



From the President: Remembering past wars

Dr Jenny Grounds

Three of our new papers on war and militarism are now available at our website www.mapw.org.au (members can also request printed copies). They cover military history, the cost of war to human health and the politics involved in going to war.

In the first, historian Marilyn Lake, looks at the story of the Gallipoli invasion, its evolution into a nation building event and its contemporary dominance of popular views of the nations history. Professor Lake encourages a more encompassing view of Australian history with more emphasis on our contribution to the promotion of ideas of social justice and equality of opportunity, while also acknowledging our own wars between Europeans and the original owners of the land.

In the second I describe the destructive effects of war on individuals, societies and the environment with particular emphasis on the health effects.

In the third Paul Barratt, former Defence Department Secretary, questions the decision making process involved in committing our defence forces to fighting in other country's conflicts.

GET ACTIVE

SIGN OUR PETITION

Promote and sign the *Medical Alert for a Strong ATT (Arms Trade Treaty)* at <http://ippnw.org/>

Michael Leunig and Peter Cundall supported MAPW by speaking at a well-attended Anzac eve event in Melbourne, where Michael launched our paper on war and health. Read more on page 3



There has been a good deal of discussion within the membership and more publicly about a perceived criticism of ANZAC day and remembrance of war. We have no wish to belittle the sacrifice made by young people in wars throughout our history, or the grief experienced by their families. We also acknowledge that some wars are less avoidable than others. However the Gallipoli campaign occurred 100 years ago.

Perhaps the most important thing we should be remembering is the desire expressed by many returned service men and women from many wars that such things never occur again.

Along with the remembering should always come resolve to prevent the horror happening again and again. A clear understanding of the history and the effects of war will increase our determination.

Paul Barratt points out in his paper, and in his recent address to a Victorian Branch dinner, that in a democracy power flows from the people to the state. When it comes to involvement in war, governments are subject to pressures other than those coming directly from the people.

Yet it is the people who will suffer the long-term effects of war on their communities and families.

Through this project and its paper and on line resources, MAPW hopes to inform and activate public opinion in favour of a strong resistance to war, a reduction in armaments worldwide, and an increase in global diplomacy and aid to effect resolution of conflict.

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Above, left: NSW Branch members helped staff an MAPW and ICAN information display and stall at the ACTU Congress in mid-May, including Branch Coordinator Anne Noonan pictured here with ICAN Board Member Leigh Hubbard
Centre: Anne Noonan at ACTU Congress with active NSW member Con Costa
Right: MAPW member Marcus Yip attended the NPT meeting in Vienna as part of the ICAN volunteer team

Research confirms nuclear war would risk mass starvation

A nuclear war anywhere in the world, using as few as 100 weapons, would disrupt the global climate and agricultural production so severely that the lives of more than a billion people would be at risk, according to new research findings released in April by MAPW's international body IPPNW. IPPNW's Dr Ira Helfand and a team of experts in agriculture and nutrition analysed data produced by scientists who have studied the climate effects of a hypothetical nuclear war between India and Pakistan.

They found that the plunging temperatures and reduced precipitation in critical farming regions, caused by soot and smoke lofted into the atmosphere by multiple nuclear explosions, would interfere with crop production and affect food availability and prices worldwide.

Their study will be published in the peer-reviewed journal *Climatic Change*.

Effects of a nuclear war:

- There would be a significant decline in middle season rice production in China. During the first 4 years, rice production would decline by an average of 21%; over the next 6 years the decline would average 10%.
- Corn production in the US would decline by an average of 10% for an entire decade, with the most severe decline (20%) in year 5. Soybean production would decline by about 7%, with the most severe loss, more than 20%, in year 5.
- Increases in food prices would make food inaccessible to hundreds of millions of the world's poorest. Even if agricultural markets continued to function normally, 215 million people would be added to the rolls of the malnourished over the course of a decade.
- The 925 million people in the world who are already chronically malnourished would be put at risk by a 10% decline in their food consumption.
- Significant agricultural shortfalls over an extended period would

almost certainly lead to panic and hoarding on an international scale, further reducing accessible food.

MAPW's Associate Professor Tilman Ruff noted that this new evidence confirms that nuclear war would cause an unprecedented humanitarian disaster, and that Australia would not be spared. "Australian agriculture would be decimated by a nuclear war anywhere in the world," he said.

"This data shows again that no purpose could ever justify use of such weapons. It makes plain the overwhelming need to prevent any use of nuclear weapons, and urgently wind back stockpiles to zero" Tilman said.



- Read the report at www.mapw.org.au

New humanitarian focus at NPT meeting



ICAN's Australian Chair
Tilman Ruff addresses the
NPT PrepCom in Vienna

By Tim Wright

Diplomats from more than 100 governments met in Vienna in May to discuss nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the so-called “inalienable right” to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. It was the first of three meetings leading up to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in 2015. Many IPPNW members, ICAN campaigners and other civil society representatives participated in the two-week meeting. Most non-nuclear-weapon states expressed concerns about the nuclear weapon modernisation programs underway in all the P5 nations (the permanent Security Council members). Many stressed the importance of reframing disarmament debates in humanitarian terms. Switzerland delivered a statement on behalf of 16 states on the “catastrophic humanitarian consequences” of any nuclear weapons use. It called for intensified efforts to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons. ICAN Chair Tilman Ruff spoke on the medical effects of nuclear weapons, noting the recent advocacy of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement in the field of nuclear disarmament. He called on governments to move from beyond a national-security-focused approach to a human-centred approach in disarmament negotiations.

IPPNW Regional Vice-Chair for North America Ira Helfand presented his new research on the effects of a limited nuclear war (opposite).

There was considerable interest in Norway's announcement that it would hold a conference in 2013 to explore the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament. This will involve any interested governments, UN agencies, Red Cross societies and civil society partners. Australia has not yet indicated whether it will attend. ICAN has expressed its hope that the conference will lead to a process for negotiating a nuclear weapons convention.

Before the NPT meeting, over 100 ICAN campaigners from 30 countries took part in a weekend conference to discuss ICAN strategy, structure and initiatives for the coming year. Workshops at the meeting focused on the proposal for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, divestment, humanitarian consequences and ICAN communications. The next international ICAN meeting will take place in Hiroshima on 21 August just before the IPPNW World Congress.

Tim Wright is director of ICAN Australia. He was part of the ICAN Australia team at the NPT Preparatory Committee, with MAPW members Tilman Ruff, Marcus Yip (pictured page 3), and Reaching Critical Will intern Lily Gardener.

Branch news

ANZAC REMEMBERED

Victorian members organised a reflective evening on 24 April with Brunswick Secondary College. Over 200 people braved shocking weather and traffic chaos to fill the school hall.

Artist Michael Leunig and well-known gardening expert Peter Cundall spoke as part of *The Language of War*. Mr Cundall is a veteran of three wars: WW2, Palestine, and Korea.

We heard excerpts from the theatrical performance *Unsung heroes of Australian History*, and songs from the local *Homebrew* choir. Alice Melike Ülgezer – poet, writer, and daughter of an MAPW family – read poems translated from Kurdish and Arabic. Two Brunswick students spoke the words of Atatürk, in Turkish and in English.

CANBERRA MUSIC FESTIVAL

As our newsletter goes to print, Canberra members are warming up for their annual musical fund-raiser.

The evening starts with a shared meal at the Kingston Baptist Church Hall, and a feast of music across three performance spaces. This year, the audience can choose from Latin, jazz, classical piano, ukulele, Italian folk, choir, mandolins, or a string quartet.

US FORCES ANALYSED

As Midnight Oil sing: *It's a set-back to your country*.

MAPW is helping coordinate groups around Australia who are questioning the rapidly increasing US military presence in our country. On 22 May we hosted a phone meeting of a groups from all states except Tasmania. See page 4 for local meetings.

Key reading: Professor Richard Tanter's new paper on US bases in Australia, available at www.mapw.org.au – or members can ask for a printed copy.

TASMANIANS MEET

MAPW President Jenny Grounds met members at the Branch May lunch, and discussed local and national activities.



MAPW volunteer researchers Maria Swrydan, Hugh Millen and Anna Johnson

Quick quiz

Where was the first overseas war fought by Australian volunteers?

Our team of volunteer graduates has been looking into this while extending our resources on Australian militarism.

Anna Johnson is writing a series of fact sheets on international treaties controlling war. Maria Swrydan and Hugh Millen are preparing fact sheets on Australia's participation in wars, and their health costs.

These will complement the resources on Australian militarism as noted on page 1. All this work aims to provide useful resources for schools and for the general public, leading up to the Anzac centenary in 2015.

(The Maori wars – where around 2600 Australian volunteers supported the British in the 1860s – appear to have been our first overseas intervention.)

SUPPORT OUR WORK

- Check out our militarism papers, fact sheets and other resources at www.mapw.org.au
- Use this information to write letters to media and politicians
- Let us know if you can help us promote these resources to students and teachers
- Consider volunteering

News briefs

MAPW MYTH-BUSTING #1

In a 17 April letter to MAPW, Resources Minister Martin Ferguson denies that the government has promoted a national radioactive waste dump on the basis of short-lived medical waste.

The Minister however had told the 7.30 Report on 21 March “There are a hundred storage spots around Australia, principally in universities and hospitals, often in shipping containers. That is unacceptable”.

After several years of being constantly corrected by MAPW and other experts, the Minister appears to be moving away from this emotive argument. However his position continues to rely on logic that crumbles under expert analysis.

In his April letter, the Minister writes that 83% of the low-level waste at Lucas Heights is from production, or services supporting production, of radiopharmaceuticals. MAPW's Dr Peter Karamoskos queries the relevance of this statistic, as most low level waste is not stored at Lucas Heights. Their main challenge is the “intermediate level” waste stored there – the most hazardous level of waste in Australia.

- *Contact us for a more detailed analysis, in our reply to Mr Ferguson*

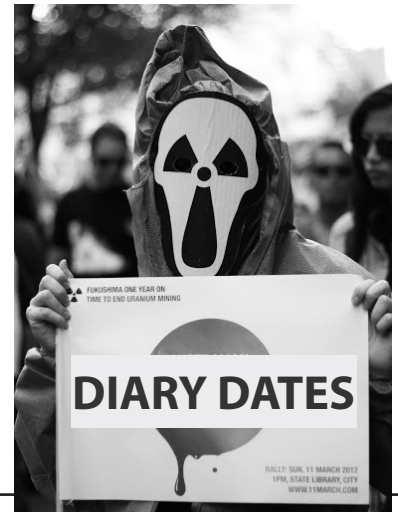
MEDICAL MYTH-BUSTING #2

Would-be WA uranium mining company Toro Energy has hosted Australian speaking tours by Dr Doug Boreham, a Canadian scientist who argues that low-level radiation can be good for you

Forty-five medical doctors, including many MAPW members, have signed a statement calling on Toro to cease promoting this fringe view. MAPW's WA spokesperson Dr Harry Cohen is particularly concerned that the company have sponsored “employee radiation training” by Dr Boreham.

Toro Energy plans to mine uranium at Wiluna in WA. MAPW have sent the statement with a letter to the WA and Federal health ministers.

- More at www.mapw.org.au



Friday 1 June, Brisbane **US BASES: THE COST**

Speakers include historian Dr Peter Stanley on armed neutrality: at UQ.

Saturday 2 June, everywhere
NUCLEAR ABOLITION DAY
See our website for local events, or check out www.nuclearabolition.org/

Saturday 16 June, Geelong
MAPW CONCERT
Great local musicians play for MAPW

Tuesday 19 June, Melbourne
US FORCES IN AUSTRALIA
Public meeting on the expansion of US military forces, not just in Darwin.

July, New York
ARMS TRADE TREATY AT UN
And a global week of action

6-9 August, around Australia
HIROSHIMA -NAGASAKI DAYS
Commemorating 1945 atomic bombing

22-29 August, Hiroshima
IPPNW BIENNIAL CONGRESS
Registrations are open.

21 September, everywhere
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE
Consider an activity, or write a letter.

Around Australia
MAPW MONTHLY MEETINGS
Regular times include Hobart first Monday lunchtime; and Melbourne, second Tuesday evening.

DETAILS AND MUCH MORE:

www.mapw.org.au or call
03 9023 1958