

Competition Between Despair and Hope



Daisaku Ikeda and Mikhail Gorbachev

"Peace is a competition between despair and hope, between disempowerment and committed persistence."

—Daisaku Ikeda

SGI ACTIVITIES FOR PEACE AND NUCLEAR ABOLITION

Petition Drives:

In 1975, young members of the SGI in Japan presented 10 million signatures calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons and the elimination of war to the Secretary General of the United Nations.

In 1998, SGI members collected more than 13 million signatures for the Abolition 2000 petition, presented to the Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee and to the UN.

Publications:

Between 1974 and 1985, young members of the SGI in Japan compiled and published more than 3,000 World War II experiences from victims of war and the atomic bomb.

The Women's Peace Committee of the SGI in Japan published a 20-volume work of women's war experiences. In 2005, the Women's Peace Committee also made an educational DVD including the accounts of 31 women war survivors.

Exhibitions:

"Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World" was organized by the SGI with the UN Department of Public Information and the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It opened at the UN Headquarters in 1982 and was viewed by 1.2 million people in 25 cities in 16 countries.

"Nuclear Arms: Threat to Humanity," launched in 1996, is an updated version of "Threat to Our World." It was viewed by a half million people in eight Latin American countries.

"Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" tells the story of the tireless campaigner for peace and nuclear abolition. Since 1998 the exhibit has toured seven cities in the United States and five cities in Japan. It was shown at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris in 2003 and has been visited by more than one million people.

EXHIBITION CREDITS

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Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons

In September 1957, Josei Toda, then president of the Soka Gakkai Buddhist association in Japan, made a passionate speech to thousands of its young members in which he condemned the use of nuclear weapons in the strongest possible language. He believed that, on a deep level, the struggle is not about weapons but about the destructive aspect of human nature that seeks to destroy others and underlies the very existence of nuclear weapons.

"We, the citizens of the world, have an inviolable right to live. Anyone who tries to jeopardize this right is a devil incarnate, a fiend, a monster."

—Josei Toda

Toda said: "It is my wish to go further, to attack the problem at its root. I want to expose and rip out the claws that lie hidden in the very depths of such weapons."

Toda believed that since human beings created the atomic bomb, human beings must ensure its abolition. He wanted to communicate to his listeners that a religious sense of purpose cannot be fulfilled in isolation but must be part of a larger social and human mission.

Through this declaration, Toda entrusted young people with the task of inspiring this conviction in others, urging them to conduct dialogue based on a belief in the preciousness of human life and the human capacity for wisdom, courage and compassion. He wanted his audience to arouse and call forth those qualities in others and communicate to them the imperative of taking action toward nuclear abolition.

