

Side A Tape one

An Interview with Mr Larry Ross.

Interviewer Ruth Greenaway.

The interview was conducted in two sessions, 2nd June and 9th June 2003.

To begin with it would be nice to get an idea of your early life as a youngster. So could you first of all tell me where you were born?

I was born in Yarchurst, New York in 1927 — the youngest of five children, I had one brother and three sisters. My Father was in advertising and I went to school for the first few years in school 25 in Yarchurst New York. I learned about the origins of US ideals, the constitution, the founding Fathers and so on. I've always had a preference for democracy and the teachings of the Founding Fathers. I think that would stem from there.

What else can I tell you, at age eight my Father felt that he had to retire; he and my Mother took us five children to Toronto Canada. We set up house again and that's how I became raised from the age of 8 on in Canada. First at a boys school at upper Canada college and then again at a boys public school, the University of Toronto Day school. Then at the University of Toronto in the Engineering faculty. Then I got married when I was about 19 or 20 I guess to Sylvia who was just getting her Masters degree in philosophy. She ended up pregnant before she got her degree and managed to sit her exams and pass her exams anyway, in that final year.

Did you have an interest in issues of peace as a young person? Maybe through your schooling or your tertiary years?

I think my interest in peace developed because I was aware at the time of 1945 that a great event had taken place, the use of the bomb against Hiroshima, Nagasaki. The killing, maiming and vaporising of some hundreds of thousands of people and this galvanised the populations of the world to work for peace and be interested in this subject because we invented way that could become a way of annihilating the entire humanity. For the first time the weapons had done a quantum leap into the ability to evaporate everybody virtually.

At what age were you when that happened?

I suppose, I was 18 at the end of the war, 1945.

Were you amongst other people of your age who felt horrified by what had happened?

It wasn't much of a subject that was talked about then that I can remember particularly. They didn't talk about that a great deal, no.

Did you feel that your education and people of your age were bought up in an atmosphere, where going to war that was the right thing to do? And not to protest against it.

That's right it was in 1945 at the end of WW2 they had just defeated some brutal dictatorships, Mussolini, Hitler, the Japanese and so everyone felt pretty patriotic at that point and that the war was justified. They thought it was a just war, defending ourselves, really defending ourselves against a terrible fate, if we were enslaved by the Axis powers.

Your parents did they have a stand?

They didn't take an active stand. I wasn't active then, I was very much aware and it was a key discussion point with certain friends at the Unitarian congregation that it was member of. We were interested there and I've always been interested in the origins of man. Why we're here? Was there a God directing human affairs? Or are we alone in the Universe or is there other life somewhere on some other planet? What is the fate of the earth, especially now that we are developing the means? Because we were still developing the means of mutual suicide and extermination. That to me seemed to me to be the most important thing in the world. That we could wipe ourselves out and we were a prisoner of the past, of our past behaviour. So, I think I was aware more and more '47 '48 '50 about the danger to the world, posed by this. I then began to be more active and I chaired a group at the Toronto Unitarian church that specialised in Cold War topics. We tried to import for a talk a very famous philosopher who also warned about these things; Corlis Lamont, who was quite a famous US Philosopher. But they wouldn't let him across the Canadian border because he was labelled during that McCarthy era as a communist. But he certainly wasn't a communist. He was just an ordinary critical democratic person. But the McCarthyites were labelling anybody who wasn't a fanatic right wing as a communist or sympathetic to the Communist cause.

So your education around the area of peace and what was happening in the war, had that come mainly through your parents and your involvement with the church or had you also taken an interest in studying politics?

From my early upbringing there was a real interest in religion and religious truth and I was questioning from the age of 16 on I questioned the authenticity of the Christian stories. I came to the conclusion that they weren't true that they were more of a myth. I thought well that of course, unless there is some kind of a supernatural force that puts man pretty well alone as an accident of the Universe. Like all things on this planet, like many things, they do flourish and they become extinct. Civilisations become extinct, planets become extinct, why not mankind? Who's to say we are to go for thousands, millions, billions of years? Do we really think that's possible or can we, are we apt to do what we've always done? Which is make war, and make more weapons and better weapons. And kill more people, which we've always done. And I thought it can't go on. And of course people like Linus Pauling another philosopher, noble prize winner campaign against war and the weapons race, said the same thing. And so did Bertrand Russell who I corresponded with back in the '50's or '60's about these matters.

How did you get to correspond with him?

I just wrote to him and he wrote back. We had a bit of a correspondence and then he had invited me when I moved down here, to start the Australasian branch of the

Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, which I did and had more correspondence with him.

So were you quite into reading up on the issues?

Yeah, and discussing with people who were interested in it. It was I think from the earliest age from 19, 20 21yrs on was a big question lurking in the background. That needed to be solved if we were to look forward to a peaceful future for any length of time. If we don't solve this one, we've had it. So I was always conscious of the danger to everybody including myself of this nuclear threat and the many tendencies that seemed to be directing us toward it such as the Cold War and human behaviour. Anyway, we're always picking wars with somebody over something. And sometime someone might pick a war with us. Who knows, you can't keep doing it to other people and not expect something in return can you?

For a lot of people that's exactly what they do they act and react as if they are terribly injured and it's so unjust that people should retaliate towards them doing what they've done to them often they don't really know what they've done or what their country has done in their name. So it's a sincere reaction of the ignorant and of course it's been in the interests of governments throughout the ages to keep their people ignorant so that they can be more malleable to wage war when necessary.

And in Canada in that time was it expected that young men would go and do military service?

It was an option, it was optional. No it was not compulsory no.

So, did living in Canada did it feel any safer then what was happening in America in terms of the build up of the arms race or did it feel like it was all one in the same?

Well we feel in Canada that it's one in the same because what happens to the US happens to Canada. It's got a very very long border and a border that you can't really seal and so it depends on the good will of both governments and if one population has been targeted with nuclear weapons and is in a state of semi devastation obviously you are going to get tremendous movement across the border and Canada itself is involved in this through early warning systems and so on and it would probably get bombed as well. I lived later on in my early 30's I got a job in Montreal which is 500 miles from Toronto and that was on the missile path from Russia to the States. If there'd been an international war then Montréal would have been devastated, so living in Canada was not that much safer really?

So that felt like a real ever present issue for that time.

Always has been since the earliest. I mean I obviously had to devote myself to other things as well to make a living it was always there and I was always involved in one way or another in taking some action or trying to figure out some action that could be effective.

So then there came a point that you and your wife decided that you had to leave Canada.

That was in 1962 and the Cold War was really heating up and Kennedy was advising people to build backyard fall out shelters for instance. But we'd done our research on that and found that was just a joke. For if you did happen to survive a few weeks you'd come out to a radiated wasteland and you'd watch your children die slowly if not from disease radiation or from starvation or from barbarism with the warring tribes that might arise out of the nuclear wasteland of crazed survivors who would do anything for a crust of bread or whatever.

So you were really given information about how to build a shelter and how to survive.

Yeah the government of the US more than Canada had a plan to help install backyard fall out shelters for people who wanted to build them. Quite a few did build them, not nearly as many as they throughout would but there were also a few built in Canada as well. But the thing is the government of the day that was under Kennedy pretended anyway to think that their side would survive if enough people had fallout shelters.

The Reagan administration did the same thing, and up until the Reagan administration it's been a theme of American governments anyway. There's a very famous quote by a Reagan official who said something to the affect of "with enough shelters we can survive" by digging a hole and putting earth on top and that sort of thing.

I read some of the background papers that Kate gave me, that you had also quoted that President Reagan had said that their reasoning behind the need for having nuclear weapons for America was to fight evil and that in the end evil would be got rid of and that this was inevitable. There's something along the lines of the prophecy of the end of the world. Was that really quite a true belief of people?

It was a true belief of a certain section called fundamentalist Christian. They really did believe in the idea of Armageddon that this would be ushered in by the Lord and that it was ultimately for human beings to cleanse the earth and the people were worried as hell that Reagan believed this as a fundamentalist Christian. That he might help; give the Lord a helping hand by putting his finger on the button and in starting the whole thing off. And that he might regard this as a holy mission. In other words there's really nothing the matter with Armageddon if it's supposed to be scheduled and the Lord scheduled it I mean who would argue against it if you're a believing Christian you see. This is the absurdity of Christianity really carried to extreme which certain fundamentalists still do believe.

I was just going to say do you think that has just grown and followed through as a constant argument for nuclear weapons?

Well it's certainly a favourable argument because god gave nuclear weapons to the Americans. Because they're the chosen people and I think Truman said, President Truman who was in power at the time they first made the decision to use them, he said something like thank God they gave us nuclear weapons or something of this

nature indicating there was a heavenly sanction for these. There was a heavenly reason.

It was ordained?

Yeah because it sounds good to some of the religious people, the majority in the States.

I'd like to mention some other thing too, doing an interview with Reagan at the time, he said something to the effect that maybe Armageddon is God's will for mankind, a nuclear Armageddon. And that was his attitude towards this on the brink situation. So that rather than being a leader of a couple of hundred million people and the rest of the world he was more of a biblical figure who believed shit. That nuclear weapons were to use. The thing is today that it's an entrenched policy, nuclear weapons are to use.

But under the Bush administration you've got another fundamentalist, what we don't know is how much his fundamentalism is a sham. To attract the unthinking religious right and how much he really believes of this crap. Apparently his lack of schooling and so on indicated that he had got a very narrow perspective do that he could in fact believe junk. Sincerely believe the junk that he is fed.

So when it came for you and your family to think about leaving Canada and to want to live in a different place how did the decision to move to NZ come about?

Well we researched the different areas we'd like to go to and it looked like first of all that the southern Hemisphere was the place to go because all the battles and bases and weapons were in the North basically and that's where most of the battles would take place. And the Southern Hemisphere would be more likely to survive. So, that's why we picked the southern hemisphere and now why we picked NZ was it was the place we thought was closer to Canada in terms of language traditions culture, British empire type of thing yeah. So we picked NZ.

Did you have any idea about life in NZ and of politics in NZ before you came?

Just that it was a democratic State with a couple of parties and that with basic freedoms respected and democracy so that was good enough.

So that was in 1962.

Yes

Where did you first settle when you arrived in NZ?

Christchurch.

Have you been base din Christchurch ever since?

Yes.

How do you find Christchurch as a city of people who are interested in peace and have worked for peace?

I think I find it a bit provincial in a sense that they're most people are very wrapped up with their own close lives of mortgage, job, interests, church, their friends and so on. Its circle is sport very much so. It's a life style that doesn't allow much thought about the future, about where we're going, certainly not about the threats to humanity. No.

It's a culture that accepts God as an acceptable possibility, okay we'll say we believe it. We don't really, some of us, but it's okay. We're not going to church every Sunday but leave it alone, leave it in the background and so on it's not bothering us.

So to the approach that it will work itself out some how?

Well, it's not something to worry about whether or not they are Christian or somebody else is or what ever it's not a big issue. Religion is not a big issue. Nuclear war certainly wasn't much of an issue either when I came. It was very remote and people when you bring up nuclear war they think Oh well we're safe down here type of thing or America will keep us safe, they're protecting us... There's a lot of that too.

So when you first arrived here in Christchurch what sort of work were you doing?

Well I wanted to be a free lance writer for one thing but after a while /I couldn't make a living doing that so I tried to get a job in advertising and I found a lot of closed doors there because my reputation had been around a while by then and I guess I'd got a certain name and I was known as an anti nuclear campaigner.

How had that developed?

Well I wrote letters to the editor and I think it was '62 I was doing United Nations work and then the NZ Australasian branch of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and doing press release back in the '60's so I was known enough that my name and my interests, you have put your interest down and so on. They didn't want to know me. Peace was equivalent to being a potential communist or enemy of the State, of the people. The question of the survival of the species was just a joke to them.

Could you tell me a little bit about the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation? Could you tell me a little about him and of what you did through that?

The BRPF had as an objective to eliminate all nuclear weapons to solve disputes by peaceful means, support the UN and generally expose the arms race in its various manifestations, so that was the BRPF. To try as Lord Russell taught us so well use reason to analyze these things and that there should be cooperation between the different belief systems of the world as well. That noone was superior to another and so on and so forth. That kind of thing. That was the BRPF. Now Lord Russell himself was the most famous philosopher of his day in Britain. He started out with a book "Pinicpa Mathematica" A book on mathematics and philosophy I suppose. But

he wrote a number of books on philosophy and he was especially famous because he did not believe in Christianity and he was willing to say so and to say why he didn't believe in Christianity. So he exploded the myths of Christianity as best he could. Showed how they lead people to wars among other things and they lead people to a lot of grief as in the case of anti abortionists. The Catholics who had an anti birth control position because of supposed Christian beliefs. He showed how this was harming and killing millions as well. This kind of belief system in the absurd.

Did he have quite a large following of people interested?

No one really believed in him, He didn't have any organised groups or anything like that until he started this peace Foundation back in the 60's. That's when he asked me to join and it's still going in England, not going here. Then the Vietnam war came along in the early 60's and that occupied most of our time exposing the truth about the Vietnam war.

So how you were active, was that in term so public speaking and writing, mainly?

Public speaking, writing and lobbying the politicians we even lobbied the military.

Can you give me an example, how did you do that?

I asked to see the joint chiefs of staff or as many as I could get to in NZ and sure enough I did I got into the Defence Headquarters and had quite an interview with the chief of defence his staff and others on the danger of nuclear war. What that would do to NZ. And that therefore our foreign policy would be geared around this and they should be devoting a lot more time to peace and prevention than we were.

Did you find in NZ that it was easier to be in contact with these people than you had experienced in the United State or in Canada?

Yes, well I hadn't really tried in Canada before. Certainly not in the States but I did reach out and try in NZ and was successful.

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So you were saying it was easier here in NZ to be able to meet with people.

I wouldn't say it was easier but I would suspect that it was because in NZ at that time we were dealing with 2½ or three million in Canada we'd be dealing with 20 or 30 million so obviously it's going to be harder to get to see people in Canada than in NZ.

So in terms of contact with local MPs was something that you were quite regularly doing?

(Note – at this point the local voluntary fire brigade siren went off in the background).

Yes I met local politician and MPs and encourage people to write to their MP about these questions so that they'd put it on the agenda for parliament. And take action on it. I've always believe that members of parliament were representatives of the people

had duty and a right to present these questions in what ever form they could about the questions of the survival of the species and the survival of the people. And nuclear war could potential effect all of this. Therefore the obvious question was, are we in an alliance that facilitates the end of the world? Were we doing anything to stop it and so on?

So your questions were picked up quite easily and did you feel that they were taken to parliament?

Some were.

And so in terms of what you said earlier, you had developed a reputation. How did people begin to react to the writings and public speaking that you were doing? What reaction did you get?

Well I'd say I developed a certain following but it was mostly indifference. I was reasonably successful in access to the media with press releases and letters and I developed circle of people of like mind. So we formed the BRPF to start with and then later on the NZ Nuclear Free Zone Committee. But there's a tremendous apathy and indifference generally speaking and that's where I'd say that perhaps Christchurch is a bit provincial in its attitudes. Perhaps a bit I hesitate to use the word, smug maybe that's bit too strong but you know pretty well wrapped up with themselves and their individual lives. The future of their kids and so on to the point where they'll work hard and spend thousands on the future of the children only to guarantee they are going into a major local war or a big one and get wiped out. And is that smart?

So I tried to do that.

So you mentioned before that the Vietnam war came along and what reaction was there to you speaking out against that?

My thought was that people spend thousands of dollars on their kid's future but nothing on preventing a war that could deny them that future. Increasingly that's the case today. Also they deny the truth to themselves. They blot it out.

What are you going to be writing? Are you writing your own story?

I'm working on the web page now and I've got to do one on membership and donation and things like that. Because we can only exist if there's money. Some people have the idea that Peace grows on trees. God will give you what ever you need or mysteriously Peace people don't need to pay their mortgage or be fed. They just exist, it's quite alright not to pay them and its bad top pay them. So they've picked up some of these ideas from the pro war political parties and atmosphere that Peace people are to be suspected of subversion, of being a member of the enemy camp in some way. And therefore you wouldn't want to support that type of thing.

By plugging that idea they managed to impoverish the Peace movement all these decades and make us just a small hardly significant, well I think we have been

significant in many ways, more so than one would expect. But still it is a sad situation.

I've got some information and questions to ask of you from the 80's onwards but I'm still interested in the 60's and 70's when you were still here. Were you able to balance your working life you were just talking about needing to survive and pay your mortgage? Were you able to balance living and working with your peace work as well?

No. Unfortunately when I was working full time, which eventually I did, that means working full time, and I couldn't do justice to my Peace interests. For the organisation and still work full time and still try to be a Father to a family of 6 kids it was just impossible.

So were there time when your motivation to keep going with your public speaking and your writing, did you have to let that go at some point and just focus on your family life and your working life.

Yeah it was always there in the background but I just didn't have the time to devote myself to it the way I would have liked to, I just couldn't there wasn't the resources. There's no social demand for Peace workers. They are an unnecessary luxury. An impediment to what society values most which is war makers and weapon makers. They're the ones who are rewarded. Not the Peace makers.

Who were some of the people here in Christchurch that became your close friends and you allies in the Peace movement?

Well, there was Malcolm Moore and he's someone you should interview, Malcolm Moore he's still alive and he'll have a lot to say, in Redcliff's, he's in the book I'll give you something on him.

The NZ Nuclear Free Peacemaking that would be in 1980, I knew him before of course. But in 1984 we sent him on a tour.

Around NZ?

In the South Island, talking about the Arms race and were the Russians really a threat, that type of thing. So he's one that had quite a bit and there's another which this goes back to the date of the NZ Nuclear Free Zone. She's one of the original with her husband members of the executive.

So this is Barbara Leonard.

She, and especially her husband, he's still very active. Have you got Bob Leonard?

He would have quite a bit to say. Of course you've got Murray Horton. Well there's a few. Now a lot of the people who were active in the, going back to the Australia New Zealand branch of the BRPF, Gordon Kilpatrick is dead. But he was a charter remember and on of the ones who worked with me. Then there is one still alive in

Auckland, he was very active his name was John Jones, or Jack Jones he likes to be called. He was our treasurer of the BRPF.

Here in Christchurch?

Yeah but he's since moved to Auckland.

It's quite neat that you have kept in contact with all these people.

Well I haven't kept in contact as much as I should. But you know I have some contact yes. Then there was Irene young, she was a key supporter, active on the executive. She's deceased. She was the BRPF lady. Stan Hemsley.



Stan Hemsley (second from left)

One thing that I am interested in terms of the networks of Peace people is that obviously you formed friendships, you work together, you have similar concerns and similar ideas of how to go about things, how did you support one another in terms of when you came up against real obstacles? Also did you feel there were times when you couldn't see a way forward or you felt you were on your own and then again you were supported to keep going? Was that a pattern?

There's one more name – John Gallagher, he was very close collaborator with the NZ Nuclear Free zone committee from the very beginning. Jenny Lineham was another one on the Nuclear Free committee. From the very beginning, and she just lives across the street. And David Pierce, he's been in it almost as long as she has. He was quite active in his way and he lives in the house next to her across the street. I don't see much of them.

How long have you lived in this house for?

Since 1962, this is the first house that I caught.

So just back to that question of the support of people, how did you support each other through difficult times?

Not particularly, I wouldn't say just trying to think what difficult times were. We all had our agendas and we all had our needs but we basically set aside our material needs, income whatever in our way rather than help each other in that way. It was my job as the leader of the movement of course to try to give people a degree of hope. The idea that if we work hard we can accomplish the objectives that we set out to do. And of course this turned out to be true in the case of the NZ nuclear free zone which actually became a reality after all the campaigning in 1984. So it was a good thing to say look if you mobilise, organise and work at it you could be successful if you have a good idea. There you are proof, there's always those who say "What can I do, I can't do nothing. Thank God I don't have to do anything".

So it was quite obvious how things came together, people bought their skills together, you all came in with the same idea or vision of how it should be?

We all agreed on certain objectives and we worked toward that.

As a group in terms of working within your own network of people, did you have processes of dealing with your own conflicts that might come up?

We developed conflict resolution when we did have conflicts on the executive a few times. We tried to resolve those conflicts by a peaceful means but in the long run it didn't really work I suppose, nuclear free did decline after a while although we did keep going some of the initial executive left. So you could say it's similar to the experience of many other kinds of groups I suppose at a certain point things sometimes fly a part a little bit. But the group is still in existence and I've been thinking re-forming and restarting a more organised cohesive and active group again.

Because I feel the times that we live in are worse than we've ever had before by a fair margin for various reasons and that most people are either not aware or don't care. Or they dismiss it, they deny it. I mean the usual response of people is look the Cold War is over Russia and the States are friends so what are you worried about? And that's their attitude. They are just as superficial as they can possibly get. Then they close down the shutters and they won't consider any other arguments. But we do have some very goods arguments. That is that the Bush clique has lowered the nuclear threshold and now considers actually using nuclear weapons which used to be a last resort type of weapon if they were attacked or in imminent danger they might use nukes. Now they are ready to use them inn ordinary warfare. They are making more as a first strike weapon. There are researching and making more at the same time. So that they will be able to use these weapons. Now that to me is real insanity and yet the people today amazingly enough seem to have accepted it.

How have you kept yourself up to date with the development?

I keep up to date today through lots of research, the bulletin of Atomic Scientists and mainly the web. I'm a member of Abolition Caucus which is a US group dedicated to abolishing nuclear weapons and I'm constantly getting good material from them. It keeps me really on top of everything.

So the web is a very useful tool for you today.

Today very much so. I mean it's so much more that you see in your daily paper.

When we were talking about the BRPF you also mentioned that when you first came to NZ you were also doing work for the UN, was that right.

No, I was a member of the UN association. Which is an NGO dedicated to UN principles. I formed an international affairs crisis group within our local UN association but they were a bit uncomfortable with that they're not used to activists actually tackling something that was happening today so I had to talk about it in principle ...

And what happened in the past...

What happened in the past and so on and so on. But they don't want to tackle today's real pressing problems because it's so controversial and they didn't like controversy in those days. A lot of people don't they shy away. Their condition, the politicians I think to regard controversy as somehow unacceptable. So that's when I formed the BRPF. That was in the 60's, yeah the BRPF was next.

What year was the BRPF formed?

I think it was 1964.

How many members did it have?

The BRPF, oh a couple hundred /I suppose.

Do you think we should move onto the '80's or is there anything else?

Sure, nothing else, because in the '70's I was mainly working full time as a sale manager for the Western Building society. If that's relevant to you, but it was nothing to do with peace.

That's one thing that has come in what I've been reading was that you had a sales and marketing background and this has been quite beneficial for the way that you have gone about ...organising campaigns....

I've always been a pretty realistic in terms of what people want and everything else, marketing I've done a lot of that in, before I came in Canada and here I was in sales, direct sales with Western building society. So I had sales marketing approach to a lot of this because I realised that to be successful at all you had to make a mass movement. You have to be able to give people something that can understand and related to I was thinking about what the hell I'm trying to do you know. Then the government of the day, all those factors have to come into it one way or another. What is possible for NZ and the nuclear free seemed to be a possible thing we could attain as a small state. Because it was unlikely we would ever achieve much on the international arena because we were working with so many other states. 150 other states and trying to influence policy and whatever. That as a small state we could emerge as an example. One way of doing that was to become a nuclear free zone.

So you that felt like that was a real feeling amongst people before you even generated the whole nuclear free zone campaign , did you already have a sense? Could you anticipate that it would come to fruition, or did you just go ahead with it with the hope that it would?

Well it seemed a possibility because it was a practical step that could be taken that wouldn't really disturb the great power balance particularly although it would supposedly remove NZ from the nuclear end of the American Alliance. It was minute significance, but as the Americans say, I read by an American Admiral the Americans saw it as the beginning of another domino theory. That people would follow NZ's example to get out of the dangers of a nuclear alliance with the States. If we did it

Around the world yeah.

Obviously you were in contact with a lot of people from around the world.

Around the world. Yeah mainly in the States.

This was pre email time, how did you contact people?

Mail. A big thing with us was NZ foreign policy.

So many papers.

It's only a small fraction.

These papers where were they published? Were they in journals?

They were in journals that we researched. We kept really important papers, here's one on nuclear tests. All those different papers. Again and again and again.

One of the things that the NZ Nuclear Free Committee that you did was to also bring out guest speakers was that right?

Yeah we bought out a lot of speakers.

Were they some of these people who'd been doing this writing?

Some yeah like Ralph McGee of the CIA; we caught out the first CIA agent who we sent around the country. Then we brought out Colonel David Hackworth who is the most decorated military man in US history a hero of the Vietnam War and he spoke against the bomb, he did a lecture tour of the country.

They'd come to a turning point in their life where they wanted to work for Peace?

They wanted to work for peace. So those were two of the most famous. Here's catalogue for nuclear proportional report. That was on all those when we had the big debate about that.

So when the speakers would come to go on a speaking tour of NZ how did you organise that? Where did they actually go and speak?

Oh they went and spoke in different centres.

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Now we would announce that they might come if we received enough support and demand for their services by the people who received our newsletter and they would reply if they wanted the persons to speak there and they would agree to pay a certain sum or whatever they could to make this possible to happen. So I managed to get together enough money to go ahead and sponsor them coming and often these people

So I had a photographer friend help by taking pictures and then a friend in a printing company who helped make the films set the type.

In the first instance to get all these things produced did the Nuclear Free Committee have a grant? Or did people put forward money to get this happening?

Well usually we had enough income to justify doing it we didn't get any grants for that no.

And for yourself the Committee was able to pay you?

I never got a salary, it was talked about. I'd get expenses but not a salary as such that I could live off it was mainly expenses and so on. So gradually my funds did dwindle, the funds that I had brought with me. That's one reason I had to go back full time working, because there was never enough money coming in to pay anybody a salary.

So for how many years did you work on this campaign full time, for the committee full time?

Since 1980.

In terms of the Nuclear Free (Zone) Committee what would you like to say about how it worked and what its main objective was?

Well the main objective of the NZ Nuclear Free Zone Committee was to make NZ a nuclear free zone. I'll just show you.....this sums it up pretty well. (Reads from a pamphlet. This paper here sums up our objectives, the 5 point plan and what this is is a report on the national peace workshop held at Living springs Centre, Christchurch 23 October 1981. Now at that workshop which included people from all around the country they agreed with the following resolutions that we proposed. That the Peace movement include as an immediate objective the attainment of a NZ nuclear weapon free zone. 2. that this workshop supports the promotion of the NZ Nuclear Weapon Free Zone with positive neutrality a five point plan as outlined by Larry Ross and those parts of the plan with which they agree. 3. That groups and individuals do what they can to facilitate the speaking tour on nuclear weapon free zones with positive neutrality in March 1982 that was my first lecture tour of the whole country. That local peace groups reevaluate our current defence agreement with the US and Australia as defined in the ANZUS treaty as an essential prerequisite to the attainment of a nuclear weapon free zone. Because there's questions' arising if we go nuclear free can we support countries that believe in the nuclear deterrent and have it all over the place? Steps might include a detailed study of ANZUS and insist that NZ government request clarification of these provisions that US ships or aircraft carrying nuclear weapons to enter NZ territory with the view to modifying the treaty so that such nuclear incursions are forbidden. Now okay they did that and in the nuclear free act they did exactly that they forbid nuclear weapons and substances to enter NZ territory by ships or aircraft with the view to modifying the treaty so that such nuclear incursions are forbidden. They didn't mention aircraft but they did mention ships okay. 4. Development of alternative policies for NZ defence which would not entail

alliances with countries employing nuclear or chemical or biological weapons. We're working toward that sill. It's our objective and the governments' seems to be less and less inclined to do the American bidding. Whether it's war in Iraq or elsewhere. Then there's another objective, wide education of the NZ public about the implications and liabilities of the ANZUS treaty which we're still doing. So that was moved by myself backed by Mike Dodge another peace worker and carried in 1981.

That is very important because there has been some sort of glossing over the fact that I started this all up. And that I played this role.

What do you mean by glossing over?

They don't like to recognise people so much in this country for some reason they see it as a threat or something.

Who the government or general people?

It's the attitude of this society I think, you know if there's a tall poppy cut it off. Who does he think he is? That attitude, but you get that. I've had it more or less form the beginning, I mean I haven't let it bother me but it is there. I suppose its one reason for the general public attitude, lack of recognition, lack of caring lack of awareness, dismissal.

Do you think you've just been ignored or have people spoken out against you?

I've had some recognition, I've had a QSM in the 1980's for my work, I've had the Christchurch City Council recognised me in their award ceremonies, that type of thing has come. I got humanist of the year award for my peace work.

Where did that come from?

The Humanist Society in New Zealand.

Have you actually been cut down in public for your stance and what you've said?

Well it's debated. And I think it's not so much cutting down as ignoring. Pretending you don't exist or that what you've done is of little significance.

And that if they ignore you you'll go away? That sort of thing, do you think?

It's a matter of don't bother me too much. I haven't got time for this kind of thing. Rather than well call it want to call it go away what ever. But they'd rather not think of it. A good example is the big fuss being made by Jona Lomu.

Jona Lomu now here's a man whose fame is tied up in his body you know he showing himself of great physique he can do things no one else did and I wish him well. I'm quite happy with that but the fact that our society dotes on this kind of thing, rugby, racing, beer and excludes the more important things about the survival of the human species and where we're going as a country or as nation or as a human race, all that alien to a lot of people, they don't even want to think about it. It's something they

don't want to bother even considering it and if you consider it they either talk you down or try to put you down for it I don't know that kind of thing. Because they never talk about it in their smokos in their groups it's always about something to do with the All Blacks you know. People like me get awfully fed up and sick of the All Blacks. And then it's somebody else, but it's always the sporting world. As if it's the most important thing in the whole world and everything else can go down the drain. They don't care.

This is just making me think that when the Nuclear Free Zone Committee established in 1981 it was also the year of the Spring Bok tour and all the uprising and the protest moment that happened in NZ, did you in your peace work have there been a natural overlap or have you worked on issue that were aligned with peace in term of other justice issues of the day?

Well we felt that the nuclear moment and all its ramifications was so big that we didn't really have the time or the resources to established other movement or incorporate the other movement with ours. It's just at one time there was an approach made to try to include Maori Sovereignty with the Nuclear Free Movement in some way. We said no, because that would dilute the nuclear free message and a lot of people who accept our nuclear position on the ground as we gave it, would not also accept Maori sovereignty so they would throw out both things, other then just accept one. Many of us didn't believe all together in every aspect of Maori sovereignty or what ever you want to call it. So we said no. Now in one way or another, the Springbok tour or what ever there have been other issue come up. Should we do anything about this or that? Well we did in the case of the Vietnam War; we certainly campaigned against the Vietnam War and got out the truth as we were able to find it. One reason was there was a real danger the US would use nuclear weapons in North Vietnam and against China. Also the sheer overwhelming injustice of the US action in Vietnam was luite enough that was really pushed on there. But at the same time we never forgot the nuclear free position which was our central platform.

So at this time in the early 80's were there several different organised peace groups up and down the country that were as prominent as the Nuclear Free Zone committee? I know for example there was the CND.

Well there was the CND in Wellington and Auckland and there are the Quakers who establish wherever they have a church and they are activist in social action and peace and justice issues. I'm just trying to think of any others at that time.

Was there the Peace Movement Aotearoa?

No that comes later on.

So did you come together?

Well I tried to establish autonomous peace groups wherever I could when I went on my lecture tours. I didn't want them to be beholden or dependant on the Nuclear Free Zone Committee or a branch of that because I foresaw the possibility that they would try, the authorities would try and wreck us in one way or another and then that would also wreck some of the other groups. So I felt that it was best if each groups was as

independent as possible in doing their own thing and that we would be in contact with them to do that,.

It was more dispersed and there wasn't just one target.

Yes more dispersed. And of course that's more democratic that way anyway. If you haven't got a central direction and everybody is free to do their own executive and their own objectives and all that type of thing yes.

So when it came to working for the creating the nuclear free zones all around the country, to me that's just amazing how it came about and how it grew. What would you identify as the real strengths of it that got the momentum going for it to actually happen?

I think people saw that it was something they could do themselves, at the local council level. They could get their councils to declare nuclear free zones and although it was symbolic, which we always realised from the very beginning, a symbolic act. So is the Mayors' chain symbolic and so are a lot of things symbolic, flags are symbolic. So a nuclear free zone is symbolic but it has a persuasive force if there are enough of them it set off voices. Enough Councils and eventually we managed to get a huge number.

105?

Yeah 105 that was the maximum. So that was a real achievement and we lead the world in creating nuclear free zones. Even ahead of the United States. We had a bout 61% of the totals population covered by locally declared nuclear free zones. We would issue a total of say 8 or 9 maps of nuclear free zones showing the growth of these zones over the time, from a small number of 23 when we started to 71.

Local councils were being lobbied, but in terms of the residential population, what were people being asked to do?

Well people would go around with petitions often either directed nationally for a nuclear free NZ or locally for a nuclear free Christchurch or Auckland and knock on doors and get a signature and in a local case that would go to the Council. Saying that people there wanted the Council to declare it's a nuclear free weapon zone. So local people talked to local people about this nuclear situation and why they should declare the area nuclear free and so on. Councillors debated it, often they threw it out but by the second or third time they accepted it, because they learned more that was the amazing thing about this. They accepted it because we kept going back to them. With new evidence and new presentations as to why they should declare it nuclear free.

It really was such a grass roots campaign.

It was grass roots

People organising themselves in their area to get names on a petition.

That's right often I didn't know about, I mean they were inspired by what we suggested but they did it all themselves, we gave help where we could with kits and suggestions and wordings and things like that.

I remember people sticking stickers on their letterboxes.

Now they did that a lot and Katie had a good one she had homebase Nuclear Free sticker. We had a lot of them too. (Shows another sticker and describes)...that was like a pamphlet and not just a sticker because if people believed in us then they could send in the coupon so it worked two ways. I always try to get something that works several ways.

But all our stickers had a message on the back like that.

So here at your home you had volunteers and people coming here to work from this place. How many people would come and go?

Sometimes we had half a dozen or eight people, especially at newsletter time when it was time to collate the newsletter and staple it and send it out and address it and send it out and all that. We'd do that. Cause we'd have maybe a couple of thousand to send. I had the whole house.

Was it quite easy to recruit volunteers?

We had quite a few who were willing yeah quite a few willing people then.

From what I've read you also not only had people in NZ receiving information but you sent information outside of NZ as well.

Oh yes...we were very conscious of the need for international links to get material from overseas and to see what they were doing and also give them something they could follow about what we were doing.

Maybe could tell just a little bit about the media coverage at that time in NZ for the Nuclear Free zones.

Well, it varied if you had a good story they'd use it but it has to be good and often visual and I remember I had cards on Boldger when I went on tour in 90 or 91 I did a lecture tour. He'd said we'll keep; National will keep this country nuclear free this election and the next election after that. BANG! Big placards. Anyway he was in power at the time I went on the tour and I made huge reproductions of these and I flashed that at the media and I'd say we're trying to get Boldger to honour his promise. BANG BANG BANG, Snap snap snap. It was visual, it worked.

And another time in Japan I did the same thing, we had I did a lecture tour of Japan. I made a special symbol,

When was your lecture tour?

Larry Ross

I'm not sure I'll have to check it. I wanted to show what we made especially for Japan. That worked a treat. (Shows badges) I designed this, and then I made some others. After doing the NZ one when I was going to Japan I designed that...

With Japan in the middle and it's written in Japanese.

That's all Japanese, *Nuclear Free zone Japan*. Then I had a big reproduction of that designed and I was sitting around a conference when I first went to Japan with all the media there and then I put forward this thing and BANG cameras came from everywhere. Bang bang bang it was all over Japan! It's Fantastic.

So they really loved it?

Yes, so I sold those while I was in Japan and it helped me finance my tour to sell these. That was the idea that was the whole plan.

I think that's something you've done really well that others could learn from. Just how to finance things.

Well surprisingly there's a lack of interest. You're one of the first ones who've really shown not only an interest in me doing this but also an appreciation in perhaps what was more than average intelligence.

I think it's brilliant. It's great to meet you because I've seen all these s and badges, obviously I was just a young teenager in the early 80's but I never knew where they came from or what the story was. How it all happened. Just to piece together how it's all happened it's great. Today there are so many people who work at a grass roots level who struggle with the whole financing side of things, who struggle with how to get a message across affectively and I think you've really got something here.

Well there was never enough money to finance my volunteer work or whatever creative contribution I gave, I mean think how successful I might have been if I'd been making soap or toothpaste or something really useful to society but making peace you get nothing.

There's no way I've been able to figure out to make it pay enough to support this work unfortunately. It's just the merchandising bit that's certainly helped.



Side 2 Tape 2

Another thing that I was reading about was that there was a magazine called the Peace Researcher.

That was produced by an offshoot subgroup that specialised in Harewood for instance and peace research as such and they produced Peace researcher which was affiliated to the nuclear Free Zone Committee.

Did you contribute, did you write for that?

No we really had enough to write for with the NZ Nuclear Free was the name of our newsletter. We issued many many copies of that. Different issues over the years from when we started back in 1981, was the first issue of that. That's right.

Could you tell me a little bit about, you've mentioned that various people came out and did speaking tours? The one that I remember was Helen Caldicott.

Arh yes, we didn't sponsor her I'm not sure who did sponsor Helen but we certainly promoted it.

It must seem to me that it was her speaking tour that really had a huge impact on the NZX local scene. She must have visited a huge number of places.

I think she did visit quite a few places and she accomplished an awful lot and turned on a lot of people, she's very effective internationally, locally, wherever she goes. And she's still at it. She's just written a book.

What's the title of the book?

I can't remember off hand but it's about the new nuclear madness in the USA I'm not whether she's got the new nuclear doctrines in there or not but she certainly got the new nuclear arms race.

Then also around this time you were a member of the NZ Foundation of Peace studies, is that right?

No, I don't think I was ever a member, so much as in constant liaison with them through the years.

What was their role?

Their role from the very beginning they sponsored some lecture tours but you'd have to ask them. (Ask Kate)

But we certainly cooperated with them and agreed with their whole objective which was also antinuclear and for peace as expressed in different ways.

At that time, I know that during the 90's for example Kate was running a course at the University in Peace studies but in the early 80's in terms of education at University or in schools was there much education around peace?

Not formal, that's something you had an interest in and usually picked it up yourself and joined groups interested in it and got your education that way. By your reading by your study by your involvement.



Larry Ross teaches school children about nuclear free zones

So it really depended on people meeting in local groups and sharing knowledge and sharing information to educate themselves.

That's right and lecture tours and public seminars and various ways of getting the information out.

So then the Nuclear Free Zone Committee became the Nuclear Free Peacemaking Association. In what year did that change happened?

That would be probably about 1986 or 87 somewhere around there. It was when we had achieved the nuclear free zone that would be 1984 which came into law in 1987 when they passed the act at Parliament. We had always been concerned to have a new foreign policy based on positive neutrality. Because we didn't feel that NZ could just declare a nuclear free zone with it's implied withdrawal from a nuclear alliance system and not have and that people wouldn't accept that they felt they would have to be able to be far more conscious that we had an official position like Costa Rica, Sweden or Switzerland who are all neutral states and they are neutral because they felt it would be in their defence interests not to have some big nuclear protector who would trap them into an nuclear war and its been very very difficult to get across the idea to New Zealanders that if they're part of a nuclear alliance they are more likely than not to be part of any nuclear war. That their security is in not being part of a nuclear alliance even to be a peace maker as we tried to make it happen because then it would be less likely quite a bit less likely to be included in any nuclear war as a target or whatever. Now it's been extremely difficult to get that across to a lot of New Zealanders.

That's something I've never understood from what I've read I think it's great that you were promoting this that NZ could take this stance of being neutral country and act as more of mediator.

That was our role that we'd been promoting ever since we were formed in 1980.

I've never understood why we not hear more about other countries, you mentioned Sweden and there would be other Scandinavian countries and other places that we could learn a lot from.

Sweden, Switzerland.

Why don't we hear much about those countries?

Well I think one reason is there is a generally provincial attitude in this country of a lack of interest in subjects like that. And two it's counter to everything that many New Zealanders have been brought up with and believe in. We've got to have alliances to protect us, period. No argument according to a lot of them. When we say look alliances trap you into wars you couldn't otherwise fight and make you enemies you wouldn't otherwise have what's so smart about that? They don't want to hear that message. Alliances are the thing, period. End of argument. They don't argue it's like the Bushites today the people doing George Bush whether Bush is right or wrong it doesn't matter he's George Bush he must be right. Even if he's a stupid nincompoop he's still right. If he's a monkey he's still right. You know. People are stupid in the mass often. Some people, they don't think. They don't use their head. They're like dogs fighting and following their master.

I was quite impressed to read that when you were promoting the positive neutrality – how do you describe that? A stance that NZ could take or a whole new political viewpoint?

We took the position that we as a nation could support the idea of positive neutrality not only to be neutral but to be actively peacemaking and finding solutions and trying to set up a situation where we could be a part of the solution to the problem. That this was a proper role, not only for NZ but for other small states that had no axe to grind. We didn't have an arms industry to speak of. We could be very useful to the big nuclear powers that could squash us any time. If we were a peacemaking nation often we would be turned to by other states who felt they needed some assistance to provide a peaceful solution to their dispute. This applied to the US to Russia, wherever. That NZ should promote itself and make ourselves available in that role. Now you've seen some things happening in the last decade or so, the Bougainville dispute, we played that role. Fiji to a degree, we played that role. We'd been playing the role to a degree even going to the Middle East today. Mr Goff was not only criticised for trying to play that role, shows you what's happened. Because the Israelis don't really want peace anyway. And anybody who threatens to bring peace, he becomes an enemy unfortunately, except well, you've got Bush supposedly trying to do it now, but I think it's just charade he doesn't really mean it. Anyway that's by the way, the point is we promoted this ideal for NZ as a way that the nuclear free policy would be acceptable to other states because we were doing something positive. We were not isolationist because look we're going out there we're trying to make peace. Is that isolationist? Drawing into a whole under a nuclear umbrella is isolationist. Because you think that you are being protected by this great big nuclear umbrella but you're just doing what any dog would do, is follow the master. Rather than trying to be an internationalist making peace along the lines of the UN which is what we are supposed to do, according to the UN charter. Anyway, so we had a very good argument for positive neutrality. And we still have.

What really impressed me from what I've read was that it really cut across political allegiances because Labour picked it up, National party MPs picked it up and the NZ party at that time and even Bob Jones.

Well it's a good idea whose time had come and so it was picked up to a degree. I think you see that today in the policies of NZ. That general approach to things.

But I think for some people who maybe of my age who didn't realise that this had been put forward at that time to understand that people could put aside some of their politics and actually agree on a way forward for NZ as a country I think is quite monumental in our history.

That's why we tried to be a non political party. And tried to just back the idea rather than a particular party.

It must have stirred up a lot of conversations, just in general in amongst the public.

Well we'd hope so.

From people who hear their MPs speaking out for something that maybe they hadn't thought about previously or thought that went along with their party line. But it was change,

Yes, I think it did certainly promote a lot of thought among a lot of people at that time. But you notice now that there seems to be a trend of let's go back to ANZUS. Let's revive the nuclear alliance amongst some people. Then US doesn't like it so we should drop it.

Do you think as a country we have actually ever let go of ANZUS?

It's always been there, because Labour designed it that way, when they designed their nuclear free act they definitely built it so that we were still a part of ANZUS. We never actually formally gave that up although the vote of the US was to write us out of it for a while and prevented us having intelligence and so on. We always assumed we were a part of ANZUS and a part of the Australian defence effort as well.

Yes, because I found it interesting at the recent Peace workshops when Nicky Hager was speaking just about the fact that our whole military set up is so aligned with the United States, Britain and Australia that until, we'll always be a part of ANZUS until we step away from everything being so fine tuned, I think that's what he was saying. That that's always going on in the background.

It's always going on, that's it and he did point that out very very well and so even though they went nuclear free they still had their ANZUS ties, because our whole military tradition and all our military is ANZUS oriented and US oriented and Australia oriented so it is quite a miracle that we were able to go nuclear free really. When you consider all those other pressures, the traditional pressures which still exist and are still as strong as ever. Although most of the country agrees with being nuclear free I think Bush demonstrated that it doesn't matter whether the rest of the country agrees with if you've got a small kernel of strong support and you're at the top you can get away with bloody murder anytime you want. And he's showing us he's showing today that a so called democracy can be just as much a dictatorship as any of the fascists' military dictatorships. He's doing the same thing, and he's altering

the fundamental principals in defence with the nuclear thing and treaties that governments have worked years to get. There's the ABM treaty the nuclear proliferation treaty, the non nuclear, all that. Previous American governmental and among the Un itself have worked very very hard at these things and Bush is throwing the whole lot out and saying no to nuclear weapons are good for you.

We'll have war thanks, do you object, you're not with me you're against me. You're with the terrorists. So we can dismiss you and the media you come and be on my side. He seems to, I'm sure that he's as shocked as everybody who thinks is. He's as shocked too with how it has been for him to do it. He's managed to capture. He's illegitimate in the first place because he's got the supreme court there who appointed him President, so that's not legitimate and then he's managed to with his help of his right wing fanatics there, managed to get control of the bloody country. Send it to war and now position himself at the next election he'll probably get in again. / Not only that, but the Senate and the Congress are like passive little poodles doing what ever he wants. It's just disgusting, but it does show that democracy is just a farce in the States today. I'd love to go on a lecture tour of the States.

Is that something you'd like to do in the near future?

Well it depends on sponsorship; it depends on a lot of things. I'd like to try it here, at least the NZ aspect of it here first. I'd like to do another lecture tour of NZ. Pointing out nuclear dangers of today and what is needed is an educational effort in the States and I believe their going ahead with that to a degree too. In newspapers, lecture tours and so on the same way we did it here. That we have done that kind of thing here and I know there are an awful lot of good groups in the States.

That's another thing, we don't, this is where the media lets you down or controls a lot of thing is because there are a lot of active people in the United States who obviously are working for the Peace movement who you have to work hard to hear about.

I'll give you one reason, Murdoch, you've heard of Murdoch who owns the Press and quite a few other NZ papers. Murdoch also finances the right wing group who is behind Bush and is now on top positions in the defence department. Through his publication that he finances Mr Crystal writes it. So, Murdoch is very much into politics and manipulating events that go the way they have gone in the States Now, the Press will jump through hoops to try and convince you that it's a free press and they wouldn't think of being influenced by somebody like Murdoch. But it's just an outright bald lie. Of course they're influenced. They are influenced in the way he appoints people to run in these different newspapers, who reflect these views. And what do they think their future career is based on? It's based on being a Murdoch.

How did we ever let that happen, in NZ?

Not enough New Zealanders give a shit about what happens to their country. Or they say, "What can I do?" You know it's the usual excuses. They just don't care enough about these things to bother. They don't think it's relevant. Or they convince themselves that Murdoch won't affect the Press or do this or do that.

This is the start of the second part of an interview with Larry Ross. Today is the 9th June 2003.

I was wanting to go back into a little more depth about the concept of positive neutrality and in this leaflet, which was following on from the peace workshop in 1981.

That was the formal introduction of the positive neutrality concept to a wider audience. I'd introduced it before to smaller audiences but this was the first time it was sort of formally accepted by the Peace national Peace organisation that meets once a year.

You presented it as a 5 point plan for the country. Could you just explain to me what the five points of the plan are?

Yes I will I'll just read them out.

1. A detailed study of the ANZUS treaty itself.
2. Insistence that the NZ Government request clarification of those provisions that allow US ships or aircraft carrying nuclear weapons or substances to enter into the territory with a view to modifying the treaty so that such nuclear incursions are forbidden.
3. Development of alternative policies for NZ defence which would not entail alliances with countries employing nuclear or chemical or biological weapons.
4. Wide education of the NZ public about the implications and liabilities of the ANZUS treaty.

Now on the question of positive neutrality I don't see it's mentioned there unless.

What was point 5?

That's what I'm trying to figure out. There's 4 points there, that the NZ peace workshop endorsedthat was another one. Declare it to be a project of the NZ wide peace movement. I'm not sure - that looks as if it was applied to the Home base Pacific Pilgrimage which was separate campaign, by George Armstrong.

Did you have anything to do with that campaign?

No I didn't. My opinion of it was that it jumped from local concerns to international and the best NZ could ever hope to achieve there would be some kind of international persuasive role, but the Home Base Pacific Pilgrimage was really dealing with, well mainly with US and Russia at that time. They wanted the Pacific nuclear free. There's also 5 other nuclear powers, France, Britain and the other one, and of course the US Russia and England. 5 nuclear powers and I didn't think it was practical to as far as achieving something, I think it was excellent as far as education on the danger of these nuclear ships turning around in the Pacific, but in terms of actually accomplishing something tangible, I didn't think it was there. That we couldn't other than the educational role couldn't actually achieve some legislation. So that's why I focused on the NZ role, which

was completely to make NZ nuclear free... Now on the concept of Positive neutrality this particular, it was approved. Did we not mention it here?

Yes I think it does say that it is approved and that it was going to be adopted.

“That the NZ Peace Movement should as an immediate objective the attainment of a NZ nuclear Weapon Free Zone.” (Reads from the 1981 Peace pamphlet). Okay that’s one of the points. Another point, that this workshop supports the promotion of a NZ nuclear Weapon Free zone with positive neutrality. The 5 point plan as outlined by Larry Ross. Or those parts of the plan with which they agree. Because some people may not want this or that or want somethingbut if they gave general approval of the gist of it then that would be a positive step. And that groups and individuals do what they can to facilitate a speaking tour on the NZ nuclear Weapon Free Zone with positive Neutrality in March 1992. And that’s when I first went on the road to promote the concept. And associated publications and publicity. OK, now that local peace groups re-evaluate our current defence agreement with US and Australia as defined in the ANZUS treaty, and then we went to the steps of reviewing that was, 1,2,3,4. OK? There we are I think that covers it pretty well. Now I’ll give you something specific **on positive neutrality**. First of all the neutral States are Austria, Switzerland, Finland to a large degree, Malta, Sweden is pretty neutral. Now that means they don’t participate in other people’s conflicts and I thought that would be an ideal role for NZ. But what do we do about all the people who think oh my god we’re without any defence we need a great power protector. Even though the nuclear connection can subject us to becoming a target in a nuclear war because potential enemies of the US would include all participating nations as potential targets, Because the US could base it’s nuclear weapons here. Which a lot of people think they did to some degree. Certainly when the ships are in harbour. So in a nuclear war it would really make us a target. And I tried to get that across wherever I could and I also in order to give those people who were afraid of Russia and any other potential enemy like Japan. It’s a very big thing in this country that they do need a big protector, because they’re so small. I mean this goes on on and on and they just don’t accept the boomerang argument big powers bring you wars. You want to go to war? Join a big power alliance. OK, they don’t really buy into that, you got a denial a blank factor so, what do you give them? You give them positive neutrality. Now positive neutrality means that we are neutral alright we’re also more than neutral we are supplying an infrastructure of peacemaking in other words we’re devoting a couple of million of dollars a year to or more what ever it takes to create force of inspectors, of mediators of negotiators of people who can function at the highest level with other governments. And to say look if you want to have a peaceful solution we’d be happy to help, we can’t guarantee anything but at least we’re here. And we’re interested. So this kind of philosophy we tried to promote. Now we argued that if we had this philosophy.

Tape 3 Side One.

About positive neutrality. That we not only would offer to be a negotiator a mediator an intermediary sometimes where you don’t do any negotiation but you carry messages back and forth to the participants in the conflict and you’re trusted by each side. That’s important and we have to be neutral, we’d have to be neutral

to do that role. Alright, now the next step would be convincing the world that we're serious. This isn't just a facade, we mean business, we're here and we're going to do this. And if you want it it's there, if you don't well, you know what fate has in store for those who keep building weapons of mass destruction in the next few decades at some point or other it will be used by accident or miscalculation or madness. As Kennedy warned. Then the whole experiment of humanity on this planet is done, finished end of story there is no more, sorry. You don't get a second chance once you've made the mistake of nuclear war there's no second chances. So, we would have a very strong story to play such a role a very strong persuasive story to be accepted. Now that means primarily acceptance by potential enemies, all the nuclear weapon states are potential enemies. There could come a time when any one of them might attack. And there could come a time when a lot of them are pretty crazed with half their countries destroyed and their hands on the button shaking wondering who to blame for this? Just like the US with the Taliban or Osama Bin Laden going into the Twin towers, who do we blame? Let's get at them, let's go to war. Anyway they go and the population re with them. 70% of the Americans like this, they think it's great and not that they think it's great but they think it's absolutely necessary. What ever you want to call it, and there are some who do like war I mean they are pro war. Anyway so, we're playing a very different role, but we already have established in the minds of all people all other nations, this is our role. Let's say that it isn't successful that there is a nuclear war and half the world or more is being destroyed and nations all over are wondering who to hit next? Who could be doing it? But we have our credentials; we've already established our credential. We didn't wait until there was nuclear war to do something we did it now because we could see it coming. Now that's positive neutrality. And it's action, action internationally for peace, now that is positive, positive, positive not withdrawal neutrality. Hey we're safe screw the rest of you we're in it.

Active Peacemakers.

More than sheltering under a nuclear umbrella and shivering and waiting for Washington to tell us what do we do next? Is that ignorant I'll say it's ignorant but the most ignorant thing you can possibly do with a Super power that has often indicated even back in the Reagan years, it's out of control, really it is in the hands and responding to the pressures of the military industrial complex, as President Eisenhower warned back in about 1960 1961 beware of the military industrial complex there are tremendous pressures for war. Well, that military industrial complex is on the road it's 400 billion a year and it's moving toward 500 billion and yet supposedly we've hit the end of the cold war and there should be peace dividend. What a joke, what a joke. There's no peace dividend and instead they're using the war on terrorism as their justification.

For more war?

For more war against who ever they want. But like most experts believe that the way to defeat terrorism is not through making war because it's an incredibly destructive way of making war on a nation to try and get a few terrorist scattered here and there and you don't reach them anyway and they just go to somewhere else. The way to get terrorists is through increasing international cooperation

amongst police and intelligence agents bumping your budgets up in intelligence gathering and enforcement and police so that you really are dealing with these players, you really are infiltrating and you know everything that's going on in the potentially terrorist world. And you can nab it in the butt. Ok but they decided to throw that away. Why? Because of the military industrial complex. It was so much more profitable to go to war, the profits are enormous and the budgets expand as much as you want. And it's wonderful for politicians because almost all the senators are congressmen would not get into power in the first place if it wasn't for kick backs and campaign funds given to them legally under the American constitution. They're allowed to fight their election on funds that are contributed to it. So that means the military industrial complex and various firms would be getting contracts in various States are contributing to Senator's funds. Now, you're not about to see those senators and congress men vote against that. I means they'd just cut their throat and they wouldn't get into power in the first place unless they had pretty well sold their soul to the military industrial complex in order to get the campaign contributions which would allow them to get to power. And that means from then on they're compromised you can't expect the decisions that would benefit humanity or even benefit the US, the longer term interests of the US in a social set up like that. I think that's why President Eisenhower warned about of the military industrial complex. Now other people just don't understand that. I don't know why, it's too involved and there's also the denial factor. There's also this tremendously embedded idea in our society and in other societies about being protected with weapons of any kind. Whether it's a gun in the house or whether it's a nuclear weapon, or a missile and the more that are out there the more you've got to spend to protect yourself. The more sophisticated it gets the more you have to spend. So what is the US doing? They're going into space. And oh what a bonanza for the military industrial campaign is space! Out of this world, I mean they're going to make fortunes trying to put weapons in space. And I've got all the data on that. Part of my lecture tour I think would be on space and the weapon of mass destruction and trying to do something about that. I have a plan in mind but I'm not going to reveal it at this time.

Okay.

But I mean people generally have not particularly given me any great credit for the nuclear free campaign and yet that was born in my mind the positive neutrality concept was born in my mind but people who originate projects become tall poppies and you got to smash them. Now you've originated a project didn't you, and its working, its good well I hope somebody doesn't try and take it away from you.

Me too.

Because it should live and breathe and you should be rewarded for something valuable, now that's the way things should be, now maybe I should have been too. And wasn't it's like in any society, society will suffer in the long run if I don't get out and do the kind of job I think I can still do.

Right okay, I just wanted to go back to you presented the idea of positive neutrality at this conference in 1981 do you think from 1981 through to now 2003, that NZ society and or NZ government have actual moved quite ahead with the concept of positive neutrality?

I think it has filtered through and certainly one of the prime exponents became John Gallagher who joined our group back in the '80's when we first formed, he actually heard me explore the concept before I introduced it to the National Peace Workshop. And he became convinced that it was the right way to go even then. Before '81 and he's written extensively on it as well. So you'd be able to get a good interview with him because he is very good about things like and in many ways has remained more focussed on that.

Do you think our role as a mediator within international affairs and sort our role in aid and that part that we play when there is war is more determined by whose in government at the time?

Oh yes, yes. National was always from the beginning hostile to the idea of a nuclear weapon free zone they wouldn't listen to any arguments and the argument for a military alliance with a Super power was always dominant in their minds and still is although they did adopt the nuclear free position for NZ when they'd lost an election or two they realised it was the only to get elected and to make it a non issue was to say the we embrace nuclear free as well. But now some of the major voices against eh nuclear free zone and to repeal it are from both ACT, Prebble and also from National. Walls' (?) he did paper on it, somebody in National.

Within NZ society do think that we have also developed that we as a society don't move towards the need or arming ourselves as with America, or do you think that actually we are now beginning a society of people that lives more in fear and feels that we need weapons, how do you view it?

It's very good question, very pointed and I would say since the introduction of our plan and since NZ became nuclear Free in 1984 and Lange pledged that this was then way we would go and I don't think Labour really realised the consequences and how badly the US would regard this however they'd cast the dice and they were stuck with it and although Lange at one time it was rumoured he was trying to wriggle out the rest of the Labour party kept him on track for a nuclear free. In term so positive neutrality they didn't adopt that that would have been too bigger step for them in '84 but they did adopt some of the attitudes so that in Bougainville they showed that NZ could take a leadership role in trying to resolve the dispute in Bougainville in PNG. We played a positive role there; we had people come to Burnham for discussions and so on and so forth. In the same way with Fiji and so on. Now as well as these positive roles there I think Mr Goff went to Israel and Palestine with that in mind because he wanted to both Sharon and Arrafat. But of Course Sharon holding the upper hand and having maybe 4 or 500 nuclear weapons doesn't feel he has to talk to Arafat. So they are trying to demonise him unfortunately. And put in this other guy so it's a pretty bad situation. So, that one failed but at least the intention was there by Goff and this Fiji of course and we certainly played role in that. It's a matter of knowing when you have to use force and when you can use peace keeping when you can use

mediating maybe or intermediary work and we don't what's gone on behind the scenes but we do know of the good work they've done and we do know all the peace keeping forces stationed around the world of NZ. So we are trying to carve out a role as a peace maker, peace keeper as much as we can and supported of the UN. And being a supporter of the UN is a major reason that NZ didn't go in to help the US and Australia and Britain all our old allies went into the war on Iraq except for little New Zealand. What check! I mean we're supposed to do what we're told especially when our major allies tell us what to do. Who do we think we are? Anyway we think we are, we have our own mind and we're capable of independent thought and we can not only see the disastrous consequences of bush's policy in Iraq but also disastrous consequences for the UN and international law, so we said No. And we're still saying No. And we're still waiting for adverse consequences if there will be any.

Do you think it's only small influential groups of people in NZ that have played a part in NZ's peacekeeping role internationally? Because do you think the public at large understands that we do have this role?

No I don't think they do because the media has not been particularly supportive or interested. The media is mainly interested in our traditional role and promoting that. Which is as a member, a loyal member of ANZUS and where the US goes, so NZ will go. Where Australia goes so NZ will go and where Britain goes so NZ will go. And where's my violin?

And that is as far as they can think really. And they base it all on the idea that we need the big protector. They cannot see and they will not accept that the big protector carries with the terrible backlash if it goes out of hand. They haven't extended their research or interest in this matter to see how it could get out of hand. It can go out of hand by intention, which is now happening with the US nuclear policy or it can get out of hand through accident, miscalculation, or act or madness as President Kennedy warned the UN in 1961.

Do you think that our story of ourselves in terms of how we just go along with the bigger powers if there is war, that our story about ourselves as peacekeeping, peacemaking country will change, that the public will start to maybe talk about us as not going to war but doing the alternative and being proactive in education about Peace?

Yes, I think the Labour Party has been too timid that it should have been more active and in accordance with the 5 point plan, which incidently most if it was adopted by Labour Party conferences back in the '80s. There were actual remits that were passed, approving this. But they never did anything about it.

And then a lot of individual MPs from other parties adopted it as well, or agreed with it as well, is that right?

Well I know the Green Party certainly goes along, because their platform is very similar to the positive neutrality platform - the other peace organisations too. So, they're very much attuned. But not ACT, and not Winston Peters what ever his party is. And certainly the Alliance under Anderton was always very sympathetic

as well. And Labour, many of them were sympathetic as a matter of fact we had a conference in Wellington, '82, '83 or '84 and both Fran Wilde and Helen Clark, addressed our conference and gave papers. So they were subjective to this kind of thinking. I think that's reflective in Helen Clark's stance today. She hasn't just forgotten it. She isn't acting out of political expediency and she's not a captive of the military industrial complex, because there is hardly any military industry in this country. But there is a very vocal and powerful right wing lobby in NZ, now I think that's embedded in the National Party too. Their attitudes. So, in many ways NZ does have a historic choice and because so many New Zealanders are apathetic and maybe don't give damn and have she's right attitude they haven't extended much support for the Peace movement. Generally Labour itself who set up a disarmament group PACDAC (or reference to PADET), what ever you call it with funds from the Rainbow Warrior made sure that it wouldn't be very effective because it included several controlling people who were anti nuclear free, they really tended to be more the traditional type thinkers, rather than new thinkers. So they effectively blocked a lot of aid that otherwise might have gone to people like the Nuclear Free Zone Committee as we were know then or to the NZ Nuclear Free Peacemaking Association. We were to be kept down. That was I think the attitude and consequently we did get a trickle of aid but it was minimal. Nothing serious, no serious money has ever come our way. And you can't expect to go anywhere if you're broke and in debt. We're at \$500 as it is now. You know where am I going? Down the drain, probably. Anyway who cares? Not very many.

You've felt that's been the message for years.

I've felt well, often I've felt quite worthless, that the work that I'm doing isn't significant and I might as well forget it and you know there's a tendency to despair and wonder why I've wasted my life in making New Zealand nuclear Free and positive neutrality and all that stuff when no-one really gives a shit.

Well then what has kept you going then, if you've felt like that?

I suppose it's just become a part of my character I suppose. But I think the interesting thing is that I could have gone I think far further if I'd have more active encouragement.

And some more resources.

More resources, more encouragement would have pushed me onward rather than the constant discouragement. I think its characteristic of NZ society. If it's a tall poppy – cut it off. Cut it off.

That does lead me to one of the other questions I have which is, I wanted to ask what have you learnt about yourself through your involvement in the Peace movement?

I don't know, what have I learned about myself, is that I have limitations, maybe I get discouraged too easily, maybe I don't persevere enough with my ideas and a few things like that. That I really do need to have more encouragement to functions at more of a maximum peak in terms of output. That eventually the

situation does wear me down. The feeling of worthlessness tends to prevail. That it's all been meaningless. And why have I ever bothered?

Can you pin point some things that you can actually say “there’s a change and maybe that wouldn’t have happened without the work that I’ve done”.

Oh yes I think maybe the Bougainville thing and the present stance of the NZ government which is adopting a neutrality non-alignment stance with regards to other allies on the Un and other things and that generally a lot of the influential thinkers in society, it has helped to evolve the attitude. Not that I'm the only one, but at least I was a big voice, especially with our Nuclear Free magazine going out. That helped a lot. But another thing too is, with the end of the Cold War the US and Russia persuaded the world that everything's alright now. People thought oh she's okay no attack, no threat; they're not going to go to war. Great! We'll get on with business, paying off our mortgage. Which is fine, you're expected to do that but on the other hand it meant that nay support for the peace movement, small as it was dwindled even further. And any interest was lost, because people said hey there's not going to be a war, the Cold Wars over Peace dividend's coming everyone would forget it.

And forget that nuclear weapons even exist?

That's right. They don't care. If the threat's over it's over. The US is supposedly disarming their warships so what's to worry? You see. I mean it's also well known and even stated by US authorities we can re-arm these ships at anytime with nuclear weapons. You think they'll broadcast the act if they ever do, and say sorry NZ we had to re-arm these you can ban us again. They're not going to ell us that. Do you think people like editors of the newspapers will take that into account? No way. Because so many of the editors are beholden themselves to the military industrial complex because of the links with people like Murdoch in the States, now Murdoch has financial interest. This right newspaper publishing the material of the right clique surrounding George Bush, so solidly behind George Bush. He's solidly behind the war in Iraq and anything else the Us wants to claim as a war against Terror even though it's quite counter- productive and I'm sure he's intelligent enough to know that. Now that means if he owns a lot of papers in NZ is he going to say oh okay you can write the opposite view? And it's fine I'll promote you and make you editors here and there. No. They want to get ahead they want to well in the world and they know that one way is to keep Murdoch happy. And so thus you have the vision of the Press which is editorially for the war. For the War! Repeating all kinds of lies. I'm sure the editor knows they're lies but he also knows that's where his bread is buttered. So, there you are. Murdock probably pats him on his pointed head and that's fine.

Just as an example, have you ever had meetings face to face with any of these people?

I have spoke to people in the, and I've had some interviews with the Press, certainly originally. But, nothing at the moment and not the real top editors. They like to keep a shield around them, they don't want ideas which they know maybe

true but they're not convenient and they are certainly not profitable to promote such ideas in NZ.

So, it's very difficult actually getting to these people that you really do need to influence?

Well I would say so. I mean I haven't done a real campaign to get to top editors because usually it stops at the intermediary level and I talk to underlings. I have gone out of my way to speak and give interviews at every centre that I've had a lecture tour in. On my way up in my lecture tour I always stop at the daily paper and I show them what I'm doing and often it can result in a big interview. Because it's the first time any peace person has ever stopped in say, Manuawatu or Gore or wherever I am. Oamaru and some of the others, anyway I've gotten front page articles in the rural population. So this is pretty invaluable. So who else in NZ does that? Well, nobody. And what's of significance to them? Not much. But reaching the rural population could have been worth ...

Tape 3 Side 2

You were saying about reaching the rural population.

I felt that was quite important because they do count a lot in the vote. And if you're going to make an impact nationally and also influencing the national Party you've got to reach the rural population with the message. Now these are people who are used to thinking in foreign affairs it's a pretty full life being a farmer. They haven't got time and they certainly haven't got the inclination, any spare time is spent on rugby, beer or what ever. And international affairs and what's going on in the world is a no-no. It's banned. Anyway I tried to introduce it but it is something they should be talking about because the future of their farm depends on peace. Fair trade and all the other things that come into that.

Maybe somewhere along the line you have gotten some farmers talking.

I think that because I am in their paper, a lot. I could have been a lot more. Some of it must have got through. They must have read it. The Ashburton Paper is another good example, I've still got copies somewhere of all these articles too. And in Gisborne another big article.

You've kept everything really, haven't you? Your garage is so full.

So full of stuff, it's all there. In terms of does it pay the mortgage? No, no it doesn't. So, although I've generated perhaps hundreds of thousands or more of publicity that's it. I get nothing. Thank you very much, good bye. So, I feel sometimes a bit bitter about this, but I still keep going for the time being. But I don't know for how much longer I'll go. Some of the ideas I have which I think are pretty valuable, especially at this time when the world is on the brink of disaster still not very many people care, or are aware or even want to be aware of how close we are to ultimate disaster. They just don't give a shit. You feel why should I bother? Anyway I don't want to be ranting and raving about that forever. Go on.

The next question is really just going back to at the start of the interview there were a couple of terms that you used that I was quite interested in. I know that one was the way in which you described yourself and that was as an ethical humanist because at the start of the interview I was asking you if religion had played a part in your life and how you'd been influenced by religion and you then described yourself as an ethical humanist. Could you explain to me what that is?

Now a humanist is someone which has looked at different religions and concluded that there is no God in the Christian sense of the word, and the Christian myths are myths and stories that sometimes contain good ethical things and sometimes don't. Especially the Old Testament. I've been very interested in and because my Grandfathers were both ministers, one a Baptist and the other a Methodist that influence of religion and social concern. They were both socially concerned transferred to my parents who transferred it to me, so I was brought up with ethical Christian values. And this played a part today, why I've chosen, why I still feel compelled to go on. But I'm ethical humanist, humanist doesn't say there's no God forget everything else, there's no ethics and so on. The ethical humanist thinks sure there is no God but we have to learn together to, live together as a human race, that's the only chance we've got, we can terminate it, therefore it is our job if we value this life and the future of the species we will do something to preserve it and that's why I'm doing what I'm doing to try and preserve the species. Really, that's what it all boils down to, as an ethical humanist. That's why I'm a Unitarian. The Unitarian religion started in England back in 17 or 1800. It became, evolved in the States into Ethical humanism in many instances. It's still theologically inclined in some areas, but it's ethically humanist inclined in others. So we live with each other in perfect harmony. The two strains. But even the religious, going back to Christian traditions, even that is far more liberal than say the Baptists are today or the Anglicans.

Right. Thank you.

But we believe Christ was a good leader and he was an ethical man. So his examples are of value to everybody, we don't throw them away but we look at them in a new light. And we'd like to promote that. That Christ was not the son of God but he was an enlightened leader.

Right.

Okay.

There was another term that either came through something I read or something you said, which was talking about being a World Federalist.

A World Federalist is a, the idea is that nations would combine with the one world government under a federal system and that all States would have a say but that central decisions would be made by a central authority and enforced if necessary by a central authority, it wouldn't necessarily change the governments in every country but it would just take away their right to make war. If there's any disputes it would be settled by federal government. And we felt, I still feel that

this system is essential for human survival. To take away the war making rights of nations. Of course a tremendous reduction in arms would then be possible. There would be huge savings and huge amounts of money and forms of aid and education health sanitation everything of this type. There would be a great advance of humanity if we could achieve a world government. It doesn't look at if that's a practical alternative now because of the power of the military industrial complex. Now the world government is an anathema to them because it means a loss of business and to them the only ethical thing to them is profit. I mean that's more important than life itself. It's like King Midas, eventually he turned the world to gold but what did he have?

Just gold.

That's all. It was worthless.

Do you think the United Nations comes anywhere near to taking that lead?

It's a definite step. The USA played a big role in setting up the UN and should be given credit for that and today, reminded of it because they seem to be in the lead now to get rid of it, because they want to do their own thing, which means set up an empire I think. The UN is an important step which should be supported as much as possible.

I've just got a last couple of questions and that was, do you think that within the peace, the history, the story of people who've worked for peace, their whole lives have been committed to peaceful solutions, that as a peace person or peace worker however you describe yourself, that it's constantly the same sort of issues, the same things happening again and again that happen through out history but just in a different way. That you're looking at the same thing again and again and looking at the same solutions again and again?

Yes I think there's certainly this; I've noticed it recently when looking at some of my own papers, going back 20 years or so that so much then still applies today. The arms race was a danger then it is today even more so, more so today than any time. So therefore the same remedies apply and so on. Mankind is repeating the same mistakes. There's an old saying, "Those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it." Well we don't know history and we are doomed to repeat it. And we are repeating it. That's why wars keep repeating and perhaps getting more frequent under the Bush administration. Because every war is a wonderful profit opportunity, and in the States, profit is the great God. If you can make more profit, you're closer to God actually. I mean there are ministers in the States preaching that profit is good. Those who are richest are the most blessed by God. You know this kind of crap.

So, you've briefly said that you're still active today and you've got some plans. Could you maybe just for the sake of this as a record, explain how you are still actively working for peace and within the peace movement today?

Yes, I'm a member of PAN, Peace Action Network. I've been active there in helping set up the speaker's bureaux and typing it all up and getting it on line so that people can learn more about the Iraq war and why from our point of view. Why we're doing what we're doing and so on. Also participating in and I'm going to a meeting tonight actually with PAN. They have one every Monday for instance. So, there's that and then I've continued as Secretary of the NZ Nuclear Free Zone Committee, it's not as active was once and I would like to make it more active again. I've tried to get more people interested and aware of the threats to humanity now but, I realise it's important to have something new, because I don't want us to sound like a broken record on this. The reasons I do sound like a broken record is because the problem is still there. We haven't solved the problem t all. We've some times covered it up with a lot of half baked false treaties, like the recent one between the Soviet Union and the US to reduce nuclear missiles. They haven't reduced anything, they've just transferred them to storage and they can reactivate them anytime. It's just to fool the publics of the two. Russia is going along with the States because it's in their interest as well.

You did say that you would like to do another speaking tour.

Yeah I would like to do that. Well, on Space and also on the necessity of keeping NZ nuclear free now more than ever. And about the lowering of the nuclear threshold and about preventative war, so called and what's happening in Washington today and the influence of the far right in the Bush administration and where that's leading the world. The sheer danger of it all, I'd like to talk about all that. I've some ideas on what we can do against it; because I haven't entered into this business of peace without thinking what can I do that's positive to remedy the situation? Not just what I can do tell people, hey it's real bad today. But we can do if we want to alter the situation.

And what would you say or what would you like to say to people of my generation that we can do to build on the work that you've done? To keep it going.

Well, what you're doing is a good example of a positive response because you're interested enough to look at history through the eyes of some of the ones' who made it. Right? So, that's positive. So you're learning from history and you're probably better able to see about repeating it and what to do. Well, generally I would say to devote a certain amount of their time to international affairs, to understand it better and to help those groups that are trying to do something and support them, either with participation or financially. One way or another. I recognise that there are a lot of people in the world who could afford lots of money but they can't afford the time because they're too busy making it.

Do you think that not affording them time?

They could afford to pay some money and let somebody else do it.

Also do you think it's about numbers, it's about that there's more momentum in the peace4 movement when there's more people and that it's about keeping up the number of people being active?

I think that helps a lot and there's been a big fall off in interest with the end of the Iraqi war now, and that's fallen well down and we're doing a demonstration on July 4th so we'll find out just how many are left. I would say educationally we have to get to the people to make them feel that threat that there's a fire toward us on the horizon and it will sweep into all our houses unless we stop it. So we have to mobilise, it is like a forest fire. I have to make people feel that. That's what I would like to make them feel, so it just motivates them, the same way you would be motivated if you did see a fire next door, to do something you'd get up with a hose, wouldn't you. Okay, that's what I mean. If the Japanese were about to invade you'd get active again. I'm saying get active now. That's what we're saying.

Live an active life.

Actively involved, yeah.

Rather than just waiting. Any other thoughts or reflections about the work you've been doing? I really admire the way you've been so committed and it's something you've just lived, it's in your home, it's in you relations with other people, it's been everything.

That's right. Well, reflections on it is that through out history mankind has indulged in many many wars thousands of wars, and it seems to be a part of human nature to do this although it is possible to live with out it and some societies have done that. Therefore our role is to try and make that possible for the global society. That's the role. I think the colossal size of the task, it really is so colossal I don't whether we can do it or not and I think possibly the forces of evil are so well embedded in our culture, the military industrial complex and whatever, they're so hugely powerful and powerful financially that they can overcome any tendency toward peace and prevail with the military attitude and response everywhere and that ultimately this will probably result in a major nuclear war. I think we haven't got much chance and I think the lack of support for the effort we doing is one good indication why I'm right, because there isn't the support and one thing I will be doing is trying to make another appeal for support and see if there is any possibility of awakening enough to keep going. If there is I'll try and make a more full time dedicated year to it. As it is now I'm torn in different directions. I feel I would like to devote the rest of my life to the peace quest. It would be very nice if I could and I think I have a lot I can give, a lot of knowledge and lot of creativity and so on that has proved itself effective and unique. Okay. I would it to be recognised and I would like to go with it.

That's great. Whilst you can foresee the looming possible disaster of a nuclear war, how do you often foresee the positive change as well and do you feel that there's like even now a new change or energy that could just happen, and take us even in direction of being stronger on our peace stance as a country.

Well I don't think it will happen by accident, it will happen if people like me and I'm not the only one in the world who believes this. But, if people like me are

encouraged and supported you are more likely to see it happen than another. But otherwise you'll a decay of the whole thing and ultimately following the US and getting back into line with ANZUS and accepting the nuclear warships. I think is a distinct possibility unless we've got a firm philosophy in place that can cope with say another major disaster in the States which everybody is forecasting, another big terrorist attack which would again precipitate the US towards war gain somewhere. If that happens, I think NZ is really at risk because it hasn't got a strong philosophy in place for say positive neutrality. It hasn't said this is where we're going, because... I think if Helen Clark did that she'd get a popular reward, the people would say that's right, sounds good to me they'd go.

I think so too.

I think so. I think well, part of my job is to try and convince politicians that it is a good way to go, including Helen Clark's government and that they should be more assertive in their positive steps, rather treading daintily through the roses, as they do now. Obfuscating the issues, so that people are not sure what she's doing. What else can I say? I suppose we could get off on a lot of different things, but basically I'm a little worried about the human nature itself and our propensity to go to war. Our propensity to accept the most silly excuses to justify war at the highest level and how people will lend themselves to this and sacrifice their sons and daughters to it. The great God of War. They do it, they still do it, and I thought we might run out of that. That kind of attitude, but it's there in NZ, unless we have positive philosophy to identify it and say hey we've got to stop this before it's too late. But I don't know if there's the will. I just don't know yet.

Thanks Larry.

What else can I say, you've really got me wound up and it's good, I really welcome this, because you're bringing out the best in me. Something's that I'd forgotten and that I'd just neglected, that you've brought out by your interview. I think you should make yourself available to the national broadcasting Association sometime, when you're ready.

Okay. Thank you for that. I'm glad I've brought out the best in you. As I say I admire you because I think you've done fantastic work and your commitment is just admirable.

That's very nice of you, thank you so much.

Thank you for this interview.

Okay.

One more question Larry. How can we hold onto the work that has already been done and the positive change that has occurred and build on that?

Well, I think that one, there's recognition of the people who've contributed, like myself and others. Because that gives a boost to them to do more, right? I don't mean a little pat on the top of the head and saying good boy, I mean financial and

other wise. Because that's what it all boils down to. Then the other end is persuading the politicians that there are votes in it. That the NZ public will respond to a rational defence policy and not this crazy ANZUS thing and not the old way we need a big protector. Big protectors bring you nuclear war. You've got to get that embedded. People will buy the new philosophy and begin to think the new philosophy when it comes to war. So if there is another big disaster whether it's in the US, England or wherever they won't think we've got to go to war to get rid of this it means let's think creatively, what can we do to solve the problem, not war. Certainly not for us to go into war or to vote for a so called war on terrorism that don't work. It just make more terrorist, I mean the Iraqi society is becoming a breeding ground, as is most of the Middle East as there's war for more terrorists. I think they know bloody well it does. But more terrorists means more for the military industrial complex. If it means more for them it means more profit and profit is God. Right? Okay, that's it. So that's what we're fighting and that's why there's billions and billions against us and huge budgets the peace movement is starved, we can't make this happen by some kind of godly miracle we've got to work at it and get the message out. And create a culture. It's like the 100th monkey phenomena, you've probably heard of that.... But a lot of people will know what I mean when I say the 100th monkey thought that it got by inspiration and stuff well, also if that worked, well the military industrial complex also has it's influence as well as our influence. They influence a lot of people, hugely and not only by doing what they're doing but by sheer propaganda and they pay their propagandists huge salaries to do it. Now against that huge salaries going to propogate war how many huge salaries are going to peace people to propagate peace? You see the imbalance is so huge now that I don't know if we can make it? If whether we can mobilise people to do that?

Thank you.

End.