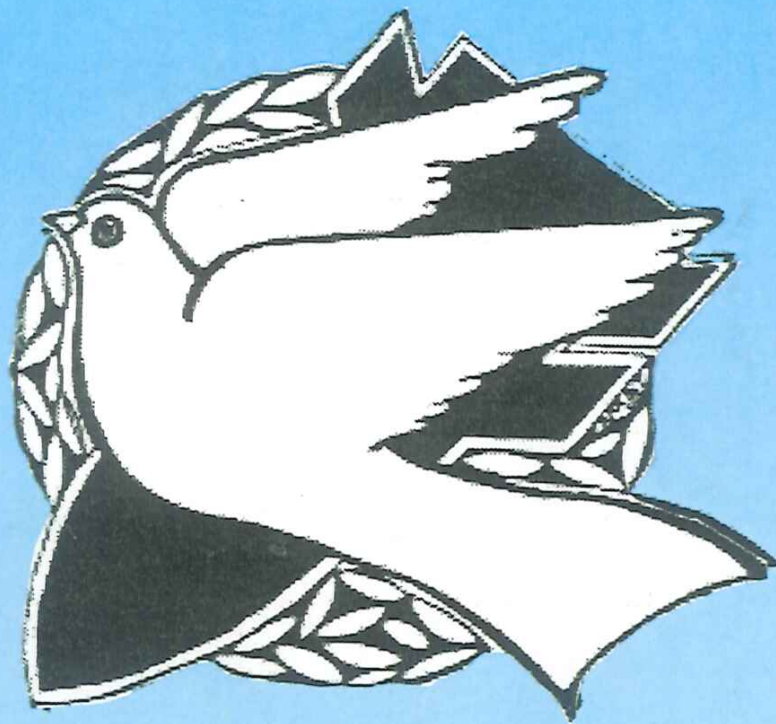


THE POWER OF PEOPLE



How Nelson Province Became
Nuclear Free

W.J. Foote

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How Nelson Province Became
Nuclear Free

By W. J. Foote



Author of:
The Decision – behind the wire in New Zealand
Disarmed and Defended
Quest for Peace
Only a Game

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Those of us living today are but the temporary trustees of an unimaginably long evolutionary process: no national purpose however urgent, no political or economic necessity however pressing, can possibly justify the risk of bringing all human history to an end

Felix Greene

I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of their way and let them have it.

President Eisenhower

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- Tony Martin let me study his records and those of the Peace Coalition.
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- My daughter Margaret Andersen typed the original script on to computer
- Philip Woollaston agreed to write the Foreword
- Craig Potton Publishing arranged the final format

My heartfelt thanks to all the above.

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FOREWORD

The 1980s was a decade of considerable change in New Zealanders' attitudes. The intellectual ferment and the protest movements of the late 1960s and 1970s had finally borne fruit. The slowly growing pressure of public opinion on such issues as racism and apartheid, protection of the environment, militarism and nuclear weapons was at last compelling official attitudes to change.

That the pace of change was not uniform is as obvious as it is logical. Political parties moved at different speeds, not so much reflecting strong ideological differences as pragmatically responding to the changing views of their perceived constituencies in the evolving post-war, post-Vietnam era. Rural and urban communities, large cities and small towns showed similar differences. The inspired decision of those seeking to change government policies on nuclear weapons to "act locally" and influence local councils was an important part of the movement for change.

Some in local government embraced with enthusiasm the chance to voice the views of many in their communities on so important an issue. Others found it hard to shake off the cold war orthodoxy which had gripped mainstream political thinking in New Zealand for a generation. The city, borough and county councillors of the Nelson region showed the same diversity of position as their counterparts elsewhere. However, faced with delegations, submissions and petitions from highly articulate, passionately motivated and well-informed activists the 'cold warriors' were largely forced to rely on the defensive argument that such issues lay outside the constitutional role of local government and for a council to pass resolutions on them was therefore *ultra vires*. That it is a proper, if not statutory, role of city and district councils to express the views of their constituents on national issues is now widely accepted.

The official records of far-reaching changes of policy are generally sparse. It does not fit well with the *macho* style of politics

in this country to admit to such changes, let alone record in detail the processes and the pressures which gave rise to them. Will Foote, who has spent a lifetime promoting the cause of world peace, was one of the key figures in this campaign. He has performed a singular service in recording the human story of the march to a nuclear-free Nelson region, now happily part of a nuclear-free New Zealand. In doing so he not only pays tribute to the hard work, idealism and dedication of many individuals, but also provides an excellent guide to those wishing to change official attitudes in the search for a better world.

Hon Philip Woollaston
Brightwater
March 1999

PREFACE

In this booklet I describe a campaign to raise public consciousness in Nelson Province on a matter of vital importance. Similar campaigns were held in other cities and provincial areas, and all led to legislative action.

I consider it important that this matter be put on record before the evidence is lost. The campaign is part of our history; it may also provide a model for the future. It is in part a memoir, as I was personally involved. Although very much in favour of the campaign's aims, I have attempted some objectivity, and have quoted from both sides when controversy arose. While disagreeing strongly with views expressed by the campaign's critics, I appreciate their concerns, and in several cases, their commitment as councillors.

I have named names of campaigners; it's a small acknowledgment of their public spirit. Inevitably, from failing memory and incomplete records, some who should have been mentioned, are not. To them, my apologies.

Chapter 1 THE MOUSE THAT ROARED

One fine day in August 1945 one man in an aeroplane high above Japan pushed a button, a city was vaporised, 100,000 human beings perished. The nuclear age was ushered in with a bang and many a whimper. The very existence of humankind was threatened. A Hot War ended, a Cold War began; men of God thundered from a thousand pulpits; scientists prostituted their calling to produce improved and more easily deliverable nuclear weaponry. Politicians told us we could live with the Bomb, dig a hole, cover it with a door and pile earth on top, just make sure we've got enough shovels. Thousands, nay millions of us signed disarmament petitions; well-meaning diplomats gave us test ban and non-proliferation treaties; the merchants of death prospered, the Cold War ended, the arms race didn't; vessels on and below the ocean's surface carried nuclear weaponry around the globe. An over-large bespectacled charismatic politician smelled uranium on an opponent's breath; and a tiny country at the ends of the earth said to the most powerful country on earth, a country to which it was supposedly firmly allied, "Stop! Enough! Come here, unarmed and in friendship and you're welcome. Nuclear armed and powered vessels and aircraft, nuclear weaponry from your or any other country can stay in their own back yard!"

Like the shot at Sarajevo, this declaration echoed around the world. It gave hope to millions. It was an unparalleled act of political courage. I know my friends will be saying, "Yes, but..." The politicians hedged their bets. They had a bob both ways. They didn't cancel the UKUSA Treaty, Waihopai still fed useless intelligence into the nuclear grid. The fact remains, we thumbed our noses at Number One and any other countries making us a pawn in their game of nuclear chess. What gave our politicians the courage? Maybe in part from their own convictions, maybe a nip or two of Bellamy's Best, but the basic answer is People Power. The New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament and

Arms Control Act was the culmination of a campaign. Like the eruption of a volcano, it was the result of relentless pressure from below, an implacable movement that started in your home and mine, that spread to neighbourhood groups, to local politics, to Parliament. I hope that some day someone with a more powerful pen than mine will do it all justice. The purpose of this extended essay is simply to chart how Nelson Province became nuclear-free and in so doing became part of the most significant, the most life-affirming act in our short history.

Chapter 2 SETTING THE SCENE

Before detailing the progress of the nuclear-free campaign I will list the factors which seem to me to have made its success possible in Nelson Province.

The Vietnam War and the Springbok rugby tour were the two great issues that energised radical activists in the sixties and seventies. The movers and shakers, the people who from conscience or belief or tradition or whatever were concerned with the human condition and thought they should do something about it, were ready for a new challenge. The nuclear issue was of course not new, many of the people I'll be writing about had shiny pants from sitting at petition tables and sore feet from marches, but there was a readiness for a new approach and a release of energy. There were people ready to do the 'hard yards', the fasts, the vigils, the marches, the banner making, the cake baking, the door-knocking.

In the political sphere there was a tradition of independence, of liberalism, even a touch of unconventionality. Consider Atmore, Rowling, Woollaston, and Nick Smith. The last named may not be flavour of the month with some of my readers, but he's always been strongly anti-nuclear. And there's the rise and, in some cases, fall of Social Credit, Values, the N.Z. Party, the McGillicuddys, the Alliance, the Greens and the occasional communist.

There existed in Nelson three well-established peace groups, which gave a solid organisational base. I refer to the Nelson Action Committee on International Affairs (NACIA) which grew out of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and which is now known as Nelson Peace Group; the Golden Bay Peace Group; and Riverside Community at Lower Moutere. There were other peace groups in Waimea/Richmond and Motueka which operated similarly during the campaign and disbanded after it. There was among Nelson doctors a very high degree of mem-

bership of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). This not only helped in many ways but also gave an aura of respectability to a campaign some characterised as run by egg-headed intellectuals and long-haired layabouts.

There were other organisations which by their very nature were supportive – Amnesty, many churches, unions, local iwi, the National Council of Women, the Environment Centre.

In common with most areas, we had democratically elected local bodies. It would be a brave and foolish councillor who opposed a nuclear-free zone proposal when he knew sixty-seventy per cent of his constituents wanted it. A few councillors were consistently in favour of the campaign's aims. It is interesting to note how many of the others changed from opposition or considerable scepticism through a fence-sitting position to final approval. Much the same happened in national politics. In the debate on the passing of the nuclear-free act, Mr Bolger said that the Labour Party was selling out New Zealand and was the toast of Moscow – and he became a firm supporter of the policy. It is easy to be cynical about such changes but in most cases I regard it as simply a matter of reflecting the views of constituents. And as a believer in non-violent action I make the point that even in undemocratic societies People Power can prevail.

Nelson has a well-deserved reputation as a home of the arts. Like the Romans, those actively promoting the campaign knew that the public must be offered both bread and circuses, and many artistic endeavours arose as spontaneous expression of the feelings generated by the issue. There were festivals, concerts, dances, plays, street theatre, posters, banners, booklets, face painting, tree planting.

In some areas the media have been criticised, with justification, for failure to give time and space to radical movements. Not so in Nelson. The Nelson Evening Mail gave excellent coverage to events promoted by the campaign. Its correspondence columns featured an interesting exchange of views, which sometimes verged on the vituperative. In Golden Bay the Community News gave excellent coverage. Nelson radio stations were

equally accessible.

Opposition gives spice to a campaign. Early opposition came from the political right. As already mentioned, this often changed to a possibly reluctant acceptance. There were however two small centres of active opposition; of them, more anon.

An active movement needs a physical base. The campaign was fortunate in being able to use the Environment Centre as a place to keep pamphlets and posters, to collect mail, to borrow tables for stalls, to meet before door-knocking.

Chapter 3

NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

Nelson Province isn't one either. The matters listed in the last chapter are not intended to convey the impression that the Nelson nuclear-free campaign was a sort of virgin birth, or a phoenix from the ashes. It owed much to previous activities and activists in Nelson and elsewhere, and to support from outside and from history.

The nuclear-free idea was not new. On the global scene we had the Antarctic Treaty, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Outer Space Treaty, an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace, the Sea Bed Treaty. In the Pacific, Vanuatu, Fiji, Belau had declared themselves nuclear weapon free. In our own country the Borough of Devonport was the first to make such a declaration. It appears that the presence there of a naval base and the possibility of nuclear-armed and powered vessels berthing there had much to do with it. The proposal was put forward by the Devonport branch of the National Organisation of Women, supported by the local United Nations Association branch. Shortly afterwards Lyttelton Borough made a similar declaration. Christchurch became the first nuclear-free city after a petition submitted by the Values Party, supported by the Sumner Peace Group and the NZ Nuclear Free Zone Committee.

At this point I would like to pay a tribute to the last named organisation and its founder, Larry Ross. Larry was, and is, an outstanding publicist and propagandist.

His countrywide tours from 1981 onwards sparked the formation of many peace groups. His fact sheets, posters, bumper stickers and badges spread the nuclear-free message. Larry believed in keeping the message simple, reduced to two points, nuclear-free and neutral. Emphasis on other matters dear to radical hearts was divisive and could jeopardise an acceptance of the message by more conservative folk. While his Peacemaker petition was aimed at the government, he recognised that the

nuclear-free concept must first be accepted, at the individual level. Since the passing of the nuclear-free legislation, Larry has given added emphasis to positive neutrality and to our country being a facilitator, a negotiator, an arbitrator in disputes. His organisation has added 'Peace-making' to its name.

The nuclear-free campaign was further aided at about the same time by the formation of Peace Movement Aotearoa (NZ), commonly known as PMA, a co-ordinating body for the proliferating peace groups. From its newsletters and its magazine 'Peacelink' groups learnt of each other's activities and were able to share the work of researchers like Owen Wilkes and Nicky Hager. The Nelson area has always been represented on PMA's Working Group - at various times by Bernard Wells, myself, Lyn Rain, Julie Cave, Noel Thomas, Richard Frizzell, Virginia Stocker, Peni Connolly.

Other long established groups have added their particular emphasis and expertise - the Foundation for Peace Studies in the educational field, the National Consultative Committee on Disarmament (NCCD), the Christian Pacifist Society (CPS), CND (already mentioned), Greenpeace, Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF), the Peace Council, and occupational groups formed by doctors, lawyers, scientists, teachers. While acknowledging their contributions which I hope will be more fully explored in future, I emphasise that the nuclear-free campaign in Nelson was locally organised, it had a peculiarly Nelson flavour. Read on and find out.

Chapter 4

THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY

I have arbitrarily decided to date the campaign to declare Nelson City nuclear-free from the visit of the US destroyer Turner Joy in October 1980.

This is not meant to indicate that there was no anti-war or anti-nuclear protest earlier. There are several reasons for my decision. First, the speed with which some 700 signatures to a nuclear-free petition were obtained in the streets. Also the attitude of spectators at the wharf and during the march from the port indicated a swing in public opinion. Veteran peaceniks probably recalled the days when activists at the Cathedral Steps were dunked in the nearby toilets. And the debate at Council clearly showed the original attitudes of councillors.

As well as calling for the city to be declared nuclear-free, NACIA's petition called for the council to stop welcoming foreign warships. This obviously confused the issue for some councillors who raised matters like ANZUS and what they regarded as our debt to America from World War 2. The petition was considered by the Administration Committee, most of whom approved a motion that the matter not go to full council. Councillor Potton spoke against the motion. Bernard Wells and Gwen Struik spoke briefly on behalf of the petition. Bernard was a dedicated Christian Pacifist whose anti-war stance dated back before World War 2. Gwen and her husband Roger Bray have long involvement in speaking and writing on peace and environmental issues.

To give further point to the protest Ros Hurford, Cecile Hurford, Gwen Struik and Bruce Dyer fasted while the destroyer was in port. A photograph in the Evening Mail showed them being tempted with a tray of roast chicken. However they were all vegetarians.

Having mentioned some members of NACIA I think others regularly attended meetings in the 1980-86 period, as shown in the Minute Book, should be named and their contribution acknowledged. These people were J Lloyd (treasurer), D Benima, T West, T Martin, R Hunt, H Derbridge, D Correa-Hunt, Rèn E Mattock, P and J Sutton, J Plows, H Kolff, Rev M Chapman, Rev K Bathgate (chairperson 1982-84), H Beere, J Griffiths, P Hogan, D Wells, L Sutherland, M Davis, G Harralambi, M Ring, R Scott, T Roberts, M Feilding, N Mason, J Gerritsen, U Rainbow, A Verity, B O'Brien, Mr & Mrs K Speedy, R Davies, A McMahon, J Hippolite, K Mayes, S Wells. I must apologise as Secretary for not recording names at some meetings so some who attended are not named here. And there were many who actively supported NACIA but did not attend meetings.

The first mention of bringing the nuclear-free concept to the home/street/workplace level seems to have been in a letter from Home Base Pacific Pilgrimage discussed at a NACIA meeting in early 1981. At about this time a Nelson Branch of HART (Halt all racist tours) was formed, and NACIA's anti-apartheid focus ceased, through many individuals were members of both organisations. NACIA then put more energy into a world disarmament petition and spent increasing time on local nuclear-free activity. The phoning list of some 400, NACIA's main way of contacting active supporters, was revised and this has been done more or less regularly since, mainly by Gwen Struik. Regular orders were made for nuclear-free stickers and badges, and these were sold at the Flea Market and elsewhere.

In Nelson's balmy climate the workload of NACIA's activists - often regarded as equally balmy - grew like the local vegetation and needed pruning. At a special meeting on 16 March 1981 a decision was made to form a sub-group, known as the Peace Coalition, to concentrate on the local nuclear-free campaign. Tony Martin, a curator at the Suter Gallery, a young man with considerable personal magnetism, acted as coordinator.

He was able to draw into the group several enthusiastic young people who wanted action rather than boring meetings.

As well as some regular NACIA members, those attending the sub-group, as shown from early records, were G McIntyre, Janice Gill, C Alessi, Shona Murray, Ellie Ashby, Peter Gaze, John Martin, Craig Potton, Anne Tutty, Dean Carroll, Linda Howard, Steve Smith, Chan Woollaston. Others were drawn in later.

At the first Peace Coalition meeting it was decided to launch a local Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone petition. This would be circulated in conjunction with Larry Ross's national petition. In the lead-up to canvassing, homes, shops, streets, churches, meeting places would be encouraged to declare themselves nuclear-free zones. Sub-groups of the Coalition were set up for such things as petition recruiters, petition boards, fund raising, petition tables, publicity, special events, education, visual aids, leafleting, and newsletters.

Mention was also made of the coming protest against the proposed observatory at Black Birch in Marlborough and its possible involvement in US nuclear strategy. The present writer circulated a summary of the findings of researchers Peter Wills and Owen Wilkes on this topic.

Individual maps were made of the areas each canvasser was to cover door to door, taking care to avoid duplication. A standard format was drawn up for the verbal approach. Petitioners were advised to avoid confrontation or lengthy argument. It was felt there had been enough publicity to ensure most people knew the purpose of the petition. If not, they could be given an invitation to attend meetings or a number to call. These appearing enthusiastic were given the opportunity to buy and display a nuclear-free sticker.

The actual wording of the local petition was "We, the undersigned petitioners, respectfully submit that to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people and the amenities of our area and region, that Nelson City be declared a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone."

It was estimated that some 200 canvassers would be needed to cover the city. Some 100 offered their services. When the date of the first approach was decided, naturally some had other com-

mitments; 70 actually took part. Then about 30 the second day. When results were collated it was clear that over 60 per cent of those approached had signed. The areas covered were a good cross-section of the city; there was little difference between the more and less affluent areas.

At this stage it was decided to proceed with a more low-key approach, having petition tables at the Flea Market and elsewhere and to continue activities to keep the issues before councillors and the general public. Some of these activities will be listed here (the actual approach to Council will be covered in a later chapter).

- NACIA Fair at Stoke Hall - chocolate wheel, balloons, stalls, Mime River
- Peace Festival at Fairfield Park - music, stalls, speakers, raffle
- Cake stalls - several
- Photo display at Chez Eelco
- Radio talks
- Totem pole to record petition progress
- Films: Nuclear Countdown, Home on the Range, If you love this Planet, The Day After, Half-Life
- Peace march, Miller's Acre to Cathedral Steps, featuring 560ft mock-up of Trident Submarine. Speakers W Rowling, P Woollaston
- World Bike Ride for Peace supported as it passed through
- Owen Wilkes, peace researcher, described workings and possible uses of installations at Black Birch and Waihopai
- Debate between Wilkes and Robert Straight, Rev Bathgate in chair, subject 'Which Way to Peace'. Wilkes summarised it as Mr Straight saying "If you want peace prepare for war" and himself replying "If you prepare for war, you'll get it"
- Warship protests - against the US destroyer Turner Joy, the HMS Aurora, the US guided missiles destroyer Hoel, the NZ frigate Canterbury, In the last case, the protest was more against the proposed purchase of further frigates. A

banner covered six-metre yacht, crewed by members of the Nelson Peace Group circled the harbour but was kept away from the frigate by the Nelson Coastguard vessel. In the case of the Hoel, protesters were not allowed to interview the captain so presented him with a bunch of flowers. A protest balloon got caught in the rigging and provided the spectators with some amusement.

- Banners were made for the 3 1/2 km peace ribbon, which later joined the US and USSR embassies
- Major feature articles in the Nelson Evening Mail.
A full page giving names and occupations of people declaring their total opposition to the arms race and the use of nuclear weapons.

An article and map sponsored by IPPNW showing what would happen if a nuclear bomb fell on Nelson.

An article by Wren Green from the Planning Council on plans for the nuclear aftermath.

Article by David Manning on Warren Hayward's book 'Dear World, We can end the Arms Race'.

Article by Dr Gwen Struik - World Court decision on use of nuclear weapons.

- A Conference organised by the local United Nations International Year of Peace (UNIYP) Committee, with Richard Mackay of IPPNW as chairperson and Suilva McIntyre as Secretary. Most matters discussed concerned factors leading to peace in individuals and society and were not specifically concerned with nuclear matters. However a strong nuclear-free remit to Government was passed unanimously.
- With the co-operation of Council Staff, a Peace Grove was planted on the verge of QE2 Drive.
- The First Earth Run - to girdle the Earth carrying a flaming torch. Nelson runners picked up the torch at Renwick and brought it to the Cathedral Steps where it was given a civic reception by the Mayor, Mr Malone.
- Two election candidates meetings, the first sponsored by

NACIA, the second by IPPNW, to establish candidates' attitudes to peace issues including nuclear-weapon free zones. According to reports, the first meeting was more war than peace; the second was more even-tempered and was the best attended public meeting during the election.

- 'When Will They Ever Learn?' - an anthology of drama and poetry with a common theme, the desolation of war and the elusive haven of peace, presented by the Garrick Theatre.
- Women's Day of Action, culminating in the presentation of a petition to the Mayor for an end to the arms race and for Nelson to be a nuclear-weapons-free zone.
- Speakers and public meetings
 - a) Larry Ross (twice) on Neutrality, peacemaking, and nuclear-free zone strategy.
 - b) Dr Ian Prior of IPPNW - 'Doctors have a responsibility to speak out against the nuclear arms race because it represents an unprecedented threat to the life and continued health of all mankind'
 - c) Dr William Caldicott on Medical Consequences of Nuclear War. Meeting organised by IPPNW and chaired by Dr Humphry Belton.
 - d) Gita and Anthony Brooke (ex-Rajah of Sarawak) on the UN World Disarmament Campaign, followed by video 'Nuclear War the Incurable Disease'
 - e) Lorraine Ethell, wife of the skipper of the Pacific Peacemaker, on the reasons for its voyage
 - f) Ralph McGehee, on his book 'Deadly Deceits' and the methods used by the CIA
 - g) Colonel Hackworth, the US most decorated soldier. "I've been called a crazy, a commie and a jackass, but I would rather be any one of these than a man who is prepared to destroy the world to save it!"
- Hiroshima remembrance day activities such as making and distributing white poppies and paper cranes. A 1983 photo in the Evening Mail showed S McIntyre and H Dockery

laying a wreath at a Hiroshima rally which was addressed by Kim Bathgate for NACIA, Gwen Struik from Fast for Life, and Richard Mackay for IPPNW.

- Peace dance.
- Peace concert
- Peace walk, Branford Park to Centre of NZ organised by Patrick Hogan, featuring bands and dancing, and led by Richard Mackay and Philip Woollaston.

Chapter 5 YOUTHFUL VOICES

The nuclear-free campaign in Nelson was sometimes accused of trying to 'brainwash' children by fostering 'Peace Education'. This is a much-misunderstood topic. In primary schools the purpose of peace education is to help children to deal with their own anger, to deal with conflict by negotiation and mediation organised by their peers, to learn to live co-operatively. To any reader interested in this topic I suggest reading, 'A Volcano in my Tummy' or finding out about 'Cool Schools' from the Foundation for Peace Studies.

Children were of course welcome at many of the activities mentioned in the last chapter. With the subject of peace being so much in the news, it is not surprising to find children making paper cranes, white poppies, peace posters. One photo in the Nelson Mail showed Hampden Street school children making a banner for the Peace Walk; another showed a small girl floating cranes at Queen's Gardens on a Hiroshima day gathering.

At the secondary level matters of war and peace cannot be avoided, in Social Studies, History, and Literature. The term 'brainwashing' could be better applied to the education of my generation. 'How can man die better than facing fearful odds?' We learnt to admire Horatius at the bridge, the boy on the burning deck, the Redcoats at Rorke's Drift and Isandhlwana, the carnage at Gallipoli, Roberts and Kitchener, the great generals of World War 1.

'Peace hath its heroes no less renowned than war'

To counterbalance the cult of violence, schools could use the stories of William Penn, of Gandhi, Danilo Dolci, our own Archibald Baxter, Lincoln Efford, Archie Barrington, Sonia Davies - but I'm straying from my brief.

During the nuclear-free campaign, Nelson Schools were visited by the Peace Van set up at his own expense and run by Jim Chapple, a retired school teacher. The van carried stocks of books,

pamphlets and posters on peace and environmental topics and Jim was prepared to address classes when permitted by school authorities. The reception in Nelson Province was less than enthusiastic. To critics of his initiative Jim pointed out that the 1978 UN special session on Disarmament had called for increased participation by NGO's in peace education at all levels., and that the NZ Government had endorsed this.

In early 1982, at the height of the campaign, two large secondary schools, on the initiative of pupils, declared themselves Nuclear Weapon Free Zones.

The first of these, and the first in the country, was Nayland College. The move appears to have been started by a group of senior students in the College's Human Rights Club. It gained wide acceptance by students and had the tacit approval of staff. The Board of Governors accepted the pupils' wishes while making it clear they were not making the declaration on their own behalf.

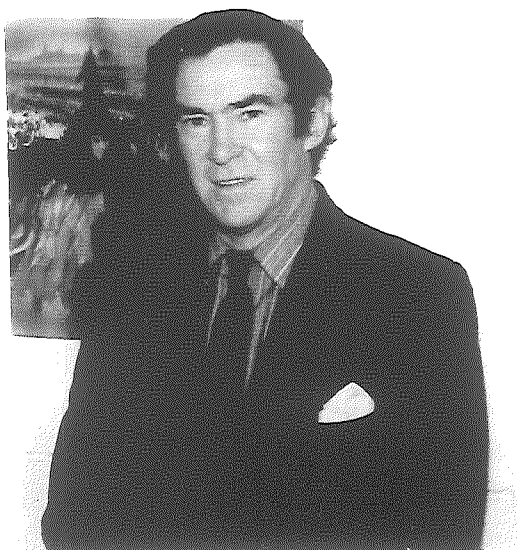
The second school to make a nuclear-weapon free zone declaration was Nelson College for Girls. In this case all was not so straightforward. The debate was triggered by a talk by Larry Ross to an assembly. Following this a group of senior girls with some staff help organised a referendum on whether the school should be declared a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. The matter was treated as a democratic educational exercise, with considerable debate over a two-week period before voting. There was poetry, dance and drama; "One of the most moving things was that from the back of the hall, right up to the stage came students dressed in black, carrying a coffin, with their faces divided in half, painted black on one side, white on the other". (A quotation from Miranda Grange's research.)

A few staff members felt the issue was being presented in a one-sided way and invited Councillor Seddon Marshall to speak to students. Accompanied by Cr Neal, who did not speak, Cr Marshall came to an assembly; he read a letter from the Mayor urging students to study all sides of the question. Then Cr Marshall criticised the poll saying pupils were too young to un-

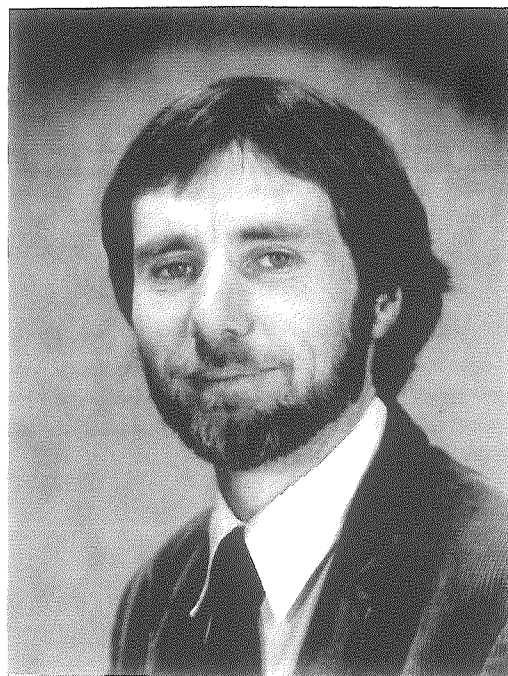
derstand the issues; some had been brainwashed; the matter was not in a school's sphere; it could possibly encourage children to undermine national security.

These remarks annoyed some of his audience; a few students walked out in protest; some teachers expressed their criticism personally. The results of the poll were not officially released. However it appears that 281 pupils voted for a nuclear weapon free zone, 161 voted against. The controversy continued in the letters columns of the Nelson Evening Mail which ran an editorial on the topic, saying the debate was healthy, teachers must set an example of objectivity and tolerance, guest speakers must reserve their arguments to the issues at hand. The paper also featured a cartoon showing the Headmistress warding off the invading Russian tanks.

Lois Voller, in 'Sentinel at the Gates', her history of the school, instances the nuclear free zone vote as one of the occasions when the school had run ahead of public opinion.



*Nuclear-free campaigner
Larry Ross.*



*Peace Coalition organiser
Tony Martin. (Photo by
Michael McArthur)*



*Veteran peacenik 'Ben' Benima breaks the police cordon during a
1980 warship protest action. (Nelson Evening Mail Collection,
Nelson Provincial Museum)*



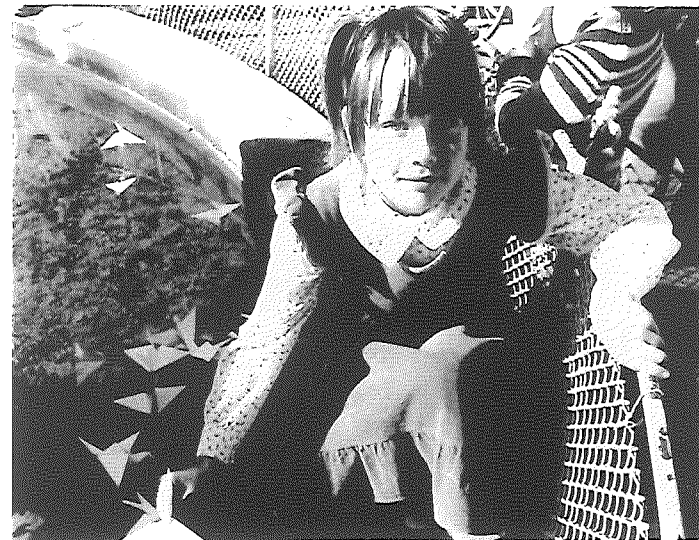
*Ros and Cecile Hurford, Gwen Struik and Bruce Dyer fasted
while the US destroyer Turner Joy was in Port Nelson. (Nelson
Evening Mail Collection, Nelson Provincial Museum)*



Protesters greet the HMS Aurora at Port Nelson in 1983. (Nelson Evening Mail Collection)



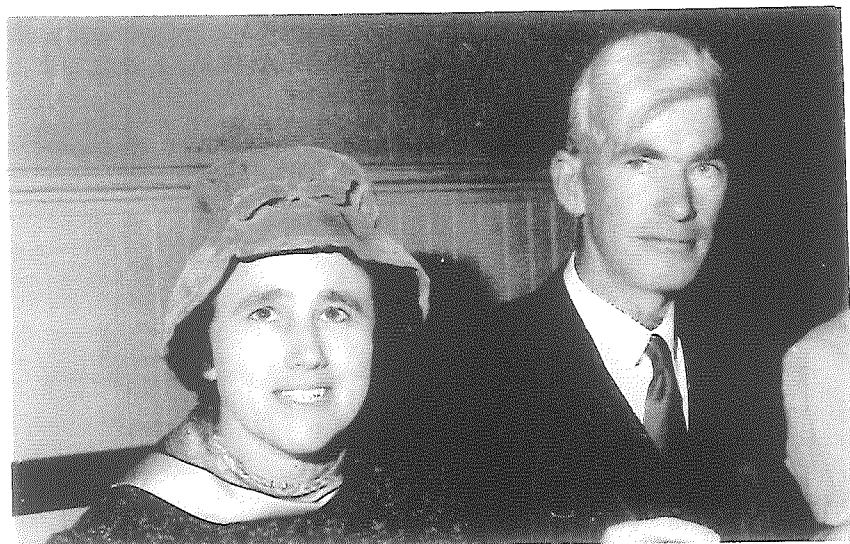
Peace march to Cathedral Steps, led by some Nayland College students. (Nelson Evening Mail Collection, Nelson Provincial Museum)



Paper cranes are floated at Queen's Gardens as part of a Hiroshima Day commemoration. (Nelson Evening Mail Collection, Nelson Provincial Museum)



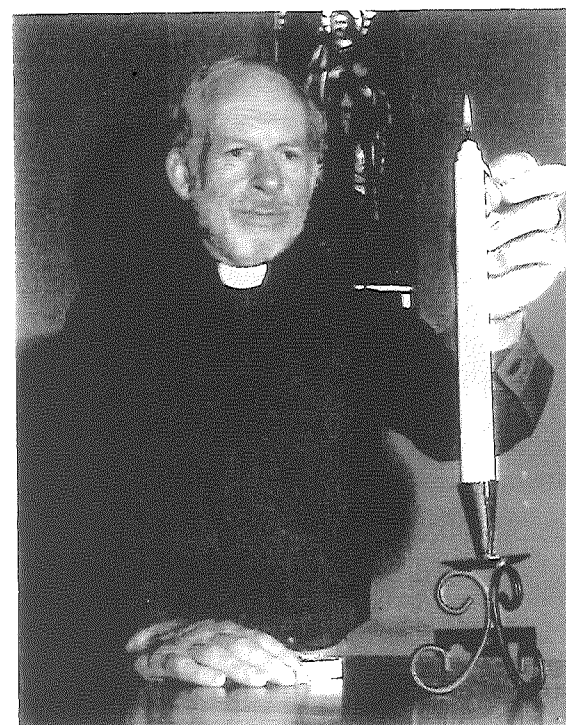
Students at Nelson Girls' College decide whether their school should be a nuclear-free zone. (Nelson Evening Mail Collection, Nelson Provincial Museum)



Life-long peace activists Bernard and Dorothy Wells.



The first Earth Run's flaming torch enters Nelson on its way around the world uniting all people. (Nelson Evening Mail Collection, Nelson Provincial Museum)



Kim Bathgate lights a candle for peace.

Chapter 6

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

'After 2000 Years of Mass,
We've got as far as poison gas'

I don't know the source of this quotation; I guess it's of World War 1 vintage. It may be just an expression of cynicism but I think it's probably an expression of frustration of some Christians that their Founder's message of Peace has been neither heard nor acted upon.

An ecumenical conference is credited with coming up with this one -

"Onward Christian Soldiers
Each to war resigned
With the cross of Jesus,
Vaguely kept in mind."

Lest you think I'm being unduly cynical, let me make it clear that the purpose of this chapter is to let an agnostic pay tribute to the contribution and leadership of those whose commitment to the nuclear-free Nelson campaign came from their Christian faith. Bernard Wells, the chairperson of NACIA when the campaign started was a life long Methodist and peace activist. Archie Barrington from Riverside Community was retired at the time of the campaign but still wrote trenchant letters to the newspaper. He had been a most outspoken Methodist Church leader. Other active members of Riverside, such as Jean and Chris Palmer, Norm and Joy Cole had similar motivation. The Rev Kim Bathgate, Presbyterian minister at Trinity in Nelson, succeeded Bernard Wells as chairperson of NACIA. His leading role in NACIA and HART protests was regarded unfavourably by some of the more conservative members of his congregation. He was the subject of a church commission of inquiry. He pointed out that the Presbyterian church was formed as an act of protest and

that it was his duty to interpret life in the light of his Christian faith. The Rev Eric Mattock of Richmond Presbyterian Church was prominent in the move to make Richmond a nuclear free zone. The Rev Wallace Chapman was for a time Kim Bathgate's deputy in NACIA and his Methodist church in Nelson was declared a nuclear-weapon free zone. Friends meeting house in Nile St made the same declaration and the traditionally anti-war Quakers supported many of the campaign's activities. Tony West, one of NACIA's most active members, was the chairperson of the Nelson branch of the Catholic Commission for Evangelisation, Justice, and Development. During the campaign Nelson was visited by Bishop Anthoni Zavgorodny of the Russian Orthodox Church. He spoke at an ecumenical service in St Mary's church and said he hoped all nations could support the nuclear free concept.

Anglicans were divided on the issue. The Bishop of Wellington strongly criticised the peace and anti-nuclear movement, and claimed that the international peace symbol had 'anti-Christ origins'.

This led to a strong exchange of letters in the Evening Mail, whose editor pointed out that the symbol was formed from the semaphore signs for N and D (Nuclear Disarmament). Bishop Sutton of Nelson spoke in support of the campaign. In the 'Year of Commitment' he urged that Christians commit themselves to urgent bi-lateral disarmament. In 1983 the Synod planted a tree in Peace Grove to mark commitment to international peace and social justice. They also passed a motion that 'indiscriminate mass destruction in war cannot be justified in the light of Christian teaching'.

However a motion by Rev Davies calling for support for a Nelson nuclear-weapon-free zone was lost. Rev Nicholson said there appeared to be justification for just war as the judgement of God. The Old Testament spoke of "Punishment for people who refused to accept God" and the Reverend gentleman claimed that Satanism was connected with the symbol of the anti-nuclear movement. He was supported by Rev Beech. "I must ask

this Synod where its faith lies - in nuclear-free zones or in a God who led people through the fiery furnace".

Rev Allan countered this. "It's appalling to me that a number of Synod members are not up with the most pressing issue facing humanity". The Synod agreed to discuss the matter again in 1984.

The 1984 gathering received a lengthy report entitled 'Nuclear Arms and the Christian'. Two of its conclusions were that 'the principles of a Just War are inapplicable when nuclear arms are used' and 'nuclear weapons are morally unacceptable'. Among suggestions for action was that the Government should refuse to allow the presence of nuclear weapons on its territory.

The above items are ones I know of or read about. I'm sure there were many more contributions by churches and Christian people to the nuclear-weapon-free zone campaign. While this succeeded in our country, the nuclear issue internationally is still with us, and churches are still active in this field. I heard the other day of a local church where the whole congregation signed the Abolition 2000 petition. Publications such as 'The Peacemaker', the magazine of the Christian Pacifist Society; the Catholic Worker paper 'The Common Good'; and bulletins put out by the Public Questions committee of the Presbyterian/Methodist churches and the Christian World Service show that Christian concern and activity are on-going.

Chapter 7 WORDY WARFARE

There was little organised opposition to NACIA, the Peace Coalition, and the nuclear-free campaign. A group called 'Peace through Security' was mentioned by Councillor Kerry Neal in the Evening Mail, but I found no other references to it. The only opposing group to make much impact was one known as 'Sceptre'. According to its main spokesperson, businessman James Cable, it was sucked into existence by an imbalance it saw created by the pressure group NACIA. He said they were also concerned at beliefs expressed by the Race Collective and HART. Sceptre, he said, stood for the integrity of the sovereign state. This reminded a literary-minded NACIAN of the poem -

Sceptre and Crown must tumble down
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Mr Cable considered that NACIA's views were slanted pro-Soviet and anti-American. Another Sceptre supporter, FR Dobbs wrote to the Mail in similar vein. He thought NACIA a "shadowy and somewhat sinister" group. This so incensed veteran pacifist Archie Barrington that he wrote what must have been one of his last letters in NACIA's defence.

Subsequently NACIA's chairperson Kim Bathgate invited Sceptre to a NACIA meeting. Messrs Cable, Dobbs and G Thompson attended. They repeated the views mentioned above, and also queried our funding. I think we satisfied them on this point; unfortunately, as Bernie O'Brien pointed out, no Moscow gold had filled our coffers. We agreed that we had attacked American actions, the US was supposedly our ally and we could hope to influence them. We showed that we had on occasion also deplored Russian military actions, such as the proposed Pacific missile tests. On most matters we agreed to disagree. I

think they went away with the impression that we were not sinister, just wrong-minded old fuddy-duddies.

This was the only meeting between the groups, but wordy warfare continued in the letters to the editor in the Nelson Evening Mail. Those not interested in the issue must have been rather bemused by the spate of letters it spawned. The good Editor probably choked on his porridge as he opened yet another paper missile. As I said before, some verged on the vituperative. As a prejudiced participant, I consider most of the bile came from a few - by no means all - of the critics of NACIA and of sundry citizens and groups with similar views.

The main contributors to this war of words were, on my left, myself, B Wells, A Barrington, P Appleton, G Struik, R Bray, K McCarthy, T Holton, AJ Baysting, R Frizzell, K Bathgate, R Hunt, G Helleur, H Kingston, D Renwick, P McGrath; on my right, JH Lench, Ruth Suckling, R Straight, L Neilson, Mary Dixon, H Denmead, Bill Scott, J Cable, F.R Dobbs, Dan Dolejs, Stanley Rea - though the last-named seemed to have a foot in both camps. Apologies to those I've forgotten. The 'Right' group could be subdivided into fundamentalist Christians and the pro-Anzus, anti-communist, peace through strength brigade.

I'm not really qualified to answer the Christian critics; I've been told that even the Devil can quote Scripture to his own ends. One critic wrote "All Christians work; some work for God, some work for the Devil". NACIA's members were in the latter category. As already noted, they were also accused of Satanism and working for the anti-Christ. Barbara Mattock wrote a good reply to some of these critics. "Some so-called Christians use the word of God to justify their apathy and sadly make a mockery of his name. I don't look for the face of Christ in a mushroom cloud. No, I see it in the beauty of nature and the laughing face of a child".

Being pro-Communist was a common accusation. Russian actions in Afghanistan and elsewhere were oft quoted and countered by mention of the covert actions of the US in places like Chile and Nicaragua. One correspondent wondered why the

Communist Party and the SUP weren't listed with peace groups in the Peace Diary. He/she also thought the NZ peace movement was started by a Professor Silverstone, a card-carrying Communist. Well that was news to me. I'd been in the Peace Movement for 60 years and I'd never heard of him.

Marilyn Waring in the Listener wrote a good reply to the 'Reds under the beds' type of accusation.

"No communist subverted me. I came to my decision about a nuclear-free world after 9 years of watching ill-informed, ignorant, propagandised, compromised, often deceitful, frequently lying small-minded and aggressive illustrations of the kind of men who rule the world".

The argument that the nuclear-free movement would destroy ANZUS is easily answered. The Treaty does not bind any signatory to using or being defended by nuclear weapons. In fact it hardly binds anybody to anything, except consulting in face of a threat and using peaceful means to settle disputes.

When elections were imminent, Larry Sutherland urged unionists to vote for candidates who supported the nuclear-free cause. This brought a swift reply from James Cable's nimble pen. "Like a veritable Gideon with a broken trumpet, he (LS) attempts to ensure the election of a bunch of riverbank philosophers whose experience of the real world is almost non-existent".

Finally, to encapsulate several more critical letters, the members and supporters of NACIA and the Peace Coalition were "naive, gullible, woolly-minded, human ostriches, useful idiots, anarchists and on a hallucinogenic high".

Chapter 8

BEARDING THE LIONS

The first approach to the Nelson City Council in the period being considered has already been mentioned. It was after this that the decision was made by NACIA to have a citywide petition and the Peace Coalition was formed to plan and coordinate activities in support.

To ensure that the petition was presented in a way compatible with Council rules, NACIA wrote to Council in April 1982 for advice. The response was not encouraging; the Administration Committee deemed the letter irrelevant and had it removed from the order Paper. At the same time a letter from the Values Party asking that nuclear armed vessels not be invited to Nelson was received, no action to be taken.

As well as 'removing' NACIA's letter, Councillors expressed strong views on the subject of the petition. The Mayor felt it was asking Council to usurp the functions of central government. Councillors Rodwell and Neal considered that if they weren't living in a free country and had the nuclear deterrent, they wouldn't be sitting at the council table. Councillor S Marshall said some members of NACIA had refused to go to war. "What rights have they got if they do not have the guts to go to war?"

However, he added, "There may be some genuine ones in that group". Councillor Potton defended NACIA against the accusation that it had written to the Council just to gain media publicity. In spite of 'removing' the letter, the City Secretary sent NACIA a copy of the relevant regulations regarding presentation of petitions.

The next move came in June 1983 when the petition signed during the march on Women's International Day for Action was presented. This petition called for a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in Nelson, for vessels carrying or with the potential for carrying nuclear weapons to be discouraged, asked that people involved in the production of nuclear arms not be welcomed and that any

installation assisting the use of nuclear arms be disallowed.

One councillor said the petition was not realistic or manageable, and this seemed to be the general opinion. The Mayor Mr Malone then moved, and Cr Tindle seconded, what is known as the Stratford resolution, so-named because it was first moved by that town's Council. This resolution is a general statement calling on world leaders to establish a nuclear-free world, emphasising the danger to human life and the right of people to live without the nuclear threat. This motion met with general approval. Cr Neal said it should include conventional weapons - a view with which I heartily agree.

While admiring the sentiments of the Council's resolution, NACIA saw it as too general, not asking for any action at the local level. They decided to press on with canvassing which at that stage was well advanced.

Tony Martin, representing NACIA and the Peace Coalition, presented the local petition to full Council in August 1983. Speaking in support were Nelson MP Philip Woollaston, Mrs Shirley Ellis from the National Council of Women, Dr Brian Neill from IPPNW, and Captain Cyril Simister, former Nelson Civil Defence Officer. Mr Woollaston countered the argument that a nuclear weapon free zone interfered with the ANZUS Treaty, and said that the spirit of the Stratford resolution should lead the city to declare itself a nuclear-free zone. Mrs Ellis said her organisation represented 6000 women in the local area. Mankind, she said, needed not weapons but food, shelter and the right to love and security.

Dr Neill said that a start in negotiation and disarmament must be made somewhere "Why not here? Declaring Nelson a nuclear weapon free zone is surely a start".

Captain Simister said that from a civil defence point of view a nuclear war represented a hopeless scenario. Civil defence had to be aimed at averting nuclear war.

Councillor Seddon Marshall questioned Dr Neill about the position of Dr Geiringer in IPPNW as he was obviously not a New Zealander, and asked if IPPNW was anti-American and

anti-ANZUS. Dr Neill replied that the organisation wasn't anti-anything except nuclear war.

The mayor thanked the deputation and invited them to listen to the debate in September.

At the September meeting the Mayor moved and Cr Potton seconded a motion "that the council as an expression of its concern about the proliferation of nuclear weaponry declare the city a nuclear weapon free zone". The motion was accompanied by a long preamble, which said the Council accepted -

- The public concern at the proliferation of nuclear weapons
- That the Council had no legal capacity to control such proliferation or the location of nuclear weapons
- Many citizens thought concern about proliferation could be expressed by declaring the city a nuclear weapon free zone
- Proliferation could be finally controlled and eliminated through the multi-lateral decision of countries with a nuclear weapon capability
- N.Z's responsibilities under its defence treaty obligations.

The motion was passed, Cr S Marshall being the only dissident. Cr Neal was absent. Cr Marshall said he opposed a unilateral declaration as it was deserting our allies, but he supported multi-lateral nuclear free zone declarations. Some petitioners, he claimed, followed an ideology incompatible with New Zealand. Cr Blair said the declaration was a purely symbolic gesture, "it would have about as much effect as if we asked the Lord to make The Wood a frost-free zone!" Cr Potton said the petition was the largest to come before the Council and the resolution was a legitimate way of expressing concern under the Town and Country Planning Act.

The Council's action met the approval of the local newspaper; an editorial article on 14th September declared "it symbolises a community's rejection of nuclear weaponry as an instrument of national policy".

Following the Council's declaration, NACIA wrote to the

Select Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control, pointing out the strength of support for nuclear weapon free zones locally and nationally, asking them to take the necessary steps to ensure that Parliament enacted a nuclear weapon free zone at the earliest opportunity.

About a month later the Nelson Bays United Council declared its area nuclear weapon free, following a deputation from NACIA, IPPNW represented by Peter Low, National Council of Women represented by Shirley Ellis, Sir Wallace Rowling and Philip Woollaston MP. The motion was put by Mayor Malone and seconded by Cr Elma Turner. It was opposed by Crs S Marshall and Fergusson.

The latter considered that the petition, from over 9000 people, should be directed at central government; he also considered that in other parts of the world the movement for peace and abolition of all nuclear weapons was perhaps being funded, encouraged, and fostered by the Soviet bloc.

Following the debate Cr Marshall moved another motion that the United Council be totally opposed to violence and war, and the proliferation of weapons, particularly nuclear ones. He also called on the nations of the world to reduce defence expenditure and increase food production and agricultural research.

The United Council's principal officer, Mr Ardell expressed doubts whether the Council was empowered by legislation to deal with the issue. However both Mr Woollaston and Tony Martin said the Council was competent to make its declaration under the Local Government Act.

The next move in the anti-nuclear campaign at City Council level was a motion by Cr Ward seconded by Cr Potton that Council request Government not to send visiting warships to Nelson unless the captains were prepared to state their ships did not carry nuclear weapons. Cr Horne moved an amendment that Council would remind Government of the city's nuclear weapon free zone when a warship visited the country. This was carried. During the debate Cr Marshall again referred to

some peace activists as "Cowards who didn't have the guts to fight for their country". Councillors Elma Turner and Gourdie objected to this. Cr Gourdie said "Probably the conscientious objectors had more intestinal fortitude than others in sticking to their beliefs in difficult situations".

I must declare an interest here. Among NACIA's active members at the time there were three wartime CO's. I was one of them. In the membership generally, we were well outnumbered by ex-military men. The peace movement of the 1980s was by no means restricted to pacifists. As to cowardice, I fear the dentist, and I didn't like fast-bowlers, as numerous bruises would testify.

I think 'coward' is a pejorative term not really relevant to the issue. The last word goes to Abe Lincoln. "He who remains silent when he knows he should protest is a coward".

The United Council's resolution was challenged the following year (1984). The motion to rescind the resolution was lost 6-5. Councillor Fergusson from Golden Bay claimed that politicians were making mileage out of the issue and added "If you want to do something that's symbolic you can mount 24 chamber pots along the top of the building and I won't say a word. But when it comes to weaponry that's something for central government alone".

NACIA made a submission to the Defence Committee of Inquiry in 1986, commending the Government's anti-nuclear policy, asking that New Zealand refuse to participate in military exercises involving nuclear-armed or nuclear-capable vessels, requesting that bases, such as at Black Birch and Tangimoana be dismantled, that we withdraw from ANZUS, adopt a policy of non-alignment, and make a study of non violent civilian based defence. Kevin Clements, one of the Inquiry Committee, said that submissions flowed strongly in favour of the anti-nuclear policy.

Submissions were also made to the United Nations International Year of Peace committee, which sent a strong anti-nuclear message to government.

On the national scene, the culmination of the nuclear weapon free zone campaign was the presentation to Parliament of the Nuclear Free zone Disarmament and Arms Control Act. NACIA made a submission congratulating the government but suggesting that the bill needed strengthening. It put too much responsibility on the Prime Minister. The nuclear ban should cover all New Zealand land, territorial seas and space; it should make clear that no New Zealand resident should train in the use of nuclear explosive devices, neither should the Armed Forces in New Zealand or elsewhere, join in any military exercises with a nuclear component.

On the local scene the nuclear issue now centred more on the matter of nuclear power and the safety of nuclear powered vessels. This led to a request by Cr Neal for reconsideration of the nuclear-free policy. He and some other councillors accused peace groups of distorting the Council's policy to mean that Nelson would not accept nuclear-powered vessels. The Mayor's motion that the policy be reconfirmed was passed with some dissent; a consequential motion that the Council write to the US embassy pointing out that the Council's resolution was not anti-American was also passed.

While satisfied that the nuclear-free Act when finally passed into law would keep nuclear-powered as well as nuclear-armed vessels out of our ports, the Nelson Peace Group - as NACIA was now known - felt that it was important that this be shown to be policy at local level. They continued to lobby Council on this.

In May 1992 Joanna Danahey made a submission to Council listing nuclear power 'accidents' on land and sea, and concluding, "It is essential to broaden the nuclear-free stance to include prohibiting nuclear power, which is in accordance with the Resource Management Act". A submission by Doug Craig on behalf of the Nelson Peace Group reiterated the request for prohibition of nuclear power and also asked for "a coherent and effective storage and disposal programme for radioactive substances used in industry, research institutes or medical facilities".

In September 1993 the City Council again reconfirmed its

Nuclear Weapons Free policy and expanded it to include chemical and biological weapons, and to prohibit the establishment of nuclear power, the disposal of nuclear waste, and the use of nuclear propulsion in the city area. These matters were reiterated in the council's Regional Policy Statement in March 1997.

When the French government decided to resume nuclear bomb tests at Mururoa, the Nelson City Council considered the matter at its meeting on 22 June 1995. The following motion was passed, without dissent –

That the Nelson City Council expresses its disappointment and its very strong disapproval over the decision by the French government to resume underground nuclear tests in the Pacific, and conveys its disapproval in the strongest possible terms to the government of France and to the French Ambassador to New Zealand.

Nelson Mayor Philip Woollaston personally delivered the Council's letter of protest to the French Ambassador in Wellington.

Nelson City is truly nuclear-free.

Chapter 9 OUT AND ABOUT

In this chapter I will chart the main points of the nuclear-free campaign in Waimea County, Richmond, and Motueka. I will not repeat activities such as warship protests, which had support province-wide. NACIA's membership covered a wide area. Bernard Wells, its President, lived in Mapua. I, as secretary, was living at The Glen, in Waimea County. John Lloyd, Treasurer, came from Richmond. However, there came a point at which people in those areas wished to express their own nuclear-free identity. Separate peace groups were formed for the duration of the campaign,

I should explain for readers not knowing Nelson that at the time of the petition Richmond and Motueka were separate Boroughs and the surrounding areas were in Waimea County. Today all these, plus Golden Bay, are in Tasman District. To further confuse readers, the Waimea Peace Group's activities were mainly in Richmond, and aimed at getting that Borough nuclear-free. In Waimea County, canvassing was mainly organised by NACIA and they organised the approach to Waimea County Council.

Richmond

The Waimea Peace Group's inaugural meeting was held in May 1983. Rex Hunt was Chairperson, Sheree Ching was secretary, Helen Derbridge was treasurer. Other members, as shown in 1984 minutes (the only ones extant) were J Walker, S McFadyen, E & B Mattock, R Mackay, G McIntyre, C Smith, G Ballantyne, C Burke, L Nicol, K Bell, D Ching, G Harris, P Kempthorne.

No doubt there were others. Councillor Kerry Marshall and Sir Wallace Rowling aided the group on several occasions.

Several fund raising, petition-signing stalls were held. Videos were shown, including one at Waimea College to interested students; a monthly newsletter was published. The Labour Party

was urged to pass nuclear-free legislation. American Quaker Susan Stark sang and spoke on peace at a public meeting at Waimea College. A request to Council for closure of Queen Street for a children's fancy dress party was refused, because it was a busy time in the Borough. Public places and businesses were urged to declare themselves nuclear-free; the Presbyterian Church and the Playcentre are two recorded as having agreed; there was a static 'Peace' display in Richmond Mall; plans were made for a door-to-door canvass.

A 'Meet the Candidates' gathering at Loney Hall in 1984 was well attended. Dr Richard Mackay chaired the meeting. The main topic was the possible threats to New Zealand's security. Ken Shirley (Labour) thought the main threat was our incredible debt. Labour, he said, would re-negotiate ANZUS and work towards a nuclear-free New Zealand and South Pacific. Gerald Hunt (National) considered the threats were from a group in the Union movement and from the Soviet Union. Pat King (Social Credit) thought ANZUS was an encumbrance to New Zealand's security; we should adopt armed neutrality. Adrian Hayter (NZ Party) considered the greatest threat was from terrorists.

The culmination of the nuclear-free campaign by the Waimea Peace Group was the presentation to Richmond Borough Council in July 1983 of a petition containing some 1200 signatures. A photograph in the Nelson Mail showed Raelene Bell handing the petition to the Mayor, Rob Maling. Sir Wallace Rowling in a letter read to Council said that the deputation had his unqualified support. He hoped the Council would make an important symbolic gesture. Dr Richard Mackay of IPPNW spoke for petitioners. He said that the nuclear-free zone was a symbol around which the citizens of the world had chosen to rally; it was important to show that ordinary people had renounced nuclear weaponry.

Rev Eric Mattock, also speaking in support, said that Christians were called by Christ not to be peacekeepers but to be peacemakers. "The longest journey begins with one small step. Declaring Richmond a nuclear-free zone would indicate we are try-

ing to take that step".

The Mayor thanked the deputation but said they would not make a decision until all councillors were present. The debate on the issue took place about a month later. Cr Teenah Handiside moved the nuclear free zone motion. Cr Kerry Marshall seconded it. Several councillors spoke against it. The Mayor wondered if they had the authority to make the declaration and thought that the balance of force was 'one of the better deterrents'. Cr Verry thought the motion didn't go far enough; it had no teeth. Cr Malcolm thought they were burying their heads in the sand; he hadn't been able to digest all the information on the issue because he had other important things to do. Cr Wilkes thought they might be turning their backs on friends who saved them in the last war.

The motion was lost 4-3. Cr Verry then moved the Stratford resolution (previously described) and this was passed. Cr Marshall said he found the situation "somewhat gymnastic". He could not understand how Council could support the Stratford resolution and not support a nuclear-free Richmond. Cr Green expressed similar sentiments.

Following the Council's decision there was a spate of critical letters in the Nelson Mail. NACIA and IPPNW felt that the decision ran against local feeling and wrote to Council asking for a referendum in conjunction with local body elections.

The Town clerk in reply stated that the request was outside the time limit for referendum procedure. A few months later Cr Handiside and Cr Marshall asked that the matter of a nuclear free zone be reconsidered. Voting was again 4-3 against.

Waimea County

In Waimea County not all-outlying areas were canvassed; the petitioners relied on supporters calling on neighbours and on getting signatures at stalls on market days. In closely settled areas, the response was excellent. At The Glen there was only one household where I did not get a signature. In a much larger set-

tlement at Mapua, Bernard Wells got a similar result. Tony Martin of NACIA presented the petition with 1087 signatures to the Waimea County Council on 26th August 1983. Dr Michael James, Mr Fergus O'Connor and myself were the supporting deputation.

Before the petition could be presented the chairman Cr Borlase read a letter from Mr Fred Stuart of Cable Bay. Mr Stuart asked that his name be removed from the petition because of the recent vandalising of the Wakapuaka War Memorial with "peace signs and symbols". Cr Phil Wastney (Whangamoia Riding) told the deputation "I believe you have some responsibility for inciting people to do this horrible thing". He said that the vandalisers were obviously sympathisers of NACIA.

Tony Martin for NACIA pointed out that the symbol used in the vandalism was the one used by CND; in all its publicity NACIA used the anti-radiation symbol; the matter before Council was the nuclear zone issue, the vandalism issue was inappropriate. Cr Wastney then reiterated that those taking round petitions must take some responsibility for the vandalism, and he left the meeting in protest.

This matter received considerable publicity. There were several letters to the Editor in the Evening Mail, some agreeing with and congratulating Cr Wastney, some decrying his action, some suggesting that the vandalism was the action of an "agent provocateur" trying to blacken the anti-nuclear movement. Cr Wastney considered that some of the Action Committee were conducting a vendetta against him. Dr James and I both lived near Cr Wastney in Whangamoia Riding. Dr James was not a member of NACIA, which just left me. The only vendetta I had with Cr Wastney was a friendly competition to see who got the first mushrooms from Stuart's farm.

There was at the time a move to challenge Mr Wastney at the next election. This may have been what was in his mind, but it was nothing to do with NACIA. I fully understand Mr Wastney's anger as a returned soldier at the defacing of the monument, but I do not see that NACIA could be blamed for what

was probably an act of mindless vandalism.

There was another strange act in this little saga. When Dr James wrote to Council protesting at what he saw as discourtesy to the delegation, Cr Thurlow moved that the letter be "received in disgust".

Getting back to the Council meeting - after the walkout, Dr James felt that the delegation should also leave, but after a quick consultation we agreed to carry on with the presentation. Dr James speaking for IPPNW put forward arguments supporting nuclear-free zones and pointed to the dangers of nuclear war.

Mr O'Connor said he was impressed with the sincerity of the people putting forward the petition. "We should try to make people think on the issue". Finally, I read a letter from Sir W Rowling to Council. He said the Council's decision would be of symbolic importance, and he hoped would be a positive one.

A week later a motion was moved by Cr Lawry, seconded Cr Wastney that "as a part of a campaign against war in general, Council supports the concept of declaring the County to be an area free of nuclear weapons". The motion was carried. This was important in the context of the national campaign, as at that time few Counties had made such a declaration. It showed that anti-nuclear sentiment was strong in both rural and urban areas.

Motueka

The Motueka Peace Group was formed at a meeting in April 1981. The avowed aim was to support NACIA's regional nuclear-weapon free zone campaign. A coordinating committee of Anne Verity, Linda Howard, Steve Smith and Norm Cole was set up. Plans were made for purchasing publicity materials, holding stalls, leaving petition forms in shops, a peace dance at Riwaka with the Riverside Band. A later meeting was addressed by Toss Woollaston on his vision for the future, Bernard Wells on NACIA's current activities, and Tony Martin on the background to the nuclear-free zone movement.

Eight schools in the district took part in International Year

of Peace activities. Each school organised a ceremony emphasising the need for co-operation and tolerance. Paper cranes were made, candles were lit, and there were songs about peace and friendship. A photo in the Evening Mail showed Tasman School pupils participating in the Earth Run; another illustration showed Parklands school new entrants making a banner for International Peace Day.

There was something of a furore on one of Motueka's market days. The Businessmen's Association had invited the Armed Services to put on a display. Riverside Community set up a stall including peace posters and petitions.

A member of the Association confiscated a peace poster "which was giving offence". The Association's President hinted at dirty work at the crossroads. "There might be certain organisations who pay them (Riverside) a back-hander to get along to market day and do a bit of stirring". The Association's Secretary said "If they (Council Staff and Press) had attended they should surely have been aware that members of the so called peace movement did gate-crash our annual gala, endeavoured to disrupt the proceedings, harangue our guests, and turn the event into a political confrontation".

A reporter and several Councillors who did attend did not support these allegations. Councillor John Krammer said the only disruption he knew of was caused by a drunken lout. "Someone should have given him a whack on the ear and carried him off!" The Councillor hoped that if there was another Market Day, Riverside Community would set up another stall.

The nuclear-free petition was presented to Council in July 1983. Supporting the petition, Sir Wallace Rowling said that the argument that nuclear weapons would stop opposing ideology was historically unsustainable. "Only collective action and determination will bring world leaders back on a path that is sane and human"

The case for a nuclear-free zone was also supported by Kate Light, Anne Verity and Dr Ros Quick. Councillors speaking against the motion said that the matter was outside their juris-

diction, it did not meet the Soviet threat, it did not deal with issues of nuclear reactors and waste. One councillor said there were more pressing issues. "We should make New Zealand an abortion free zone". The motion was lost 4-3, those voting for it being councillors Jim Fry, Newport and Gibbs.

Subsequently, the Stratford resolution was passed 6-3. Sir Wallace Rowling said he was saddened by the ostrich-like postures of some councillors. He hoped they would in future "front up, rather than look for escape hatches".

Both NACIA and IPPNW asked Council to hold a referendum in conjunction with local body elections. The request was refused.

The Motueka Peace Group no longer exists, but Riverside Community continues as a focus of peace activity in the Motueka-Moutere area. Most readers will know that it was started in World War 2, by Methodist Christian Pacifists. Though its character has changed in some aspects over the years, it maintains its peace and anti-war focus. It is both a refuge and a beacon for the Peace Movement. It has hosted the annual national peace workshops; every three months it hosts a meeting of top of the south peace groups. During the nuclear-free campaign, groups from Riverside attended marches, vigils, warship protests, made submissions to the Defence Review and the Committee on Nuclear Powered ships. In 1991 a joint deputation from Riverside and Golden Bay met with the Tasman District Council. A subsequent motion that the Council's area be declared both nuclear weapon and nuclear power free was moved by K Light, seconded by E Henry, and carried.

The Tasman District Council has consistently followed an anti-nuclear attitude. In 1995 the Council condemned resumption of French tests at Mururoa; a few months later Council supported the Nelson yacht Sudden Laughter on its nuclear protest voyage. Recently the Council commissioned a peace dove sculpture that now enhances the Council's headquarters and gives a permanent peace message.

Chapter 10

VOTING WITH THE HIPPIES

Golden Bay County, alas, is no more, swallowed up in the gigantic maw of Tasman District, but the county and its peaceniks deserve a chapter to themselves, for several reasons. There's the physical beauty and diversity, the Shangri-la atmosphere, the isolation, which has sometimes engendered a fortress mentality, the occasional issue which highlights the difference between the old-established more conservative element and the alternative lifestylers. When a controversial topic was debated at Council, one old identity was heard to say, "Who voted with the hippies on that one?" But generalisations are unfair. Many newcomers to the Bay have added to the economic viability of the area in the Arts, in horticulture, in Tourism. Many long-term residents have sided with radical elements.

Whatever the reason, the Golden Bay Peace Group has been one of the most active in the Country. For instance, over 10 years since 1983 the group sold some \$7000 worth of peace-promoting material, spent \$3500 bringing films and speakers to the Bay, donated over \$5000 to causes such as the Gulf Peace Team, famine relief, the women of Belau, volcanic disaster relief in the Philippines. At ordinary monthly meetings during the nuclear-free campaign, up to 25 people would cram in to the Kingston's small lounge. In the period when I attended the group, which was after the main campaign, regular attenders were Helen and Derry Kingston, Virginia and Eve Stocker, Betty Duffield, June Washbourn, Henry James, Richard Davies, Peni Connolly, Dorothy Whetter, Charles Naylor, Pam Pruden, Maurice Alach, Ann Castle and others whose names I can't recall.

The peace group's activities were on similar lines to those of other groups already mentioned - but there were more of them. Invited speakers were Charles Gray, Gwen Struik, Jim Chapple, Walter and Bette Johnson, myself, Sonia Davies, Ken Shirley, Clark and Marybeth Shannon, Jack Shallcrass, Katie Boanas, Lady

Rowling, Owen Wilkes, Fran Wilde, Jan Bech, Betty Duffield, Sidney and Elsie Hinkes, Yeshua Moser, and Nick Smith. Films 'Islands of Empire' and 'The Journey' were shown. Entertainers Radha, Bob Burson, Floating Eagle Feather were invited.

Contributions were made to the Peace Ribbon, the Peace Blanket. There was an exhibition of International Peace Posters and a 'Peace and Music' week. There was a Peace Walk to Pohara in 1983, another in 1991 protesting the Gulf War, followed by an address by Betty Duffield, 80-year-old grandmother just returned from the Gulf Peace Camp.

Submissions were made to the Defence Review Committee; Derry Kingston and Graeme Helleur spoke to the Committee in Nelson. A 'Peace Tree' was planted to commemorate Hiroshima Day. Unfortunately it died; a replacement was accidentally removed by Council staff; a third was planted to the accompaniment of a speech by David Lange; both are still extant.

The group has always had a special interest in education. In 1986 Paula Davies was sponsored as a youth delegate to the Copenhagen Peace Conference. Other young people were sponsored to the Peace Power and Politics conference in Wellington. Magazines and posters have been donated to schools. At present the group is also conducting a school peace essay exercise. Petitioning for a nuclear weapon free zone in Golden Bay started in May 1982, preceded by a publicity campaign with articles in the Community News by Joe Tisdall, Colin Iles, Carol and Simon Parkinson-Jones. The petition was taken house to house by volunteers. When presented to Council in November it contained 1300 signatures, estimated as 51 per cent of the adult population.

In support of the petition Puramahoi farmer Graeme Wilson said that the stand against nuclear weapons was a cry of sanity against an arms race that threatened to destroy everyone. Mr Wilson also pointed out that if the Council endorsed the petition, it would be the first to do so on the basis that a majority of electors had asked for it. Local doctor and IPPNW member Helen Kingston added "I cannot condone the use of weapons which

inflict pain and suffering on such a massive and indiscriminate scale, affecting future generations as well as our own".

Councillors Robilliard and Lewis spoke in support of the delegation. Councillor Robilliard felt that regardless of personal views, councillors had a responsibility to represent the views of the district. Councillor Lewis also thought that the wish of the majority had to be considered. Councillor Bob Taylor however said "If it hadn't been for the bomb, we wouldn't be here as we are now and would be under a different regime". The idea of a nuclear weapon free zone left him "completely cold". The Chairman, Councillor Nees, felt that the course of action sought by the petitioners "would endanger our political and democratic freedom".

The Council voted 4-5 against the petitioners' request. The decision caused some controversy. Local MP Bill Rowling gave the Council a 'roasting'. He said that those who thought there was refuge in nuclear weaponry were "under a significant delusion". Councillor Hovenden in a letter to the Evening Mail queried the validity of some signatures on the petition. He noticed the name of one R Muldoon. Colin Iles of the Peace Group took exception to an inference of dishonesty. Judith Ansell wrote that the issue was now one of democracy as well as of being nuclear-free. She said that the campaign would continue and the petition would be re-presented.

There was some laughter round the Council table when Peter Greer as chairman of the Onekaka Hall Committee wrote to say that the Committee had agreed unanimously to declare the hall a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Councillor Robilliard said it wasn't a laughing matter. "It's not scare-mongering but a positive step in which I believe very strongly"

To prove more conclusively that the majority wanted to be nuclear-free, the Peace Group and the Nelson branch of IPPNW wrote to Council asking for a poll on the issue in conjunction with Council elections. The Assistant County Clerk queried whether the Council had statutory authority to declare a nuclear-free zone. Councillor Robilliard said the thing that mattered was

that most of the people wanted it. Cr Peter Riley said "If they (the Peace Group) want a poll they can do it themselves". On Cr Taylor's motion, the Council received the letters and took no further action.

On International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament, Golden Bay and Nelson women wrote to Council urging a nuclear weapon free declaration as a step towards "a safe future for your children and our children". The Council took no action on these letters but agreed to adopt the Stratford resolution. The mayor Mr Nees said, "This is a resolution the council can put forward without negating its stand against a nuclear weapon free zone in Golden Bay".

As noted earlier, the United Council for Nelson Bays had declared the region nuclear weapon free. Golden Bay County Council objected to its inclusion and asked the United Council to either rescind its motion or exclude Golden Bay. The chairman Mr Nees moved this, Cr Fergusson seconded it, and it was passed.

Finally in December 1986 the Council on yet another request from the Golden Bay Peace Group declared Golden Bay a nuclear weapon free zone. The motion was moved by Cr Liz Thomas, seconded by Cr Judy Bell and there were no dissenting voices. The dramatic change in the council's attitude could be attributed to a change in voting patterns in the previous month's elections. According to the Bay's bearded Marxist philosopher, Dick Moth, "the Tories voted for the hippies and the hippies voted for the Labourites". The United Council had declared the whole region nuclear weapon free in 1983, but the Peace Group felt that it would still be appropriate for the Council to make the declaration. The County Clerk, in a letter conveying the Council's action, congratulated the Peace Group on their persistence.

After this success the Group turned their focus to banning nuclear power. In November 1991 several peace group members, including myself as spokesperson, presented this matter to the Golden Bay Community Board. They agreed - with Cr Sangster dissenting - to recommend to Tasman District Council

(which Golden Bay was by then part of) that their District be nuclear weapon and nuclear power free.

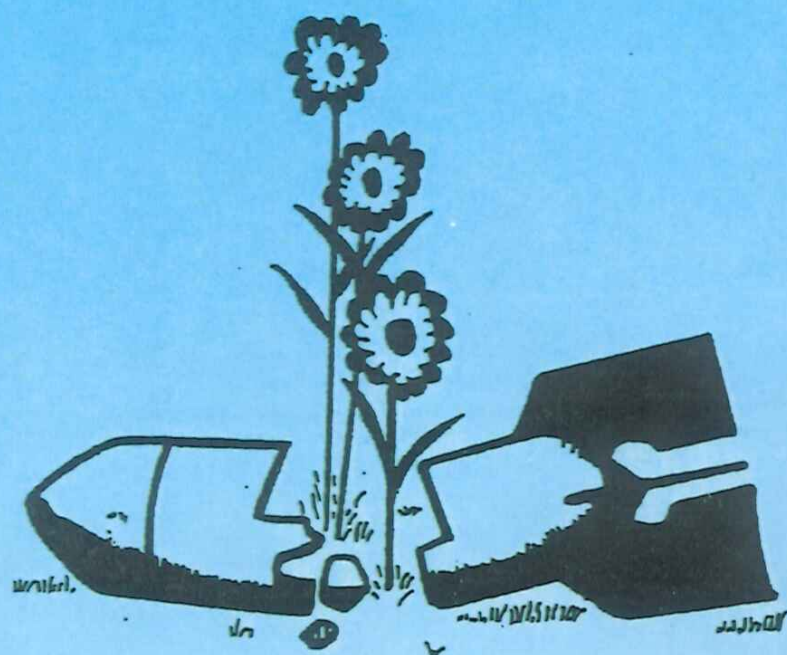
A month later Virginia Stocker, Derry Kingston and I, with a delegation from Riverside Community, spoke to the District Council on the recommendation. A motion in favour of the proposal was moved by K Light, seconded by E Henry and passed. This marked the successful culmination of a lengthy campaign by Golden Bay Peace Group and its supporters. They have since shown their continuing concern by an approach to District Council to support Abolition 2000, a world-wide campaign to get agreement to abolish nuclear weapons by the year 2000, with a planned nuclear disarmament programme thereafter. The District Council agreed to this not long afterwards; the Nelson City Council also endorsed Abolition 2000, after an approach from the Nelson Peace Group.

Chapter 11 WHAT NOW?

What did the campaign achieve in Nelson, countrywide, on the world scene? Nelson is nuclear-free; so is Aotearoa/New Zealand. The World Court, following a New Zealand initiative, has made a declaration against the use of nuclear weapons. The ripple effect of our anti-nuclear stand may even, according to writer-researcher Nicky Hager, have been a factor in ending the Cold War.

On the debit side, the dinosaurs of the nuclear club still huddle in their caves, jealously guarding their right to destroy humanity. Somehow we must awaken the world conscience. Peace is too important to be left to horse-trading politicians and diplomats. Nuclear weapons, conventional weapons, war itself must be consigned to the dustbin of History. There's only one thing that will do it -

The Power of People



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