

89 year old author and retired school teacher Will Foote has been an active member of the peace movement since he attended Teachers' College and University in Christchurch (1937-1939). He was one of a small group who then expressed their opposition to war in the streets of that city. His beliefs resulted in his spending four war-time years in North Island detention camps. After re-admission to the teaching service in 1948 he spent the next 30 years in a variety of teaching positions, mainly in rural areas, and including three years as Principal of Tonga High School in Nuku'alofa. He was an active member of both primary and secondary teachers' organisations promoting the idea of a combined teachers' union and a better deal for rural education at the secondary level.

In retirement in Nelson he was Secretary of the Nelson Peace Group for 16 years and he represented the Nelson-Marlborough area on the Executive Working Group of the national peace movement co-ordinating organisation, Peace Movement Aotearoa, for eight years.

Will has written several books on peace topics. In this book he looks at the appalling human cost of wars, particularly those in which our country has been engaged, and considers the real and given reasons for those wars. He shows that there have always been non-violent alternatives to war and looks forward to the day when non-violent people power will be used to eliminate poverty, the arms race and war.



PASSING BELLS: wars, non-violence & common morality

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Foreword by Dr. Kate Dewes, NZ Representative on the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament

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*I have no country to fight for;
my country is the earth and I am a citizen of the world.*
- Eugene Debs



DEDICATION
To all war resisters

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to all who have assisted me with this book

- Susan Barnes for the original typescript and editorial assistance
- Dr Kate Dewes for the Foreword
- Jaron Foote for the cover design and graphics
- Garrick Tremain for permission to use cartoons
- Steffan Browning, Bob Leonard, the Nelson Mail and the Marlborough Express for permission to use photographs
- the Locke family for permission to quote from Elsie Locke's 'Peace People'
- Rob Tuwhare and the Estate of Hone Tuwhare (honetuwharepoetry@gmail.com) for permission to quote from 'Holy Cities'
- Harper Collins Publishers New Zealand Ltd for permission to quote from Glyn Harper's 'Massacre at Passchendaele'
- the Hocken Library, University of Otago, for permission to quote from R A K Mason's poetry
- Steele Roberts and Derek Wilson for permission to quote from 'Five Holocausts'
- my wife Anne for constant assistance and encouragement

I also acknowledge the help given by Christchurch City Libraries and the inspiration of the writers of the magazines and books listed in the bibliography.

Published by
The Glen Press
Flat 1, 52a Aorangi Rd,
Christchurch 8053,
phone (03) 351 8662

Printed by ??? April 2009

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FOREWORD

Today is Armistice Day. Many of our politicians, military and members of the public are marking the 90th anniversary of the end of World War I when thousands of our male ancestors lost their lives in the madness of battles and mud at Gallipoli and Passchendaele. Like Helen Clark, I too lost three great-uncles while others returned forever damaged by their horrific experiences. A recent visit to their graves and to the local museum at Passchendaele brought home to me the stark realities of the futility of war, and the need to teach future generations that slaughtering each other never solves conflicts. It was heartening to hear a Returned Services Association President agree today, adding ‘We don’t want our young people going to war ever again’.

The stories of both those who went to war, and those who suffered the scorn and wrath of the community to oppose war as conscientious objectors, continue to influence the future foreign and defence policies of our country. Like Will Foote, another of my great uncles was imprisoned in detention camps for the duration of World War II. The sacrifice and moral leadership of these ‘conchies’ is only now being honoured, along with their vision of a peaceful resolution of conflict through active non-violent people power.

Some tangible successes include the reconfiguration of the defence forces for peacemaking and disaster relief, and cancellation of the combat airforce. This was a truly revolutionary achievement by the Helen Clark-led government. New Zealand has almost broken free of major military alliances: instead it is promoting minimal non-provocative defence; mediation, peace-monitoring and peacekeeping in Pacific regional disputes; strengthening of the conflict resolution mechanisms of the Pacific Forum; the promotion of peace and disarmament education globally; and pro-active engagement in multilateral bodies such as the United Nations.

This book, written from the perspective of a committed pacifist and retired teacher, is a wonderful contribution to peace and disarmament education in this country. Will Foote uses poetry and prose to convey

powerful images of the futility of war and gives many source documents which the reader can explore later. He summarises the history and consequences of the major wars in which New Zealanders have participated. He documents how the early citizens' anti-war movement influenced the subsequent government protests over nuclear testing in the Pacific and the nuclear free legislation; and stimulated the World Court Project and the non-violent campaigns by the anti US-bases movement. Examples of many successful and often unknown non violent actions around the world are cited which inspire hope that genuine people power can transform government policies, which in turn create a safer and more peaceful planet for us all.

Kate Dewes 11.11.08

*What passing bells for those who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns,
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.*
- from 'Anthem for Doomed Youth', Wilfred Owen

PREFACE

The poetry of Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, with its depiction of the tragedy and idiocy of war, was one of the many factors in my decision some 70 years ago to oppose all war. Events since have given me no reason to alter that decision.

In this book I summarise the work of more recent authors on many wars. I consider whether any good came from those wars, who profited from them, whether the reasons given for fighting were the real ones, whether one war simply led to another, whether the sacrifice of so many young lives was in vain. I also look at how non-violent action could have averted war and its needless destruction.

Some sections are devoted to the peace and anti-nuclear movement in our country. Older 'peace people' will know all this but there's a generation now that doesn't. Our non-violent movement didn't actually stop a war but it led to our anti-nuclear legislation and must have been a major factor in our Government's refusal to join in the second Gulf War.

I also summarise the ways that people power may challenge the economic forces that disadvantage us. In conclusion, I hope that the common morality that binds us all, regardless of race, religion and nationality, will be expressed in non-violent action to eliminate poverty, the arms trade and war.

W J Foote
November 2008

1 LEARNING FROM HISTORY

Learning from history

Like most boys growing up in the years between the 'Great' wars I enjoyed reading stories of brave British and colonial soldiers on the South African veldt, in Khyber Pass, on desert sands triumphing over wild Zulus and treacherous Boers, vengeful Pathans and mad dervishes. We attended Anzac services, heard of Simpson and his donkey and saluted the memory of the fallen. We changed step and formed fours at Cadets, at high school we did projects on our glorious Empire. On Sundays our ministers told us that God was on our side. What Britain, and by association ourselves, did was good, our wars were just.

Now at the age of 89, I'm still reading about wars, but those romantic illusions are long gone. As some wise old man, probably Bernard Shaw, said, "The only thing we learn from history is that we don't learn from history." The dead from a thousand wars ask 'Did we have to die? What was it all for? Has our sacrifice made the world a better place?'

If there is a God, He/She must be thinking 'Why did I give them free will? I gave them a wide, wild and wonderful world to live in, I gave them the capacity to live, laugh and love, and what do I see? Bodies, some still alive, buried in desert sand; men drowning in stinking mud in shell craters, dying in fox holes amid their own excrement, bodies roasted by napalm in caves, incinerated in firestorms, dying slow deaths by radiation, children legless from landmines, blown up by cluster bomblets...'. I could go on, I guess you get the picture.

Did those soldiers really have free will? Many had no choice, their King, dictator, President, priest or mullah ordered them to fight for God, King and Country. The propagandists persuaded them that they had to fight for freedom and democracy, to avoid subjugation, to stop atrocities by the enemy. War itself is the atrocity.

World War I was popularised as the 'war to end war'. Well, it didn't. Perhaps those who start wars should pass a test on the long-term effect

of previous wars. Like Old Man River, the effects of war just keep rolling along. If I had the time and energy, I'm sure I could trace the present turmoil at the eastern end of the Mediterranean back to the Crusades. Sure, the Crusaders brought back algebra, but that hardly makes up for that running sore, the Palestinian/Israeli impasse.

Now, let's take a look at some early wars and their consequences.

England's Civil and European Wars

An interesting example of unintended effects comes from the English Civil Wars 1640-1660. Charles I lost his head, the Puritan Roundheads triumphed. Ireland was invaded with considerable brutality. English and Scottish supporters of the winning side were rewarded with Irish land, and a few years later another Stuart king Charles II, was on the throne. In time many of the new settlers, intermarried with the Irish, became strong supporters of Irish independence in a bloody struggle which ended only a few years ago. The dead of Marston Moor and Drogheda and other battlefields and massacres are still wondering 'Why did we die?'

While our minds are on that era, let's congratulate James II and William of Orange, their respective advisers and supporters, that a bloodless revolution took place in 1688. Even that doyen of historians, G M Trevelyan, waxed lyrical. "The true glory of the British Revolution lay in the fact that it was bloodless, that there was no Civil War, no massacre, no proscription, and above all that a settlement by consent was reached of the religious and political differences that had so long and so fiercely divided men and parties."

Even before Oliver Cromwell's time, civil war was a very English pastime. In the Middle Ages Norman barons kept their private armies, battled among themselves for power and territory, joined forces to support rival claimants to the throne, raped and pillaged their way through the countryside with little or no consideration for the common folk whose only defence was to hide their daughters and cattle in the greenwood until the marauders had passed on. So we can regard it as progress when this anarchy ceased, internal dissent was fought out in the political sphere, and the armed forces became a weapon of the state.

That might have been regarded as a mixed blessing by dispossessed Scots and by the soldiers who marched back and forth across France, Spain and the Low Countries, in the war of the Spanish Succession and the Peninsular and Napoleonic Wars; also by the sailors caught up in the most ridiculous of wars brought on by the loss of Jenkins' ear, a war that caused such an outbreak of mindless patriotism that Prime Minister Walpole said that though they were ringing the bells then, soon they'd be wringing their hands.

The futility of it all was well expressed in Southey's poem.

*"They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won
For many thousand bodies there
Lay rotting in the sun,
But things like that you know must be
After a famous victory,
And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win."*

*"But what good came of it at last?"
Quoth Little Peterkin.*

*"Why that I cannot tell," said he.
"But 'twas a famous victory."*

The Crimean War 1854-56

The same mindless patriotism was evinced in the Crimean War remembered now mainly for the heroism and stupidity of the Charge of the Light Brigade. As Tennyson put it

*Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.
Into the Valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.*

The 29,000 who lost their lives in the Crimea could well be wondering why. Florence Nightingale pointed out that some 16,000 of them died

because of 'bad administration', lack of medical facilities and also simply from failure to get basic supplies delivered. Perhaps something good came of it all, greatly improved medical facilities. To quote Trevelyan again, "From the frozen and blood-stained trenches before Sebastopol, and from the horrors of the first Scutari hospital have sprung not only a juster national conception of the character and claims of the private soldier but many things in our modern life that at first sight seem far removed from scenes of war and the sufferings of our bearded heroes in that winter-bound plateau." Also let us remember those English Quakers who defied the jingoism of the time and went to St Petersburg to try to persuade the Russians against war.

American Wars 1812, 1861-65

The success of colonists in North America in breaking out of the British orbit did not usher in an era of peace. The 1812 war with Britain, a sort of off-shoot of the Napoleonic War, ranks high in the list of unpopular and unnecessary wars. It did have two good results. One, the rise of an American peace movement; two, the establishment of a disarmed corridor along the US/Canada border.

Far more disastrous, and with repercussions even to this day, was the American Civil War. The basic cause was the determination of Lincoln's administration to maintain the union of northern and southern states. For this some 650,000 lost their lives, more American deaths than in World War I. Wounded and captured men suffered the horrors of Andersonville, families were torn apart, thousands made homeless and for years afterwards gangs of unemployed ex- soldiers ravaged the countryside. The atmosphere of the time is conveyed in a poem by Charles Carroll.

*Letters home from fear-drunk boys –
In rags of banners, disarrayed –
The anthems torn to silent leaves –
of these, the Book of War is made.*

Was it worth it? If the South had seceded, it seems likely that over time common interests would have reversed the process and brought some sort of economic union.

In the common view, the war was about slavery. When the war ended, most slaves were 'free' but in name only. They had no vote, no homes, no economic power. They could stay in the South and face discrimination. They could go north to economic slavery. Was it all worthwhile?

The 'Maori' Wars and Maori Non-violent Action

The series of military engagements between the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand and the European settlers aided by British soldiers are generally known as the Maori Wars though they should be more correctly known as the Colonial or Pakeha Wars. Could they have been avoided? At first many European settlers and traders were welcomed by Maori. There was considerable profitable inter-trade and inter-marriage. However, as settlers came in ever-increasing numbers and Maori saw their land encroached on, some strife was almost inevitable, as was the outcome, even though militarily the strong resistance of Maori tribes surprised the British troops and local militia. It certainly wasn't like imperialistic strife elsewhere summed up in Belloc's words

*We have the Maxim gun
- and they have not.*

In the annals of Maori resistance, and of non-violent action, one story stands out, the story of Parihaka, the story now celebrated in music and literature, a story which ranks with that of Gandhi in its brilliant conception and operation. Led by their chiefs Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi, the people of Parihaka in Taranaki set up a co-operative community apart from what they saw as the corrupting influence of the English settlers. They ignored the confiscation of their land, removed survey pegs and fences and ploughed the land. When armed militia and constabulary finally attacked the village they were met with laughing, singing children and some 2,500 Maori sitting quietly together. When ordered to disperse, the villagers remained seated. Tohu and Te Whiti moved among them, telling them to stay where they were. Tohu said, "Do not resist even if the bayonet comes to your breast." Te Whiti said, "There must be no violence of war but glory to God and peace

among men.” The situation was brilliantly parodied by New Zealand poet Jessie Mackay in the style of Tennyson’s ‘Charge of the Light Brigade’.

*Gleamed all their muskets bare,
Fright’ning the children there,
Heroes to do and dare,
Charging a village, while
Maoridom wondered.
Plunged into potato fields,
Honour to hunger yields.
Te Whiti and Tohu
Bearing not swords or shields,
Questioned nor wondered,
Calmly before them sat,
Faced the Twelve Hundred.*

The village was destroyed, the inhabitants removed, the leaders gaoled without trial. The people resumed the protest. In 1927 a Royal Commission found that the Maori people must be compensated for wrongful land confiscation.

There are few examples in history of a whole isolated community embracing peace. Small groups within wider communities have often eschewed violence; for example, the early Christians, later Quakers and Mennonites, and our own New Zealand Riverside Community. A notable example is that of the Maori, known as Moriori, in the Chatham Islands. After some violence due to a misunderstanding in their first meeting with sailors from a foreign vessel, the Moriori conferred and agreed that all future visitors would be met with emblems of peace. In 1835 a group of NZ Maori took advantage of this, killed about a tenth of the Moriori and enslaved the rest. Would armed resistance have served them better? Probably not.

Maori non-violent action featured again in World War I. Waikato Maori, remembering the confiscation of their land by pakeha, resisted conscription. Their leader, Te Puea Herangi, was inspired by the words of her grandfather, the Maori king Tawhiao, “The killing must stop,

the destruction of land must stop. I shall bury my patu in the earth and it shall not rise again. Waikato, lie down, do not allow blood to flow from this time on.”

The Boer War 1899-1902

This was the first overseas war in which our country officially participated. It was part of one of those merry-go-rounds we see in history. The original inhabitants, various Zulus, Matabeles, Xhosa and Swazi tribes squabbled intermittently over territory; along came the British who settled mainly in the south and the Dutch Boers who settled further north. The British wanted to build their Empire and get down on all the mineral wealth, the Boers wanted freedom to live on the land in their traditional manner. Then came war and the British won. Later came democracy, the Boers and the rules of apartheid triumphed. Now we’re back at the start. The descendants of the original people, largely by non-violent action, are ruling their own land.

Back to the war. In New Zealand there was an unprecedented wave of Empire patriotism. Prime Minister Seddon’s moment had come. He declared New Zealand’s support and volunteered a contingent two weeks before England declared war. Some 6,492 volunteers and their horses left New Zealand. Seventy died in battle, many more from disease and accident. It doesn’t seem to be recorded how many New Zealand horses died but it is on record that the British lost 350,000 horses and 50,000 transport mules. According to ‘New Zealand’s Heritage’ the horses were the heroes of the war. The concentration camps into which Boer women and children were herded were conveniently forgotten. Denis Glover’s poem expresses the inanity of it all.

*Then Uncle Joe was off to the war
With a carbine at his saddle
- and was killed in the Transvaal,
I forget in just what battle.*

In England the war was vehemently opposed by the Independent Labour Party and many in other parties. ‘Pro-Boer’ was a label worn proudly, even by Lloyd George, shortly to conduct a much wider struggle. Lord Morley’s words, quoted by A J P Taylor, are worth repeating.

“You may make thousands of women widows and thousands of children fatherless. It will be wrong. You may add a new presence to your Empire. It will still be wrong. You may give greater buoyancy to the South African Stock and Share Market. You may create a South African boom. You may send the price of Mr Rhodes’ Chartereds to a price beyond the realms of avarice. Yes, even then it will still be wrong.”

Again we ask - could it all have been settled by negotiation? Yes.

Did anyone need to die? No.

Did the war damage Britain’s, and by association our, moral standing in the world? Yes.



2 THE GREAT WAR 1914-18

The Great War

The Great War, also known as ‘the War to end Wars’, and now relegated to the status of World War I, was one of mankind’s greatest follies. What caused it? One great statesman confessed ‘We just stumbled into it.’ Historians argue whether countries fought for power or profit or both. A united and industrially powerful Germany threatened the Balance of Power, a delicate juggling act to ensure that no one country should be predominant in Europe. The maze of alliances ensured that once the first shots were fired the contagion spread. The build-up of armaments fuelled the impetus to war. Consider A J P Taylor’s verdict: “All were trapped by the ingenuity of their military preparations, the Germans most of all.”

In the pre-war years, anti-war sentiment was strong, particularly in



A 1918 poster “Void of War” drawn by Paul Nash after returning from the Front. - from ‘The Peacemaker’

Britain and France and thousands of workers there and in Austria and Germany, combined in the Socialist International, decided that they would strike if war was declared. Sadly, when war did come, numbers fell away; there was disunity in the ranks, false stories of atrocities fuelled national anger, and when leader Jean Jaures was assassinated, hopes of concerted anti-war action went to the grave with him. If that non-violent action had succeeded, how different our history might have been.

Some blamed the rulers for the war. ‘Hang the Kaiser’ was a popular call, but the Kings, Emperors, Kaisers, Tsars and Sultans were old men who wanted nothing more than comfortable couches and their evening port, cognac or vodka. Anyway some of them had been made irrelevant by democracy and they just had to ‘go with the flow’.

So the war stuttered on for four years, millions lost their lives and in the end the leaders sat down together, which they could have done in the first place, said ‘Let’s call it off’ and proceeded to make a peace which sowed the seeds of World War II. The nightingale sang again in Berkeley Square and, to quote Wilfred Owen again, “At each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.” Here’s what Army Chaplain Studdart Kennedy thought of the war.

*Waste of blood and waste of tears,
Waste of youth’s most precious years,
Waste of ways the saints have trod,
Waste of glory, waste of God – war.*

The final over-all score, some 10 million killed, 20 million wounded.

To summarise the war – was it ‘worth it’? No.

Could it have been avoided? Yes.

Now let’s consider Gallipoli and Passchendaele, two World War I battles in which New Zealand soldiers played a major and tragic part.

Gallipoli

It wasn’t the Hun that some early contingents of New Zealand soldiers found themselves facing; it was the Turk, because of a hare-brained scheme planned by Winston Churchill and others to form a sort of Second Front by clearing a way through the Dardanelles to the Black Sea and Russia. By a series of errors, the New Zealand, Australian and British troops were landed by the British Navy on a narrow, barren beach-head below towering cliffs above which the Turks were well entrenched. We all know the story, we’ve been told it in schools and at Anzac ceremonies ever since. It was an impossible situation. The eventual evacuation was the only success of the campaign.

Two thousand seven hundred and twenty-one New Zealand soldiers were killed, 4,752 wounded. Their heroism and sacrifice is remembered yearly on Anzac Day, for long as a sort of victory in defeat, now more realistically as needless sacrifice. Many regard the campaign as a sort of national growing-up, becoming a nation. I cannot go along with that. The real day we grew up was the day we faced down the United States and its satellites and declared ourselves nuclear-free.

If anyone still sees glory in Gallipoli, I recommend reading A P Herbert’s poem.

*The flies! Oh God the flies
That soiled the sacred dead.
To see them swarm from dead men’s eyes
And share the soldier’s bread.
Nor think I now forget
The filth and stench of war,
The corpses on the parapet,
The maggots on the floor.*

Passchendaele

Later contingents of New Zealand troops joined British and other colonial soldiers in a war of attrition in northern France and Belgium. The men lived in rat and lice-infested trenches, which one writer called “the concentration camps of World War I”, from time to time dashing out through wire entanglements and bomb craters to gain a few yards of mud encrusted with the bodies of the dead. It seems beyond belief that

men could bear it. As one who endured it – quoted in Glyn Harper’s ‘Passchendaele’ – said, “*An ordinary man at Passchendaele was a pretty dumb beast. That’s how he’s treated you see. He was only gun fodder and when all is said ... that’s what I feel. We were pretty dumb beasts or we wouldn’t have been thrown into that kind of warfare, because it was hopeless before you started. We all knew that.*”

In sporting terms Passchendaele was a draw, some 250,000 killed, wounded or missing on each side. And just to prove how unnecessary it all was, on Christmas Eve German and British troops came out of the trenches, sang ‘Silent Night’, exchanged cigarettes and compared photos of wives and children. Then back to the slaughter until, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the top brass and their political masters cried ‘Hold, enough! Tie up the dogs of war.’

Some commentators blamed High Command, particularly Haig, for lack of alternative plans. Others saw them as compassionate men, doing their best. A commonly expressed view was that the ordinary soldiers were ‘lions led by donkeys’. Not all soldiers did put up with the situation. Desertion was widespread in all the combatant armies. One high-ranking officer, Brigadier Braithwaite, bravely refused to send his men to slaughter. He was quietly retired. Common soldiers who deserted or refused orders got field punishment or faced the firing squad. The French Army mutinied. Some regarded it as proof of British and Colonial troops’ superiority that they didn’t.

Let’s give the last word to soldier-poet Siegfried Sassoon –

*... I died in hell
(They called it Passchendaele) My wound was slight
And I was hobbling back; and then a shell
Burst slick upon the duck boards, so I fell
Into the bottomless mud, and lost the light.*

The Home Front

The early years of the 20th Century saw a determined attempt by conservative administrations led by Ward and Seddon to militarise the

country. The British Navy was supported by the gift of a Dreadnaught. A cadet system was instituted for youths from 12 to 20; young men were conscripted to form a Territorial force, with a Reserve for older ones. However the youth scheme was largely a failure and anti-war sentiment was widespread. Preparations for war were opposed by H E Holland’s ‘Maoriland Worker’, the Socialist Party, the Social Democrat Party, the Society of Friends, the National Peace Council, the Women’s International League of Peace and Freedom and the Freedom League.

Sadly, when war came, the anti-war message was swept aside by a wave of patriotism and jingoism. Men and women believed, as Wilfred Owen put it,

*... The old Lie
Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori*

(Roughly ‘It is good and noble to die for your country’)

The Homeland and Empire are under attack. The German soldiers are a lot of rapists and murderers and cut off the breasts of Belgian nuns. ‘Your Country Needs You!’ Let’s hurry and join up, it might all be over before we get there.

Anyone not in uniform was suspect. Elsie Locke, in ‘Peace People’, quoted a journalist. “Enough white feathers were sent for the country to resemble a chicken coop on a windy day.” At that time, white feathers were used to symbolise cowardice.

On the home front dissent was harshly treated. The only conscientious objection allowed was to a few members of traditionally anti-war sects. Others were imprisoned. Twelve were ‘to encourage the others’ forced overseas with the army. Archibald Baxter’s experience of the field punishment known as ‘crucifixion’ is described in his book ‘We Will Not Cease’ and also in Christopher Pugsley’s ‘On the Fringe of Hell’. Baxter’s book ranks with Remarque’s ‘All Quiet on the Western Front’ as classics of anti-war literature.

The introduction of conscription triggered widespread protest. Five Labour and Liberal members of Parliament voted against the Military Services Bill. Some 71 men, including Peter Fraser, Bob Semple and Tim Armstrong, were imprisoned for sedition. Although they later claimed that they opposed conscription of men because there was no conscription of wealth, some of their utterances were very anti-war. For instance, as quoted by Elsie Locke,

“For the past two and a half years we have been looking at the ruling classes of Europe spreading woe, want and murder over the continent and it’s time that the working classes of the different nations were rising up in protest against them” (Fraser).

“Wealthy monopolists of this country are taking advantage of war to steal the people’s liberty in the name of patriotism” (Semple).

“Let the Kings and Kaisers go and murder one another if they like, but the working class have no quarrel one country with the other” (Armstrong.)

So in 1918 the soldiers came home to a heroes’ welcome. Memorials were erected in every little hamlet, the physically and mentally wounded were hidden in institutions and forgotten by all except close relatives and a few old mates. Fit men were allocated hard-scrabble farms to face a different sort of struggle.



3 WORLD WAR II 1939-45

World War II

Some call it ‘The Good War’ to distinguish it from various wars for cash and colonies and from its numerical predecessor, which most people now concede we could well have done without. It’s also given that name because in most of the later generation’s eyes it was fought to save the Jews from Hitler and his minions. Well it wasn’t, and to a considerable extent, it didn’t. I’ve just finished reading a book about World War II and Jews hardly get a mention. American writer Zezima concluded that “World War II was about territory, power, control, money and imperialism.”

World War II was mostly about that same old question, Balance of Power plus the repercussions of the Treaty of Versailles. In boxing parlance, when you knock your opponent down and win, you help him up and tend to his wounds and, in theory at least, you’re friends again. That’s not how the Germans saw the Treaty. The winner, on most counts, the USA, ensured that the one knocked down stayed down; that is, until they realised that a strong Germany could be a bulwark against the Soviet Union and Communism.

In the immediate post World War I years near starvation, massive inflation, unemployment, the imputation of guilt and crippling reparations created the atmosphere leading to the rise of Hitler and National Socialism. Powerful elements in both industry and society in Britain and the USA aided Germany’s financial recovery. Before and even well into the war several major US corporations invested heavily in and even provided military equipment to Germany and, to a lesser extent, Italy. For details, read ‘Sleeping With the Enemy’ in Zezima’s



- from 'The Peacemaker'

‘Saving Private Power’. Where there’s money to be made, you can’t afford a tender conscience.

Hitler’s adventures in the Ruhr, the Sudeten and Austria were justified or ignored. The appeasement policy, often regarded as the precursor of war, was at first just seen as an adjustment of the old Balance of Power. The unnecessary violence involved was disregarded by most in the corridors of power in France and Britain. They’d all done a bit of it at one time or another, putting down striking workers or recalcitrant natives. One historian suggested that Hitler’s idea of ‘lebensraum’ in the Ukraine was based on the way the Americans had moved westwards brushing aside the unfortunate inhabitants.

I’m not going into details of all the political and military machinations that led to World War II. There’s plenty of books covering that. Suffice to say that Hitler took one step too far, he ran up against a British guarantee to Poland.

When it was all over, some 50 million were dead and the stage was set for what we know as the Cold War. As after most disasters, scapegoats were sought. The most popular one was the supposed neglect of Britain’s armed forces caused by the influence of pacifists, Socialists and Labourites. While this theory made the Colonel Blimps and Conservatives feel good, it was almost entirely false. Conservatives held power for most of the era. Britain’s armed forces were considered adequate to meet any threat. At the outbreak of war the opposing armed forces were approximately equal. Hitler’s generals had told him that his army was not ready for war. He disregarded them. One commentator said that the main difference was that the British army was led by men who thought horses preferable to tanks.

Could war have been avoided? If Britain, France and Russia had presented a united front, it seems likely that Hitler’s ambitions would have had to be satisfied with gains already made and that would have been certain if the United States had been engaged from the start. Here’s Noam Chomsky’s verdict from his latest book ‘What We Say Goes’. “If the United States and Britain had wanted to stop Hitler in

1938, they probably could have done it. There wouldn’t have been any war, but they didn’t particularly want to.”

In the atmosphere of the time a common policy of non-violent resistance was unlikely, though the success of non-violent action in Denmark and Norway amazed everyone including the Nazis. British military expert and author Liddell Hart, quoted in ‘Legacy and Future of Non-violence’ explained “the Nazis were experts in violence and had been trained to deal with opponents who used that method. Other forms of resistance baffled them and all the more that the methods were subtle and concealed. It was a relief to them when resistance became violent.”

The success of non-violent resistance in Denmark and Norway was one of the bright spots among a plethora of violence. I’ll try to summarise it. When the Nazis invaded Denmark in 1940, the Danes did not resist militarily. Life under Occupation continued much as usual. Led by the King, the Danes refused to adopt the laws against the Jews. Most Jews were hidden or evacuated to Sweden. Fewer than 400 were seized and sent to Germany.

In Norway armed resistance was quickly suppressed and a puppet regime set up under Vidkun Quisling. Non-violent resistance soon sprang up. Underground newspapers were distributed, youth clubs, the Supreme Court, clergy and teachers refused to co-operate. Teachers were sent to concentration camps in the far north. They remained firm and were eventually allowed to return without recanting their principles.

After the British retreat at Dunkirk there were calls for peace. Even Churchill is said to have had doubts about carrying on. Hitler had his main aim, hegemony in Europe. The Vichy regime in France showed that life went on under German overlordship; its worst features could be modified over time, as shown in Scandinavia. Germany was constrained by the presence of Russia and the economic power of the USA. Anyway, peace didn’t happen. Britain, with her colonies, decided to ‘go it alone’. So men fought and died in North Africa, Greece, Italy, Russia, France and Germany. Hitler made his fatal mistake in Russia; the Americans entered the war. Finally the Russians came into

Germany from the east, the Americans from the west. Hitler died in the ruins of his capital and another chapter closed on the story of man's inhumanity to man.

All wars are horrible, but World War II added a new dimension of terror, war from the air. Both sides claimed they only bombed 'military targets'. This proved ineffective and so we had the bombing of Coventry and London, Hamburg and Berlin, and to cap it all, the fire storm as in Dresden. Gasoline bombs started fires that caused intense heat which, according to Zezima's 'Saving Private Power' "melted bodies into the pavement and shrunk them into three foot long charred carcasses". Some 100,000 people died in Dresden. Could there be any greater horror? Yes, the atomic bomb.

The Pacific War

This war coincided in part with World War II and is generally regarded as part of it. Though its causes were mainly economic, there was also a strong element of racism. Just as Germany felt constrained by Versailles, the Japanese felt unjustly served by the Washington Treaty of 1922. They felt that their military incursions into China, Manchuria and Indo-China to get control of raw materials and markets were no different to those of Britain and other colonial powers. In the USA there were boycotts of Japanese goods and discriminatory tariffs; Britain tried to exclude Japanese goods from colonial markets. In the immediate pre-war years a complete embargo was placed on oil and scrap metal supplies to Japan. All these actions played into the hands of the 'War Party' in Japan; they do not, however, excuse atrocities such as the 'rape of Nanking' or the decision to go to war.

The trigger for war was the Japanese bombing of the US fleet in Pearl Harbour, Hawaii. It was the so-called 'day of infamy' the unheralded attack while still at peace. There are still serious doubts about this. Did the British know and not tell? Did Roosevelt know? Did they and he keep quiet to ensure that the USA entered the war? Anyway the war was on. It involved the British in Singapore, the Dutch in the East Indies; it involved Malaysia, Burma, the Philippines, China, New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand and most western Pacific islands.

It was a particularly vicious war, it involved death marches and prison camps; it finished with the fire-bombing of Tokyo, and the use of the atomic bomb by the Americans on Hiroshima and Nagasaki bringing a fearsome new element to international relationships. The justification for this was that it ended the war without the invasion of Japan which, in President Truman's words, "would have caused millions to die". The contrary view, which seems to me the correct one, is that the bombing was unnecessary. US forces had complete control of sea and air; the Japanese were suing for peace. A more likely reason is the desire of the Americans to forestall the Russians, whose troops were on the move, from having the right to any say in the peace settlement. And perhaps a motive beyond that, to emphasise US domination in the post-war world and, as President Truman put it, "so little Harry could show Molotov and Stalin that we've got the cards."

Could the war have been avoided? If there had been no European war, yes, perhaps. If some sort of Common Market to share the riches of the area had been agreed on by all the competing interests, yes, but in the climate of the time that was unlikely. The war guilt was loaded on Japan.

Much was made, rightly, of the sadistic treatment of civilian and combatant prisoners of war in the so-called 'death camps'. It wasn't all one-sided. In an article in 'Guardian Weekly' on ending the war, American Professor Paul Fussell wrote "There was much sadism and cruelty, undeniably racist, on our side" and he pointed out that the Marine Corps journal 'The Leatherneck' wrote "The Japanese constituted 'pestilence' and the only appropriate treatment was 'annihilation'."

One respected journalist concluded 'It was just another war between the haves and the have-nots.' In years to come, both Germany and Japan rose from the ashes of defeat. Another writer later cynically observed that two world wars had not inhibited the rise to dominance of Germany and Japan; neither had they interrupted Britain's decline.

The Jews and World War II

As has already been noted, World War II was not fought to save the

Jews. One of the greatest crimes in history, the attempted elimination of a whole race, took place during the war but not because of it. It can be argued with considerable justification that if Britain and France had not gone to war in 1939, or if peace had been negotiated after Dunkirk, we would not have seen the worst features of the Jews' persecution. And given the war situation, much more could have been done non-violently to save them.

Jews had long been a persecuted race. They were not Christians, they had strange customs, they kept together and didn't mix, they were too successful in business, they were Shylocks, they looked different, they were Socialists and Communists and a threat to social order etc etc. It was easy for Hitler and his associates in Nazi Germany to make scapegoats of them; they offended the Aryan philosophy, they were associated with Versailles and Germany's humiliation. Such views were widely held in other countries. According to Ralph Summy in 'Legacy and Future of Non-violence' one can argue that it was not the ruthlessness of the Nazis that led to the attempted elimination of the Jews, usually known as the 'holocaust', but "the ubiquity of the Jews' marginalisation". Where the Jews were not marginalised, as in Denmark and Bulgaria, most survived the 'final solution'.

If there had been no war, the Nazis would have had to work with other people with whom they had various political and financial agreements, they would have been under scrutiny from the USA, a country whose economic power they feared. It is highly unlikely that they would have been able to hide what was happening in the concentration camps, they would have had to find some less reprehensible way of dealing with their Jewish citizens.

Before and even during the war there were non-violent ways of saving the Jews. In the 1930s Jews were allowed to emigrate; many, particularly the wealthier, did but few countries welcomed them. Australia did not want to import a racial problem. New Zealand would not lift immigration restrictions. In 1939 a vessel loaded with Jewish immigrants was turned back from US ports. The Jews disembarked in France and some ended up in the hands of the Germans. Resettlement plans, for instance in Madagascar, could not be agreed on. The British

wouldn't allow the Jews into Palestine because they wanted to keep 'on side' with the Arabs. Denmark and Holland were two countries which did open their doors.

In occupied countries many brave families hid Jews. For instance, in southern France it has been estimated that some 5,000 were sheltered and many assisted over the Pyrenees to Spain and Portugal. Diplomats used their country's flag and issued false passports to thousands; for instance Harry Bingham and Varian Fry in Marseilles, in spite of Cordell Hull's instruction on no occasion to help Jews. Carl Lutz, Swiss Consul, issued 8,000 visas and gave his country's guarantee of removal to Palestine. Swedish Consul Wallenberg saved some 60,000 Jews. de Sousa Mendes, a Portuguese diplomat, defied Dictator Salazar's orders and issued some 20,000 visas. These figures were taken from a recent TV programme. The above-named people, and many others, are revered by the Jews as 'the righteous among nations'.

Special mention must be given to Nazi Georg Duckwitz, a humble shipping attaché stationed in Denmark. In the course of his work he found out that the Germans were about to enforce their policy on Denmark's Jews. He went to Stockholm, ensured that Sweden would accept the Jews, went back and the word was passed around. A fishing boat fleet was organised and most Jews were saved; only some 400 fell into Nazi hands. Many Jews were saved when the Allied armies overran the concentration camps but over-all many more Jews were saved by non-violent means than violent.

Of course, much more could have been done; it's easy for us to say that. The ordinary German went about his daily business, ignored rumours just as we ignore global warming and the arms trade and starving Africans ... A few brave German churchmen protested the actions of the Nazis, Niemoller and Bonhoeffer for example, but there was little concerted protest by Catholic or Protestant. Cardinal Roncalli successfully persuaded the Bulgarian government to not allow the deportation of Jews. A French Protestant minister organised a whole village to hide Jewish children and transport them over the Swiss border. No doubt there were many other unsung heroes.

What of the Jews themselves? Some form of concerted nonviolent action may have saved them back in the pre-war years. Gandhi wrote of European Jewry, "I am convinced that if someone with courage and vision could arise among them to lead them in non-violent action, their winter of despair could in a twinkling of an eye be turned into a summer of hope." In another incident that has come to light 200 non-Jewish women surrounded a Nazi detention centre and demanded the release of their Jewish husbands. The Gestapo gave in! And let's give some credit to the Italians, commonly regarded as Hitler's lackeys. They usually disregarded orders to deport Jews and some 85% of Italian Jews survived the war.

The sequel – Jews are generally accepted without prejudice but sadly their homeland, Israel, is hardly an oasis of peace. For this they must take much of the blame. The Israelis are heavily armed; they even have a nuclear weapon capacity. Mordecai Vanunu was locked up for 16 years for telling us that. Strife with the Palestinians is a major cause of wider unrest. There is a minority on both sides seeking non-violent solutions.

World War II and New Zealand

The outbreak of World War II was not greeted with the euphoria that surrounded World War I. A minority welcomed it, those concerned with the rise of Fascism and National Socialism, the events in Abyssinia and Spain and the war had the support of most conservatives. Another minority, the pacifists, and many workers' and women's groups opposed war. Left-wing opinion was divided. Was it just the same old capitalist powers jockeying for position?

When Prime Minister Savage said "Where Britain goes we go" most accepted it and volunteer contingents were soon on their way overseas. Early reverses in Greece and Crete brought echoes of Gallipoli. New Zealand troops played a large part in the North Africa campaign and later in Italy and in the Pacific theatre of war.

On the home front, conscription was introduced by a government containing several imprisoned for opposing it in World War I. They claimed that this time they were conscripting wealth, which made

it OK. A Peace and Anti-conscription Council gained considerable public support and repression of anti-war activity increased. Those who refused to serve faced tribunals heavily loaded against them. The few conscientious objectors whose appeals against military service were allowed faced considerable hostility; those judged insincere were herded into remote detention camps, usually with a period of gaol first to cool their ardour. Anyone wanting details should read David Grant's 'Out in the Cold' or one of the personal accounts written by detainees including the present author.

And so the war ended, as wars usually do, though one lasted a hundred years with tea breaks. We weren't invaded, except by the Americans for their 'R&R', which did cause some minor trouble such as the Battle of Manners St.

Suppose the war had taken a different course, and we had been invaded by the Japanese. The purpose would only have been to find a food source for their soldiers and another base to forestall the Americans. Our main fighting force was overseas. Armed resistance by the few still here and the Home Guard would not have been successful and invited reprisal. Far better in my view not to resist militarily but adopt a Norwegian style programme of non-violent style resistance.

The ANZUS (Australian, New Zealand and USA) Treaty may also be seen as a result of the Pacific war. It was a decision to take a common stand against any resurgence of Japanese or any other country's military expansion into the Pacific. Although it is generally regarded as a military pact, a reading of the Treaty reveals that all agreed to do little more than consult and find peaceful resolution of problems.

The New Zealand government, particularly in the person of Peter Fraser, took a leading part in the formation of the United Nations Organisation with one of its aims being "to prevent the scourge of war". It hasn't, because those who want profit more than peace still rule the world and the common people have not yet combined to exercise their non-violent power.

4 THE COLD WAR

The name is a misnomer. It wasn't just a war of words. One number cruncher counted some 130 wars between 1945 and 1980 and there have been many since. The present strife in Afghanistan, another hot war, was spawned by the Cold War. Suspicion by the Western powers of Russia and counter-suspicion goes back a long way. This intensified with the Russian Revolution and the fear that Communism was exportable. The Soviet Union's suspicions were confirmed when Allied troops invaded after World War I. The term 'Cold War' is commonly understood to apply to the differences between the Soviet Union and its satellites, and the USA and theirs, which began after Stalin and Roosevelt agreed on their relative spheres of influence, like the way the Pope drew a line to keep Spain and Portugal apart in a much earlier era. Roughly the idea was that Eastern Europe was the Soviet's sphere, the Western was USA's, with its junior partner Britain.

Then the distrust spread. Any group not favouring the established order was labelled 'Communist'. Some did get Soviet support, some were just home-grown. Any groups favouring the established capitalist order could count on American covert or overt support. The American administration got Brownie points for the generosity of the Marshall plan, to aid recovery from war but it also brought the recipients of that generosity into the American orbit.

So we had mini-wars, revolts and counter-revolts in Greece, the Balkans, West Africa, Central America etc etc, fuelled by massive arms exports from home base. It was a great time to be alive if you manufactured instruments of death. As Hiram Maxim said, "If you want to make money, think of another way of killing people."

I'm not going into detail. There's plenty of information available on aspects of the Cold war. It was such a wide-ranging struggle, it contained so many sub-sets that it's almost impossible to draw up a scorecard. I guess the USA 'won' by virtue of its economic power, something of a pyrrhic victory when we think of the death and destruction involved.

The Soviet Union 'lost' by virtue of its internal difficulties, by greed and lust for power, by the death of a good idea. It could have been an inspiration to common folk everywhere.

Could the Cold War have been avoided? Yes, if three old men at Yalta had a wider vision, if the United Nations had worked as it was intended to (not the fault of the organisation but of the narrow national interests that stymied it) and if we, the people, had in our millions stormed the barricades of profit and prejudice and demanded peace.

The Cold War contagion spread even to New Zealand, though in a less virulent form. After the Berlin blockade crisis, in which some New Zealand airmen took part, the Government feared that 'cold' might become 'hot'; they felt that we must be prepared for war and planned to conscript. Just the impetus needed for a peace movement in post-war lethargy and now joined by a wide variety of Socialists, students, unionists and church groups.

A photograph in 'Peace People' shows a student parade led by Harry Evison and the late Ron Smith, last seen by this author defying the contractors building another Cold War off shoot, the Waihopai spy base. The government and conservative interests applied considerable pressure in favour of conscription. In the heat of the controversy peace activists were routinely described as Communists and invited to 'go home to Russia'. Intimidation was common. In Nelson, 'a centre of bigotry', one speaker was seized by enraged citizens, had his head put into a toilet bowl which was then flushed. Fortunately his head was bigger than the aperture below.

When a referendum was held, conscription was approved. It was a hollow triumph. Conscription soon lost favour, it was replaced by a selective training system, and then quietly forgotten even when war did come in Korea and Vietnam. These off-shoots of the Cold War will be considered separately but in times of comparative peace the Cold War kept alive, particularly in the matter of atomic and nuclear weapons.

The British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) spread to New Zealand. The New Zealand Peace Council, the Progressive Youth

League and several student, church and union groups called for the banning of nuclear weapons and for an end to weapons testing, which had rendered a Melanesian island uninhabitable. The Russians tested a mega-bomb, the British got into the act with testing at Christmas Island. New Zealand played a small part by sending a frigate to patrol and observe. Testing also took place in the Australian semi-desert without notifying the Aboriginal people who lived there.

Little was then known of the full effects of radiation. The conservative Holyoake administration was sympathetic to protests but said they could not go against allies. Bertrand Russell put the issue bluntly, "Shall we put an end to the human race or shall mankind renounce war?" Poet Hone Tuwhare put the issue of the bomb succinctly

*... for this
is no ordinary sun.*



- from 'Nuclear Free New Zealand'

5 MORE 'HOT' WARS

The Korean War

After World War II the former Japanese province of Korea was divided into two at the 38th parallel with the soviet forces controlling the north and American forces the south. When these forces withdrew a United Nations commission supervised the division. Most Koreans on both sides desired a united country but with armed forces on both sides of a border, misunderstandings soon arose. Which side crossed the border first is a matter of controversy. The UN Security Council in the absence of Russia blamed the North and authorised military action.

This was the time when McCarthyism was rampant in the USA, Reds were under every bed, even in New Zealand where the waterfront strike was seen as part of the Communist menace. The New Zealand Parliament approved military participation, only Clyde Carr objecting, and naval units and ground troops were sent to support the mainly American force. Peace and student groups, unions, Socialists, Communists and some churches disagreed with military action and called for mediation. Chinese troops joined the North Koreans when it appeared that hostilities might move into China. General MacArthur leading the United Nations troops was keen to do that but was removed from leadership.

Fears of a wider war led to calls for negotiation and a ceasefire. Agreement was hard to reach and the war dragged on, becoming increasingly horrific. Napalm, which peels the skin from the human body, was dropped from the air, the hydro-electric grid was destroyed and the rice fields rendered unproductive. The unhappy North Koreans were starved as well as homeless and were even threatened with the atomic bomb.

Some three million Koreans died as did 37 New Zealanders. The North-South border remained where it was at first. The only happy people were New Zealand wool growers and garment manufacturers whose profits ballooned. Clyde Carr's verdict, "The Korean War will go down

in history as one of the most ghastly and gratuitous holocausts.”

General MacArthur, looking at the bodies of two young North Korean soldiers, is supposed to have said, “That’s a good sight for my old eyes.” New Zealand poet R A K Mason wrote

*Never have I known one who of his own choice
follows up the machines of death to take his stand
over the slain and in a quavering voice
declares his joy at youth dead beneath his hand.*

Just another avoidable war.

War in Vietnam

China was Communist. In North Vietnam the French had been ousted, it too was Communist. The dominoes were falling. South Vietnam would be next, then Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Indonesia – well, Suharto’s men had taken care of that, launching what Chomsky called “the greatest massacre since the holocaust” and what the New York Times called “a gleam of light in Asia”. To American eyes the rot must be stopped. An international conference had been held at Geneva about the situation in Vietnam. A temporary division of North and South was agreed on, to be followed by Vietnam-wide elections. The Americans saw to it that this never happened, for the result was predictable. They saw to it that suitable puppets were installed in Saigon and that a suitable pretext be found to legitimise military intervention. So in August 1964 North Vietnamese torpedo boats attacked innocent US war ships in the Gulf of Tonkin – this was a total propaganda concoction by the Americans – and it was all on between the South Vietnamese government and American forces, and the North Vietnamese government and their supporters in the South known as the Viet Cong.

It was a dirty war by any standards – carpet bombing, napalm, Agent Orange, the destruction of crops, the defoliation of forests and acts such as the massacre at My Lai. Derek Wilson, in his book ‘Five Holocausts’, gives some figures –

- 70 million litres of Agent Orange dropped
- an estimated 200,000 Vietnam veterans claimed that the war caused serious health problems
- an estimated 620,000 Vietnamese killed or injured by toxic chemicals
- birth defects in 500,000 children.

After an on the spot investigation in 1969, the American Friends’ Service Committee concluded “*Every day sees the armed forces of the world’s most powerful nation raining bombs and chemicals and napalm on the rice fields and bamboo huts of one of the poorest and most defenceless countries. As long as this continues, millions must wonder whether the Americans have indeed become the new Barbarians.*”

The American troops themselves became disillusioned with the war; alcoholism, drug taking and mental breakdowns were common and those at home found it hard to maintain their faith in the war.

After years of conflict the ‘little men in black pyjamas’ reached the gates of Saigon. Those Americans who hadn’t yet been evacuated were helicoptered out. In American eyes another domino had fallen, Vietnam was Communist, but if the Americans only had the sense to realise it, the Vietnamese were just people wanting their own land and most were Buddhists just wanting to follow the quietist precepts of their faith.

Once again, one war had led to another. Because they considered that the Viet Cong were launching attacks from bases in Cambodia, the US forces mounted a massive bombing campaign in that country, killing some half a million Cambodians, setting up the conditions which enabled Pol Pot and his murderous gang to take over, to be overcome later by the Vietnamese army which was then blamed for the conditions in Cambodia.

A British view of the war was well expressed by poet Nigel Grey, cited by Albert Beale in ‘Against all War’

*How can I sing you a love song
accompanied by the stamping of men into mud?*

*How can I write you a letter
when my inkwell's filled with blood?
How can I smell the new mown hay
when the world stinks of putrefying flesh?
How can I listen to birds singing
when it's drowned by explosions of death?*

New Zealand and the Vietnam War

The initial response by the National Party Government to requests from the USA and the ANZUS Council for military aid was to send a civilian surgical team. However as pressure increased, as evidenced by visits from Cabot Lodge, Clark Clifford, Hubert Humphrey, Vice President Agnew and President Johnston, the Government felt encouraged (or bribed?) to send contingents of volunteers. In reply, the anti-war protest movement really came of age. Visits by US warships were the focus, particularly when it was discovered that some were nuclear-armed. Protests were so many and varied that it is difficult to summarise. Elsie Locke recounts it all brilliantly in 'Peace People', pages 188-251. There were sit-ins, walk-outs, marches, vigils, sermons and speeches, books and pamphlets, paintings and poems, folk singers and rock bands, and a proliferation of peace groups. The New Zealand peace movement must take much of the credit for the withdrawal of our troops after the 1973 election of the Labour Government led by Norman Kirk. However, as Elsie Locke pointed out, the ANZUS Alliance was unshaken, the nuclear arsenals continued to grow.

The verdict – our men had fought and some had died in a pointless war, a war based on a lie and false premises. Others returned suffering psychological scars of war and facing the lifelong results of exposure to deadly chemical defoliants. Our poets knew where the blame lay. Here's Hone Tuwhare in 'The Holy Cities'

*Not all the towns and shattered
villages napalm-drenched and put
to flame (defoliants or phosphor)
can purify
nor rid the stench which emanates*

*from Holy Cities so-called
Washington Canberra Wellington*

Here's James K Baxter from 'a death song for mr mouldybroke'

*frying 50 kids a day to keep the reds away
is a bloody sight worse than being red*

The Falklands War

A long-standing dispute over the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands turned to war between Argentina and Britain in 1982. British Labour politician Dennis Healey called it 'a war which need never happen'. The Argentinean strong man, General Galtieri, ordered invasion to boost his failing credibility. British Prime Minister Thatcher smartly despatched her Navy, which included a nuclear capability, for much the same reason. The US pretended to be neutral, but the CIA arranged for President Noriega to buy Exocet missiles from France and secretly ship them to Argentina; on the other hand, top US official Caspar Weinberger offered the British an aircraft carrier if needed.

When the Thatcher administration demanded that the Argentinean Navy withdraw or suffer the consequences, the Argentinean vessel 'General Belgrano' turned around and was steaming away when the British Navy sank it, causing considerable loss of life. A popular British newspaper headline exulted 'GOTCHA!' A French-supplied Exocet missile sank a British destroyer, while the French President sent the British technical information about Exocet missiles. British land forces took over the main island. While all this was going on, the Peruvian President was attempting to mediate a peaceful settlement. If it wasn't so tragic, it would have made a good script for Gilbert and Sullivan.

In all some 255 men from the British side died, 800 were wounded, for a matter that could easily have been settled by a little patient diplomacy.

New Zealand's involvement? Apparently our 'HMNZS Irirangi', a listening post run by the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) which also administers the Waihopai spy base, culled some

information off the airwaves and passed it on to the British. Also Prime Minister Muldoon offered a frigate to the Royal Navy so they could send another vessel to the Falklands.

Kosovo

As I write this, there's another reminder of the long-term effects of violence. Almost a century ago, a Serb nationalist shot an Austrian Archduke, setting off a chain of events that led to World War I and the endless struggle in the subsequent Balkanisation of the Balkans. This involved Christian versus Muslim, near genocide, dictatorship, rival armies and intervention by NATO. The NATO bombing, ostensibly to protect Albanian Kosovars against Milosevic's Serbs, caused almost one million to flee their country, killed several hundred of the inhabitants still there and ruined the area's infrastructure. The Kosovars could well have said 'With friends like that, who needs enemies?'

Now Kosovo has declared independence, to the fury of the Serb minority, and peace has to be maintained by armed peacekeepers. As they survey the wreckage and mourn the dead, maybe the Albanian Muslim majority will wonder why they did not follow the earlier non-violent struggle led by Ibrahim Rugova. The hot-heads of the Kosovo Liberation Army saw 'peace come dropping slow' and took the path of violence.

Is it all over yet? Those Serbs who attacked the US Embassy in Belgrade last night don't think so.



6 WARS IN THE GULF AND AFGHANISTAN

Let Slip the Dogs of War

A brief period of comparative peace in the Middle East was shattered by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. World opinion was outraged, a brutal dictatorship attacking a tiny, peaceful country. Those in the arms industry rejoiced. George Bush Senior and his cabal gleefully rubbed their hands. Just the chance to reinforce their leadership of the New World Order and put a stropky Saddam Hussein in his place, conveniently forgetting that they just backed him with conventional and chemical weapons in the war with Iran. It was 'good against evil', a 'just war' if there ever was one, and most countries, even peaceful little New Zealand, approved.

Just hold on. Weren't peace negotiations still underway when the bombers struck? Weren't there arguments about the pricing of oil and the draining of oil from wells near the border? Didn't the US Ambassador tell Hussein that the US had "No opinion on the border conflict"? Didn't the Chairman of the US House Armed Services Committee say "Our position should be the protection of the oil fields. Now whether Kuwait gets put back, that's subsidiary stuff"? Didn't the US Army have an 'exercise' that exactly copied what happened before it happened? Wasn't that atrocity story of Iraqi soldiers killing babies in Kuwait a complete fabrication? That one's the result of John Pilger's research, not mine, but he gives chapter and verse.

Full scale war followed. In spite of Saddam's belligerent words, his troops were completely outclassed. Retreating Iraqi soldiers were mown down in what was variously described as 'turkey', 'duck' and 'rat shoots'. Indiscriminate bombing destroyed most of the country's infrastructure particularly in Basra and Baghdad. No clean water, sewerage in the streets, hospitals and schools bombed, bridges wrecked. Saddam and his henchmen lived on, the Americans felt that the 'devil they knew' was better than rule by the 'mad Mullahs' or Communists that might succeed him. That let Saddam vent his wrath on those,

such as the Kurds, who had not supported him and had been promised protection by the Americans.

The verdict – just another unnecessary war, another human disaster.

Why did so many countries support the US? The answer, bribery. The Americans, aided by Saudi Arabia, forgave loans totalling billions, gave new loans, removed trade barriers, gave diplomatic recognition and then punished the few who didn't sign on the dotted line, for example Yemen which had aid removed and its workers in Kuwait forcibly repatriated. And to quote 'Journey Towards Peace', the war "*witnessed the ultimate in hypocrisy. Britain, France, United States and West Germany had over several years sold billions of dollars worth of the most modern weaponry, including chemical weapons and nuclear technology to Saddam Hussein and then justified the war on the pretext that he was dangerous to world peace.*"

The Price Was Worth It

Those were the words of Madeleine Albright, the US Ambassador to the United Nations, when asked if the death of half a million children under the UN sanctions on Iraq could be justified. Her words, which we can take as the official US view, must rank for callousness with the 'veni, vidi, vici' ('I came, I saw, I conquered') of a much earlier time. The sanctions applied by the United Nations after the ceasefire of the first Gulf War were intended to punish a belligerent Iraq and ensure its compliance with post-war settlements. However, when applied 'across the board' to restrict food and medical supplies and to stop the repair of essential services such as water supply, sewerage, electricity and irrigation, the results were catastrophic. Add to that the effects of the radio-active dust from the use of depleted uranium shells and the continued bombing by the US and UK planes. According to John Pilger in 'Tell Me No Lies', Iraq was hit by bombs and missiles every three days since the curfew. It was the longest Anglo-American bombing in history.

All this was done under the aegis of the United Nations but records show that the worst of the sanctions were applied at the insistence of the UK and, more particularly, the US. One wonders why the other

members of the Security Council went along with it and why the General Assembly, which includes New Zealand, did not make more protest. Of course at the time much was hidden from the media. Many protests were made to our Government by Quakers, Christian World Service, peace groups and many others.

While our Government at the time gave tacit agreement to the war and the sanctions regime, the practical support was limited. A New Zealand naval vessel, the 'HMNZS Wellington', participated in shipping interdiction in the Persian Gulf. It was revealed later that the request for assistance came from the US, not the UN, and that the vessel operated under US command. The New Zealand Peace Council pointed out to the Government that this could be regarded as a breach of our anti-nuclear legislation. New Zealand also provided surgical and transport teams to the Gulf.

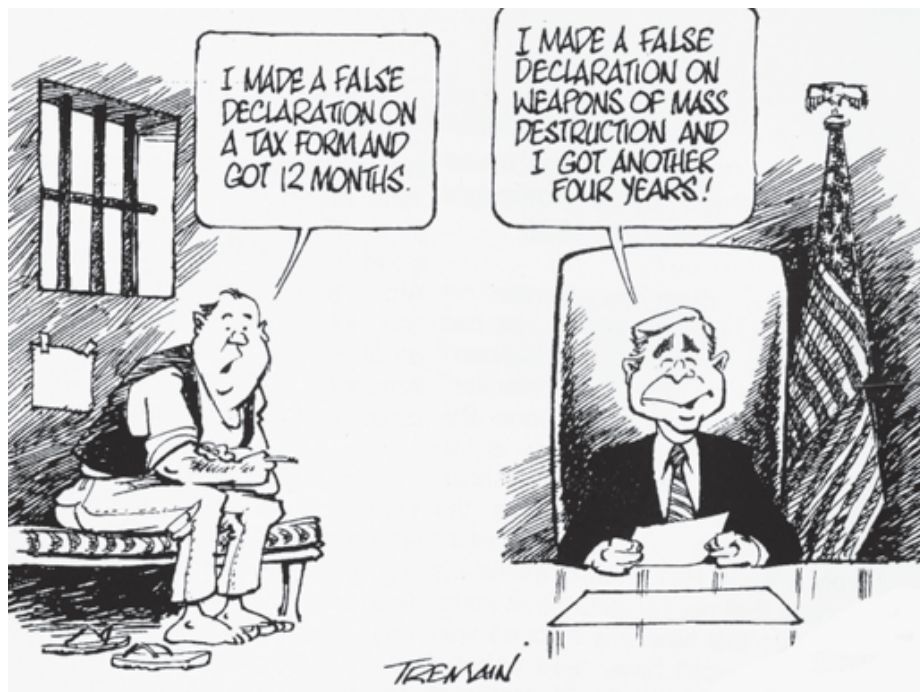
A Litany of Lies

The 2003 war in Iraq, known as the Second Gulf War, was probably the most unpopular war in history, going by the number who protested against it, not only in the main participating countries the USA, the UK and Australia, but virtually world-wide. One estimate put the number of protesters at 10 million. The protests were certainly not in support of Saddam Hussein, they were against the war and the real reasons for it. The war was also illegal, though legality has seldom been more than a façade in war. It was also one of the shortest, if one considers the end of Saddam's rule the end point, though Iraqis and Americans still dying might consider the end not yet in sight.

It wasn't just a war for oil, though that was a main factor. Under Saddam's regime it was increasingly difficult for other countries, particularly the US, to get the oil they wanted at the price they wanted, and they feared that the Saudi oil fields could be closed to them. After the 9/11 crisis in the US, the hunt was on for terrorists, and Saddam was alleged to be a supporter of the organisation known as al-Qaeda. There was little evidence of this. Saddam did not favour al-Qaeda's brand of Islamic fundamentalism.

Iraq was also said to be stock-piling weapons of mass destruction.

There was a basis for this, as Iraqis had made chemical weapons, partly with ingredients supplied by the US and the UK, and used them in the war with Iran. It was further alleged that Iraq had obtained aluminium pipes from China for uranium enrichment, and uranium from Nigeria for developing nuclear weapons. However in spite of exhaustive searches, the UN inspectors found no evidence of a nuclear weapons programme, no supplies of chemical weapons and the Nigeria story a fabrication.



To many it appeared that the attack on Iraq was not just about oil, it was part of a wider agenda to initiate a 'New World Order' based on democracy and the capitalist free market. To that end, nearly all positions of power in the new Iraq were given to Americans with a few self-serving Iraqis for local colour, and American corporations made a killing on cost-plus contracts that even they could hardly imagine. For instance, Halliburton, a company with connections to Vice President Cheney, had contracts worth \$11 billion. There are many excellent accounts of the Gulf Wars. One that seems to me to best get to the heart of the matter is Andrew Wilkie's 'Axis of Deceit' written by one who,

until he resigned in disgust, was at the heart of the Allied intelligence community.

What of New Zealand? To its credit, the Labour administration did not take up the invitation to join 'the Coalition of the Willing' in 2003. The Government's stance was almost certainly affected by the massive protests country-wide. The Government, following their general policy of aiding reconstruction in countries ravaged by war, sent a party of Army engineers to the Basra area.

The judgement – just another unnecessary war, and one with long-term effects on the attitude of the Muslim world to the West.



Nelson protest against war in Iraq

Sowing and Reaping

To understand the war in Afghanistan, let's take a quick look at its recent history. In 1978 the feudal monarchy was overthrown by the People's Democratic Party and the military. A secular modernist pro-Russia government was set up and had wide support except for some rural fundamentalist Muslim groups known collectively as the 'Mujahidin'. These groups were secretly financed and armoured by the American

CIA, Britain's MI6 and Pakistan's ISI and encouraged to attack the government. This led to incursion by Soviet troops, as it was probably meant to. This was countered by forces of warlord Hekmatyar and Muslim fundamentalists recruited and armed by Western interests and the wealthy Saudi Osama bin Laden.

After a vicious war in which much of the capital Kabul was reduced to rubble, the Soviet troops departed, Hekmatyar and the Muslim fundamentalists now collectively known as the 'Taliban', ruled Afghanistan, or at least those parts not still ruled by other warlords. Then came the 9/11 attack on the American World Trade Centre and other Western interests by the organisation known as al-Qaeda and supported by the Taliban. So by the sort of mental gymnastics common in world affairs, 'friends' were revealed as 'enemies'. US forces invaded Afghanistan, officially to destroy the infrastructure of al-Qaeda, the perpetrators of the 9/11 attack.

However, according to the norms of behaviour where great powers are involved, the given reason was not the only one, probably not even the main one, which was to ensure that central Asian oil could be safely delivered by pipeline through Afghanistan to the thirsty West.

Osama bin Laden lived on, one Hamid Karzai was elected President, warlords retained control of parts of the country, the Taliban went into hiding and are now making a comeback. The bombing goes on, now as part of 'the war on terror', though to the ordinary Afghani the 'on' should be 'of'. The yearly deaths of some 1,000 Afghani civilians are passed off as 'collateral damage', which doesn't do much to win Afghan hearts and minds. The opium poppies blow in the fields among the land mines and cluster bomblets while UN reconstruction teams from various countries try to bring order from chaos.



Was the war necessary? If bin Laden was guilty of inciting and bank-rolling terrorism, he should have been brought to justice. The war didn't do that. The Taliban had a plan, said to have been agreed to by Osama himself, to bring him to Peshawar to be tried by an international tribunal. The Pakistan President, under advice from the US, vetoed the plan. As for the pipeline, most people think peace more important than oil. Though the Taliban were defeated militarily, the worst features of their rule are now being replicated, not only by them.

Necessary? No. Thousands are dead, homes destroyed, country laid waste and we're about back where it started. Our Government under UN Auspices is sending our soldiers to do humanitarian and reconstruction work. In my view, they should be unarmed or they risk being seen as 'just another lot of Western invaders'. Also it appears that we have SAS soldiers in Afghanistan for unspecified reasons. A full scale reconstruction effort funded by all the Western nations and planned in conjunction with local expertise and employing local workers might just win the co-operation of the Afghan people, bring some peace to this unhappy country, and do something to compensate for the real wrongs done to Muslims elsewhere.



7 THE WAR ON TERROR

It's a new name for an old problem, it's the war on terror, it's 'Operation Enduring Freedom', it's good against evil. It all started under its new name when Arab terrorists hijacked four planes and flew two of them and their passengers into the New York World Trade Centre with horrific loss of life. In response the American authorities began the search for those responsible for planning the attacks so that they could answer for their crimes. This justifiable aim has led to the formation of an International Coalition Against Terror with repercussions even in New Zealand, it has led to new restrictive laws, it has led in some cases to imprisonment without trial and rendition of suspects to countries without our respect for law.

That terrorists, whether they be Christian, Muslim or atheist, European or Arab, should face a court of law is beyond question. Let's look a little deeper. Are terrorists born evil or are they a product of their environment? Were they born in refugee camps, were their homes bombed, were their parents slaughtered, were their homelands devastated? Who is the greater criminal?



I quote Arundhati Roy: *“Enduring Freedom means Enduring Subjugation for others. The International Coalition Against Terror is largely a cabal of the richest countries in the world. Between them, they manufacture and sell nearly all the world’s weapons. They possess the largest stockpile of weapons of mass destruction,*

chemical, biological and nuclear. They have fought the most wars, account for most of the genocide, ethnic cleansing and human rights violations in modern history and have sponsored, armed and financed untold numbers of dictators and despots. Between

them they have worshipped, almost deified the cult of violence and war.”

Since World War II the USA has been at war with and bombed 20 countries. How many terrorists has that created? A further problem with the War of Terror is that it's open-ended, can be used to pay off old scores and has led to hasty legislation and unnecessary restrictions.

In New Zealand the hysteria created by the so-called 'war' seems to be behind the over-reaction by the police to some relatively harmless posturing by Maori and other activists and to unnecessary disturbance in a peaceful village. The matter has yet to come before the Court.

We live in a violent world. We'll stop terrorism when we stop being terrorists; when we stop looking for enemies and see human beings with the same hopes and desires and fears as ourselves; when we stop glorifying armies; when we stop manufacturing and using the instruments of death.



8 IT'S NOT TIDDLYWINKS

That's what one of the best exponents of our national game said when asked about its physical nature. Well the arms trade is not tiddlywinks either. At one end it blesseth he who invests in it, at the other end is death and destruction. The evil that the merchants of death do liveth after them in the tears of orphans, in the gibbering in psychiatric institutions, in the misery of refugee camps, in the slow painful deaths of the leukaemia victims.

How about those at the sharp end of it all, when they come back to a land fit for heroes? According to surveys of returned American soldiers reported in a recent issue of 'Time', "One in five suffers from major depression or post-traumatic stress...more than 300,000 have suffered traumatic brain injury...400,000 veterans are waiting for their claims to be processed...those seeking assistance for homelessness is up 600% in the past year...the real number of suicide attempts in a year is close to 12,000."



from 'The Peacemaker'

How can it be that human beings, capable of love and laughter, care and compassion, poetry and painting can tolerate this incubus? It's blessed by priests and Prime Ministers, royalty as well as rascals. Its salesmen used to be somewhat dubious characters with names like Zaharoff and Kashoggi who weren't quite acceptable in high society. Now, tours by Royal princes and Cabinet Ministers just coincidentally result in multi-million dollar orders for the latest missiles, while the fellow removing the land mines gets paid in peanuts and aid workers distribute crutches to the legless.

Who are the guilty? Well our 'good friend' the USA manufactures just on half the world's weaponry. All the permanent members of the

Security Council are in on the racket. Wonder why they haven't stopped wars? Even little New Zealand gets a share of the loot. According to the latest figures I've seen our 'defence' exports are worth about \$145 million per annum. The trade has strong support from both our main political parties. A few years ago the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade urged the Government to support the arms trade and 'make a killing from the war in Afghanistan'. One can only admire the choice of words. Details of our arms trade can be obtained from Peace Movement Aotearoa, P O Box 9314, Wellington or from NoWARP – Network opposed to Weapons And Related Production – at the same address.

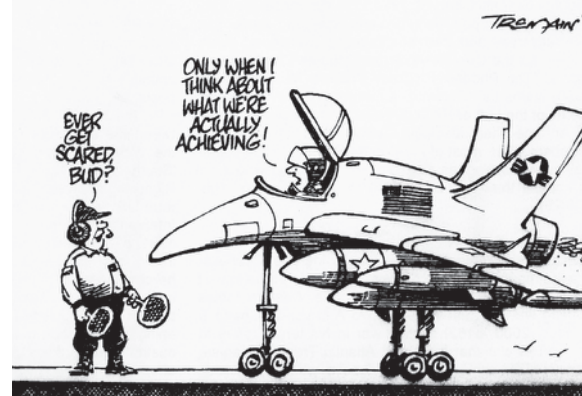
Statistics show what we could do for humanity with the money we spend on arms. I'm sure Derek Wilson won't mind if I repeat some figures from his monumental work 'Five Holocausts'. "In 1991 the University Science Centre of Philadelphia produced a graphic chart showing how the combined annual costs of various programmes for solving the world's major human and environmental problems would amount to but one quarter of the then total annual world military expenditure of \$1 trillion.

	<i>US billion</i>
Provide clean safe water	50.0
Provide energy efficiency	33.0
Retire developing nations' debt	30.0
Prevent soil erosion	24.0
Provide shelter	21.0
Eliminate starvation and under-nourishment	19.0
Provide clean, safe, renewable energy	17.0
Provide healthcare	15.0
Stabilise population	10.5
Prevent global warming	8.0
Prevent acid rain	8.0
Stop deforestation	7.0
Eliminate illiteracy	6.0
Stop ozone depletion	5.0
TOTAL	253.5"

The morality, or rather the lack of it, in the arms industry is staggering. Officials in buying countries are paid huge bribes to see that they buy a certain manufacturer's product. Salesmen get monstrous 'under the table' commissions. If Country A's government doesn't allow sales to Country B, A's arms manufacturers simply sell to Country C, which is allowed, then C on-sells to B with kick-backs along the way. Companies which made 'a killing' in the second Gulf War are making millions from the clean-up. British, French and South African companies which made land mines have got million dollar contracts for de-mining; in the industry it's known as 'double dipping'. The article in the 'New Internationalist' which mentioned this also mentioned that some manufacturers made their anti-personnel mines in bright colours and weird shapes to attract children to pick them up. Cluster bomblets are now the toy of choice for little Afghans and Iraqis and while we're thinking of children, here's some more statistics: the annual average number of children killed in conflict 1990-2000 was 200,000 and the annual average number of children made homeless by conflict 1990-2000 was 1.2 million.

So, what's the non-violent answer? There's only one, people power. It has led to an almost complete ban on land mines. Cluster bombs are next. In our country people power made us nuclear free. People inspired by their religion, by their common humanity, speaking with one voice can remove that monstrous man-made mountain, the arms industry.

Let's end this chapter on a hopeful note. Tony Blair says 'We're a peaceful country'. George W Bush says 'We're a peaceful nation'. I'm sure Messrs Sarkozy, Putin and Hu would say the same about the countries they lead. Well, looking at the record, one can only agree with Arundhati Roy's verdict:



"So now we know. Pigs are horses. Girls are boys. War is peace."

9 PEACE ACTION IN AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

Battle of the Bases

This on-going struggle, non-violent if one discounts a little stone and ordure throwing, arises from the desire of the USA political and military establishment to make New Zealand part of its defensive-offensive world strategy. To that end they set up a series of facilities which could make us a nuclear war target. This naturally was opposed by anti-war groups and young people in organisations such as the Progressive Youth Movement (PYM) and the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA).

The first of many protests was about Omega, a 1968 US Navy plan to build a transmitter in the Southern Alps as a navigation aid. After long argument, the Navy withdrew and built their station in Australia, opening some 10 years later than first planned.

Issue number two was project Longbank at Woodbourne Airport near Blenheim. It proved to be there to detect nuclear explosions in the atmosphere. Nineteen months after the first demonstration, the Americans packed their bags. Score US 0 - NZ peace movement 2!

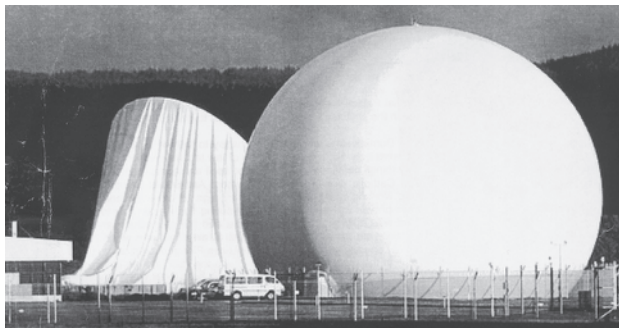
In 1970 the University of Canterbury student paper, 'Canta', published the result of research by Owen Wilkes showing that the US satellite tracking system at Mt John near Tekapo was to provide targeting data for a US anti-satellite nuclear weapon system. This of course reactivated protesters, some of whom climbed the mountain and surrounded the base, then guarded by a strong police presence with dogs. The police moved on to the protesters, one of whom was seriously injured, and some rocks were thrown.

The University of Canterbury, which owned the land, declined to renew the lease. The land reverted to the government which allowed the US facility to continue until it pulled out in 1983. Call that one a draw. A few protesters had broken the code of non-violence, which was always emphasised at later protests.



The Anti-Bases Campaign protest at U.S. base of Harewood. Behind masks from left - Warren Thompson, Moana Cole, Melanie Thompson, Ciaron O'Reilly. On right, Murray Horton. - *photo Bob Leonard*

The next targets of protests were the US Communications facility at Weedons, a few miles out of Christchurch, and at the US Navy base at Harewood, alongside Christchurch's airport. The US base, ostensibly just to support Operation Deep Freeze in the Antarctic, also supports flights to and from US military bases in Australia. It is regarded as US territory and in spite of protests it's still there.



Waihopai spybase. - *photo Steffan Browning*

So, sadly, is Waihopai, a satellite listening post set up as part of the secret UKUSA intelligence-sharing agreement. Interesting information which they glean is fed into home base in the US. The whole secret scheme was revealed by

researcher Nicky Hager in his book 'Secret Power'. Successive protests by the Anti-Bases Campaign and CAFCA have yielded some information about the base and caused some changes to political oversight, but yes, it's still there, though one of the domes covering vital equipment was deflated recently by three Catholic Ploughshares protesters, much to the chagrin of the security guards.

Not far away, on the top of Black Birch Mountain, the US Navy established an observatory for 'peaceful atmospheric research' in 1982. New Zealand researchers found, in material from US sources, that the information could be used for nuclear missile guidance. It wasn't easy to stage a protest on top of a mountain, but intrepid protesters did it twice and invited the base-dwellers to leave. They didn't then, but did so 10 years later. Call that one another draw.

From such protests evolved a sort of non-violent pattern, though no two actions will be exactly the same. A preliminary briefing is held, so that all know what the aim is and the method to be followed including what to do if arrested; then a meeting with police and the representatives of the organisation or facility being protested against. Afterwards, a follow-up to review the action and, if necessary, to support any arrested.

All at Sea

While the US action in Vietnam was being the main focus of non-violent protest, the proposed nuclear-weapon testing by the French at Mururoa did not go unnoticed. The CND, the Seamen's Union, Peace Media, Greenpeace, independence leaders in French Polynesia, Maori and Cook Islanders all protested and sea-going protest was mooted. In 1972 the first protest vessel, the 'Vega' renamed 'Greenpeace III', left for the French nuclear test zone where it was rammed by a French minesweeper. The full story of this and of later protest vessels, 'Boy Roel', 'Tamure' and 'Magic Isle', is told in detail in Elsie Locke's 'Peace People' and in Owen Wilkes' 1983 booklet on protest demonstrations against American military presence in New Zealand.

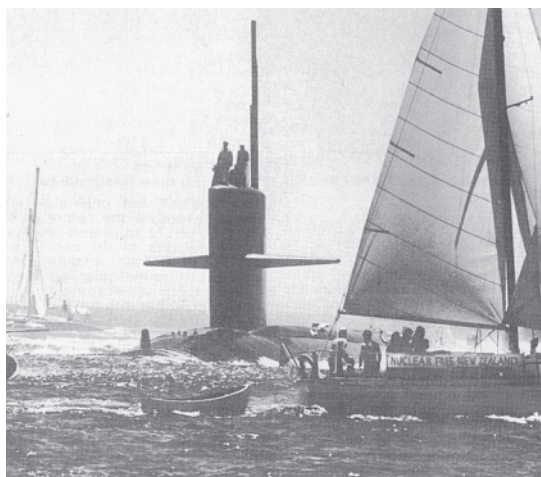
When Norman Kirk's Labour Party won the 1973 election, government protest against French actions intensified. The frigate 'Otago', with a

Cabinet Minister on board, sailed for the test site. Kirk's words to those departing, "Today the Otago leaves on an honourable mission. She leaves not in anger but as a silent accusing witness with the power to bring alive the conscience of the world. We believe that by this endeavour we shall contribute not only to our own concern but to make a contribution to the continuing quest for peace and disarmament."

In 1974 the French Government announced that they would do no further atmospheric tests – a victory for protest, official and unofficial. However the International Court of Justice did not make any decision on the case against underground tests; it was only asked to rule on atmospheric tests.

The publicity given to French testing in the Pacific led to a wider movement for a nuclear-free and independent Pacific. A 1975 conference in Suva brought together delegates from 22 countries concerned variously with colonisation, the fall-out from nuclear tests and consequent illnesses, militarisation, dumping and storage of chemical weapons, movement of nuclear-armed vessels and the ANZUS Treaty. Not long after that conference a joint NZ/Fiji proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific was placed before the UN General Assembly and was passed 94-18, with the nuclear-armed states abstaining.

The Labour Government, now led by Bill Rowling, was defeated at the polls. The in-coming Muldoon administration vetoed the proposal and welcomed visits by warships, whether nuclear-armed or not. This led to the activation of Peace Squadrons, armadas of small boats whose owners in Auckland, Wellington and Lyttelton, were prepared to face down the nuclear-armed warships. The Peace Squadron was part of a new non-violent strategy.



from 'Survival' handbook

Think Globally, Act Locally

The idea was not new but the way it was put into practice was. For years what we call the Peace Movement had stuttered along, the heat and burden of the day borne by a few noble souls, most of whose names you'll find in 'Peace People'. The rest of us might come to a demonstration on a big issue like Vietnam, send the occasional donation so that we've done something, and on the other 360 or so days go about our daily grind, think 'Good old Owen (or whoever) is doing a great job' and do damn all ourselves, forgetting that peace is indivisible, it doesn't just drop like the gentle rain from heaven. To get peace, we who ardently desire it must be personally involved.

I don't know who put the first nuclear-free sticker on his or her gate but it spread like a virulent disease, which was what some reactionaries thought it was. Much of the credit for the 'disease' must be given to George Armstrong who made the first nuclear-free declaration in 1980 and to the indefatigable Larry Ross who barnstormed the country with the nuclear-free message. Peace groups proliferated, not following a set pattern, each group reflecting its own environment. Houses, churches, schools, halls, streets, towns all declared themselves nuclear-free. In some areas every house was canvassed to judge the mood. Over 70% desired a nuclear-free country. There were concerts, picnics, street theatre shows, deputations to councils and to Parliament.



Nelsonians protest the arrival of a US warship.

- photo 'Nelson Evening Mail'

When US warships arrived, there were mass protests at ports and the Peace Squadrons harassed them in the harbours. Conservative councillors who saw bearded Russians behind every bush were faced

with the fact that a majority of their voters wanted their country nuclear-free. Some bowed to the majority opinion; others found themselves out of a job at the next election. They had to bow to 'the power of people' which was the title of a booklet I wrote about the nuclear-free campaign in Nelson. Our campaign would have been similar to, but not the same as, those in other centres. That was the strength of the nuclear-free campaign, unity in diversity. To cater for this, a new sort of central organisation, Peace Movement Aotearoa (NZ), was set up in 1981 to co-ordinate but not control the work of the proliferating peace groups.



Organisers of 1987 Annual Peace Workshop at Curious Cove. From left, Owen Wilkes, Lisa Thompson, Nicky Hager, Phillip Hunnisett, Will Foote. - photo 'Marlborough Express'

The climax of the campaign came in 1987 when the NZ Parliament passed the New Zealand Nuclear-free Zone Disarmament and Arms Control Bill. Three years later the National party in opposition also adopted the Labour Government's anti-nuclear policy. Many also regarded the policy as the death of ANZUS as no longer could any nuclear-armed or propelled vessels enter our territorial waters.

Swords into Ploughshares

*They will beat their swords into ploughshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.*

*Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war any more.*

Isaiah 2:4

While the United Nations organisation has failed to save us from 'the scourge of war', there have been occasions where its intervention has prevented small conflicts escalating, and its work for children, refugees and displaced people and bringing temporary accommodation,



- from 'The Peacemaker'

medicines and food to disaster and war-torn areas deserves our full support. I don't intend to cover the work of the United Nations here. It is all on record and in most libraries.

Although not getting the publicity given to spontaneous non-violent actions, many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are quietly beaver-

ing away, knocking on doors in the corridors of power, working for peace. In a brief survey like this, there's not room to cover the work of each and every one. All have Minutes of meetings, many publish their own pamphlets and magazines. I'm referring to such organisations as the National Consultative Committee on Disarmament, the National Council of Women (New Zealand), the New Zealand Peace Council, the United Nations Association, the Peace Foundation, the Disarmament and Security Centre, International Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, the Pacific Institute of Resource Management, the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom.

We peace people, and New Zealanders generally, owe much to Harold Evans, Dr Kate Dewes, Alyn Ware, Robert Green, Dr Ian Prior, Dr Erich Geiringer and Pauline Tangiora who have had the courage and ability to argue our case in international forums on such matters as getting a World Court opinion on the illegality of the threat and use of nuclear weapons, the establishing of a Nuclear Weapons Convention, the outlawing of chemical and biological weapons, the promotion of an international criminal court, the use of depleted uranium, the formation of a parliamentary network for nuclear disarmament. For details read Dewes and Green's book 'Aotearoa-New Zealand at the World Court'. For knowledge of what peace issues our government supports, read the booklets put out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and write to our Minister for Disarmament.



Four NZ Peacemakers from left, Alyn Ware, Dr. Kate Dewes, Harold Evans, Robert Green. - photo 'Disarmament and Security Centre'

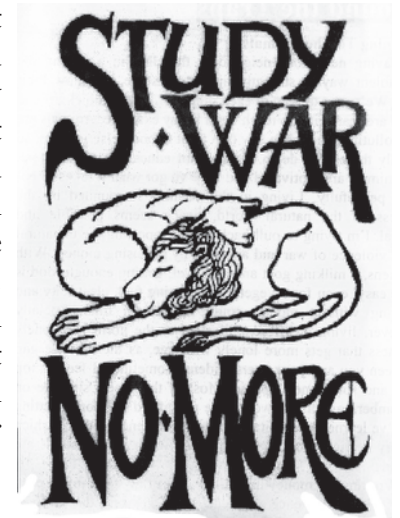
Peacekeeping and Peacemaking

These are two of the most basic and important functions of the United Nations Organisation. Except insofar as New Zealand is concerned, I do not intend to cover those matters which can be studied in the UN reports. My general conclusion would be that the UN has been most successful where the interests of Great Powers are not threatened. When they are, action is often prevented by a veto by one or two permanent members of the Security Council or action is taken by one or two members using their economic power to gain support from others, as in the Gulf War.

Peacekeeping and peacemaking are often two sides of the same coin. I notice that the New Zealand Defence Force's survey 'In the Field for Peace' uses the term 'peace support'. The list of occasions when New Zealand has provided peace support is most impressive and, insofar as most has been non-violent, commendable. Truce and election supervision, mine clearance, transport of humanitarian supplies, reconstruction, medical aid, all those things that help clear up the mess left by war lead to that elusive condition, peace.

We must be careful not to be drawn into operations where we may not

be seen as neutral. To that end I repeat that our peace support troops should be unarmed and that must be generally known. Current thinking would be that it would put our operatives in danger. I read somewhere that having a weapon is a sign of intent. A rifle in a New Zealand home is a sign that a rabbit's life is endangered. In Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq even small boys carry AK47's and they're not after rabbits. Also maybe do away with uniforms; just wear the blue beret for similar reasons.



- from 'The Peacemaker'

Even though I'm a pacifist, I must admit there have been situations where a show of force could have prevented a humanitarian disaster, as in Rwanda. However, instead of finding even better ways of killing people, why not devote a few of those millions that go into armaments into developing non-lethal weapons like disabling sprays that could be used by the UN in such situations. Better still, fund roving teams to search out areas of tension and do the peacemaking before rather than after.

The New Zealand Defence Force and the New Zealand Police must be credited with non-violent initiatives to solve the dispute between Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army. In 1990 New Zealand naval vessels were used as a neutral venue for peace talks. Later, leaders were brought to Burnham Military Camp for a similar purpose and an unarmed police contingent was sent to end a separatist war, which they did.

Less successful was the intervention in East Timor in conjunction with Australian troops. The violence continued for some time. Recently the troops' presence seems to have contributed to the overthrow of the Socialist Prime Minister and the establishment of rule more favourable to Australia's interests in the region. One suspects that behind it all is the old villain, oil.

10 A DIFFERENT SORT OF WAR

It's a war without bombs and bullets; it's a war that makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. I don't understand Economics. I can only judge by results. It seems to me, and to many who do understand Economics, that those highly respectable international institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation which were set up to help developing nations and to end poverty are having the opposite effect. Perhaps using the term 'war' is a bit extreme. I don't imagine there's deliberate intent to pauperise much of the world's population. It seems to me that there's a mind-set, a belief in the corridors of economic power, that privatisation, globalisation, structural readjustment, free trade, liberalisation will usher in benefits to all; something like believing in what in New Zealand we call 'Rogernomics'. Like it or not, we all have to live with the results as, for instance, when we buy a pair of shoes for \$120, of which some landless peasant worker in China or Indonesia gets \$2 while the skilled cobbler in New Zealand stacks shelves in the Warehouse.

It's an undeclared war, in an Alice in Wonderland world where nothing is what it seems to be or does what it's intended to do. The 'trickle down' theory is a good example. If certain people or businesses or countries get wealthy, the wealth will trickle down and we'll all be on the pig's back, but, defying gravity, it's trickled up. He that hath shall hath more.

Australian writer John Pilger has pointed out that since so-called 'liberalisation' and 'trickle down' theories have been put into practice, the number of poor countries has actually increased and that the World Bank admits that few of them can meet the Bank's poverty reduction target by 2015. Almost half their people subsist on less than a dollar a day.

The anger of those affected by decisions of the World Trade Organisation and the World Bank has been the focus of massive public protest at world

economic forums in places like Seattle, Genoa, Cancun, Prague and Quebec. Official delegates have been treated in the luxury appropriate to their importance, surrounded by a heavy police presence and by 'people power'. On some occasions this has strayed beyond the code of non-violence. As David Cortright said in 'The Peacemaker' magazine, "Vandalism and street fighting tactics jeopardise the moral integrity and political legitimacy that are necessary for political success."

In New Zealand 'privatisation' whereby essential services are put in the hands of private companies, which may be offshoots of trans-nationals, to bring us vastly improved services at cheaper rates, has done the opposite. For examples, I suggest you read back issues of 'Foreign Control Watchdog' for the reports of the annual 'Roger' award for the worst trans-national companies.

One of the worst results of 'structural adjustment' ordered by the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation for the repayment of debt is that the indebted countries are virtually ordered to grow or manufacture items needed by the trans-national companies in the rich countries. John Pilger has pointed out that fertile land in Senegal is being used to grow peanuts for Western margarine and in Ghana to grow cocoa for Western chocolate bars and this has led to increasing malnutrition. That is because the common people can no longer grow the crops and look after the animals that provided their food and a small surplus to sell at the local market.

Many of us in the 'developed', the rich world salve our consciences by donating to Oxfam and similar organisations when we hear of famines, hopelessness and disease in Somalia and Sudan or wherever. I'm not suggesting we stop this, rather the opposite.

Governmental aid money often comes with conditions. One example quoted by Pilger concerns British aid to Ghana for a clean water project being conditional on the privatisation of the water supply with the project being carried out by a British multi-national company. In this topsy-turvy world, people are being asked to pay for the water nature provides for free. I wonder when air and sunshine will be privatised.

What's the remedy? It's people power, non-violent resistance. It's providing the necessities of life by by-passing those who would use our need for personal profit and that of their shareholders. As I've just mentioned water, here's a good example. In Cochabamba, in Bolivia, the authorities sold the city's water company to the giant US corporation Bechtel. Prices doubled, leaving many families unable to buy necessities. The people rose in protest and refused to pay. Eventually, the company pulled out, and there's a public supply once more. In nearby Uruguay the people have voted for a constitutional reform consecrating water as a human right to be served only by public provision.

How about dams, those temples to progress? Their power houses provide electricity; the irrigation from their lakes makes the desert bloom. But what of the human cost? Let me quote from the 'New Internationalist' November 1995: "*The Nile, the Volta, the Zambezi, the Indus, the Parana are just a few of the great rivers of the Third World breached to supply dependable water for irrigation and the voltage necessary to jolt an industrial take-off. A powerful consortium of national politicians, multilateral lenders and trans-national engineering and construction firms have reshaped river eco-systems as a vital part of industrial infrastructure. Advantages and wealth for some came right away but not for those up-rooted from their homes, four million at last count. Costs have been slower to accumulate. The costs of salted and water-logged fields, coastal erosion, ruined fisheries, staggering debt and escalating repair bills are just now beginning to hit home.*"

Non-violent resistance has grown and in several cases has been effective. Again I summarise information from the 'New Internationalist'. A number of dams have been stopped in Thailand, the Bangladesh Flood Action Plan has been scaled back dramatically and the World Bank has been forced to withdraw from several mega-dam projects on the Indian sub-continent. The resistance is putting alternatives on the agenda, energy development that works with a river rather than trying to reshape and conquer it. Traditional small scale methods of irrigation are also being revived, from Karez in Western China (small scale water catchment) to the stone lines used in arid Sahelian Africa and the building of raised fields in the age-old manner to aid drainage by the Quechan Indian farmers near Lake Titicaca in Peru.

In the drylands of the Deccan Plateau in India women banded together and, in 1994, set up a Community Grain Fund. Securing a single government loan they set about restoring wastelands, growing coarse grains that are locally produced, stored and distributed in villages around Zaheerabad. They have succeeded in creating autonomous food communities in one of the most degraded regions of India.

On the very day that I was writing this there was an article in 'The Press' that a New Zealand bakery is trialling the use of an ancient coarse grained wheat grown in semi-desert countries. As well as providing an excellent crop for dry areas, it is of special value in combating diabetes.

Small is beautiful. We don't have to live in thrall to outside economic forces. There are peaceful ways that communities can overcome economic problems and revitalise themselves in so doing. The 'New Internationalist' has outlined some of them. There's the Local Exchange and Trading System known in some areas of New Zealand as 'the Green Dollar system'. It's one step up from the oldest economic system of barter. Members simply list the product, such as vegetables, or service, such as baby-sitting, that they can provide. They meet at markets, read their newsletter, contact personally or by phone. If a deal is made, both parties record it and lodge the information with the system's accountant who prepares a monthly statement showing each party's debts or credit. No money changes hands. There are many variations of this sort of system.

Credit unions exist in most of our towns. They are usually co-operatively and locally owned. Local investors deposit their savings and small scale loans are made to local enterprises.

Farmers' markets are now common. A suitable space in a village or town is made available by a local authority. Once a week farmers set up stalls. Buyers get fresh meat, vegetables and fruit at prices lower than if the product had to go through a third party. The same system is often used by artists and hobbyists. Notice boards advertise local events, buskers do their thing and a good community atmosphere prevails.

Community ownership or lease of land provides an opportunity for landless city dwellers. Land may be leased from the local authority or bought by a Trust. For a minimal rent, people get the use of a small block of land to grow their own vegetables or small fruits. They may also help on a communal area. Surplus produce may be sold at a stall. The whole project is usually overseen by someone with horticultural expertise.

Groups wishing to live a simple communal life for religious reasons, for economic reasons or just for togetherness may set up communities. They may live communally or in separate houses on communal land, they share the planning and the various tasks that make the project viable. There are all sorts of variations in the way they work. One that I have some acquaintance with is Riverside Community near Motueka. Set up originally by Methodist pacifists, it now accepts any who agree with its peaceful philosophy. You can read about it in 'Community – the Story of Riverside' by Lynn Rain.

In most industrialised countries electricity is brought from a large corporation or a government enterprise. In Denmark in 1986 the people of Venderso set up a co-operatively owned wind farm. The scheme was so successful that similar ones have been set up all over Denmark.

Grocery co-operatives used to be common in poorer areas, particularly in Britain. In some stories I've read, Mum didn't tell you to go to the shop, she said, "Go to the Co-op." Goods are bought in bulk and smaller quantities sold cheaply to members. Again there are many variations of the system. In simplest form the products for sale are held in bulk at a central venue, buyers bring their containers and have a good gossip at the same time, just like my Dad did when he harnessed Old Dobbin to the dray and took the cream to the Co-op dairy factory.

All the above form only a small fraction of the 'fight-back' by the common people of this earth. Read the 'New Internationalist' and you'll find much, much more. In my youth I attended a church-based organisation called The Band of Hope. Its purpose was to combat the

demon of alcohol. I went because Mum thought I should and I enjoyed the non-alcoholic supper. Well the other organisations I've mentioned, and the hundreds I haven't, form a band of hope for the future. Maybe if, as suggested by David Ransom in the 'New Internationalist', we could combine the anti-globalist movement, the global justice movement, the anti-war movement, the environmental and human rights movements and the labour movement, we could be living in the Century of the Common Man and Woman.

However, in spite of our best efforts, it will be a slow process and in the meantime something more must be done for the hungry and homeless. It seems to me that what is known as the 'Tobin tax' could be the answer. It's a suggested tax of about half of one per cent on international speculative currency transactions. As these transactions can be as much as \$1.5 trillion a day, we're not talking peanuts. The tax could provide up to \$300 billion annually. The UN estimates that the cost of wiping out the worst forms of poverty and environmental destruction globally would be around \$225 billion per year. The international trade union movement, the Canadian Parliament and the government of Finland support the tax and there is a Tobin tax network world-wide.



11 THE WAY AHEAD

Pie in the Sky

Advocates of non-violence are told that they have their heads in the clouds, that it's all pie in the sky, that they should live in 'the real world'. Well, look at the record and you'll find that though their heads are in the clouds, their feet are firmly in the 'real world'. Where non-violent tactics have been used, often by force of circumstance rather than by deliberate policy, they have been remarkably successful. Let's look at a few examples.

In the tightly controlled satellite states of Soviet Russia, early armed uprisings were unsuccessful, but in the second half of the 20th Century a quiet revolution took place, not so much by directly opposing the state apparatus but by what has been called 'a quiet accretion of democratic ventures' – books, plays, music, union activity, church groups, co-operative ventures. What the Hungarian writer Konrad described as "the iceberg of power" melted from within, so much so that when the official break came as in Romania, the soldiers sided with the reformers. In Russia itself, the peaceful revolution came in the opposite direction, from the top down through Gorbachev's programme of liberalisation and gradual democratisation. It might have been better if the process had stopped there. From what I've read, it seems that the more unsavoury aspects of capitalism have triumphed in both Russia and the old satellite states.

There should be no need for me to recount the well-known stories of the successful nonviolent campaigns led by Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr against British rule, apartheid and racial discrimination respectively. Less well-known are other success stories. One I'd never heard of before is recounted in Kurlansky's 'Non-violence, the History of a Dangerous Idea'. In 1929 the Pathans, a Muslim tribe in North West India, under their leader Abdul Ghaffar Khan, organised the world's first non-violent army. Members swore an oath to renounce violence and vengeance, to forgive oppressors and live a simple life, they practised civil disobedience against British rule.

When Khan was arrested by the British in Peshawar, the entire town's population took the oath and joined his army.

Political change in Central America has traditionally been violent. In 1944 two dictators, Martinez in El Salvador and Ubico in Guatemala, fell before massive non-violent civil resistance. Neighbouring Costa Rica has disbanded its army as an official policy of non-violence and has taken the lead in promoting peace.

A successful non-violent action took place in Samoa in the 1920s. The clash between the New Zealand administration and the indigenous people in Western Samoa 1929-30 was an 'incident', not a war. The island came under New Zealand military rule after the ruling Germans were removed in 1914. There was tension between the administration and the local population almost from the start, mainly from lack of understanding of native custom, and culminating in the formation of a Samoan League commonly known as 'The Mau'. The League instituted a campaign of non-co-operation, refusing to pay taxes and boycotting non-Samoan stores. The administrators reacted by taxes, fines, confiscations and imprisonment of leaders.

In 1928 the Administrator called for military assistance and HMS Dunedin and HMS Diomedes arrived in Apia. When Marines came ashore to arrest demonstrators and picketers, The Mau fell into columns and marched to prison. As there wasn't room for them all, they were given a sort of open detention. They ignored this, wandered off during the day and sensibly came back each morning for a free breakfast.

Tensions increased under a new Administrator and the formation of an armed guard. In December 1929 a feast was held to celebrate the return of an exiled Mau supporter. A scuffle started when police tried to arrest a 'wanted' member of The Mau and shots were fired. A Samoan leader called for the shooting to stop. He was shot, 50 were wounded and nine, including Chief Tamasese, died. His dying words were recorded: "My blood has been shed for Samoa. I am proud to give it. Do not dream of avenging it, as it was spilt in maintaining peace. If I die, peace must be maintained at any price."

After this, The Mau fled into the bush. The New Zealand Government sent troops to round them up, with little success. The Mau continued to act non-violently, the troops continued to search for and imprison them. The whole episode finally just fizzled out. The actions of The Mau serve as a non-violent example to us all, and no doubt helped Western Samoa to eventually gain independence in 1962, the first South Pacific nation to do so.

Another little-remembered non-violent success story was the defeat of the rightist Kapp coup d'état over the post-World War I Weimar Republic. Kapp's followers intended to restore the monarchy. A general strike was organised by workers from all other political and religious groups. All essential services closed down, the industrialists' organisation denounced the new regime, the police demanded Kapp's resignation. Kapp took the hint and fled to Sweden. German historian Erich Eyck said, "Since the regular tools of state have been found wanting, only immediate intervention by the populace could have saved it so soon." In other words, people power.

In the 1970s Argentina was ruled by a ruthless military junta. Men criticising it simply 'disappeared'. A group of women known as 'Las Madres', mothers of the 'disappeared', made weekly demonstrations against the junta, demanding to know the fate of their sons. In spite of harassment, the action continued and gained wide support. The fall of the regime in 1982 was at least in part due to the non-violent action of the women and the publicity it gave to the nature of the regime.

In this booklet my main concern has been with the use of non-violent means to solve international problems and to avoid conflict. This does not mean I disregard the importance of non-violence at the personal, family and community level. Unfortunately many good people who would never countenance personal or family violence still regard armed conflict as acceptable, even admirable.

Common Morality

Reading history, one would tend to the view that man is inherently evil, that violence is the natural order of things, that there will be wars and rumours of wars, that there are irreconcilable differences. Yet I am convinced that the great majority of the world's peoples have a

common morality. In the USA there is a powerful group of mainly fundamentalist Christians who call themselves 'the moral majority'. They are not. The moral majority are most of the world's people, the great unwashed, the hoi polloi, you and me. Wherever we live, whatever our skin colour, whether we are Hindu, Muslim, Christian or pagan, the great majority of us are honest, compassionate, abhor violence, love our children, respect our elders and care about the world we live in.

Look at a baby's smile and tell me there's Original Sin. The other night on television I saw a gorgeous smile on the face of a small boy of a Colombian jungle tribe. In basic economic terms he had nothing but enough food to sustain life, the love of his parents and the support of his tribe. There's no original sin, there's original goodness, a basic love of life and living and any who depart from that are aberrations from the norm.

Those who run the international financial institutions, the heads of global corporations, the wielders of military power, the dictators are not evil men. They don't beat their wives, they love their children, they probably go to church, mosque or synagogue regularly and while they regard their bank balances with some satisfaction, they also believe they are working for the general good. We need to convince them otherwise, that the common morality they show in their everyday lives should be applied to the common good. The only way to change them and their institutions is by people power, both at the personal level and by powerful mass persuasion. I've already mentioned that what one writer called 'an accretion of democratic ventures' can moderate and may eventually lead to the end of oppression. One small example – I read recently that the New York Philharmonic performed in North Korea. Just one break in a wall of distrust. In 'Time' magazine I've just read of Israeli conductor Daniel Barenboim's youth orchestra of both Palestinian and Israeli musicians. Its aim is just to play good music, but I guess it's doing more for peace than all the missiles and endless top-level conferences. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has pointed out that even the worst dictator can be approached through a common interest. If, for instance, Saddam Hussein had been a chess fanatic, a game and a glass of wine could have made a small breach in

a confrontational atmosphere. Another example of this sort of thing is how Nelson Mandela learnt the Afrikaans language and the rules of Rugby so that he could understand the mentality of the Afrikaners and so, more easily, negotiate with them. The ‘tortoise’ method of peacemaking make take time, but it’s better than the ‘hare’ method which ends up in a trillion dollar war.

Even a dictator depends on the acquiescence of the populace. If they turn against him, in time he’s a ‘gone coon’, he’s cashed his chips. I think of the photograph of Ceausescu standing on the balcony of his palace watching his subjects and even his soldiers crowded into the town square below, all shouting “Scram!”

On an even more personal level, we mustn’t discount the power of personal example. If I specify the Dalai Lama some will tell you that he’s a waste of space, an exiled leader, a failed guru. Yet he’s probably the world’s most inspirational person, a man with his head in the clouds but his feet firmly on the earth, a man of both faith and science. In the words of a ‘Time’ article by Pico Ayer he’s “one of the leading spokesmen for a new global vision in which we look past visions of nation, race and religion, and try to address our shared problems at the source.” The Dalai Lama is not just a religious nut-case, as some might think. He sees the wider picture. While clinging to his Buddhist faith; he sees the good in all religions and in those not professing any. In the article quoted above, the Dalai Lama is reported as saying “Even without a religion, we can become a good human being.” Though his people are being oppressed, he sees good in the Chinese and there is evidence that his sayings are widely understood and revered by the Chinese people.

Who knows? Maybe religion will spawn a charismatic leader who will say ‘Rise up and follow me in the paths of peace.’ That’s what the Christian ‘second coming’ means in the metaphorical language of the Bible. Not the return of Jesus, that’s a chimera, but someone with His spirit. ‘Blessed are the peacemakers’. Maybe another Martin Luther King will arise and say ‘Let my people go, go from the idea that they are the new rulers of the world, that they are the guardians of democracy, that bullets and bombs will usher in a new millennium of peace’. The

‘praise God and keep your powder dry’ people, these whom one writer called ‘the Christian fascists’ will be seen as what they are, generally good but deluded people who by their support of George W and his cabal are adding to the sum of human misery.

While the roots of conflict are basically economic, they are inextricably linked with religion. As theologian Hans Kung wrote, “There will be no peace without religious peace.” I quote his words taken from his book ‘Global Responsibility’ and copied by ‘The Peacemaker’. *“What would it mean for tomorrow’s world if the leaders of all religions, great and small, decided today to give expression to their responsibility for peace, love of neighbour and non-violence, for reconciliation and forgiveness? If from Washington to Moscow, from Jerusalem to Mecca, from Belfast to Teheran, from Amritsar to Kuala Lumpa, instead of helping to foment conflicts they were to help in solving them? All the religions of the world today have to recognise their share of responsibility for world peace.”*



- from ‘The Peacemaker’
All the religions of the world today have to recognise their share of responsibility for world peace.”

From a brief study of the great religions, it seems to me that their original messages were of peace. Over time, minor differences were magnified, even led to war. In the ostensibly Christian world, Muslims are being targeted as the source of present strife. Islam is widely regarded as violent, even barbaric, but to quote a Muslim scholar’s words repeated in the ‘New Internationalist’, *“Nothing could be further from the truth. Islam is all about seeking truth for its own sake. Indeed, peace is considered in Islam as an essential precondition for submission to the will of God. Only through the creation of peaceful circumstances can the life of faith be implemented in all aspects of human existence.”*

Non-violence is a basic concept for Christians, Hindus and Buddhists; it’s often honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Leaving

aside matters of ritual, it seems to me that there is a basic one-ness, that similarities are greater than differences. If there is a God, a Supreme Being who created the earth and all therein, there can only be one, whether S/He is called 'God' or 'Allah' or 'Vishnu'. God's family may have their differences but like our own families they must come together to face common dangers, such as poverty, disease and militarism so we need a common practical ecumenism. New Zealander Lloyd Geering, quoting Cantwell Smith, wrote "My aspiration is to participate Christianly in the total life of mankind and I invite others to do so Jewishly, Islamically, Buddhistically or whatever, including Humanistically." Even if a charismatic leader arises to call for peace, even if the Pope, the Archbishop, the Grand Mufti and the Grand Ayatollah get together and tell their followers to stop fighting, their words will only resonate if they fall on ground already prepared by public opinion. The Palestinian/Israeli impasse has been the subject of countless high-level conferences but it will only end when enough of the grassroots people decide that violence is no solution. I don't often agree with Dick Cheney but he was right on when he said that "The present strife in Iraq will end when the Iraqis get tired of dying." He might have added, "And when the Americans leave."

It's hardly fair to lay all the responsibility for creating world peace on the adherents of the various religions, but they do have the basic organisation already in place, they already do a massive job in caring and sharing, in creating a more humane society. My main criticism would be the ambivalence of many on the question of peace and war.

What of those of us who reject the theology but share the Christian philosophy of love? Those who see God as just a word for the greatest good? We lack the organisation of a church but there's plenty we can do towards a peaceful world, working in local body and national politics, through aid organisations, peace and environmental organisations and in those groups aiming at a fairer economic system. It's so easy to backslide, to find it all too hard and working with like-minded people keeps one 'on course'. And through working in peace groups for many years I've found that our common aim transcends any question of religious affiliation.

Through a Glass, Darkly

The Secretary General of the United Nations, viewing world affairs from the 38th floor of the UN building, said a few weeks ago, "My perspective is of cautious but resolute optimism." Following his lead, I'll try to end on an optimistic note. I have faith that the innate goodness of a common man and woman, the common morality that binds us, will triumph over the financial and military institutions that oppress the human race. There are hopeful signs; for instance, in South and Central America, people power is bringing peaceful change. I hope they can avoid the military mind-set of their oppressors. In Venezuela, where so much has been done to return power to the people, the government is spending millions on arms. For what? Military might does not ennoble, it degrades and dehumanises.

Our country has a reputation, perhaps not entirely justified, for its dedication to peace. Our nuclear-free legislation, our work at the World Court on the illegality of nuclear weapons, our support for peacekeeping and peacemaking operations, our virtual repudiation of the ANZUS Treaty have all demonstrated our commitment. I remind my readers that it came about by the demonstration of people power.

There's still plenty to be done. We still have links with the US military machine, through Waihopai, Tangimoana and Harewood. We still have a part in the arms trade. Our superannuation fund supports armaments firms. We should follow Norway's lead. According to a recent 'Time' article, their superannuation fund has been told to dump 27 holdings, in which is invested over \$2 billion, because of their role in producing weapons.

Although much has been done in peaceful missions, our armed forces still equip and train as if they are going in to battle. We still have what one writer called 'primitive tribal obsessions' that the heathen lot over the hill are coming to get us, so sharpen the cutlasses, and get out the knobkerries. I'd like to see a Disarmed Force, a Peace Army, a disciplined group ready to go to areas of disaster or conflict, to heal the sick and wounded, to fix the roads and bridges, to rebuild the schools, fix the water supply, to mediate conflict.

For a peaceful country we often give the wrong messages to our young people. Our newspapers and television stations headline the taggers and boy racers, the gory accidents and disasters, the bomb carnage in Iraq and Afghanistan. The really good news gets relegated to the back pages. Computer games make violence seem the natural order of things. Some television channels give endless re-runs of World War II. We make heroes of the wrong people. I'm not decrying military bravery, but the accolades we give it give many young the impression that war is great and glorious, not dirty and degrading – as many old soldiers will tell you.

On the political scene, the Greens get my vote, both on ecological and military matters. Politics apart, contamination of our air, soil and water by pesticides, the effluent from industry and the toxic residue of armaments is an issue that must concern us all. Labour has, in the main, been a good international citizen but on some vital issues has not been able to distance itself from the new imperialism. If, as most predict, its reign is over for the immediate future, it may return to its roots and anti-war Labour Party founder Harry Holland will stop turning in his grave. And I sense that National may shed some of the jingoism of its ancestors and disregard the 'bring back the Sky Hawks' brigade.

I'm probably writing to the already convinced. If not, if you need to know more, go to the experts. The book that triggered my belief in non-violence some 70 years ago was Richard Gregg's 'The Power of Non-violence'. For a more modern view, try Jonathan Schell's 'Unconquerable World' or Kurlansky's 'Non-violence, the History of a Dangerous Idea'. For militarism and the arms trade, read both Chomsky and Pilger. For the results of privatisation and the shenanigans of our local tycoons, go to our home-grown magazine 'Foreign Control Watchdog'; for all the above plus indigenous issues, poverty, racism, discrimination, global warming and environmental issues, read the 'New Internationalist'. And make your voice heard in whatever social or educational groups to which you belong.

I'll finish by quoting words written by one of the heroes of non-violence, Martin Luther King, while in gaol in Georgia.

Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Evil multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction.

... the chain reaction of evil, hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars, must be broken or we will be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.

... love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend. We never get rid of an enemy by meeting hate with hate; we get rid of an enemy by getting rid of enmity. By its very nature, hate destroys and tears down; by its very nature, love creates and builds up. Love transforms with redemptive power.



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