means countries and citizens must continue to work together on the global abolition of nuclear weapons.

**In Toronto individuals and organizations involved in peace building have worked with Toronto City Council on peace measures since World War II.**

**The following partial listing of City of Toronto actions for peace and nuclear disarmament over the past half-century, based on information in the City of Toronto Archives and Toronto City Council Minutes, provides guidelines for what kind of City of Toronto peace actions could be implemented today:**

### **Summer 1943**

Mayor Frederick Conboy and Toronto City Council declare Friendship with Russia week.

### **November 29, 1943**

Alderman Nathan Phillips moves that December 3, 1943 be declared Stalingrad Day.

### **February 1945**

Mayor Leslie Saunders, the Toronto City Council and 155 organizations conclude a city wide door-to-door campaign that during World War II collected nearly \$4 million and more than 30 tons of clothing to help the people of Stalingrad in reconstructing their war-ravaged city.

### **November 5, 1969**

Toronto City Council endorses a resolution submitted by the Toronto Branch of the World Federalists of Canada that “ceaseless effort is

necessary to free mankind from the scourge of war and to harness the sources of energy and knowledge for the service of mankind.” City Council declares Toronto a “mundialized” municipality dedicated to international co-operation and world law (By-law 337-69). Council commits itself to appointing City Council members to a Toronto World Citizenship (Mundialization) Committee.

### **March 28, 1978**

City Council urges Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau and Parliament to oppose deployment of the neutron bomb by NATO and to ask President Jimmy Carter to stop its production.

### **March 6, 1979**

City Council reaffirms support for its motion of March 28, 1978 opposing the neutron bomb.

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### **August 20, 1979**

Mayor Takeshi Araki's Hiroshima Peace Declaration is read into the record of City Council.

### **May 7, 1982**

City Council votes to hold a referendum on worldwide nuclear disarmament in the November 8 Municipal election. The report entitled "Public Health Consequences of Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear War" adopted by City Council is distributed to all Toronto households as information for the referendum on disarmament.

### **May 20, 1982**

City Council urges the federal government to urge the United Nations to declare 1983 a Year of Disarmament.

### **November 8, 1982**

78% of Torontonians who cast ballots in the municipal election vote yes to the following resolution: "Do you support nuclear disarmament by all nations on a gradual basis to the ultimate goal of a world free from nuclear weapons, and mandate your federal government to negotiate and implement with other governments steps which would lead to the earliest possible achievement of this goal?"

### **December 16, 1982**

City Council forwards the results of the November 8 referendum on disarmament to the federal government and calls on the Government of Canada to urge the United Nations to conduct a global referendum on nuclear disarmament. City Council also urges the federal government to halt cruise missile testing in Canada.

### **January 24, 1983**

City Council designates Toronto a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone.

### **March 7, 1983**

City Council adopts the Inter-City Solidarity Programme proposed by the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and becomes a member of Mayors for Peace.

### **October 17, 1983**

City Council endorses the October 22 Against Cruise Testing (ACT)/Toronto Disarmament Network demonstration against nuclear weapons.

### **December 12, 1983**

Toronto City Council approves the building of the Peace Garden on Nathan Phillips Square at a cost of \$480,000 to commemorate the City's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary "by creating a lasting physical expression of our highest aspirations in our most public place...In symbolizing peace and a love for mankind, it will represent our continuing struggle to avoid the devastation of war."

### **1984**

Former Mayor and City Councillor John Sewell serves a member of the Toronto-Volgograd Initiative working with the Volgograd Peace Committee to bring about twinning of the two cities in order to promote understanding and reduce world tensions.

### **March 5, 1984**

City Council hosts Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau turning the sod to initiate the construction of the Toronto Peace Garden.

### **July 16, 1984**

City Council endorses the Four-Continent Peace Initiative for the "freeze in the production and development of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems by the nuclear weapons states."

### **September 14, 1984**

City Council hosts Pope John Paul II kindling the Peace Garden's eternal flame with an ember from the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima and pouring water from Nagasaki in its pool.

### **October 2, 1984**

City Council hosts Queen Elizabeth II dedicating the Peace Garden as a lasting expression of Toronto's commitment towards peace.

### **1985**

City Council supports the International Shadow Project sponsored by Performing Artists for

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Nuclear Disarmament, with thousands of participants in Toronto.

### **April 21, 1986**

City Council approves the formation of the City of Toronto International Year of Peace Committee as proposed by Toronto peace organizations and allocates \$50,000 to the Committee from the 1986 Operating Budget. Council appoints Aldermen Betty Disero and Chris Korwin-Kuczynski and Councillor Jack Layton to the Peace Committee as well as Shirley Farlinger (United Church Peace Network), Patrick Kellerman (Performing Artists for Nuclear Disarmament) and Steve Shallhorn (Toronto Disarmament Network) as community representatives. The Peace Committee elects Jack Layton and Steve Shallhorn as its co-chairs and is joined by an Advisory Group of peace activists in its open public meetings. 33 project grants (none larger than \$500) totalling \$12,856 are awarded to peace groups. \$12,083 is spent on an October Peace Festival on Nathan Phillips Square and another \$19,772 on the printing and distribution of 270,000 Peace Festival brochures delivered to every Toronto household listing peace events from October 14-25.

The final budget for the Committee is \$52,963. City Council co-sponsors the Toronto Disarmament Network's annual Walk for Peace attended by 8,000 culminating in the peace rally at Nathan Phillips Square. In its final report, the International Year of Peace Committee declares that "there is no question that Torontonians spent more time thinking about peace and how it can be achieved than ever before. This was the primary objective and the Committee believes that it was achieved."

### **April 21, 1986**

City Council approves an exchange program between the Toronto Department of Public Health and the Department of Public Health in Nicaragua. Leave of absences with pay for a period of up to ten days is given to the four Department of Public Health senior managers who comprise the City delegation.

### **November 13, 1986**

The Ontario Legislature declares Ontario a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone.

### **1987**

The United Nations designates the City of Toronto as a Peace Messenger City.

### **April 6, 1987**

The International Year of Peace Committee presents a proposal to City Council, moved by Jack Layton, that there should be a continuing Peace Committee at City Hall to promote informed discussion and debate of issues in the City involved in the pursuit of world peace. Other mandates include the development of Toronto's involvement with the World Conference of Mayors of Cities for Peace through Inter-City Solidarity; to co-ordinate the City's involvement in national, international and global peace events; to work with and support events and proposals from community and peace groups in Toronto; and to encourage use of the Peace Garden. Layton's motion is defeated.

### **July 27, 1988**

City Council passes a motion condemning the federal government's proposed purchase of nuclear submarines for \$10 billion, believing that such expenditure would be irresponsible in the face of pressing municipal needs including housing, health promotion and infrastructure repair.

### **December 1988**

Toronto City Council approves the report *Healthy Toronto 2000* which specifically refers to questions of "safety, security and peace," thereby accepting that the City is accountable for the immediate personal security of its citizens.

### **July 13 and 14, 1989**

City Council approves the establishment of a City of Toronto Peace Committee. Its mandate includes co-operating with and providing financial support to community groups in their initiatives to pursue peace, disarmament, common security, and the reduction of violence; promoting better relations between the City of Toronto and other cities of the world; promoting education concerning local and

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global peace, disarmament, common security, and factors (including ecological justice and human rights as defined by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights) that contribute to these; providing advice to City Council on policies and issues relating to peace, disarmament and common security.

### **1989**

City Council votes 9-8 against a motion to twin Toronto with the Soviet city of Volgograd. Council twins Toronto with Warsaw, Poland, in order to nurture people to people understanding.

### **January 8 and 9, 1990**

Toronto City Council approves a motion drafted by the Toronto Disarmament Network and moved by Jack Layton that the City of Toronto opposes military low-level flying and combat training at Goose Bay, Labrador. Council agrees to send a letter urging the Department of National Defence and the governments of Britain, West Germany, and the Netherlands to end their current testing program in Nitassinan. Council agrees to send a letter to the Canadian Parliament urging it to withdraw its offer to allow NATO to establish a tactical fighter training centre at Goose Bay.

### **August 6, 2001 - 2002**

Mayor Mel Lastman proclaims "Hiroshima Day."

### **September 19, 2004**

Mayor David Miller Proclaims "Toronto Peace Day" as part of the celebrations of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peace Garden on Nathan Phillips Square.

### **November 16, 2004**

Mayor David Miller proclaims "YMCA World Peace Week"

### **August 6, 2005**

Mayor David Miller proclaims "Hiroshima Day."

### **June 1, 2005**

Mayor David Miller proclaims "Peace Tree Day", an initiative bringing together children from every

culture, race and faith to celebrate diversity and peace.

### **August 6, 2006**

Mayor David Miller proclaims "Hiroshima Day."

### **November 20-27, 2005**

Mayor David Miller proclaims "YMCA World Peace Week"

### **August 9, 2006**

Mayor David Miller proclaims "Nagasaki Day" and "Peacekeepers' Day."

### **September 21, 2006**

Mayor David Miller proclaims "International Day of Peace in Toronto"

### **March 17, 2007**

Mayor David Miller proclaims "Abolish Nuclear Weapons Day."

### **June 22, 2007**

Toronto City Council passes the motion stating the "City Council reaffirm that the Peace Garden relocation be undertaken in such a way as to maintain and enhance Toronto's commitment to building global peace and that any such relocation reflect this commitment."

Another City Council motion establishes the Peace Garden Public Advisory Group comprised of prominent peace and faith-based community organizations as part of the Nathan Phillips Square Revitalization Public Advisory Group. Faith group representatives from the Toronto Interfaith Council include Father Lombardi, Liz Chapel, and Earl Smith. Toronto Peace group representatives include Setsuko Thurlow, Phyllis Creighton, Anton Wagner and Helen Chilas.

### **August 6, 2007**

Mayor David Miller proclaims "Hiroshima Day."

### **August 9, 2007**

Mayor David Miller proclaims "Peacekeepers' Day."

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### **August 2008**

The Hiroshima Day Coalition launches the public exhibit “Hiroshima, Nagasaki Photo Exhibit and A-Bombing Survivors Artwork” at the Rotunda inside Toronto City Hall.

### **September 21, 2008**

Mayor David Miller proclaims “International Day of Peace in Toronto”.

### **November 15 – 22, 2008**

Mayor David Miller proclaims “YMCA World Peace Week”.

### **August 9, 2008**

Mayor David Miller proclaims “Nagasaki Day.”

### **August 6, 2009**

Mayor David Miller proclaims “Hiroshima Day.”

### **September 21, 2009**

Mayor David Miller proclaims “International Day of Peace in Toronto” inviting all nations and

people to honour a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the day including the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon’s call for the abolition of nuclear weapons around the world.

### **September 29, 2009**

The City of Toronto celebrates the “25th Anniversary of the Toronto Peace Garden” with over 6,000 students from across the city in attendance at Nathan Phillips Square.

### **May 5, 2010**

Mayor David Miller welcomes over fifty Japanese peace activists at the public forum, “Working Together for a World Without Nuclear Weapons,” in the Toronto City Hall Council Chamber. The event, organized by the Hiroshima Day Coalition, brought together Canadian peace activists and members of Gensuikyo, the Japan Council Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, who had attended the opening of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference at the United Nations.

## UPCOMING CITY OF TORONTO PEACE DECLARATIONS & RELATED PEACE EVENTS

**August 6, 2010: “Hiroshima Day”**

[\*Click here for details.\*](#)

**September 21, 2010: “International Day of Peace in Toronto”**

[\*Click here for details.\*](#)

*For further information, please contact Anton Wagner, Committee Member, **Hiroshima Day Coalition**,  
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