

'I may not agree with what you say ~~but~~ I will defend unto death your right to say it'—VOLTAIRE

## Editorial:      Nuclear free Arctic

The Native people of the Arctic have been shown to carry bodyburdens of dangerous radionuclides in amounts which exceed all the world's people, except for victims of nuclear weapons detonated in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

This radionuclide bio-contamination is primarily the result of atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons by the United States and the USSR between 1945 and 1963. Arctic ecosystems are particularly prone to contamination by radioactive wastes.

The Inuit Circumpolar Conference has responded to this problem and the threat posed by nuclear weapons and waste dumps by adopting several resolutions calling for a Nuclear Free Arctic. These resolutions express the concerns of Native people living in the Arctic regions of Alaska, Canada and Greenland.

The ICC is strongly opposed to the disposition of nuclear waste, placement of nuclear weapons and use of nuclear energy in Native homelands.

Various Alaskan legislators responded by introducing Nuclear Free Arctic Resolutions in 1984 (SJR 38) and 1986 (HJR 52). SJR 38 passed the Senate, and HJR 52 was narrowly defeated by a 19 to 18 vote in the House.

The primary objective of Nuclear Free Arctic legislation is similar in many ways to the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Initiative which was decisively endorsed by Alaska voters in the primary election Aug. 26.

Both are intended to advise Congress and the administration that Alaskans desire the United States to seek mutual and verifiable treaties that increase global security and reduce the threat of nuclear war.

The Nuclear Free Arctic Resolution calls for multilateral agreements which would keep the Earth's Arctic/sub-Arctic regions free from nuclear waste dumps and nuclear weapons testing, deployment and development. Peaceful and benign uses of Atomic energy such as nuclear medicine are not restricted by this legislation.

The ICC is joining Citizens Against Nuclear War, a statewide peace group, in a grassroots campaign to assure that the Legislature enacts a Nuclear Free Arctic Resolution in 1987.

Every Alaskan can participate by calling or writing to their legislators. Alaskans should also ask local and state political candidates to go on record before elections regarding how they will vote on this issue.

The ICC and the citizens group are planning a petition drive, an educational effort for legislators and a lobbying campaign. Interested persons may call or write Citizens Against Nuclear War, 3605 Arctic Blvd. No. 1717, Anchorage 99503; phone, 272-0621.

The Nuclear Free Arctic represents an issue that transcends racial and political boundaries. Join with Alaska's Natives, whites, blacks, Democrats and Republicans who have recognized that a Nuclear Free Arctic is an idea whose time has come.

Nuclear fallout recognizes no international boundaries.

*This guest editorial was submitted by Dalee Sambo, ICC director, and Ed Davis, steering committee member of the Citizens Against Nuclear War.*