

PEACE NEWS NEW ZEALAND

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BLENHEIM BASE

David Buller

Do NZers know what the U.S. Navy has in store for us? Not likely if recent statements by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs are any indication.

The U.S. is building a facility in Marlborough which P.N.N.Z. believes will be used to greatly increase the accuracy of strategic systems, in particular the Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) carried by Trident submarines.

The document reproduced opposite clearly states (point 10) that the facility has a military function, yet Robert Muldoon and Brian Talboys seem to be unaware of this fact, or unwilling to acknowledge it.

continues on page 2

Charting a Course for Death

1. COMPONENT								2. DATE							
FY 19 82								NAVAL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM							
NAME															
3. INSTALLATION AND LOCATION								4. COMMAND				5. AREA CONSTR. COST INDEX			
CIRCLE TRANSIT STATION, BLENHEIM, NEW ZEALAND								CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS				0.80			
6. PERSONNEL STRENGTH		PERMANENT			STUDENTS			SUPPORTED			TOTAL				
		OFFICER	ENLISTED	CIVILIAN	OFFICER	ENLISTED	CIVILIAN	OFFICER	ENLISTED	CIVILIAN					
a.	AS OF 9/30/80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
b.	END FY 19 86	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10			
7. INVENTORY DATA (\$000)															
(0)															
a. TOTAL ACRES															
b. INVENTORY TOTAL AS OF 30 SEP 1980															
c. AUTHORIZATION NOT YET IN INVENTORY															
d. AUTHORIZATION REQUESTED IN THIS PROGRAM															
e. AUTHORIZATION INCLUDED IN FOLLOWING PROGRAM															
f. PLANNED IN NEXT THREE PROGRAM YEARS															
g. REMAINING DEFICIENCY															
h. GRAND TOTAL															
B PROJECTS REQUESTED IN THIS PROGRAM															
CATEGORY CODE		PROJECT TITLE			SCOPE		COS - REASON		DESIGN STATUS		COMPLETE				
310.11		Celestial Observatory			5,620 SF		1,280		12-78		10-81				
		Major Construction - Total for Cost Variation					1,280								
9. Future Projects:															
a. Included in following program (FY 83): None.															
b. Major planned next three years: None.															
10. Mission or Major Functions: Operate an observatory to obtain locations of stars in the Southern Hemisphere with the increased accuracy that is required for military purposes.															

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US Senate Military Construction Appropriations for 1982

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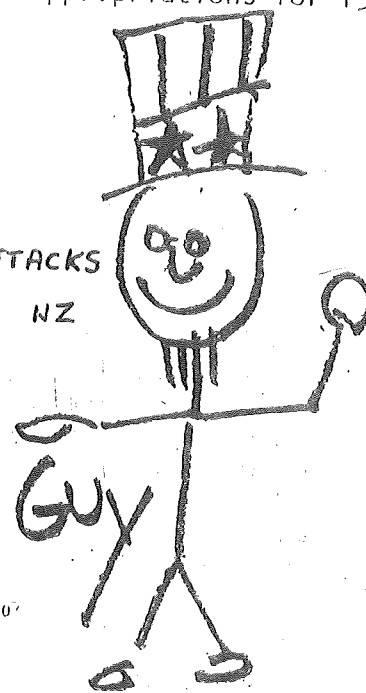
U.S.
EMBASSY ATTACKS
PEACE NEWS NZ

Good Guy

Portrait of Uncle Sam by Dan Zedek, Age 10

Wall Street Journal.

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BLACK BIRCH

The US embassy in Wellington is being blatantly dishonest in this matter, as a further document in our possession shows.

'The US authorities inform us that the Transit Circle project was not inspired by a quest for data for military use, and that the project generally and the data to be obtained from the Black Birch facility have no specific military objective. They state that it is conceivable that information collected from the NZ station could be of interest to the US military - but no more so than any other work done in the general area of mapping or charting, or indeed in the whole range of scientific study which could be drawn upon for military purposes. The principal point is that the Transit Circle project has not been conceived for military purposes and it has been made clear to us by the US authorities that no military tasking will be applied to the data collection process at the Black Birch Station'. (B.E. Talboys, Minister of Foreign Affairs, letter to the editor of PNNZ dated 9/9/81/.)

A letter from the Prime Minister indicates much the same understanding.. ...'These observations will have a multitude of scientific uses, e.g. the study of the dynamics of the Milky Way Galaxy, cosmic distance scale, the evolution of stars and the more accurate determination of star positions for navigational purposes. Results of this programme will be made freely available world-wide...' 'The project has not been conceived for any military purpose, and it has been made clear to us that no military tasking will be applied to the data collection processes at the proposed Black Birch Observatory.' (R.D. Muldoon, Prime Minister, letter to Mia Tay of Christchurch, 26/8/81/.)

Charles Bell, Public Affairs Officer, United States International Communications Agency, U.S. Embassy Wellington writes.....'It still might be useful to have the full background information on the facility and its

purpose, which I urge you to note is purely scientific and definitely not military'. Charles Bell then proceeds to attack PNNZ as follows

'As you may be aware, Peace News New Zealand, The People's voice and a few individuals with similar views are attempting a "disinformation campaign" about Transit Circle in the hopes of course of undermining public support for the good relations our two countries enjoy. In this regard I call your special attention to the fact that the effort to improve the stellar reference frame in the Southern Hemisphere, of which the Transit Circle project is a vital part, has been endorsed by the Soviet Union and other Communist Nations, making the disinformation efforts of local communists rather absurd and almost amusing. Perhaps they ought to keep in closer touch with "headquarters" (From a letter written by Charles Bell, on 8/5/81.)

Other points of view as to the purpose of 'Black Birch' follow - Robert C. Aldridge, an aerospace engineer who has spent sixteen years designing US submarine launched strategic missiles, including early work on Trident.

'It is my estimation that 'Transit Circle' will provide the ultra precise star map needed to guide submarine launched Trident missiles to their pinpoint targets.'

'Mr Bell points out that the US Naval observatory "as one of the few astronomical institutions in the world engaged in classical astronomy" is responsible for Transit Circle. The US Navy manages programs with direct military advantages, although subsidiary civilian spinoffs are frequently more highly emphasized. Warfare is the Navy's function and that is the purpose for which it is funded.' 'Mr Bell gives assurance that the Transit Circle facility will not be equipped to participate in any type of targetting network. Of course not, but it will provide very accurate celestial maps. Such a statement is like computer manufacturers selling their products to the military while claiming they are not weapons contractors. Both products, however, whether computers or astronomy charts, are critical to the accuracy of first strike targetting

networks.' Robert Aldridge continues 'I am a little surprised at the crude rhetoric used by a representative of so prestigious an agency as the US Embassy. It seems that in New Zealand, as in the United States, the mention of communism is supposed to discredit any dissidence. I hope the people are not taken in by such innuendos. Witch hunters had their day but I hope people are better informed now.' 'Transit Circle is convincing evidence that Trident submarines will be operating in the southern Hemisphere. That should be of particular concern to New Zealand'.

Desmond Ball, a senior research fellow in the "Strategic" and defence studies Centre at the Australian National University, Canberra, said 'that a lot of United States Navy research for navigation and for targeting of missiles was concerned with better mapping of the stellar system. Dr Ball said that "transit" had another meaning for the Navy - it had navigation satellites called Transit Satellites

which were originally developed in the 1960's to provide Polaris missile submarines with high accuracy navigational capability'. (From an article in the Christchurch Press 16/4/81)

In another article Desmond Ball noted that 'even where the existence of a particular operation has been acknowledged, its function is usually described euphemistically only as 'space research', "upper atmospheric studies", geological and geophysical research", etc.

Desmond Ball in commenting on the Australian situation with US bases says 'The US installations in Australia constitute one of the most critical issues of Australian national security policy. Unfortunately the subject is also one of the most complex as well as one of the most controversial; there are no easy answers for the Australian citizen concerned, with what should be done about them.....' One of the most disturbing features of the American installations is the lack of political control exercised by the host Government over their establishment, operation and maintenance. In the case of the Gap and Nurrungar, three of Australia's last four Prime Ministers - the only ones to address the issue - have specifically stated that, at the least, they were ignorant of major aspects of the operations of these installations.' 'the Australian public

(should) be told as much as possible about the general purposes and functions of the installations as is compatible with any genuine security arrangements. This will involve a complete reversal of the paternalism which has characterised the attitudes of Australian Governments of both political persuasions regarding the right of the public to be informed about matters of National Security.....' The greater part of what the Government has attempted to keep from the Australian public is available on the public record in the United States.' (From an article in the Pacific Defence Reporter, September 1981, pages 25-33).

In his book 'A Suitable Piece of Real Estate,' Desmond Ball discusses the installation of the Omega system thus... 'The "official" position is that Omega has no important military uses. This is not only dishonest but the record shows that governments of both political persuasions have been unnecessarily secretive, uninformative, equivocal, disingenuous and themselves quite ill-informed and technically ill-equipped to comprehend the system and its strategic and defence implications (From 'A Suitable Piece of Real Estate - American Installations in Australia by Desmond Ball, published by Hale and Iremonger, Sydney 1980).

There are many questions that can be asked about the 'Black Birch' facility.

Why has the US Embassy been misrepresenting the purpose of the Transit Circle when the US Senate Military Construction Appropriations for 1982 state clearly that the observatory is for 'Military purposes? (Report of hearings before a subcommittee on Appropriations, House of Representatives pages 1237-1241)

Why do prominent NZ politicians not acknowledge the military purpose?

If the project is for the benefit of the international community, will the observatory have scientific staff from NZ or the Soviet Union?

If the data is for wider community, will the information be given to the USSR for the improvement of their weapons systems?

Should NZers be seeking to stop the base being constructed (through Trade Union, Church or other protest action)?

Why the US Military Needs Another NZ Mountain

Yet another US military installation has been proposed to be sited in New Zealand. Owen Wilkes, long-time peace campaigner, currently appealing his conviction for "treason" in Norway (where he works), backgrounds the latest US Navy proposal.

The United States Air Force already has a satellite tracking installation on top of Mount John near Lake Tekapo. Now the United States Navy wants to build something called a "Transit Circle Facility" on Black Birch Mountain, near Blenheim. What's going on?

Government statements on the issue have been vague as to the military significance of the installation. Mr Talboys, making the first announcement about the project as Minister of Foreign Affairs, in August 1977, said only that the data it produced would be used to update nautical almanacs used by both civil and military navigators. There has been nothing explicit about whether all or only some of the data will be released to the public or to science in general. After the debates about Omega and Mount John we can guess that such vagueness on the part of the government means they are trying to hide something — either their own ignorance about US navy intentions, or the unpleasant nature of those very intentions.

Transit circle

A transit circle is simply an astronomical telescope mounted in such a way that it can only be swung in a north-south direction. The rotation of the earth brings the stars past the cross-hairs, and the times at which stars thus "transit" the instrument is very accurately recorded. From such observations the positions and motions of the stars can be accurately determined.

The instrument to be installed at Black Birch will be controlled by a computer and will feed its data straight into the computer. At present the accurate positions of about 20,000 southern hemisphere stars are known. The 10 year planned Southern Reference Star Program at Black Birch will expand this to over 200,000.

Black Birch

To get the best coverage of the southern hemisphere sky the Navy needed a site at about 45°S, and initially sites in Australia and South America were also considered as well as in New Zealand. In New Zealand the choice lay between

the Canterbury University/US Air Force site at Mount John and the Carter Observatory site at Black Birch. Reportedly Canterbury University was not interested in playing host to a second US military installation and so Black Birch was chosen.

The installation will consist of a transit circle and an astrograph (a star-mapping telescope) mounted in separate astronomical buildings plus a few other small buildings. In February of this year the Navy submitted to Congress a request for US\$1.28m for the construction of the installation. The 18 cm transit circle will cost \$2.0m and "miscellaneous equipments" will cost a further \$630,000. The Navy documentation did not mention any expense involved in purchasing the astrograph, so this is probably being shifted to New Zealand from some other installation. The total cost is more than \$3.9m, rather than \$1.25m as mentioned in New Zealand.

The military significance of Black Birch may or may not be known to the New Zealand Government, but it is certainly known to the US Congress. In the "justification document" the Navy stated that the "Mission or Major Functions" of Black Birch was to "Operate an observatory to obtain locations of stars in the Southern Hemisphere with the increased accuracy that is required for military purposes".

The wording of this statement is of some interest: it seems to imply that although southern hemisphere star positions are known accurately enough for civilian purposes, more accuracy is needed for military purposes. This contrasts with a letter written by R. J. Dols, Science Officer at the US Embassy, to the Carter Observatory, dated 28 November 1980, in which it is stated:

For New Zealand, the benefits of the Transit Circle Program are manifold and manifest. Air New Zealand, the

Royal New Zealand Air Force and Navy, and the many airlines and shipping lines serving New Zealand are dependent on accurate navigational systems.

Obviously this letter was written to give the Carter Observatory something it could use to placate rather than to inform public opinion. Air and shipping lines certainly need accurate navigation, which is provided by radio navigation aids and by sextant observations. No way do they need 200,000 accurately measured stars. It is also very doubtful, to say the least, whether the RNZAF or RNZN need so many stars.

Another source of information on the Black Birch installation is a recent undated but official guff-sheet titled "US Naval Observatory, Washington DC: Its Unique Mission". This publication describes the development of the highly automated transit circle needed "to comply with the ever increasing demands for more accurate positions dictated by more sophisticated weapons and defence systems." The publication then describes the 10 year program planned for the transit circle in NZ, and says, with specific reference to the NZ project, that "Availability of such observations soon is important for many DoD users, particularly strategic systems". ('DoD' means Department of Defense, and 'strategic systems' means long range bombers and ballistic missiles. The emphasis is mine.)

Military needs

The point of all this is that the US Military needs to know worldwide positions to a far higher degree of accuracy than do civilian navigators. Insofar as civil navigators use the stars at all, they only do so to estimate their positions to within a few kilometres when well away from coastlines or airfields.

The US Military needs much more accuracy in order to have long range weapon systems deliver nuclear warheads with high accuracy to distant targets which cannot be seen from the launch point. High accuracy is particularly important if the intention is to destroy "point" targets like missile silos rather than "area" targets like cities. Thus the counterforce first-strike strategy being developed by the USA requires far more accuracy than the

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former counter-city deterrent strategy. B-52 bombers, U-2 and SR-71 spy planes plus many other high-flying long-range US aircraft carry automated star tracking sextants to help them navigate deep into enemy territory. Spacecraft can navigate with similar sextants.

Accurate aiming is particularly difficult for ballistic missiles launched from submarines, where the precise distance and direction to each target must be known from whatever point in the ocean the submarine happens to be at. An inertial navigation system on board the submarine, consisting of gyroscopes and accelerometers, must be updated by position information derived from radio signals and azimuth (direction) information derived from star sightings taken by means of a periscopic sextant.

Errors in azimuth are even more important in the actual trajectory of the missile, especially as the range is increased. An azimuth error which causes a 1000km range missile to miss its target by one kilometre will cause a 2000 km range missile to miss by 2km. The new Trident I missile has twice the range of the obsolete Polaris missile, but achieves better accuracy by means of a technique called stellar-inertial guidance, or SIG. SIG involves mounting a small telescope in the missile nose cone which tracks a pre-selected star in the general direction of the target so that the correct azimuth can be followed to the target, in approximately the same way as Three Wise Men are reported to have followed a Star to Bethlehem. The Trident II missile will have greater range and better accuracy, largely achieved by means of "two-vector SIG" — in which the warhead is also fitted with a second telescope pointed at a right angle to the first to allow determination of both azimuth and distance travelled.

The extended range of the Trident I and more particularly the Trident II missile will allow the Trident submarines to cruise in southern hemisphere waters and still be within range of their Soviet targets. The multiplicity of possible trajectories from different launch points to different targets will require a multitude of reference stars located in different parts of the sky. Some of these reference stars will have to be in the southern hemisphere. No doubt this is a large part of the reason

why the US Navy has become interested in plotting southern hemisphere stars.

Other uses and non-uses

There are a host of other reasons for knowing the accurate positions of stars. The USAF installation at Mount John, for example, determines the orbits of satellites by measuring their position against the star background. The US Naval Observatory, which will operate the Black Birch observatory, is responsible for collecting this kind of data for all military services and agencies.

Transit circle observations were in the past important in such esoteric matters as determining the wobble of the earth's axis of rotation and variation in the speed of rotation.

"Both types of change in earth rotation", according to a US Office of Naval Research publication on the subject, "are important, especially for reasons of ensuring missile accuracy" (*Science, Technology and the Modern Navy*, ONR publication 37, page 328, 1976). However transit circles have now been largely supplanted for this type of investigation by more sophisticated methods.

Transit circle observations are still important in geodesy, the science concerned with measuring the shape, size and gravity field of the earth. Geodetic information is particularly important for calculating missile trajectories, which have to be tailored to fit the curve of the earth and its gravitational pull.

Transit circle observations also form the foundation of classical astronomy, and there is a certain amount of international non-military collaboration in this field, carried out in the interest of pure science.

The transit circle has no role to play in the actual conduct of any war. There is no way that specific observations will be taken at Black Birch to improve the accuracy of specific missile shots, therefore there is no possibility of Black

Birch itself being a target for attack during any war.

What to do?

To summarise: We have it on the authority of the US Navy itself that the Black Birch installation is needed to obtain data "that is needed for military purposes". We have seen that if Black Birch is built, over the next 10 years it will accumulate a body of data which will allow US military systems in general, and the Trident system in particular, to reach higher levels of accuracy. This will contribute in general to making US counterforce first-strike doctrine more realizable and a US first-strike more probable.

The total effect on first-strike capability and probability may not be very great. In other words, stopping Black Birch will not stop the drift towards US first-strike capability. On the other hand Black Birch will be of some benefit to conventional astronomy. Black Birch does not itself pose a threat to New Zealand — there is no reason why any nation that feels threatened by US power would choose to destroy Black Birch.

For New Zealanders it is then primarily a moral question rather than one of simple self-interest — can we tolerate an installation, which, while not a direct threat to us or anyone else, will make a contribution to a developing US strategic capability which a large part of the world believes is immoral, dangerous, and destabilising?

I think the answer is no. It is time to put a stop to US military projects that come to us dressed up as benefits to all mankind. Omega, we were told was to be a worldwide navigation system for everything from supertankers to sailboats: it turned out to be a military system specially suited to submarine use. Mount John was described in the official agreement as being "for the direct benefit of man": it turned out to be for maintaining a target list of Soviet satellites worth shooting down. And now Transit Circle, less dangerous than Omega or Mount John, but still undesirable. If the astronomers need a transit circle in the southern hemisphere, then let it be financed from a civilian budget and operated by a civilian institute, with the resulting data free to all.

☒



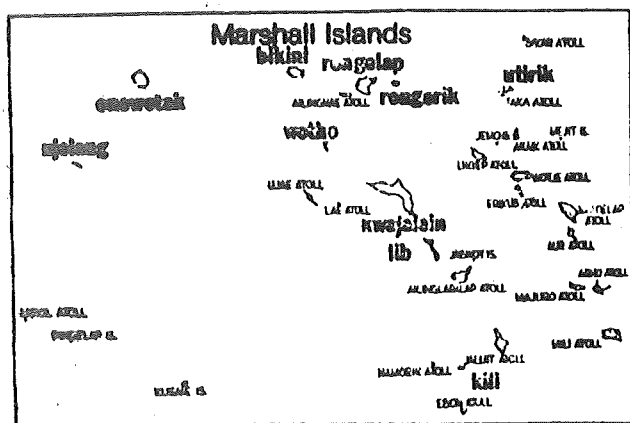
Another Nuclear Cover-Up

by Giff Johnson

Two American military men, stationed on Rongerik Atoll during the "Bravo" hydrogen bomb test at Bikini on March 1, 1954 have recently released statements showing that U.S. officials who made the decision to explode Bravo did so in full knowledge that winds were blowing east, and would carry dangerous radioactive fallout across inhabited Rongelap, Rongerik, Utirik and other atolls.

Their statements point to a 27 year cover up by U.S. officials who have maintained that the contamination of hundreds of Marshallese and U.S. servicemen by Bravo was "accidental" and caused by an "unpredicted shift in winds."

"Prior to and for weeks leading up to the blast the prevailing upper level troughs indicated that wind was blowing to the vicinity of our island," said Gene Curbow, a veteran who was one of 28 Americans on Rongerik Atoll during the massive hydrogen bomb blast. Despite the fact that this weather information was regularly reported by radio to scientists and military officials at the Enewetak Joint Task Force-7 headquarters, U.S. government representatives have claimed since 1954 that the fallout which caused severe burns among the Rongelap people and Rongerik men was an accident.



Dr. Robert Conard, from 1954-1978 the head of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC)/Department of Energy (DOE) medical program in the Marshall Islands, wrote in his 22 year report: "An unpredicted shift in winds caused deposition of significant amounts of fallout on four inhabited atolls east of Bikini." An AEC press release after Bravo noted that the people "were unexpectedly exposed to some radioactivity."

In fact, at a Washington, D.C. press conference following the Bravo test, AEC

Chairman, Admiral Lewis Strauss, stated:

"The first shot (Bravo) has been variously described as devastating, out of control and with other exaggerated and mistaken characterizations. I do not wish to minimize it...but at no time was the testing out of control."

In a telephone interview, Curbow said Conard's "statement is totally inaccurate. We were measuring wind velocity and weather conditions -- the wind was blowing right at us." Curbow and Donald Baker, another of the Air Force weather men on Rongerik, point out military command chose to ignore the unfavorable conditions.

They arrived on Rongerik -- about 125 miles east of Bikini Atoll -- six weeks before the Bravo test. Curbow stated: "We had the normal weather station items which gave us the capability of making station observations and upper level observations up to and including 100,000 feet above sea level." Baker, an Air Force radio operator, said their job on Rongerik was "to provide this weather information and Enewetak's job was to be sure the conditions were absolutely right before they exploded any atomic weapons."

Despite the reports of winds threatening to blow radioactive fallout on to the people and islands east of Bikini, the Bravo test went ahead on the morning of March 1. Whether, as many Marshall Islands people think, the U.S. intended to use the Marshallese as guinea pigs in their nuclear experiments, or the U.S. simply had no concern for the lives and health of either the Marshallese or their own military personnel, the well being of these people on the endangered islands was clearly of low priority.

The 28 Americans on Rongerik, just as the Rongelap and Utirik people, were not warned when the Bravo test would be exploded. Baker described the test at Bikini, more than 100 miles away:

"The sky was suddenly completely lit up, brighter, if possible than daylight itself...The shock wave that came after the initial blast was so tremendous that all the pre-fabricated buildings were damaged in one way or another. Almost all of the windows just blew out."

Nuclear Cover-Up

Later in the morning they were startled to see the radioactive ash falling on them. Baker said "If you can imagine a snow storm in the middle of the Pacific, that's what it was like." It began falling about 9:30 in the morning, "until approximately 8:30 or 9 pm that same day," Curbow said.

Soon after, many of the more heavily exposed people developed burns on their arms, necks, backs and feet and their hair fell out. In the years following their exposure the Marshallese have had an abnormally high rate of thyroid disease and cancer, miscarriages, stillbirths and other health problems. The Americans have suffered a similar fate.

"When we arrived on Kwajalein we started getting burns all over our bodies and people were feeling dizzy and weak...After two days something appeared under my fingernails and then my fingernails came off and my fingers bled. We all had burns on our ears, shoulders, necks and feet and our eyes were very sore."

Etry Enos, Rongelap Atoll.

In addition to ignoring the weather forecasts, the U.S. did not evacuate any Marshallese before Bravo as it had evacuated the Rongelap, Enewetak and Wotho people in 1946 prior to the first atomic bomb blasts at Bikini. The strength of the "Able" and "Baker" tests in 1946 was about 20 kilotons. Bravo was about 1,000 times the strength of the 1946 tests, yet there was no official warning of the Bravo test, much less an evacuation of the people.

Although the Rongelap and Utirik people and the American military men suffered the most serious effects from Bravo, many other

atolls and single islands were contaminated with the radioactive fallout. In 1978 the U.S. DOE noted in a study that in addition to Enewetak, Bikini, Rongelap and Utirik, 10 other atolls and islands had "received intermediate range fallout from one or more of the megaton range tests," including: Ailinginae, Ailuk, Likiep, Rongerik, Taka, Ujelang, Wotho, Jemo and Mejit. This information, that at least 1,400 more Marshallese were contaminated with radiation wasn't released until 20 years after the nuclear testing ended. And the DOE has made no attempts to provide this information to the people exposed.

The Rongelap and Utirik people are the only populations to receive continuous medical follow up from the U.S. since 1954. Many Marshallese believe, however, that this medical program has not adequately treated their health problems.

Except for their initial examinations in 1954, Gene Curbow, Donald Baker and the other military men who were on Rongerik have received no medical follow up from the U.S. government, despite their exposure to a radiation dose at least 5 times that of the Utirik people. "We have received very poor treatment by our government," said Curbow, adding that "the Veterans Administration has a deaf ear to the problems we have...I have not received any medical treatment nor compensation from the government in this case."

Congress of Micronesia Representative Ataji Balos's statement in 1972 that the U.S. government "knowingly and consciously allowed the people of Rongelap and Utirik to be exposed" to fallout from the Bravo test in 1954, although vigorously denied by the U.S., has been proved true. And the Marshallese and Americans who were exposed are suffering the consequences.

"I have not been impressed with the assiduity of the...Atomic Energy Commission physicians. For example, there was a general complaint of dimming vision some five or six years ago on Utirik, probably due to an increased incidence of cataracts. None of the people from Utirik that I spoke to told me that any physician examined their eyes in such a way as to be able to recognize cataracts. Instead I was told that two boxes of eyeglasses were shipped to the island being of various models and frames, and the people were to come in and choose whichever eyeglass seemed to help them. And this was the sum of the investigation and treatment of the eye problems -- of what I think is a unique epidemic of cataracts. American citizens would not likely tolerate such handling. At least my patients would not."

-- Excerpt from a report by Reuben Merliss, M.D., following a visit to the Marshall Islands, July 1980.

BAREFOOT GEN, VOLUMES 1 & 2

by Keiji Nakazawa

Available from the War Resisters League/

339 Lafayette St./New York, NY 10003/

\$5.00 per volume.

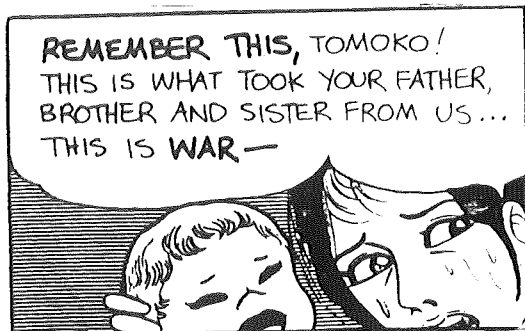
by Chuck Fager

Barefoot Gen has passed one of the toughest tests I know of for "peace education literature" for children: it caught and held the attention of my ten-year-old daughter. My daughter was riveted to the books, ignoring friends, food and even (wonder of wonders!) television to finish them. She has since re-read parts of them several times, and is already lobbying to receive future volumes as they appear.

Barefoot Gen is the story, told in comic strip form, of a young Japanese boy and his family living in Hiroshima during and after World War Two. The artist, Keiji Nakazawa, was one such youth, and his anti-war sentiments are unmistakable. The story was apparently very popular in Japan, and has now been translated into English by a group of peace activists. It is not widely available yet; I am hoping a major publishing house will pick it up and give it the wider distribution and promotion it deserves.

One caution, though to interested parents: if you have been shielding your children from violence and other unmentionables in media and reading, **Barefoot Gen** will give them a jolt. It is often and explicitly violent, gruesome and vulgar, as life doubtless must have been in a country devastated by nuclear warfare. I strongly suspect these features enhanced the authenticity my daughter seemed to find in the story.

I know of nothing to compare with these two books as a means of introducing a young person to the horrors of war and the obvious imperative for its abolition. But they are not fare for the squeamish. Ω



CONFLICT IN AFRICA

Our general image of Africa is of a place of haphazard dangers and imminent violence often 'uncaused', just in the nature of things.

Those who become interested in Africa and take the trouble to study it find something quite different, and in fact, normal. Conflict in Africa, both on small and large scales, is just as 'politically' intelligible' as anywhere else.

Africa suffers from the same media distortion as any 'problem' group in our society. Whenever something goes wrong the vultures descend, especially if it's 'tribal' or can be made to appear so. The fact that different cultural groups have for generations worked out ways of successfully cooperating and competing is overlooked when on occasion the system breaks down.

Recent reports from Ghana are an example. In the north-west Bimbilla area serious communal violence has been experienced. Western news reports indicate that no reason was known, except some important person from one tribe was murdered by someone from another. In fact, serious problems of land control have been building up in this area and obviously a solution to the frustrations of the affected people was not found in time to avert trouble.

Sensitivity on border questions is common throughout Africa. All member states of the OAU except Somalia accept the former borders of the colonial territories. While realising that it will not solve many strange anomalies they agreed it would keep likely trouble to a minimum. Inevitably border incidents occur and mutual suspicion can run high. Kenya suspects Somalia of wanting to turn the ethnic Somalis of the North-east district against the Kenyan government. Nigeria and Cameroun have to sort out a dispute because of the shooting of a Nigerian border patrol. Guinea and Guinea-Bissau have different ideas on how to measure their off-shore area. The area where Uganda, Zaire and Sudan meet is obviously difficult to police and is a potential source of discontent for all three countries. Ghana has a smuggling problem with Togo, as the Ewe (Eveh) people straddle both sides of the border and the Togolese economy is at present a lot healthier than the Ghanaian.

Occasionally nations are at loggerheads because of wider interests than just border irregularities. Somalia has not accepted the OAU position on colonial territories,

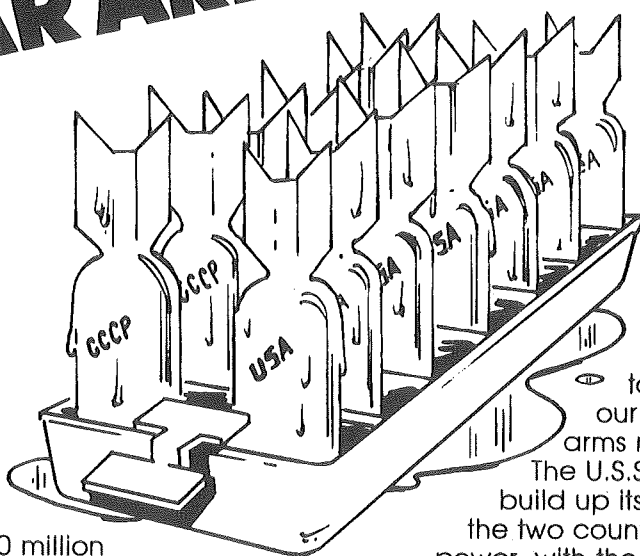
FREEZE THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE

All war is awful. A nuclear war would be worse than any war we have known. Remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Today, nuclear warheads are 1500 times more destructive than the bombs dropped on Japan. According to a U.S. government study, 50 to 250 million people would die in one day in a nuclear war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. The air, land and water would be contaminated with dangerous radiation for months and years afterwards. After a nuclear war, the living might envy the dead. From a religious, moral or social perspective, nuclear war must be stopped.

The dangers of the arms race are greater today because both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. are on the verge of building new, first-strike nuclear weapons like the U.S. Cruise Missile and MX and the Soviet SS-18 and SS-19. Building these weapons will make stopping the arms race harder and nuclear war more likely. First-strike weapons make nuclear war thinkable to the military. That's bad enough for the U.S. and U.S.S.R. but more and more countries are developing their own nuclear weapons. That further increases the chances for a nuclear war.

A nuclear war would destroy our country and the world. But the arms race is already destructive. The energy, imagination, skills and dollars—billions of dollars—going into the arms race each year could go for economic and social development. The money we spend on the arms race actually adds to our economic problems by fueling inflation without giving a useful product or service. And it provides fewer jobs dollar for dollar than an equal amount spent on housing, education, health care and transportation.

People used to believe we could have all we wanted of both civilian and military goods. Now it is clear we need to make choices. More military spending does not make us more secure. We are learning to conserve energy and to choose safer, renewable energy sources. Slowly we are



also learning that if we want a decent society we cannot afford the arms race. This is true for the U.S., U.S.S.R. and other developed countries, and even truer for poorer countries.

If nuclear war is so insane and the arms race so costly, why don't the governments agree to stop? We believe the U.S. or any government would be morally right and wise to drop out of the arms race. But our government says if it stops the arms race, the U.S.S.R. will get ahead.

The U.S.S.R. says if it stops, the U.S. will build up its lead. Most experts agree that the two countries are about equal in military power, with the Soviets ahead in some areas and the U.S. ahead in others. Why don't both countries agree together to stop the arms race now before either one builds more weapons? If we want to avoid nuclear war and build a decent world for ourselves and our children, the arms race must be stopped and stopped soon.

But governments will not stop the arms race by themselves. People need to demand that it be stopped. And people are demanding it, in our country, in the U.S.S.R., in Europe and in many other countries. People are joining together to demand that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. Freeze the Arms Race Now.

A Nuclear Freeze means the U.S. and U.S.S.R. would agree to halt the research, testing, production and deployment of all new nuclear weapons as a first step to negotiate the abolition of nuclear weapons and real reductions of all armaments.

A Nuclear Freeze between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. would:

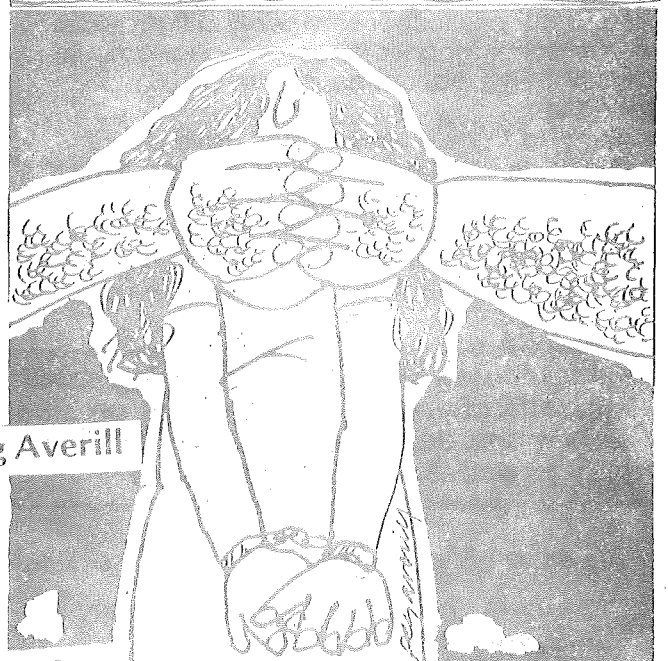
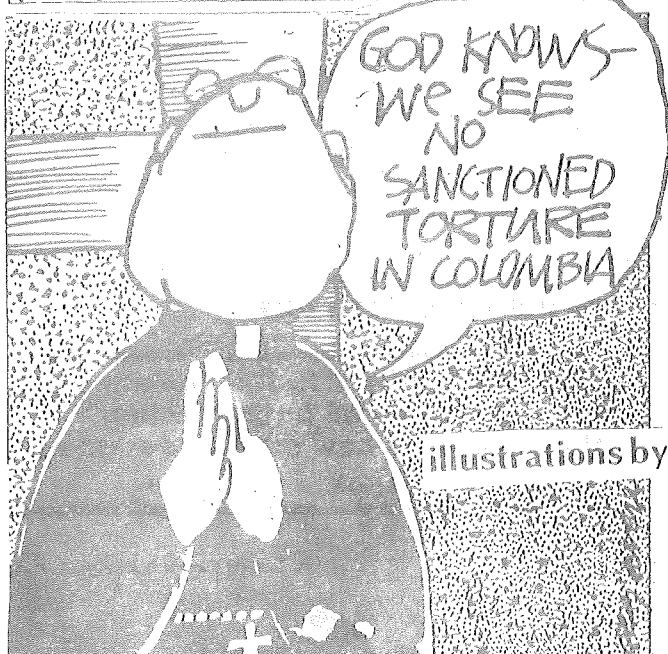
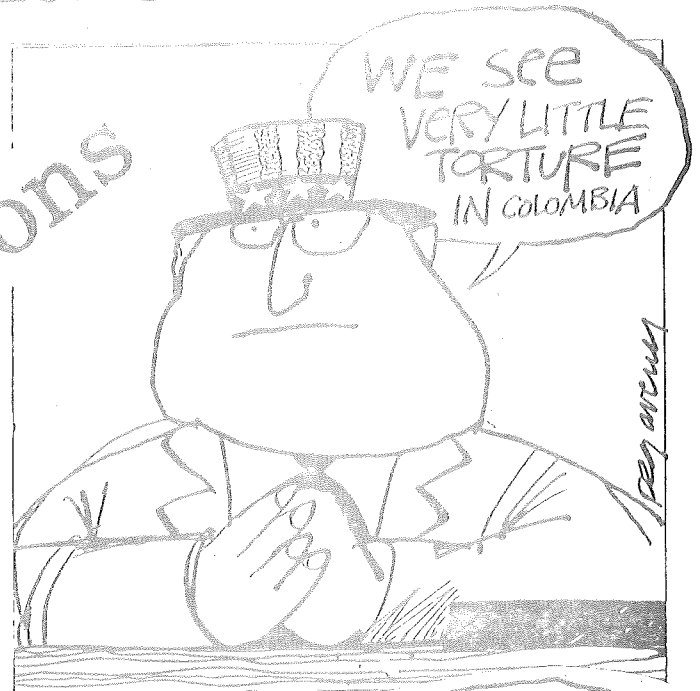
- halt development of dangerous first-strike weapons like the MX, cruise Missile, SS-18 and SS-19
- reduce tensions between the giant military powers
- help solve the economic problems of inflation and unemployment
- set the stage for future reductions
- provide incentive to other countries to stop nuclear weapons production
- create more national and international security

The best way to stop the arms race is to stop it.
Freeze the arms race now!

The United States and the Soviet Union should immediately and jointly stop the nuclear arms race. Specifically, they should adopt an immediate, mutual freeze on all further testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and of missiles and new aircraft designed primarily to deliver nuclear weapons.



Inside Colombia's Political



illustrations by Peg Averill

arguing that Ethiopia is also a former colonial power, and that its empire should be de-colonised just like the European ones. Algeria and Morocco back different sides in the war over Western Sahara. In fact, Morocco is one of the sides, but both Libya and Algeria reject the Moroccan claim and support a liberation force from the area, which has considerable phosphate reserves that would mean an enormous amount to the Moroccan economy.

Libya's adventures in Chad are also a concern to other African countries who feel their stability and that of the entire West African region is threatened by El Gaddafi's dream of a Pan Saharan Islamic state. Nigeria's obvious economic clout in West Africa also means that she must tread warily in her dealings with neighbours, if she is not to earn a 'neo-colonial' reputation. The gap between English and French speaking countries is apparent here, as a good deal of rivalry has existed in the past.

Africa has to live with the consequences of colonialism. The Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) is beginning to bring countries together, but it will be a long and difficult process. It might be structurally rational for the Republic of the Gambia to integrate with surrounding Senegal, but the differing traditions and history of the tiny Gambia have to be taken into account, just as ours do in relation to Australia.

Another type of conflict that Africa has not yet seen the last of is the war of liberation. In the Western Sahara it could carry on for some time, even though Morocco is reeling from the cost. In northern Ethiopia a federal solution might be found, short of outright independence for Eritrea. In Namibia the South Africans are capable of holding on militarily for years, with an expensive but low-scale operation. In South Africa itself the internal and external aspects of the struggle feed on each other as black workers gain more strength.

In all these liberation wars the question of foreign support is crucial for all involved. Morocco is losing the diplomatic battle for recognition of its rights in Western Sahara, but the Polisario guerrillas have to keep on side with their backers, Algeria and Libya. The Eritreans can be affected by the changing policies of their main supporters like Sudan and Saudi Arabia, but the Ethiopians are also strongly influenced by their advisers, the Russians. It is imperative for Swapo in Namibia to continue to receive the help and protection of Angola, and diplomatic pressures from the

West on South Africa are essential for a just solution to be quickly effected in both Namibia and South Africa.

From all this it becomes clear that some African conflicts are Africa-oriented and can be Africa-solved. Others involve complicated foreign influences. In Southern Africa these include attempts by South Africa to exert control of newly-independent states by supporting fringe and even terrorist movements in campaigns of 'destabilisation'. Mozambique and Angola have suffered most from this and Zimbabwe fears its likelihood in the future.


The United States, the Soviet Union and France all have major strategic interests in Africa. For example the Americans want to wean Ethiopia from the Russians to gain a 'cordon sanitaire' in the Horn to protect the Gulf oil reserves. Some African states exploit this international rivalry. Sudan now warns of the danger of a Libyan-Ethiopian linkage to squeeze Sudan and start a thrust against mineral-rich but vulnerable (because corrupt and despotic) Zaire. France has traditionally reserved a special place in the sun for herself and her supporters - witness the changing fortunes of the Central African Republic. Things will change with Mitterand, but not much and slowly.

The geo-political aspects of African conflicts bring in the arms dealers. In the last 10 years military spending has increased by about 50%. Total military expenditure by all countries is now running at \$15,000 million (World Armaments and Disarmaments Yearbook 1981). Not all of Africa is on the bloody trail, however, as only 5 countries account for 75% of the money, with another 7 countries accounting for 20%. The big spenders are Egypt, South Africa, Libya, Nigeria and Morocco.

The big question for Africa is how to concentrate resources on the major issues of development, without being side-tracked into global rivalries with consequent loss of all chance of achieving real independence. Regional associations like ECOWAS, the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference, and hopes for similar initiatives in the Nile Basin countries, give some grounds for optimism.

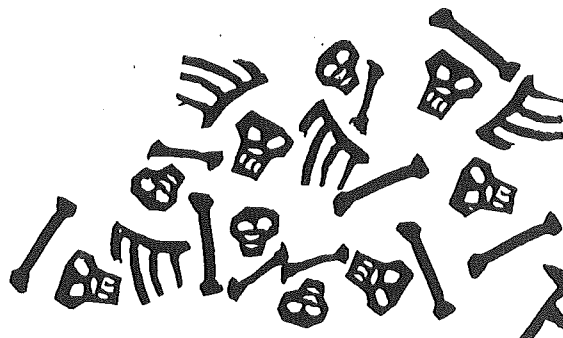
It helps to know that African conflicts have causes - we may yet take Africa seriously but these conflicts can only be solved in and by Africa. The realization of Nkrumah's vision of continental freedom, unity and independence is still a very long way off.

Rupert Watson,
Africa Information Centre



FOR EL SALVADOR
1981

OH CREATOR MOTHER FATHER
PROTECT US FROM ALL WHO RULE
THROUGH FEAR
FROM THOSE WHO TURN
EVEN THE COLORS OF OUR SKINS
AGAINST EACH OTHER
LET THERE BE NO PEACE
WITH MURDERS OF THE POOR
NO PEACE
WHEN THE RICH CAN DO WITHOUT US
NO PEACE WITH KILLERS
IN THEIR COMPANIES AND SQUADS
SIGNING WARRANTS FOR THE PEOPLES DEATH
IN ALL COUNTRIES
LET US LEARN
THROUGH THE FREEDOM OF OUR HEARTS
WHAT IT MEANS THIS WORD
PEACE



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