PRESS RELEASE: REMEMBERING HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

Consistent with its anti-war legacy going back 100 years, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Cape Cod Branch, is sponsoring a series of actions commemorating the 70th anniversary of the bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The first atomic bomb was dropped at 8:15 am on August 6th, targeting the Shima hospital in Hiroshima, Japan, killing 120,000 people by the year’s end. At 11:02 am on August 9th, the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan over the Urakami Cathedral, the largest church in Asia. By year’s end, more than 70,000 had perished in that second blast.

On August 6th, WILPF, along with other peace and justice organizations, has planned actions in a number of towns on the Cape. The following are scheduled:

- Wellfleet, 11:00 am – noon, Town Hall lawn
- Brewster, 4:30 pm, in front of First Parish Brewster
- Yarmouth, 5:00 pm, Yarmouth Friends Burial Grounds (two blocks north of Route 28 from the west end of the Bass River Bridge on North Main Street.
- Falmouth, 5:00 pm, on the Village Green.

On August 9th, at 7:30 pm, WILPF will hold a memorial gathering at Rock Harbor in Orleans. A silent meditation will remember the many dead and dying as a result of nuclear weapons. Poetry and music will mark the occasion, and people will be asked to send candles of remembrance off into the sea, our desperate call for peace. All are welcome to attend.

Actions on both days will remember the dead, call for an end to the dangerous spiraling nuclear arms race, and clarify the prevailing historical narrative that says the US had to drop the bombs. A little known document, “The Franck Report,” quotes a number of Manhattan Project scientists and other high-level military personnel, who questioned the strategy of destroying Japanese cities with atomic bombs to bring surrender when destroying cities with conventional bombs had not done so. Those who disagreed with the atomic bombing included Dwight D. Eisenhower, Admiral Wm. D. Leahy, Ellis Zacharias, Herbert Hoover, and Leo Szilard (the first scientist to conceive of how the atomic bomb might be made). They recommended, instead, a demonstration of the atomic bomb for Japan in an unpopulated area.

The authors of “The Franck Report” feared this bomb would begin an unlimited armaments race. Such fears have been confirmed, as today some 1800 of these missiles remain on hair-trigger alert, ready to be fired within moments. Currently, there are nearly 16,000 nuclear weapons in the world, over 90% in arsenals in the US and Russia, enough weaponry to destroy the earth and all its inhabitants many times over. The WILPF events across Cape Cod are calling for a nuclear weapons-free world. As Pope Francis says, “We need a ‘conversion of hearts’.”

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