One of the common threads that run across a range of injustices is the invisibility of victims. Victims are not always invisible: they can be the objects of derision, contempt, and the projective screen for all sorts of fantasies that serve to rationalize acts of aggression. Perhaps this invisibility is a feature of violence against civilians, the so-called “collateral damage”. I am thinking of the victims of climate change in the global south, of Israel’s massacres of Palestinian civilians or the disappeared Iraqis or North Koreans or Vietnamese in United States’ wars, the unacknowledged global victims of the current financial crisis (the World Bank estimates that at least 100 million people in the developing world will lose their jobs), the unreported death of six million people in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Canada’s failing grade in its treatment of children (UNICEF report) and of its aboriginal people, the ninety Ontario children/year who die despite being in Care, the nameless victims of Canadian mining practices here and abroad. The constant visibility of the people who have been rendered invisible needs to inform our perception of the world and the way we work together for change.

This way of treating millions of people as disposable is called “warehousing” by Mike Davis in his profoundly important book Planet of Slums, and by Jeff Halper, a co-founder of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions.
Invisibility takes many forms. In a recent article in the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (February 2009), John McMurtry describes Obama’s chief of economic policy Larry Summers. For Summers, humans are simply measurable quantities. As chief economist of the World Bank, he recommended locating polluting industries in Least Developed Countries, as the resulting “morbidity and mortality” would cost less. He states that underpopulated countries in Africa are underpolluted and that “the demand for a clean environment for aesthetic and health reasons is likely to have very high income elasticity.”

Similarly, the latest World Watch Magazine (March/April 2009) implicitly disposes of 7.4 billion people. “The conservatively calculated Ecological Footprint indicator suggests that the Earth can sustain about 2.1 billion high-income individuals or 6.2 billion middle-income individuals or 13.6 billion low-income individuals (this assumes all of Earth’s biocapacity is used for humans). Few will be willing to return to a state of poverty, nor should they, so really we need to aim for either a high-income (‘consumer’) population one-third of today’s population (and no one else), or, more realistically, a larger but still much-reduced middle-income population – one that maintains a simple but satisfying way of life.”

In individual people, simplistic thinking can occur side-by-side with considerable complex thinking in other areas. Psychologist Jean Piaget described features of regressive thinking as he identified characteristics of earliest cognition. In the sensorimotor phase of infancy, the sense that an object exists depends on sensory perception of the object. It is a great advance to learn that an object exists even if one does not see it.

I am reminded of a comment by Anna Maria Tremonti on CBC’s The Current. In discussing the comparative culpability of NATO and Serbia, she expressed great surprise that one could equate the aggression from aerial bombing with hand-to-hand ground combat where soldiers see and touch their victims.

In the subsequent preoperational cognitive stage, children between the ages of two and seven still restrict their perceptions to one aspect or dimension of an object at the expense of other aspects. At this stage, the child links together unrelated events and does not understand point-of-view. Thus, among aggressor nations, we often hear of casualty figures of their own soldiers, or even of self-directed disenchantment with what the war is doing to our own ideals or economy, but almost nothing about the suffering of the real victims. The orientation is basically egocentric. A corollary of invisibility is that the flawed perception is not scrutinized, analyzed, even noticed.

At the pre-operational stage there is over-generalization, limited logic, and an inability to reverse operations (e.g. adding 2+3 but not being able to subtract 5-3). Piaget tested the concept of conservation by pouring the same amount of liquid into two identical containers; but when he poured one cup into a third, wider container in front of the children, children still thought there was less water because the water level looked lower. The singling out of one factor, often with implicit mathematical assumptions of balance or equivalence, is another corollary of situations involving disposable people. The implicit assumption of balance by accusing Hamas and Israel of the same war crime (i.e. as if the cup is the same) neglects innumerable factors, including the purely numerical unbalanced ratio of civilian casualties (minimally 300:1 in the recent invasion). Similarly, the above quotation about reducing population singles out only the one factor of class size so there is a strange logic of offering the planet to the smallest feasible class that would presumably include the authors of the study. Among the many complicating factors not included, disposable people use far less carbon dioxide: Uganda 0.07 tonnes/year per capita, the DRC 0.04 tonnes/year versus Canada 20 tonnes/year (2004 figures from the US Department of Energy’s Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center and the UN
Statistics Division).

By school age, children have the cognitive capacity for simple operations. They are also beginning to acquire a conscience so that there is an inner guide to behavior, not just external authority and rules. In the book All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten: A guide for Global Leadership (1990), the author, Robert Fulghum, shows that the tasks are transferable to adulthood, tasks predicated on the giving up of egocentrism and omnipotence: “share everything, play fair, don’t hit people, put things back where you found them, clean up your own mess, don’t take things that aren’t yours, say you’re sorry when you hurt somebody. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup – they all die. So do we; when you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together.” In view of the massive damage already done globally, I would add a fourth item to the learning list: “R”, Reparations.

What Can You Do Through Mayors for Peace?
Phyllis Creighton

A speech by Phyllis Creighton for the Canadian Peace Alliance Conference, 6 Dec. 2008 at Ryerson University, Student Campus Centre

Mayors for Peace is potentially a useful instrument in the dangerous times we live in. The world bristles with vast nuclear arsenals – 25,000 nuclear weapons. The probability they will be used is increasing. The US, UK, France, and Russia – hence NATO -- have first-use policies. In both Russia and the US several thousand nuclear missiles on launch-on-warning, could be dispatched within 15 minutes. Far more powerful than those used in 1945, today’s nuclear weapons could end civilization and even much of humankind. Since there’s also an inextricable link between nuclear weapons and nuclear power, massive proliferation looms -- some 30 currently non-nuclear weapons states have nuclear power. Disarmament stalls interminably, the world’s leaders sleepwalk toward annihilation, and the public is unaware, or apathetic.

Mayors for Peace came into being in the Cold War, at the 2nd UN Special Session on Disarmament in June 1982 when Hiroshima’s mayor proposed a program to promote solidarity of cities toward nuclear weapons abolition. The mayor of Nagasaki soon joined him to call on the world’s mayors to join in. Mayors for Peace is now a UN NGO having special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; 2,536 mayors from 133 countries and regions are mayors for peace, including 70 Canadians. In 2003 it launched the 2020 Vision campaign for a world free of nuclear weapons by 2020. In 2006, on the tenth anniversary of the International Court of Justice advisory opinion

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1 (If it were not for military profits gained from perpetual warfare, perhaps the most economical solution to dealing with disposable people might be Jonathan Swift’s Modest Proposal (1729) to remedy overpopulation and poverty by eating lower class children, and nowadays that would also save invaluable land for biofuels)
declaring use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in general illegal, Mayors for Peace took the next step. It issued the Good Faith Challenge to states parties to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty governments to fulfil their obligation, under its Article 6, to accomplish total nuclear disarmament, an obligation the court had reiterated. Remember the Good Faith Challenge: use it to prod our government, which signed the NPT, to act for disarmament. Remember, too, that India, Pakistan, and Israel, all nuclear weapons states, did not sign the NPT.

Cities, where more than half of humanity now resides, are age-old targets for attack. The capacity to destroy them remains at the core of the nuclear weapons states’ national security policies. Mayors for Peace also launched in 2006 CANT – Cities are not Targets! The purpose of CANT is to raise a loud “NO” from cities, mayors and citizens saying “you may not target cities, you may not target children!” National governments need to know that cities expect them to act. In 2007 Hiroshima sent letters to the governments of Japan and of all the nuclear-armed states demanding nuclear weapons be abolished and in the meantime cities not be targeted. The hope is, then, not to shift the nuclear threat away from cities but to promote abolition. To that end there is a petition on the Mayors for Peace website (www.mayorsforpeace.org/) open for citizens to print out and sign. In October Mayor Akiba of Hiroshima submitted petitions with 370,221 signatures to the President of the UN General Assembly.

He also told him about the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol, which Mayors for Peace put forward in May 2008. This protocol is complementary to the NPT and is designed to facilitate fulfilling the obligations under Article VI. Its aims are set out in two articles. Article I covers activities of nuclear weapons states that are to cease -- activities related to acquiring nuclear weapons and incorporating them into their military doctrines and practices, but forbidden to non-nuclear states parties by the NPT. It also covers the need for them to place their nuclear weapons and weapon-usable fissile material in safe, secure storage as soon as possible and for all NPT states possessing weapons-usable fissile material to deal with this material similarly.

Article II stipulates that states parties to this protocol shall pursue in good faith negotiations to standardize and legally codify these measures to be taken, with agreement and implementation of them by 2015. Negotiations are also to address the elimination of nuclear weapons as well as of their delivery vehicles, launch platforms, and command and control systems, production and testing facilities, and weapon-usable fissile material stocks. These negotiations are to have a Nuclear Weapons Convention or Framework Agreement as their objective. The article also stipulates a secretariat be set up and remain in operation until negotiations are concluded and says every effort should be made to ensure agreement and implementation of the elimination measures by 2020. The implementation is to take place under strict and effective international control and international institutions capable of ensuring maintenance of a nuclear weapon free world are to be provided.

The Mayors for Peace website has a Cities Appeal in support of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol for print-out and signing by any mayor or governor, city councilor, or other elected local authority representative. Signing it doesn’t make you a member of Mayors for Peace. This Cities Appeal challenges all states to consider and adopt the Hiroshima-Nagasaki protocol as a direct means of fulfilling the promise of the NPT by 2020, and to undertake in good faith to present to the 65th General Assembly in September 2010 the envisioned Nuclear Weapons Convention or Framework Agreement. Mayors for Peace also brought delegations of mayors to the two Preparatory Committee meetings for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, to do this for PrepCom 3, and urges
heads of governments to lead their delegation to that conference and ensure the NPT review process lays the foundation for actual nuclear disarmament during the coming UN Disarmament Decade, 2010-20.

It’s five minutes to midnight on the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists’s clock. The Hibakusha who suffered the bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and carry the searing memories of that fiery hell, cry “Never again!” Their growing fears that nuclear weapons will be used again must not come true. Get your fellow citizens involved! Remind your mayor that mayors are responsible for their citizens’ safety and security and should work with them! Aroused cities demanding the abolition of these ultimate weapons of terror can be a crucial political force to save the future.

The Nuclear Abolition Imperative
- Bev Delong

To fully appreciate the extent to which NATO’s retentionist doctrine has become an anachronism, it is necessary to also appreciate the full extent of the remarkable shift in professional judgment and public opinion toward nuclear abolition. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon told a New York audience in October, 2008, that “a world free of nuclear weapons would be a global public good of the highest order.” He recalled the first resolution of the UN General Assembly was a call for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, and challenged nuclear states to meet their disarmament obligations under the NPT, and urged them to finally negotiate a global convention prohibiting all nuclear weapons.

This goal is also endorsed by former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger and three other leaders as well as former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev asserting “in fact with every passing year they make our security more precarious.”

A group of retired British generals rejected the UK’s nuclear weapons as “completely useless as a deterrent to the threats and scale of violence we currently or are likely to face.”

Despite NATO’s formal doctrine that nuclear weapons are “essential” to “preserve peace” most of its member state signatories are non-nuclear weapons state signatories to the NPT and have already disavowed nuclear weapons for themselves. They seek cover under the US nuclear umbrella but the Obama White House website claims the US is pursuing the “goal of a world without nuclear weapons.”

Leaders calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons include Helmut Schmidt,
three former foreign secretaries, former NATO Secretary-General George Robertson, Norway, Italy and groups of Nobel Laureates. A global appeal under the banner of Global Zero is calling for a strict and accountable timeline and has been supported by the Simons Foundation of Canada.

Publics around the world are, by all accounts eager to support efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. A survey of 21 key states found 76 percent of people favour a global agreement that “all countries with nuclear weapons would be required to eliminate them would be required to eliminate them according to a timetable,” while all other countries would be required not to develop them.”

This global nuclear weapons taboo is buttressed by an international movement involving national and municipal governments and a global civil society of NGOs, faith communities, professional and service groups, researchers and academics. Mayors for Peace (see article above) has mobilized leaders of 2,635 cities in 134 countries and regions to endorse the campaign to eliminate nuclear weapons by 2020. The 2009 NATO summit is a potent opportunity to set in motion a process to rethink and restate its strategic nuclear doctrine.

(For the complete article see NATO’s Strategic Concept and the Emerging Nuclear Abolition Imperative at: www.ploughshares.ca.)

PEACE STUDIES

ROBERT STEWART

(These are excerpts from a letter written in response to an article in The National Post by Barbara Kay criticizing the peace movement)

Peace is popular because the vast majority of people around the world want peace and know the military/industrial/political/media complex is not working for them – and they want change. Quoting President Obama, I respectfully submit “yes we can” bring peace to our communities and world through peace education done well.

Peace is an actual subject, thing, place and related series of events – otherwise why would people throughout history have been trying to cultivate it and include it in their Constitutions? Peace is not just the absence of war; peace (or lack thereof) is evident at the individual, family, community, regional and world levels. Peace is evident in a direct way, such as not being verbally attacked or not denying rights for women, or not discriminating against “Peaceniks” or races and cultures. The science of peace is not well understood, hence the need for Peace Education and a Peace profession.

Peace is not just idealistic – it must also be pragmatic.

Military studies are not “realist.” The invasion of Iraq because Iraq “really” had weapons of mass destruction is one example of how misled militants, warmongers and the military/industrial/political/media complex are. Military realism is as much an arrogant contradiction of terms as military intelligence. History has shown that if we prepare for war we get war. At some time our society must realize that if we want peace we must prepare for peace.

Peace studies have been going on since
the 1930s, every major violent incident accelerates the search for peace. Despite its great importance there have been no lavish donations for peace, which is starved of resources compared with the trillion spent annually on militaries and wars. Our government leaders, Stephen Harper included, tout peace but I challenge them to show me the money. There is virtually nothing spent on peace in comparison with what is spent on militarism.

Peace Studies have produced many practical prescriptions for managing or resolving global conflicts including improvements to the United Nations, the start of the International Criminal Court, conflict transformation methodology, building better relationships, nonviolent communications practices, school peace programs, Community Centres for teaching peace, peace cafes, etc.

Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Lester B. Pearson, Mother Teresa and Maria Montessori are some of our gurus, past and present, respected by the world.

If Peace Studies are said to be intellectually incoherent, riddled with bias, unworthy of academic status, of a certain ideological bias, the same could be said of Military Studies. Yet Military Studies in North America receive a tremendous amount of funding from departments of National Defence, and companies making fortunes from war and the military.

For the most part Peace Education is a labour of love by “do-gooders” millions of people who simply care about other people. Militarism is not working for anyone except those who profit from it.

If our world leaders wanted it, war could be banished tomorrow.

Gaza and Israel

Judith Deutsch

There was a great deal of coverage of Israel’s most recent assault on Gaza, of the daily atrocities perpetrated on an already vulnerable, besieged civilian population. While governments and the UN sat by in collusion or in impotence, the most highly respected humanitarian and human rights organizations condemned Israel’s flagrant disregard of international law and advocated direct actions such as an immediate ceasefire. Amnesty International called on governments to stop arms shipments. The International Committee of the Red Cross, which usually does not publicly comment on conflicts, accused Israel of failing “to meet its obligation under international humanitarian law to care for and evacuate the wounded” from combat zones and prepared to press charges of war crimes. There is a great deal of information versus disinformation, and critical analysis versus propaganda about Gaza and Israel. In this brief article, I will only touch on a few points and recommend several sources.
Of great concern is the impotence of the international community in face of decades of Israeli impunity. Again, this last January, the UN failed to act, blocked always by the U.S. and now by Canada. Canada cast the sole veto of the UN Human Rights Council’s call for a ceasefire.

There is the failure of international law to pursue investigations, charges, and sanctions. Israel used the same non-conventional weapons in 2006 as in 2009 but nothing was done. Israel has long violated Geneva Conventions through:

• the bombing of civilians, including women and children, in violation of Art. 147 and Art. 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (“the Convention”), and in violation of the law of nations.

• wanton destruction of property and infrastructure, in violation of Art. 147 of the Convention, including extensive destruction to infrastructure.

• the imposition of a siege over 1.5 million people in the Strip leading to starvation, malnutrition, and a shortage of medicines and medical supplies, in violation of Art. 33 and Art. 147 of the Convention.

• Willfully causing great suffering and serious injury to body or health, in violation of the Art. 147 of the Convention.

Despite Israel’s attempts to block information about this entire situation, there are a number of reliable and extensive reports from the major human rights NGOs, from the UN, and from journalists. Articles clarifying the nature of state terrorism have wider applicability to Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. Henry Siegman, former director of the American Jewish Congress and of the Synagogue Council of America, wrote an article “Israel’s Lies” (London Review of Books 29 January 2009). He details how “Middle East peacemaking has been smothered in deceptive euphemisms” from the beginnings of the State of Israel. I also recommend reading many statements by Richard Falk, UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. He is Jewish and is Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University. Israel barred him from entering Gaza just prior to the recent invasion, and actually held him in detention. He writes eloquently about daily life under siege, the historical context, and about the violations of international law.

There is also the incomparable and courageous Gideon Levy who writes for Ha’aretz. He is the ethicist and psychologist of this particular nadir of civilization. Amira Hass, also of Ha’aretz, also writes of the descent into utter deprivation on the Palestinian side, and the descent into brutality and lawlessness in Israel.

It is also essential now to look at the Canadian side. The leaders of both major parties unequivocally support Israel (and on another note they both unequivocally support exploitation of the tar sands!). Canada has a free trade agreement with Israel and Stockwell Day signed a security
pact agreement with Israel. Richard Sanders of Coalition Against the Arms Trade has just compiled a list of Canadian military exports to Israel. Also, as I mentioned before, there is much pressure within universities and the media to silence discussion about Israel. Lastly, Canada has been silent about Israel’s nuclear weapons.

There is a substantial library of excellent works on this situation. Of importance to Canadians concerned about world peace is Jonathan Cook’s new book, Israel and the Clash of Civilizations: Iraq, Iran and the Plan to Remake the Middle East (2008, Pluto Press). For the particulars of Canada’s collusion with illegal settlement policies in the occupied territories, see Yves Engler’s Canada becomes Israel (The Electronic Intifada, 12 February 2009).

After retiring from the navy in the 1960s, he set up Algonquin Waterways Wilderness Trips, a pioneering business taking clients canoe tripping on routes throughout Ontario.

His awareness of the environment took him to a Masters degree in Environmental Studies at York University. In this career, he was employed at the Ontario Science Centre and played a role in the creation of the original interactive exhibits. He was a member of the Conservation Council of Ontario (CCO) through this period and wrote a substantial report entitled “An Energy Plan for Ontario.”

John joined the Population Committee at the CCO and this led to a 20-year career in global issues. Using his background in strategic analysis and computer simulations, he wrote extensively to spread awareness of the finiteness of planet Earth. He made extensive use of a prototype Global Systems Simulator to study the relationships between population and resource consumption. He was very concerned about the fragility of the global environment and about the Earth’s ability to sustain humankind. He was an active member of the Canadian Association for the Club of Rome and recommended the establishment of a Global Systems Centre to promote further simulation work. John was an avid proponent of the need for a strategy designed to manage the finite resources needed to support humankind on this fragile ecosystem. He was an active member of Science for Peace and a founding member of its Global Issues Project, participating in the Roundtable on Forests in 2006.

John had a long relationship with the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Vienna and collaborated with IIASA and the Club of Rome, making presentations in Vienna in both 2007 and 2008. His last presentation was entitled

In Memoriam: John McRuer

Kenneth Mackay

John Dow McRuer passed away on February 25, 2009 in Kitchener in his 83rd year.

John was a graduate of the Royal Canadian Naval College (Royal Roads) and rose to the rank of Lt. Commander in the Royal Canadian Navy in which he served on several ships. He became an expert in strategic planning, ending his naval career as a Senior Analyst at the Defence Research Board in Ottawa.
“Strategies for an Endangered Civilization.”
He leaves his children and their families: Sandy and Patti, Anne, Gillian and John (Erica, Carly, Sophie), Geordie and Nici (Amelie), Ian, his loving friend and former wife Mavis Kerr, his surviving sister Katherine McIntyre, his first wife Cynthia Hunt, and eleven nieces and nephews.
A memorial service for John McRuer will be held at the First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo at 299 Sydney St. South in Kitchener, April 18, 2009. Memorial donations may be sent to Science for Peace (A306 University College, 15 King’s College Circle, Toronto M5S 3H7).

Book Nook

Dewes, Dr. Kate, Hiroshima and the World (essays) (Hiroshima Peace Media)
Ellis, Deb, Off to War: Voices of Soldiers’ Children (Groundwood Books, 2008)
Leopold, Ellen, Under the Radar: Cancer and the Cold War (Rutgers University Press 2009)
Moore, Michael, Twilight War: The Folly of US Space Dominance (The Independent Institute)
Roche, Douglas, Creative Dissent: A Politician’s Struggle for Peace (Novalis, 2008)
Stein, Janice Gross and Lang, Eugene, The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar (Penguin Canada, 2007)

Documentary Films

‘Myth for Profit: Canada’s Role in Industries of War and Peace’
‘Running Guns: A Journey into the Small Arms Trade’ by Shelley Saywell with Keifer Sutherland (Every year enough bullets are produced to kill every human being twice)
“The Strangest Dream” a tribute to Dr. Joseph Rotblat and the Pugwash movement to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This NFB film was shown on March 24 at Hart House, University of Toronto at 7 p.m. Free admittance to the film and discussion with expert panel. For more information contact Dr. Walter Dorn 416-482-6800 x 6538
Science for Peace Notes

A Nominating Committee has been struck for the upcoming AGM. Please respond positively to a call for nominations to a position on the Board.

Please check out our new website at scienceforpeace.ca. We also have a blog to which members can post. Go to blog.scienceforpeace.ca to read the contents. We hope members will use it in place of email to express their opinions or make announcements. If you wish to add posts or comments you have to register as a user, which is restricted to members. See the link below to log in. When you click on the ‘register’ link below the login panel you will be asked for your information and confirmed as a user within a day or two.

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Editor’s Note

The articles in The Bulletin are the opinion of the writers and may not represent the views of all our members or of the Bulletin editor. Like Science for Peace in general, the Bulletin encourages a vibrant dialogue on important topics.

Announcements:

A Memorial Lecture by Steven Starr to honour Alan Phillips was held in Waterloo on March 24 and in Toronto on March 26 at 7 p.m. in Room 2279 at OISE. This talk on nuclear weapons and climate change was sponsored by Science for Peace.

A World March for Peace and Nonviolence will take place from October 2, 2009 to January 2, 2010. It will be the first World March for Peace and Nonviolence to circle the Earth. See www.worldmarch.ca and info@worldmarch.ca. It will last 90 days and cover all climates and seasons.