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6-9 August 2008 : Hiroshima-Nagasaki Commemorations

In Saintes, trees and flowers affirm life in opposition to the atom bombs

- Homepage - News - News Articles -

Publication date: Friday 8 August 2008

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On August 6 1945, 8.16 a.m. local time, an atomic bomb exploded over Hiroshima ; **on August 9** at 11.02 a.m., another bomb exploded over Nagasaki. Those two bombs, neither of which is now thought to have been necessary to end the Second World War, caused hundreds of thousands of casualties in the Japanese population and began the nuclear arms race which continued for the rest of the 20th century. From that, we have inherited nearly 27000 nuclear warheads ready to explode at any moment, and also a wide dispersion in our environment of billions of deadly and carcinogenic radioactive particles, such as those reported last month at Tricastin in SE France.

To fight against this permanent danger, which the end of the Cold War did not suffice to terminate, the City Council of Saintes unanimously decided, in June 2000, to affiliate the city to the international « Abolition 2000 » network, which calls for the abolition of all nuclear weapons. On 5 March 2008, the council agreed, again unanimously, to join the « Mayors for Peace » association, which pursues the same aim under the chairmanship of the Mayor of Hiroshima, and which today includes more than 2200 cities around the world, including Saintes.

In July 2004, a delegation from the Hiroshima World Peace Mission visited Saintes. In May 2006 and May 2008, on the occasion of the 2nd and 3rd Rallies for International Disarmament, nuclear, biological and chemical (RID-NBC) which were held at Saintes, two gingko trees were planted in memory of the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (the « gingko biloba » was the only tree whose seeds resisted the atom bombs of 1945).

In the spirit of these actions, ACDN France organised a meeting on Wednesday 6 August morning at the « Prairie de la Pallu » (a meadow near the Saintonge Bridge) bringing flowers which were placed at 11 a.m. at the foot of these two trees, in order to join with the « hibakusha » (the survivors of the two bombs) in saying : **« Never Again Anywhere ! »**.

Only a planet freed from nuclear arms and other weapons of crime against humanity has any longterm chance of being habitable.

PS:

PRESS ARTICLES

Sud Ouest, 6 August 2008 : Flowers against bombs

COMMEMORATION. Gathering at the « Prairie de la Palu, this morning, in memory of Hiroshima.

This morning at 10.45, ACDN (Action for Citizens for the total Dismantling of Nukes) is calling people to gather at the « Prairie de la Palu » near the Saintonge Bridge, on the right bank.

The place and date are not chosen at random. ACDN intends to commemorate the 63th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, and then of the Nagasaki bombing which occurred on 9 August.

« Those two bombs caused hundreds of thousands of casualties in the Japanese population and began the nuclear arms race which continued for the rest of the 20th century, » writes Jean-Marie Matagne, president of ACDN, in a media release.

A surviving species. He adds that «From that, we have inherited nearly 27000 nuclear warheads ready to explode at any moment, and also a wide dispersion in our environment of billions of deadly and carcinogenic radioactive particles, such as those reported last month at Tricastin in SE France. »

To say « never again » ACDN invites people who feel concerned to bring flowers and meet close to the two gingko biloba trees planted on the

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edge of the Prairie de la Palu in memory of those two bombings. The trees have a history : that was the only tree species whose seeds resisted the
atom bombs of 1945.

It is the first time for ACDN to meet there. The first tree was planted in May 2006 during the Rally for International Disarmament, nuclear, biological and chemical (RID-NBC) which took place in Saintes ; the second was planted in May 2006 during the third of those Rallies. On previous years, Jean-Marie Matagne and his friends lit the nuclear disarmament flame near the Monument to the Dead or in the courtyard of the Saintonge Building.

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Article illustrated with an archive photo

Sud Ouest, 7 August 2008 : Remembering. 11.02 a.m. on August 6.

Called together by ACDN, some fifteen activists yesterday commemorated the 63rd anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear catastrophes. The date of August 6 was chosen in memory of Hiroshima, and the time was 11.02 a.m., the moment when the atom bomb was dropped over Nagasaki. Jean-Marie Matagne, president of ACDN, reminded people of the City's commitment to nuclear disarmament, in the Abolition 2000 network. Saintes has also been, since March 2008, a member of the international « Mayors for Peace » organisation, chaired by the Mayor of Hiroshima.

A large photo accompanying the article shows a placard reading « Nagasaki Tree. Gingko biloba. Planted on 9 May 2008 in memory of hte victims of the A bomb of 9 August 1945 », and in the background two ACDN activists with bouquets of flowers.

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