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SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY

PERVASIVE CORRUPTION exists in many areas of politics, unions, police and big business. While we all know that corruption exists, the public exposure of snouts in the trough disgusts and appalls most people and we view with growing incredulity the arrogant hypocrisy shown by those in power. That is not to say that there are not some politicians, police, union officials or business people who don't feel the same as we do and want things to improve. Unfortunately, however, very little is done to weed out the crooks.

We need to remember that the trough in which these snouts wallow is kept filled by our taxes, money that should be used for community purposes. It is time to publicly proclaim that we employ politicians to serve us and that they are there to meet the needs of the majority, not to serve their own sectional interests.

It is time to ensure that businessmen and women who break the law are punished to the full extent of that law. It is time to demand a retreat from the Alice in Wonderland world that we live in and to restore some common sense to the way that we are ruled.

It's time to register our objection and to express our disgust and anger at the hypocrisy of the gamesmanship played out in the United States, which could have brought the world to the brink of another financial disaster.

It's time to reject the words of the Israeli Prime Minister when he demands that Iran rejects nuclear power while his government retains a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons.

It's time to condemn our Prime Minister and government, when his Cabinet introduces legislation that will further demonise asylum seekers, destroy the already perilous state of the environment, attack the trade union movement, close down urgently needed social structures and sell off what little is left of our infrastructure.

We have allowed the situation to develop where politicians have become the masters, when in fact they are our servants and are paid and employed by us, to carry out our wishes in order to serve society.

It is time we taught our young people a very important lesson: it isn't enough to feel contempt for politicians – it is time to bring them to heel. It is clear that there is one law for 'them' and another for 'us' at the moment and this must end. It will end if the people demand it, but this takes energy, commitment, and determination.

We must find ways to achieve this aim. This can include political action, civil disobedience, lobbying, joining with others who are also concerned. Letter writing, emailing and bombarding politicians with demands is another form of action. We are proud to note that Unitarian ministers were arrested in the United States recently for campaigning for the rights of asylum seekers.

Beacon will play its part by bringing you the truth as we see it. Being armed with the truth is a powerful weapon, but only if it is used. Another way in which you can help with very little effort is to spread the word about our Unitarian journal *Beacon*. The more subscribers we have, the better armed with the truth people become. You can help us double our readership. Let us aim for one new reader for each reader we have, and double those who are armed with the truth. ■

EDITORIAL



2020 OLYMPICS UNDER CONTAMINATION THREAT

Helen Caldicott, MD

As the escape of radiation at Fukushima seems virtually unstoppable, there are still steps that governments all over the world should take to prevent worst case consequences. One of them would be cancelling the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo.

Scientific estimates predict that the radioactive plume travelling east across the Pacific will likely hit the shores of Oregon, Washington State and Canada early next year. California will probably be impacted later that year. Because the ongoing flow of water from the reactor site will be virtually impossible to stop, a radioactive plume will continue to migrate across the Pacific affecting Hawaii, North America, South America and eventually Australia for many decades.

We are only talking about ocean currents; however, fish swim thousands of miles and don't necessarily follow the currents. Big fish concentrate radiation most efficiently, and tuna have already been caught off the coast of California containing cesium from Fukushima. Seaweed also efficiently concentrates radioactive elements.

As I contemplate the future at Fukushima, it seems that the escape of radiation is virtually unstoppable. The levels of radiation in buildings 1, 2 and 3 are now so high that no human can enter or get close to the molten cores. It will therefore be impossible to remove these cores for hundreds of years if ever.

Buildings 1, 2 & 3

If one of these buildings collapses, the targeted flow of cooling water to the pools and cores would cease, the cores would become red hot and possibly ignite releasing massive amounts of radiation into the air and water and the fuel in the cooling pools could ignite. It is strange that neither the US government in particular nor the global community seem to be concerned about these imminent possibilities and exhibit no urge to avert catastrophe.

Similarly the global media is strangely disconnected with the ongoing crisis. Most importantly, the Japanese government until very recently has obstinately refused to invite and collaborate with foreign experts from nuclear engineering companies and/or governments.



AFP Photo/TEPCO

Building 4

This structure was severely damaged during the initial quake, its walls are bulging, and it sank 31 inches (79 cm) into the ground. On the roof sits a cooling pool containing about 250 tons of hot fuel rods, most of which had just been removed from the reactor core days before the earthquake struck. This particular core did not melt because TEPCO was able to maintain a continuous flow of cooling water, so the rods and their holding racks are still intact, but geometrically deformed due to the force of the hydrogen explosion.

The cooling pool contains 8,800 pounds of plutonium plus over 100 other highly radioactive isotopes. Instead of this core melting into a larval mass like the other three cores, it sits exposed to the air atop the shaky building. A large earthquake could disrupt the integrity of the building, causing it to collapse and taking the hot fuel rods with it. The cooling water would evaporate and the intrinsic heat of the radioactive rods would ignite a fire as the zirconium cladding reacted with air, releasing the radioactive equivalent of 14,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs and 10 times more cesium than Chernobyl.

Not only would the Northern Hemisphere become badly contaminated, but the Japanese government is seriously contemplating evacuating 35 million people from Tokyo should this happen. TEPCO has constructed a steel frame to strengthen the shaky building in order to place a massive crane on the roof so they can extract the hot rods by remote control. This operation is always performed by computer and a remote, manually controlled extraction has never been attempted before. If the rods are deformed, a rod could fracture releasing so much radiation that the workers would have to evacuate

or, should they touch each other, a chain reaction could release huge amounts of radiation.

I defer to Arnie Gundersen, a nuclear engineer in whom I have great faith. He says that a 2-meter thick zeolite wall should be constructed some distance from the reactors on the mountainside, which would effectively absorb the cesium from the water surrounding the reactor cores so it could not get out and further pollute the pure water descending from the mountain. At the same time, channels must be constructed to pump and divert the unpolluted mountain water into the sea. Then the three molten cores and their associated buildings could be immersed in concrete as the Soviets did at Chernobyl, and the situation could possibly be neutralized for about 100 years. What our poor descendants will then decide to do with this radioactive rubbish dump is beyond my comprehension.

However, as one Japanese official said, *'If we just buried them no one would look at another nuclear plant for years.'* An interesting reaction, so it is perfectly obvious that despite the calamity, they still want to pursue the nuclear option.

In North America and Canada the EPA should immediately start monitoring the fish routinely caught off the west coast and it must also, as a matter of urgency, establish many effective airborne monitors up and down the west coast and across the US continent, so that if there is another large release of radiation it will be effectively measured and the information rapidly passed on to the public. The same holds true for Canada.

The US and Canadian governments must forthwith ban imported food from Japan, unless each batch is

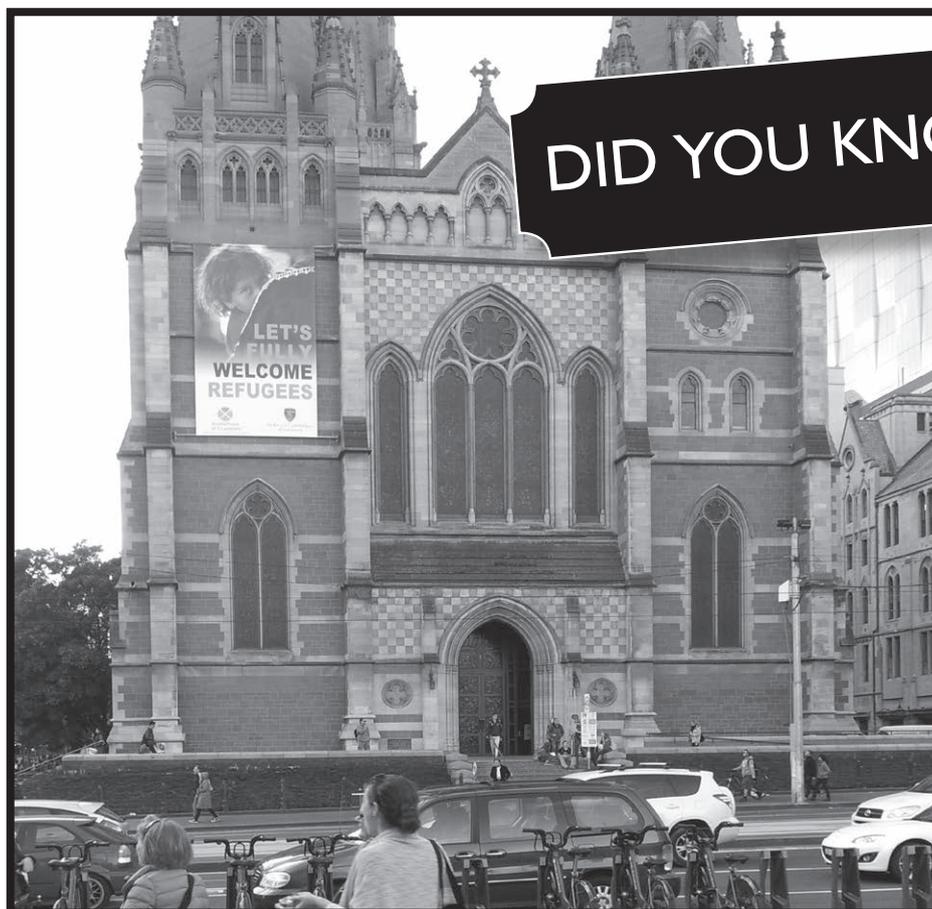
monitored for contamination, and the food grown in the US and Canada needs to be effectively monitored pending another major accident. The US has allowed food measuring up to 1,200 Becquerels per kilo to be sold in the US from Japan, while the Japanese allowable concentration for food is only 100 Becquerels per kilo. What does the US government think it is doing purposely exposing people to radioactive food? This situation must be urgently amended.

Nuclear Olympics

Given these impending problems, how can Japanese Prime Minister Abe possibly say that Tokyo will be safe for the Olympics? He actually said that 'there is absolutely no problem' and 'the situation is under control.' Does he not understand that parts of Tokyo are already radioactively contaminated and that his government is dumping ashes from the incineration of thousands of tons of radioactive debris from the tsunami and earthquake into Tokyo Bay? Is this what the athletes will be swimming in?

What if there is another major release of radiation before the Olympics? Young fit people who have spent years in rigorous training must, under no circumstances be exposed to radioactive air, food or water. And how can Abe possibly consider spending all that money housing people in expensive accommodation and constructing stadiums, etc., when his own people – 160,000 Fukushima refugees – live in shacks and millions still live in highly radioactive zones, and when the Fukushima complex is out of control? ■

Source: Guardian October 2013



St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne

Radical Islam is the last refuge of the Muslim poor. The mandated five prayers a day give the only real structure to the lives of impoverished believers. The careful rituals of washing before prayers in the mosque, the strict moral code, along with the understanding that life has an ultimate purpose and meaning, keep hundreds of millions of destitute Muslims from despair.

THE WAR ON THE WRETCHED

CHRIS HEDGES



Jack.Q / Shutterstock.com

The fundamentalist ideology that rises from oppression is rigid and unforgiving. It radically splits the world into black and white, good and evil, apostates and believers. It is bigoted and cruel to women, Jews, Christians and secularists. But at the same time it offers to those on the very bottom of society a final refuge and hope.

The massacres of hundreds of believers in the streets of Cairo signal not only an assault against a religious ideology, not only a return to the brutal police state of Hosni Mubarak, but the start of a holy war that will turn Egypt and other poor regions of the globe into a cauldron of blood and suffering.

The only way to break the hold of radical Islam is to give its followers a stake in the wider economy, the possibility of a life where the future is not dominated by grinding poverty, repression and hopelessness. If you live in the sprawling slums of Cairo or the refugee camps in Gaza or the concrete hovels in New Delhi, every avenue of escape is closed. You cannot get an education. You cannot get a job. You do not have the resources to marry. You cannot challenge the domination of the economy by the oligarchs and the generals.

The only way left for you to affirm yourself is to become a martyr, or shahid. Then you will get what you cannot get in life – a brief moment of fame and glory. And while what will take place in Egypt will be defined as a religious war, and the acts of violence by the insurgents who will rise from the bloodied squares of Cairo will be defined as terrorism, the engine for this chaos is not religion but the collapsing economy of a world where the wretched of the earth are to be subjugated and starved or shot.

The lines of battle are being drawn in Egypt and across the globe. Adli Mansour, the titular president appointed by the military dictator of Egypt, Gen. Abdul-Fattah el-Sisi, has imposed a military-led government, a curfew and a state of emergency. They will not be lifted soon.

The lifeblood of radical movements is martyrdom. The Egyptian military has provided an ample supply. The faces and the names of the sanctified dead will be used by enraged clerics to call for holy vengeance. And as violence grows and the lists of martyrs expand, a war will be ignited that will tear Egypt apart. Police, Coptic Christians, secularists, Westerners, businesses, banks, the tourism industry and the military will become targets.

Those radical Islamists who were persuaded by the Muslim Brotherhood that electoral politics could work and were brought into the system will go back underground, and many of the rank and file of the Muslim Brotherhood will join them. Crude bombs will be set off.

Random attacks and assassinations by gunmen will puncture daily life in Egypt as they did in the 1990s when I was in Cairo for *The New York Times*, although this time the attacks will be wider and more fierce, far harder to control or ultimately crush.

What is happening in Egypt is a precursor to a wider global war between the world's elites and the world's poor, a war caused by diminishing resources, chronic unemployment and underemployment, overpopulation, declining crop yields caused by climate change, and rising food prices. Thirty-three per cent of Egypt's 80 million people are 14 or younger, and millions live under or just above the poverty line, which the World Bank sets at a daily income of \$2 in that nation.

The poor in Egypt spend more than half their income on food – often food that has little nutritional value. An estimated 13.7 million Egyptians, or 17 per cent of the population, suffered from food insecurity in 2011, compared with 14 per cent in 2009, according to a report by the UN World Food Program and the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS). Malnutrition is endemic among poor children, with 31 per cent under 5 years old stunted in growth. Illiteracy runs at more than 70 per cent.

In 'Les Misérables' Victor Hugo described war with the poor as one between the 'egoists' and the 'outcasts.' The egoists, Hugo wrote, had 'the bemusement of prosperity, which blunts the sense, the fear of suffering which in some cases goes so far as to hate all sufferers, and unshakable complacency, the ego so inflated that it stifles the soul.' The outcasts, who were ignored until their persecution and deprivation morphed into violence, had 'greed and envy, resentment at the happiness of others, the turmoil of the human element in search of personal fulfilment, hearts filled with fog, misery, needs, and fatalism, and simple, impure ignorance.'

The belief systems the oppressed embrace can be intolerant, but these belief systems are a response to the injustice, state violence and cruelty inflicted on them by the global elites. Our enemy is not radical Islam. It is global capitalism. It is a world where the wretched of the earth are forced to bow before the dictates of the marketplace, where children go hungry as global corporate elites siphon away the world's wealth and natural resources and where our troops and US-backed militaries carry out massacres on city streets. Egypt offers a window into the coming dystopia. The wars of survival will mark the final stage of human habitation of the planet. And if you want to know what they will look like, visit any city morgue in Cairo. ■

This article was originally published at 'Truth Dig'.

Adelaide Voices Sept–Nov 2013

President Obama referred to the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria as **'the worst chemical weapons attack of the 21st century ...'**

This conveniently ignores the US chemical warfare against Viet Nam, spraying nearly 100 million litres of diabolical chemicals on the environment and innocent people of that country, over a 10-year period from 1961– overwhelmingly the 'largest chemical warfare campaign in history'.

The US military used many toxic chemical agents, including Agent Orange, containing dioxin, the most deadly chemical known to science. Millions of Vietnamese were affected, and birth defects, cancers and horrible diseases continue, now into the 4th generation.

In the bombing wars since Viet Nam, radioactive 'depleted uranium' munitions have been widely used, causing radiation diseases and birth defects, in some cases worse than in Hiroshima after the nuclear bombing there. Will these horrors be unleashed on the people of Syria?

Interesting, how history comes back to haunt us ...

At a time when the US military was losing its war against Viet Nam, the 'Tonkin Gulf Incident' was

fabricated in order to deceive the US Congress and public into escalating the war with massive bombing and ground troops.

Today, does history repeat?

The 'rebels' in Syria, long-supported actively and covertly by the US, France, Turkey, some Arab monarchies and al-Quada, are losing the battle, so we have the allegation that chemical weapons were used by the Syrian government in order to 'justify' active foreign military escalation, ratified by the US Congress.

This deception worked before, with all but two members of Congress passing the President's Tonkin Gulf Resolution, because they were taken in by the deliberate lies of the Vietnam War.

Will the US Congress fall for the same trick now over Syria?

'War is manufactured by political leaders, who then must make a tremendous effort – by enticement, by propaganda, by coercion – to mobilize a normally reluctant population to go to war.'

– Howard Zinn, US people's historian



MARTHA TURNER



By MARGARET WILLIAMSON

Martha Turner, the sister of Henry Gyles Turner, was born in London in 1839. She was sent to Dijon in France for three years to improve her education and, according to her brother, developed high intellectual skills.

Martha was an adventurous woman, travelling to Australia in 1870 to see her brother and, liking the country, decided to stay. At that time, the Unitarian Church had no minister and Gyles Turner was part of a panel of lay preachers who took over the services while they searched for another minister. Gyles, being a busy banker and lacking confidence in his abilities, found writing and delivering sermons an onerous task. When Martha arrived, he looked to her to assist him and soon Martha was writing his sermons and, when need arose, she also commenced to deliver the sermons she had written.

By 1873 it had become clear that the church was having difficulty finding a new minister, and the congregation requested that Martha take on the role and be inducted as the full-time minister. It appears from letters and comments she made to others that Martha did this with some reluctance, being concerned at how she as a woman would be received by the women of the congregation. This is not a comment on those women but more a comment on the times.

According to Dorothy Scott who wrote the *Halfway House to Infidelity*, the history of the Melbourne Unitarian Church, women were unable to become members until 1860, when women were allowed membership but not permitted to become officers.

The rules were changed in 1871 to allow female officers but it says something of the times and attitudes that it took another 20 years until 1891 before a woman became an office bearer.

So it was that in 1873 Martha Turner was appointed the minister answering to an all male committee, becoming the *first woman minister of religion in Australia and possibly Britain*. It says quite a lot about the freethinking more liberal members of the Melbourne Unitarian congregation that, while being reasonably conservative living people, members of the establishment of their city, they were still progressive enough to break a huge barrier that existed for many years to come, well into the next century, for other protestant religions.

Along with having an adventurous spirit, Martha clearly had a sense of the irony of her position as well as a strongly developed sense of humour, which is shown by her choice of reading during her inauguration service on 23 November 1873, when she chose to read from 1st Corinthians, Chapter xiv, in which occurs the verse: 'Let your women keep silence in the churches'.

The novelty of her induction as the first woman minister drew a large crowd including the press, who suggested that it was 'somewhat unusual'. Her induction was

covered by all the Melbourne dailies – it was said that she was not a woman of fashion and one paper took the opportunity to take a swipe at Unitarians in general. *The Argus*, which at the time was more supportive of liberal thought and therefore not as malicious as the other newspapers, reported as follows:

The preacher was plainly attired in black, her manner is quiet, ladylike, perfectly self-possessed and free from any demonstration of any kind. ... there is no obtrusive womanhood about her to urge the idea of sex and its special characteristics on your attention.

So it was that in 1873 Martha Turner was appointed the minister answering to an all male committee, becoming the first woman minister of religion in Australia and possibly Britain.



Not one paper commented on the substance of her sermon. It seems that, when it comes to women leaders in Australia, some things don't change.

Catherine Spence commented on Martha Turner: *She was the first woman I ever heard in the pulpit. I was thrilled by her exquisite voice, by her earnestness and her reverence. I felt as I had never felt before that if women are excluded from the Christian pulpit you shut out more than HALF THE DEVOUTNESS THAT IS IN THE WORLD ... I felt how much the world had been losing for so many centuries.* Martha Turner and Catherine Spence were close friends, writing to each other regularly, and visiting each other. Martha travelled at least twice to Adelaide to visit Catherine Spence who also commented that Martha was a great support and example to her. Visiting Unitarians from Britain, Florence and Rosamund Hill were also impressed by her. Martha performed marriages and consecration of children.

Martha continued as minister until 1878 when, at the age of 39, she married a friend and colleague of her brother's John Webster, at the Melbourne registry office. From his diary, Gyles Turner appears to be surprised by the marriage and somewhat put out. He immediately asked her to resign her post as he considered it unseemly that as a married woman she continue in that role, including receiving the ministerial stipend. Martha agreed. However, the congregation would not accept her resignation and asked her to continue, which she did until 1883. Yet another barrier broken by those freethinking Unitarians.

It is good to remember what this era was like for women who still did not have the right to vote and it had only been in 1871 that women in Britain had been granted the right to possess property and to keep their earnings. Throughout these years the church, including her brother, had from time to time continued to look for a male minister. I wonder how that made her feel. In 1883 Martha finally resigned. She and her husband then undertook a lengthy trip back to England and Scotland where Martha was asked to preach at many Unitarian churches, her good reputation having preceded her.

In another part of her story Martha and John Webster returned to Australia and took up a selection of 60 uncleared acres in the thick forests of the Strezlecki Ranges in Gippsland near the hamlet of Budgeree over the hills and a winding unmade road from Boolara where the rail line petered out. Who knows what this intellectual woman and her banker husband were thinking when they did this. The venture failed and in the financial crash of the 1890s they lost most of their property. Their cottage was a kit home brought all the way from Britain, which still stands and is inhabited to this day.

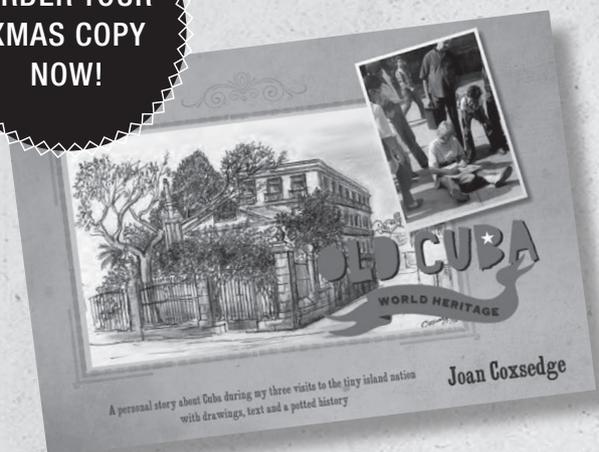
Craving intellectual stimulation of the church and Melbourne, Martha would often make the daylong exhausting journey to Melbourne. Quite a trip, by gig over an unmade twisting precarious road to Boolara. A risky trip in winter, and then a slow train to Morwell and then a further slow train to Melbourne.

Her later years found her deeply involved in the movement for women's suffrage. She attended the inaugural meeting of the Victorian Women's Suffrage Society in Melbourne and spoke at many meetings on this and other issues, including a number throughout Gippsland. She also continued to give sermons at the Melbourne Unitarian Church. Martha died at her brother's in St Kilda after a period of ill health in 1915, at the age of 77. We have a very poor photo of Martha. Would she have considered herself a heretic? – maybe not. Certainly she was not a heretic within her own chosen Unitarian religion, but within society?

Martha Turner is a heretic in that she did not conform with the views of her time, in her choice of religion, which was different to that she was raised in, as a woman in her use of her prodigious intellectual abilities, in her pursuit of rights for women, in her determination to be adventurous and her acceptance of great change and her free liberal thinking. She was truly a remarkable woman and deserves the recognition of this church and the wider community. ■

[This is the text of Margaret's address at the Melbourne Unitarian Church on 31 March for the occasion of All Heretics Day (01 April).]

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THE ECONOMICS OF KILLING

BY VIJAY MEHTA

Lecture to Conway Hall Ethical Society, 22 September 2013

Will there be an alternative social evolution of our species towards peace that might some day eliminate war (which is politically organised violent crime perpetrated by warmongers and controlled by war making lobbies)? Is there a way we can put people before profit and thus have growth and reduce inequality without exploitation, which is the *modus operandi* of the capitalists who are the cause of most of the problems including violence facing the world today?

The greed of fulfilling corporate interest by capitalist expansion and financial globalisation has created extreme economic disparities for the majority. 925 million go to bed hungry every night. The United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon observed, "The world is over-armed and peace is underfunded." The cold war has been over for more than two decades, yet the world continues on an insane path to increase its military spending year after year as if we are living in a time of unending conflict.

Each year, armed conflict kills an estimated 200,000 people. The current proxy/civil war in Syria, for example, has resulted in over 120,000 deaths so far. Wars now kill more civilians than soldiers. Privatising the military has become a profitable business for some companies and it has become an industry itself. Halliburton (a US Corporation) made \$26 billion from the Iraqi war.

After living on this earth for so many centuries, why is it man cannot live peacefully on this marvellous earth? How can a society be called civilised if it has an international arms/killing industry which leads to wars, violence and barbarism?

Violence Costs World Economy 11% cent of Global GDP

The cost of violence to the global economy in 2013 is \$9.46 trillion, which is equivalent to 11 per cent of global GDP. 780 million guns are in circulation world wide and 5 to 6 million are manufactured on a yearly basis. For example, for a population of 300 million, Americans have 300 million guns. Mass shootings in [the] United States occur every 4 to 6 weeks. If the gun culture is to be reviewed, surely US drone assassination policy should likewise come under scrutiny as it will not only be the cause of future wars but also a continuing danger to peace.

In 2012, the US, with weapons as its number one industrial export, is still the biggest in military spending with \$711 billion but China and Russia are catching up fast. The USA has only 4 per cent of the world's population, friendly neighbours Canada and Mexico, yet spends more than the rest of the world on its military.

The Military Industrial Complex (MIC)

The US obsession with wars and military spending has created a monster, the military-industrial complex, which acts against the interests of people everywhere, including US citizens themselves. My book, *The Economics of Killing*, shows how this monster is not only the cause of extreme poverty in the developing world, but contributed to 911 and the market crash of 2008.

We need to explore non-violent ways for building peace and restoring human dignity, ethics and civilisation, reflected in a new initiative, 4D for World Peace, inspired by my book: *4D standing for Disarmament, Demilitarisation, Development and Democracy*. The 4D for World Peace Campaign offers a choice: continue on the same destructive path of war economy, greed and competition based on market forces and suffer even more; or build a safer and fairer way of life.

The MIC comprises manufacturers of military technologies, dual use systems (from computers and software to fuel cells, lasers, robotic arms and optical equipment) and industries deemed to be strategically important. It also includes the arms trade, illegal and legal. No arms company sells weapons only to democracies to use for self-defence. The arms trade is not about defence, but about profiting from violence, poverty and human rights abuse.

The MIC includes 25 million soldiers worldwide. America's defence department is the world's biggest employer with 3.2 million people on its payroll. China, a big military spender, employs 2.3 million in its armed forces. The MIC includes spying, surveillance and intelligence-gathering centres and 1000 military bases spread around the world in 183 countries having missile and nuclear systems.

Technological developments in the armaments field are becoming more and more sophisticated and murderous. The military is moving towards letting battlefield "killer robots" take their own decisions without human input. Shall we allow computers to decide who lives and who dies? Who is legally responsible for their actions? The development of robotic warfare is the most dangerous military technology since the atom bomb. If drone attacks were able to put an end to terrorism, we would have already got rid of terrorists in countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq. The use of drones means that you assassinate people without bringing any charges, without finding them guilty and in the process cause collateral damage, that is the killing of completely innocent people who might be in the neighbourhood.

The Culture of Militarism

Reverence for the military has been prevalent in all societies throughout history. Obsession with wars and

military spending since the Second World War has created a war economy in which big industries, heavily subsidised by the US tax payer, have become arms manufacturers alongside civilian output e.g. Boeing, General Electric, Honeywell, Lockheed Martin and the United Kingdom's BAE (British Aerospace).

Resource Transfer from Poor to Rich

Between 1980 and 2008 the income of the top 0.01 per cent of Americans grew by 403 per cent while the income of the bottom 90 per cent of the Americans grew by just 1 per cent. Militarism is the key driver of the economics of underdevelopment. Puppet governments in the poorest countries are given arms by the rich countries in return for unfettered access to natural resources such as oil, gas and minerals, widening the gap between the rich and the poor to an all time high.

This extreme poverty is the cause of two billion people subsisting on less than \$2 a day. Every 3.6 seconds, a person dies of starvation. Every 30 seconds, a child dies of malaria. Every minute a woman dies in childbirth. One is reminded of the quotation of former US President Dwight Eisenhower who said, *"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in a final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."*

Special Weapons and Tactics – SWAT

Rulers legitimise violence by creating fear in the masses like the war on terror, which gives the military a reason for increasing its military spending. Arms industry lobbyists have been pushing hard to get police departments all across America to switch from a peacekeeping attitude to an aggressive, militarised SWAT for law enforcement units. These use military-style light weapons and specialised tactics in high-risk operations that fall outside the capabilities of regular, uniformed police, with officers being armed, trained and psyched to treat common citizens as enemies.

The 2008 Financial Collapse

Unregulated capitalism is trapped in a competitive world that seeks growth, efficiency and profit maximisation only. Capitalism's finance along with resource theft is becoming the 21st century's *modus operandi*. According to a recent Harvard University Report, the cost to the United States taxpayer of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is estimated at \$4 to \$6 trillion, which the US cannot afford and which plunged it and the west into massive debt and financial crisis. Britain is experiencing the human and economic cost of the Afghanistan war today.

It was China that provided US with its seemingly endless quantities of cheap credit which left a huge amount of liquidity in western markets resulting in low interest rates and unwise lending of loans by bankers leading to a market crash. Banks were responsible in a major way for the global financial crisis from which they profited. When they got into trouble, the governments of [the] US, UK, etc., stepped in to bail them while knowing that this happened because of the unethical and greedy behaviour of the banks themselves. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are controlled by powerful vested interests, a situation that compromises our security and undermines democracy.

Secrecy and the Surveillance Society

The global surveillance system to control information in an organised way is so much bigger than "big brother" — spying on its citizens secretly, comprehensively and virtually without accountability. It includes recent revelations about drones, special operations and kill lists. Tools of freedom are being turned into tools of operation and agencies like NSA (National Security Agency) and GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters) are eroding not only our privacy but also our hard-earned freedom, civil liberties and violating human rights. These programmes are highly unconstitutional, illegal, intrusive and undemocratic.

Security assessments given by the US and European intelligence gathering agencies always highlight new threats with the purpose of starting new conflicts and wars. Peace, dialogue and diplomatic solutions are routinely ignored with a result that it becomes easier to go to war than to explore peaceful solutions.

Misuse of Brain Power

The tendency of science/engineering/technology to be put at the service of the military system rather than human needs is not only deplorable but encourages militarism. MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) is a good example of how science and technology is used in universities for military development. For many years till the 1970s MIT was fully funded by the Pentagon. The Pentagon was and remains a funnel to which taxpayers pour funds deluded into thinking they are being defended and saved.

BAE Systems is the UK's largest employer of engineers; but it is also the world's third largest arms company, building warships, fighter aircraft, missile systems and many other military technologies. Among the most controversial of BAE's activities is its involvement with Britain's Trident nuclear weapons system and the proposed replacement. It has also been widely criticised for selling military technology to régimes with poor human rights records.

In the name of global security and science, new technology is being used to develop and produce insane weapons and fight the asymmetric wars of the future. In universities, scarce resources are being manipulated to develop and produce new high tech deadly weapons for warfare. Worldwide, between 1.2 and 1.5 million people work as scientists and engineers in military research and development. Industry and public research budgets add up to 100 to 120 billion dollars per year. Of this, some 25 billion dollars are spent on research in universities.

Regarding UK universities, the most recent assessment was published in August 2012, using freedom of information requests; this study found that 17 of the UK's most prestigious universities including Imperial College, Cambridge and Oxford received a total of £83 million over the 3 years up to until 2011 for military research.

The role of universities should be to promote wisdom and not just acquire knowledge — wisdom being the capacity to realise what is of value in life, to oneself and others, by intellectual and educational means. What we lack is a worldwide system of universities rationally devoted to helping us learn how to solve our problems of living, above all our global problems. As Einstein famously said "The pioneers of a warless world are the young men (and women) who refuse military service."

The US and western countries need urgently to restructure their economies away from its dependence on the military sector. How can it be done? Shift workers from war industry into “green collar” jobs: renewable, waste management, pollution control, carbon capture. Share green technology innovation by exporting it to developing countries so they escape [the] smoke-stack stage of development. Close down corruption loopholes and fraud which has cost the UK economy \$73 billion in 2011, most notably the \$43 billion BAE Al-Yamama arms deal to Saudi Arabia.

Reform the Financial and Banking Sector

Tax Justice Network have published a study, “The price of offshore revisited”, that reveals that the global super-rich has between \$20 and 32 trillion hidden in secret tax havens, some equivalent to the size of the United States and Japanese economies combined. According to the study, if this sum were taxed at 30 per cent it would have generated income tax revenues of between \$190 and 280bn, roughly twice the amount the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries spend on all overseas development assistance around the world. Bankers and corporations should be made to pay their due share of taxes.

The period 1940–1980 was the most democratic and egalitarian era in modern western history. Thanks to progressive taxes, the share of national income in the UK held by the top one per cent dropped from 17 per cent on the eve of World War II to 6 per cent pre-Thatcher. This was an era of more fairness and almost unprecedented prosperity – for the many. So there is a correlation between high tax levels and better social outcomes. We need to make progress in three areas:

- (a) Serve the interest of developing countries by scaling down the Common Agricultural Policy, subsidies to US cotton farmers and weapon manufacturers
- (b) Greater corporate transparency
- (c) Action against tax havens.

Activists and independent journalists need to challenge the narrative spun by the crony media. Multinationals have blamed Africans, Arabs and Asians for corruption, when it is these state-backed corporations that hire the local agents, pay the bribes, set up the offshore accounts, hide the fugitive capital, rig the internal investigations and sell the weapons that protect corrupt régimes from their own people. The real source of corruption lies not in the poor world but in the European and American military-industrial complexes, which wilfully subvert the industrial development of poor nations in order to extract cheap commodities and to prevent their industrialisation.

A reformed United Nations could play a leadership role in the global economy, international peace and security, protection of human rights and tackling the climate change crisis. We need a more democratic, accountable and transparent United Nations, with fair representation of members.

Non-violent Ways to End Conflicts

There are examples of people and countries working in creative ways to end violence. In 1948, Costa Rica abolished its army and since [then] has been able to invest resources in the public interest: education, health care, etc. No one has attacked Costa Rica although they have

no army. The campaign against land-mines which resulted in the Land-mine Ban Treaty — signed by 159 countries — began with the collection of data by hospital staff treating the victims of land-mines.

Non-violent revolutions have taken place. Examples are the Indian Independence Movement, the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the Good Friday Agreement, Northern Ireland Peace Process, the recent Orange revolution in Ukraine, the Velvet revolution in [the] Czech Republic, the Rose revolution in Georgia, and the reunification of Germany.

Any demilitarisation plan should begin with the US by slashing its cold war level of military spending, it being the biggest player in the arms race. The US could easily cut 15 per cent from the defence budget, saving US\$1 trillion, by laying off the 92,000 new defence personnel hired over the past 10 years and reducing the US presence in Asia and Europe, scaling back or terminating wasteful projects such as the F-35 fighter (\$1.51 trillion over its lifecycle, \$680 million each) and the Virginia class submarine (\$2.4 billion per unit), and shrinking the bureaucracy at the Pentagon that consumes 40 per cent of its budget. In the UK we can save huge amounts of money by scaling down on Trident nuclear submarine replacement, which will cost the UK economy over \$130 billion over its 30 year lifecycle. Nuclear disarmament is urgent and critical to global peace and security.

Speak Truth to Power

There is nothing more dangerous than living in a society whose citizens are afraid to speak the truth. We need more courageous people risking their lives like Julian Assange, Bradley Manning, [and] Edward Snowden who exposed the torture, illegal detentions and crimes perpetrated by the US in Iraq, Afghanistan, etc. The leaked information shows how corrupt is the military system and how the secret state wages perpetual war behind our back.

Our hope for abolition of war and demilitarisation lies with us — Citizen Power. We can mobilise strong grassroots movements, to change public opinion with the help of the internet. Change comes from bottom-up, grass-roots social movements. When enough people are convinced that war is not necessary then elected leaders will be forced to change their war-mongering policies.

My book demonstrates that, in 4D for World Peace, there is an alternative model to the deadly cycle of military and economic disaster. It shows the vital necessity for disarmament on a world scale and a strict regulation of arms trading. I believe all global citizens have the passion, talent, determination and power to be agents of change. Let me end with a poignant quote from a Hiroshima survivor, Hisako Kimura, aged 8 in 1945 when the bombing of Hiroshima took place:

“I must convey to the youth the sanctity of peace, the terror of war, the tremendous power of the atom bomb. As long as I have breath and strength, I must tell the terrible story to help bring about the abolition of nuclear weapons.” ■

The full talk can be downloaded from www.unitingforpeace.com

From the Ethical Record (London), 118 (9), October 2013: 20–25.

Proceedings of the Conway Hall Ethical Society www.conwayhall.org.uk <<http://www.conwayhall.org.uk/>>

from our readers



The Editor

You've previously published me on the coal seam gas mining that is hurting our farmers and I've just been introduced to a BIG PROJECT aimed at tackling this and more – initiated by a body of some 30 scientists centred in Melbourne and titled '**Zero Carbon Australia Stationary Energy Plan**'. It includes contributions by renowned local scientist Tim Flannery, Robin Batterham, and Peter Doherty, and world scientists from America and Europe, who all contributed to the 30-Year Scientific Plan to change our energy production and consumption drastically, for the good.

The 30 contributions – 171-page book – are striking, with Zero Carbon world illustrations and Australian projections. I can post you one of these if you wish. Just send \$5 postage, or +.

(Warning – ample illustrations, but studious reading).

K O'Hara, NSW

Thank you to Marion Harper for the brilliant article 'Politics and liberal religion: Are they mutually exclusive', which appeared in the September issue. It clarified more for me about the history and diversification of Unitarianism, including the differences between Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists – the latter applying to the congregation here in Brisbane.

Please don't change a thing about what you are currently doing down there at Grey Street East Melbourne. That includes the thought-provoking articles appearing in the *Beacon*, which for people like me who cannot attend easily is a way to read text of the speakers. The one about the situation in Syria was superb. I suggest to anyone who is making a trip to Melbourne that takes in a Sunday that they include a visit to the Unitarian service. The nearest thing we would have to it in Brisbane would probably be St Mary's in Exile in South Brisbane.

For those who have expressed dissatisfaction, please shop around for another church that sits better with you philosophically and leave the Grey Street church to their

courageous outspokenness. By the way, I had no idea I was a fellow traveller with Michael Leuning and Peter Cundall. I have admired their work immensely for years.

Fay Waddington, Qld

Dear Editor

There's always hope, just never give up.

There's so much bad stuff happening right now in Australia and in so many other places, it's easy to despair and get frustrated and despondent that we can't make a difference. But we must be optimistic and even if we fear we may fail, we still must try to strive with all our spirit and heart to seek fundamental change. I always remember when I started getting involved in the Franklin River Blockade in Tasmania in 1982–3, to stop the damming of the wild Franklin River in the wilderness. I thought we probably wouldn't win, but I felt I had to try. It took a lot of struggle, energy and time, but we did eventually win. We saved the river and millions of trees and animals from drowning. So every time I revisit Tasmania or think of this victory, it gives me hope and encouragement that we really can get positive change, despite it sometimes looking hopeless. That's just one very tangible example.

In the 1960s and '70s my generation contributed to ending the war in Vietnam, conscription, apartheid and getting Aboriginal land rights in Australia, to freeing East Timor, among many other issues. There are still wars and much conflict, injustice, inequality, racism, hate, pollution, death and destruction. But amid the terrible events and misery, there are also success stories. And there are so many good, decent, inspired people who are motivated by love and empathy who are battling tirelessly to help transform our sick, unfair world. We just have to never ever give up this just fight for a change for the better. As the saying goes, if we don't fight we lose. And we have a lot to lose. All we have to do is keep struggling and not give up, because there's always hope. And together we can make a real difference.

Steven Katsineris, Vic

Our church is a public and usable asset with portable seating and excellent conference, meeting and function facilities. We welcome its use by those who support our motto 'Seek the Truth and Serve Humanity'. Interested individuals or groups can contact the church office – we would be delighted to speak to you. A donation is payable.

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The church has now opened a PayPal account. If you have access to PayPal – all you need do is log on and the church's PayPal address is **admin@melbourneunitarian.org.au** Visit our web page and click on the link. You will be able to pay your subscription and make donations.

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