



Newsletter of the Campaign for International  
Co-operation and Disarmament

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Sept - Oct 2015

## A Nuclear Weapon-Free, Peaceful and Just World

*Organizing Committee, World Conference against A and H Bombs*

With this theme: - Let Us Make the 70th Year of the A-bombing a Decisive Turn to a World without Nuclear Weapons," the 2015 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was



held from August 2 to 9 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It ended with great success by the participation of a total of 11,750 people: 250 in the International Meeting (Aug. 2-4, Hiroshima), 5,500 in Hiroshima Conference (Aug. 4-6), and 6,000 in Nagasaki Conference (Aug. 7-9), including 147 overseas delegates/guests from 21 countries.

The Organizing Committee of the Conference would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and solidarity to all of you, who have travelled all the way to join the conference, sent delegates and messages to the conference, and who carried out commemorative actions on Hiroshima and Nagasaki days in your respective places in solidarity with us.

In the midst of growing world attention to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the presentations and reports by Hibakusha from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, medical and legal experts who have consistently worked on this issue and those by the victims of nuclear tests from overseas revealed the actual damage and sufferings brought about by the atomic bombing since 1945. They sent a strong warning to the world on the urgency of totally banning all nuclear weapons.

The Conference had the honor of being addressed by Mr. Kim Won-soo, Acting U.N. High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, government representatives from Indonesia, Venezuela, Cuba, and a New Zealand parliament member, adding to the

representatives of a broad range of peace movements from around the world. They included active campaigners for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons in the 5 nuclear weapon states and those under the "nuclear umbrella" and Pacific island nations and territories, and religious leaders working for peace beyond creed. Their participation helped enrich the exchange of views and experiences and generate a firm determination to make great advance to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons in the 70th year of the A-bombing.

In the Conference, many overseas delegates expressed their support and solidarity to the Japanese people and civil society in their struggle against war legislation, which would lead Japan to

participate in warfare abroad in the name of the "right to collective self-defense", trampling on Article 9 of the Constitution that prohibited the use of force, right of belligerency and possession of war potentials. They also offered strong support to the struggle of Okinawa to remove dangerous U.S. bases and to block the construction of a new base.

The Conference adopted the "Declaration of the International Meeting" on Aug. 4, "Hiroshima Appeal" on Aug. 6 in the Hiroshima Day Rally and "Call from Nagasaki" on Aug. 9 in Nagasaki. The Declaration of the International Meeting, among others, calls on national governments, public agencies and civil society movements to work together to make the 70th year of the atomic bombing a decisive turn to a nuclear weapon-free world and achieve a total ban and elimination of nuclear weapons without any further delay. (Copy of the "Declaration" is attached.) It also sets out a number of concrete actions for the civil society to take up so that the experiences and struggles of the Hibakusha can be shared among the people of the world, such as holding A-bomb exhibitions in numerous communities and petition campaigns which will enable each citizen to take part in a process to establish a nuclear weapon-free world.

In concluding, we reiterate our deep gratitude to you for your warm support and cooperation to the 2015 World Conference against A and H Bombs. We continue to look forward to working together with you in our common struggle to achieve a "nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and just world."

### **About Gensuikyo**

The Japan Council against A & H Bombs was founded on September 19, 1955, following the first World Conference against A and H Bombs in August the same year.

The background was the mounting nationwide protests against the damage from the hydrogen bomb test, which the US conducted on March 1, 1954 at the Bikini Atoll in the central Pacific. More than 32 million signatures then collected in demanding a ban on nuclear weapons represented a strong desire of the whole Japanese people for peace and against

nuclear weapons.

Since the founding, Gensuikyo, have developed many forms of actions to reach the three basic goals of 1) the prevention of nuclear war, 2) a ban on and the elimination of nuclear weapons, 3) the relief and solidarity with the Hibakusha, the A-bomb sufferers, including the annual World Conference against A & H Bombs in every August, constant and nationwide signature campaigns for a ban on nuclear weapons, events and actions in cooperation with the Hibakusha to make known the damage and health effects of the A-bombings to general public.

### **1997 March 1 Bikini Day, Shizuoka**

*Hilde Varney*

*Australian Peace Committee (S.A.)*

*Global Hibakusha Aust Related Reports*

I would like to tell you of the Australian experience of nuclear testing. In the early 1950s the then Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies, without consulting the Australian people or even his own cabinet, invited the British Government to carry out nuclear tests in the Australian desert. The places chosen for the tests were two at Monte Bello (presituated W. Australian coast near Perth) at Maralinga and Emu in the Great Victoria Desert in South Australia and home of the Tjurutja Aboriginal people, which, while Mr. Menzies referred to it as a useless desert, is regarded by scientists and tourists alike as one of the worlds unique territories.

### **Environment**

Let us consider the damage to the Australian environment. Between 1953 and 1963, Britain conducted a program of nuclear warhead development at Maralinga and Emu, consisting of nine atomic explosions and several hundred smaller trials codenamed VIXEN B. Whilst the atomic tests did deposit radioactive material at the test site and on areas downwind, it was the VIXEN B trials which caused what is now considered as one of Australia's worst environmental disasters. These trials stemmed from an effort by British scientists to study the effects

of conventional explosives on the bomb's components, and twelve of these, called one-point safety trials, sent jets of molten plutonium up to 1000 metres into the air, spreading plumes of contamination outwards from the firing site. In 1966, Britain, after a radiological survey, mounted Operation Brumby to clean up the test area. During the Operation, 21 pits were filled with contaminated equipment and 20 kilograms of the 22 kilograms of plutonium used in these trials - enough to produce 10 atomic bombs, and then capped it with 650 tons of concrete. In 1984, when the 3000 square kilometres of land surrounding the test site was due to be returned to Tjurutja Aboriginal people, scientists of the Australian Radiation Laboratory (ARL) carried out a radiological survey of the site to ensure that levels of radioactivity were such as could be considered safe. They were stunned to find that the levels of radioactivity were of the order of 10 times higher than those stated by the British 8 years earlier. They found that the significant contamination was much more widespread and in some places extended beyond the fenced boundary. They concluded that as much as 20 kilograms of plutonium, estimated as consisting of over 3 million pieces, is distributed over the test area, and not the 2 kilograms claimed by the British. In July 1984, in response to the ARL findings, the Australian Government set up a Royal Commission to enquire into the British nuclear tests. The Commission held the British Government responsible for a further cleanup, estimated in 1984 to cost 100 million British pounds, and blamed the 1950's Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies, for the tests being held in Australia. It also found the British Government to be guilty of concealing vital information on the tests from the Australian Government and that in



collusion with an Australian nuclear scientist Professor Ernest Titterton, had deliberately distorted facts that were communicated. The Commission also recommended that compensation for injuries sustained during and after the tests, should be extended to Aborigines, particularly those exposed to the black mist which swept over them after some of the atomic tests.

### **Aborigines**

And what happened to the inhabitants of the atomic test site? At the time of the British nuclear tests in Australia, the Australian aboriginal people were considered to be little better than noble savages. Although not without their champions in the white community, they had up to that time suffered much cruelty and exploitation at the hands of white people, and many of them had become urban dwellers, wholly dependent on the white society. In the early 1950's the Tjurutja Aboriginal people were living as they had for thousands of years, as hunters and food gatherers in a part of the Great Victoria Desert which borders the Nullabor Plain. Aboriginal people have a deep spiritual relationship with their land - a fact only recently accepted by white Australians, and certainly not appreciated in the 1950's by the Australian and British military commanders, when it came to moving them prior to the tests. Without being given any choice, most of the Tjurutja people were moved to Yalata on the Great Australian Bight and those who remained - those who had hidden in fear of the unaccustomed sight of military vehicles, and since illiterate could not understand the posted warning signs, were present during the tests. Eyewitness accounts from service personnel, speak of seeing Aborigines wandering and camping in the test area during and after the tests. Testimony from

Aborigines present in the area at the time, tell of a black mist that drifted over the landscape, leaving a black oily coating on everything in its wake, and of the sickness of many Aborigines which followed, particularly children and old people. At Yalata, the harsh conditions drove many of the Tjurutja people who had been moved there, to rebellion, crime, violence and alcohol abuse. In 1984, the Tjurutja people were granted access to their traditional tribal lands at Maralinga, but were prevented from the using 480 square kilometres of land surrounding the test site, because of high radiation levels. In 1991, it was agreed to compensate Aborigines for injuries suffered during and after the tests, and late last year the Australian Government granted a settlement of \$13.5 million to re-establish them in the part of their tribal lands where it is safe to live. Since 1984, they have campaigned tenaciously to regain the test lands, and this year the Australian Government agreed to clean up the site at an estimated cost of \$104 million, \$45 million of which will be provided by the British Government. The clean-up, which is due to commence in September of this year, is expected to last six years, and until that time Tjurutja Aboriginal people are refugees in their own land!

### **Conclusion**

Surely, the enormous and widespread opposition to the Chinese and French nuclear tests is an indication that the world community will no longer tolerate - no longer sees the need for - the existence of nuclear weapons. The Nuclear Powers do not appreciate that the continued threat of nuclear annihilation was tolerated during the cold war, only because nuclear weapons were deemed a necessity. They do not understand that nuclear weapons are now seen as chattels of political power, intimidation and prestige, rather than necessary weapons of war. Since the Second World War, America has threatened their use on more than forty occasions - mostly against third world non-nuclear

states. Aside from the immorality of such intimidation, there is the real fear that belligerence and national pride will replace political expedience and that a nuclear war will result. To keep their nuclear arsenals up to date, testing is necessary. The French tell us that their tests are designed to make their arsenal more safe and secure. Let us not be fooled - nuclear testing can only have one purpose - to build more modern nuclear weapons!

### **Four Million Muslims Killed In Western Wars: Should We Call It Genocide?**

*By Kit O'Connell, August 22, 2015  
"Information Clearing House" - "Mint Press"*

It may never be possible to know the true death toll of the modern Western wars on the Middle East, but that figure could be 4 million or higher. Since the vast majority of those killed were of Arab descent, and mostly Muslim, when would it be fair to accuse the United States and its allies of genocide?

A March report by Physicians for Social Responsibility calculates the body count of the Iraq War at around 1.3 million, and possibly as many as 2 million. However, the numbers of those killed in Middle Eastern wars could be much higher. In April, investigative journalist Nafeez Ahmed argued that the actual death toll could reach as high as 4 million if one includes not just those killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also the victims of the sanctions against Iraq, which left about 1.7 million more dead, half of them children, according to figures from the United Nations.

Raphael Lemkin and the definition of genocide

The term "genocide" did not exist prior to 1943, when it was coined by a Polish-Jewish lawyer named Raphael Lemkin. Lemkin created the word by combining the Greek root "geno," which means people or tribe, with "-cide," derived from the Latin word for killing.

The Nuremberg trials, in which top Nazi officials were prosecuted for crimes against humanity, began in 1945 and were based around Lemkin's idea of genocide. By the following year, it was becoming international law, according to United to End Genocide:

"In 1946, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution that 'affirmed' that genocide was a crime under international law, but did not provide a legal definition of the crime."



With support from representatives of the U.S., Lemkin presented the first draft of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide to the United Nations. The General Assembly adopted the convention in 1948, although it would take three more years for enough countries to sign the convention, allowing it to be ratified.

According to this convention, genocide is defined as:

"...any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

Under the convention, genocide is not merely defined as a deliberate act of killing, but can include a broad range of other harmful activities:

"Deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to destroy a group includes the

deliberate deprivation of resources needed for the group's physical survival, such as clean water, food, clothing, shelter or medical services. Deprivation of the means to sustain life can be imposed through confiscation of harvests, blockade of

foodstuffs, detention in camps, forcible relocation or expulsion into deserts."

It can also include forced sterilization, forced abortion, prevention of marriage or the

transfer of children out of their families. In 2008, the U.N. expanded the definition to acknowledge that "rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide."

#### **A Middle Eastern genocide**

A key phrase in the convention on genocide is "acts committed with intent to destroy." While the facts back up a massive death toll in Arab and Muslim lives, it might be more difficult to argue that the actions were carried out with the deliberate intent to destroy "a national, ethnic, racial or religious group."

The authors of the convention were aware, however, that few of those who commit genocide are so bold as to put their policies in writing as brazenly as the Nazis did. Yet, as Genocide Watch noted in 2002: "Intent can be proven directly from statements or orders. But more often, it must be inferred from a systematic pattern of coordinated acts."

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush employed a curious and controversial choice of words in one of his first speeches. He alarmed some by referencing historic, religious conflicts, as The Wall Street Journal staff writers Peter Waldman and Hugh Pope noted:

"President Bush vowed ... to 'rid the world of evil-doers,' then cautioned: 'This crusade, this war on terrorism, is going to take a while.'

Crusade? In strict usage, the word describes the Christian military expeditions a millennium ago to capture the Holy Land from Muslims. But in much of the Islamic world, where history and religion suffuse daily life in ways unfathomable to most Americans, it is shorthand for something else: a cultural and economic Western invasion that, Muslims fear, could subjugate them and desecrate Islam."

In the wars that followed in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. not only killed millions, but systematically destroyed the infrastructure necessary for healthy, prosperous life in those countries, then used rebuilding efforts as opportunities for profit, rather than to benefit the occupied populations. To further add to the genocidal pattern of behaviour, there is ample evidence of torture and persistent rumours of sexual assault from the aftermath of Iraq's fall. It appears likely the U.S. has contributed to further destabilization and death in the region by supporting the rise of the self-declared Islamic State of Iraq and Syria by arming rebel groups on all sides of the conflict.

After 9/11, the U.S. declared a global "War on Terror," ensuring an endless cycle of destabilization and wars in the Middle East in the process. The vast majority of the victims of these wars, and of ISIS, are Muslims. And, as extremist terrorists created by the unrest increase tensions with their attacks on the West, some Americans are embracing Bush's controversial language of religious warfare, calling for Muslims to be placed in camps or even openly calling for genocide.

### **Why Congress Must Support the Nuclear Agreement With Iran**

*Posted: 22/08/2015 05:52 AEST*

What should have been an occasion of diplomatic rejoicing has turned into an ugly

partisan struggle over whether or not the international agreement negotiated with Iran will or will not be approved by the United States Government. The extremely troublesome obstruction to the agreement is centered in the U.S. Congress where anti-Obama Republicans are teaming up with pro-Netanyahu Democrats to create uncertainty as to whether the arrangements negotiated with such persistence by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council together with Germany will be undermined by this unprecedented leverage being exerted by Israel on the internal governmental processes in America. It should be appreciated that the agreement has been unanimously endorsed by a positive vote of



all 15 members of the Security Council, a rarity in UN politics for an issue of this geopolitical magnitude.

In the end this debate raises some fundamental questions about American domestic politics along with its leadership in the Middle East and indeed, the credibility of its global role. Here is an agreement, restricting Iran's freedom of action with regard to its nuclear program beyond that imposed on any other country ever, clearly serving the national interest of the United States in Middle Eastern stability, an outcome of dedicated efforts by the President and Secretary of State to find a way to avoid both another war in the region and a dangerous nuclear arms race.

That such a diplomatic breakthrough is being so furiously opposed posts a warning that irrationality is mounting a serious challenge to common sense and self-interest.

As Obama has noted on several occasions he knows of no other leader that interferes so directly in the national policy debates of a foreign country than does Netanyahu(1&2). Britain's Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond observed: "Israel wants a permanent state of stand-off and I don't believe that's in the interests of the region. I don't believe it's in our interest."

Israel has used all the influence at its disposal to block approval, mobilizing rich ultra-Zionist donors in the U.S. to create a war chest of \$20 million and relying on AIPAC (American-Israel Public Affairs Committee) to twist enough legislative arms to override an expected Obama veto if the agreement is turned down by a majority in the two houses of Congress. This drive has been led by the ever belligerent Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, but it is disturbing to realize that all the leading political parties in Israel are united in their opposition to the agreement. This alone tells us the degree to which political attitudes in Israel are out of sync with those prevailing in the rest of the Middle East, and indeed the world.

As such, there is a moment of truth for the relationship between the United States and Israel. A rejection of the agreement will raise serious questions about the capacity of this country to pursue a foreign policy that reflects its best interests and dominant values. It will also raise doubts about whether it is capable of constructive leadership in the Middle East and the world. If the agreement is approved, as we firmly believe it should be, it will not only confirm the autonomy of national institutions in the United States but show that the alliance relationship with Israel can withstand disagreement when vital issues are at stake.

### **Iran Problem**

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a religious dictatorship that systematically violates the rights of its citizens, and has demonstrated enmity toward the United States since the 1979 Revolution. Despite this, compared with other Islamic countries of the Middle East

and North Africa, it is far better situated to realize democracy and respect human rights.

Iran is a stable nation that has not invaded another country for nearly 300 years. Its population has nearly more than doubled since the 1979 Revolution, but its number of university students has increased by a factor of 27, with more than 60 percent of them female. The most important international writings of Western liberal, feminist, and secular thinkers have been translated into Farsi, including the work of some of the most important Jewish thinkers. Iran has a large middle class, and is the only country in the region, aside from Turkey, that has the prerequisites for a transition to democracy despite problematic features of the relations between state and society.

For over 22 years Netanyahu has been "making" nuclear bombs for Iran, continuously claiming that Iran is only a short time away from having the bomb. The predictions have turned out to be false and inflammatory, but his desire and appetite for war with Iran seems only to have increased over time. The nuclear agreement with Iran, which has imposed severe restrictions on its peaceful nuclear program despite going well beyond what the 1968 Nonproliferation Treaty requires, has agitated Netanyahu and the political mainstream in Israel. There are several explanations of this irrational Israeli response to an agreement that help all in the region. Netanyahu has engaged in fear-mongering that has mobilized Israeli society. Beyond this, a focus on Iran's nuclear program draws attention away from other difficult problems confronting Israel,, including the Palestinian problem and its own covertly acquired arsenal of nuclear weapons.

### **National interests of the United States or Netanyahu's political interests?**

As President Obama has repeatedly said, the only alternative to the nuclear agreement with Iran is war. But, this would be a war that Israel wants the United States to fight on its behalf. Military attacks on Iran will

almost certainly produce an extremely strong reaction by Iran and other nations in that region, a process likely to set the entire Middle East on fire. Iran with its population of 78 million will likely degenerate into another Iraq and Syria, and extremists from throughout the world will stream across its borders to join the struggle. How can risking such an outcome possibly be in the interests of the United States?

Approving the nuclear agreement with Iran is by far the least costly solution to whatever problems can be associated with Iran's nuclear program, and approval will also promote peace and stability in the Middle East. With this background in mind Congress should clearly approve the agreement, and it is also why the citizenry of the United States should welcome it. After approval,, the United States would find itself in an excellent position, perhaps in cooperation with other governments to help address other problems on the Middle East agenda by proposing an ambitious diplomatic package with the following essential elements:

Guaranteeing present national borders through resolutions backed by the United Nations Security Council

Elimination of all weapons of mass destruction from the region through the establishment of a nuclear free zone in the whole of the Middle East

Resolving the Palestinian problem encouraging two-state diplomacy premised on the right of the Palestinian people to form their own independent, viable and contiguous state on all territories occupied since 1967, and if diplomacy fails, then more coercive measures should be imposed by action of the United Nations .

A collective security and mutual non-aggression treaty signed by all the Middle Eastern nations

Investment in the economic and political development of the region combined with the regulation of arms sales

Moving forward from the agreement it is important to appreciate that peace is a common value envisioned and shared by Jews, Muslims, and Christians:

"They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4).

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9).

"Making peace is the best" (an-Nissa 128) and "O, you who believe! Fulfill the promises and covenants made [by you]" (al-Maidah 1).

For too long these shared values, deeply embedded in the worldviews of these civilisation perspectives, have been ignored, even repudiated. The nuclear agreement with Iran creates the opportunity to move the flow of history in better directions. Such an opportunity must not be lost. If lost, the United States and Israel would be morally, politically, and legally responsible for whatever harm befalls the region and the world.

### **How US-backed war crimes made Yemen world's most terrifying place to be a child**

*Sonali Kolhatkar 21 August 2015*

As Yemen is taken to the brink of mass starvation, the UN says 10 million children in Yemen are in need of immediate assistance.

The United Nations says Yemen is one of the most terrifying places in the world to be a child, with 10 million in need of immediate assistance.

YEMEN HAS been the target of a brutal US-backed war led by Saudi Arabia. While ordinary civilians are suffering horrific violence and starvation, there is deafening silence from the US and others who claim to be defenders of human rights.

The situation is so bad now that nearly every major global human rights organization has issued dire warnings of the humanitarian



catastrophe unfolding in the Persian Gulf's poorest nation.

Since the Saudi regime began a bombing campaign in March, the situation has deteriorated rapidly as access to food and other aid has been stymied. In response, the United Nations in early July declared a Level 3 humanitarian emergency—the highest level possible. UN Envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed described Yemen as “one step away from famine.”

But the bombing has had direct consequences, too. In late July, Human Rights Watch accused Saudi Arabia of war crimes after an airstrike on two residential buildings killed 65 civilians. Ten of the victims were children. “With no evident military target, this attack appears to be a war crime,” said an HRW researcher.

Amnesty International also published a scathing report with a title that says it all: “Yemen: Bloody trail of civilian death and destruction paved with evidence of war crimes.” Echoing the HRW report, Amnesty researchers found “a pattern of strikes targeting heavily populated areas including civilian homes, a school, a market and a mosque. In the majority of cases no military target could be located nearby.”

Children are especially vulnerable. UNICEF called attention to their plight in Yemen, citing the unimaginably high number of 10 million children in need of immediate assistance. Nearly 400 children have been killed and 600 injured since March. According to the report, “Yemen is one of the most terrifying places in the world to be a child.”

Overall, more than 4,000 people have been killed in Yemen, more than a thousand estimated to be civilians.

On Aug. 11, Peter Maurer, president of the International Committee of the Red

Cross, added his voice to the chorus of warnings. “The humanitarian situation is nothing short of catastrophic,” he said after a three-day visit to Yemen. “Every family in Yemen has been affected by this conflict. ... Medicines can’t get in so patient care is falling apart. Fuel shortages mean equipment doesn’t work. This cannot go on. Yemen is crumbling.”

The same day, Teresa Sancristóval, who heads up Doctors Without Borders’ Emergency Unit, also warned of multiple crises, including a severe water shortage, lack of medicines and vaccines, and needless deaths exacerbated by the incessant bombing. She wrote, “In some moments, I felt that the conflict in Yemen



is much more of a war against civilians than a war against armed groups.”

Ignoring the outcry from these high-profile human rights groups, Saudi Arabia just bombed yet another port, a main one used to transport aid to civilians in northern Yemen. In response, Save the Children’s Edward Santiago said, “The bombing of Hodeida port is the final straw. ... The impact of these latest air strikes will be felt most strongly by innocent children and families.”

Not only has the United States blessed the brutal Saudi air war on Yemen, it has taken an active role in it. Recently “the Pentagon more than doubled the number of American advisors to provide enhanced intelligence for airstrikes,” the Los Angeles Times reported. This has directly contributed to a surge in airstrikes and subsequent civilian casualties. The L.A. Times rightly pointed out that Yemen’s plight has been “vastly overshadowed” by the US war on Islamic State.

In a nutshell, when Yemenis toppled their longtime former president, Ali Abdullah

Saleh, in the wake of Arab Spring revolutions such as those in Egypt and Tunisia in 2011, they ended up with Vice President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi as their new leader. But Hadi was pushed out by a Shiite rebel group known as the Houthis, even as a low-level US drone war continued against al-Qaida. Fearing Iranian aid to the Houthis along its southern border, Saudi Arabia punished Yemen with an aggressive air war actively sponsored by the Obama administration.

Adding to the air war, a new, aggressive, ground-based effort began in earnest in early August. The United Arab Emirates, a small but extremely wealthy country, has deployed a major contingent of troops on the ground in Yemen. Like Saudi Arabia, the UAE is a major US ally and a loyal customer of American military weaponry. A recent analysis found that US arms sales to the Middle East exploded under President Obama, peaking at more than \$40 billion in 2012, compared with just over \$10 billion under George W. Bush. The \$60.7 billion worth of weapons during Obama's tenure went mostly to Saudi Arabia (67 percent) and the UAE (21 percent), the two main aggressors in Yemen.

Among those weapons were cluster munitions, which Saudi Arabia has allegedly deployed against Yemen's civilians. Cluster bombs are widely banned by most of the world, except for a handful of countries—including the US and Saudi Arabia. They are condemned specifically for indiscriminately affecting civilian populations. But, as so many humanitarian groups are pointing out, the well-being of ordinary Yemenis seems to be a low priority for the warmongers.

Although Saudi Arabia cites its fear of Iranian influence as impetus for the war (couched in rhetoric about restoring Hadi's rule), there is little evidence that Iran is actually helping the Houthis. Certainly the Iranian regime has sent aid shipments to Yemen, many of which have been thwarted by Saudi Arabia despite the desperate need. But there is no evidence of military or

logistical Iranian support.

Bizarrely, even Obama has asserted that Iran has not boosted the Houthi rebellion. On the contrary, he claimed Iran tried to discourage the Houthis, telling the press, "There were moments where Iran was actually urging potential restraint." Obama has had to portray Iran as a "rational" actor in his administration's recently brokered nuclear agreement with the Islamic Shiite regime. So why has he remained silent on Saudi bloodshed in Yemen, and worse, actively participated by providing advice and weapons?

The answer may lie in the fact that the US has long waged its own one-sided drone war in Yemen and shamelessly continues to do so even as the country is falling apart. On Aug. 12, the latest drone strike in the eastern part of the country reportedly resulted in the extrajudicial assassinations of five suspected members of al-Qaida. The drone wars have gone hand in hand with greater terrorist threats rather than fewer, evident in al-Qaida's Yemen chapter recently calling for more anti-US attacks.

The richest and most powerful country in the world—the United States—is aiding the richest and most powerful countries in the Middle East—Saudi Arabia and the UAE—in bludgeoning the poorest in the region and one of the least powerful countries in the world: Yemen. What is remarkable about the Obama administration's silence on Yemen's civilian suffering is that it is mirrored by everyone else's muteness. Neither right- nor left-wing forces in the United States have taken much interest in the carnage and starvation there.

International human rights groups like UNICEF, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, International Committee of the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders and Save the Children are united in their denunciation of the catastrophic war in Yemen. The rest of the world would do well to heed the call for an immediate end to the atrocities.

## **Ron Spencer: Champion of Labor and Campaigner for Peace**

**29 June 1933 – 2 May 2015**

*Senator Kim Carr, Shadow Minister Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Industry.*

Ron Spencer, ALP activist, trade unionist and Australian socialist, was esteemed from the shop floor to the most senior levels of the Labor movement.

He joined the struggle for a better Australia and a better world at an early age. The record shows that he joined the ALP on 15 February 1959, when he was 25. He served the party throughout his life, becoming a life member in 1999.

A printer by trade, Ron joined the Victorian branch of the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union, a forerunner of today's United Voice, in 1972 and became an organiser.

He was a member for nearly 43 years and was awarded life membership in 1998. He really was a life member: Ron was still a financial member at the time of his death.

Ron was an important part of the team, under Secretary Ray Hogan, that forged the Missos into a powerful political voice for the dispossessed.

They built a union that was well-managed, well-resourced and well-respected.

Ron organised members in the western suburbs and part of the CBD. He looked after many groups of low-paid workers: school cleaners, workers at the Kodak plant, and in the asbestos, leather and paint industries.

Other organisers remember him returning to the union office covered in dust from asbestos factory visits, which may have contributed to his emphysema.

He was also a member of the Missos'

federal council in the 1980s.

Our paths first crossed in 1976, when as convenor of the Socialist Left in the seat of Wills, Ron organised my entry to the faction.

Our association continued as I began teaching at Glenroy Technical School, where he organised the cleaners.

We worked closely together for more than 40 years, and during that long collaboration, I came to know Ron very well.

He was completely dedicated to the service of the Labor movement, and an outstanding example of the movement at its best. Ron understood that the fundamental strength of Labor lay in its ability to work through both its industrial and political wings.

Whether he was working for school cleaners or getting the vote out for the party, he was always resolute. He was highly meticulous and painstakingly thorough in tackling any task that arose.

And no matter how adverse the situation might sometimes have been, he remained undaunted. That persistence usually paid off.

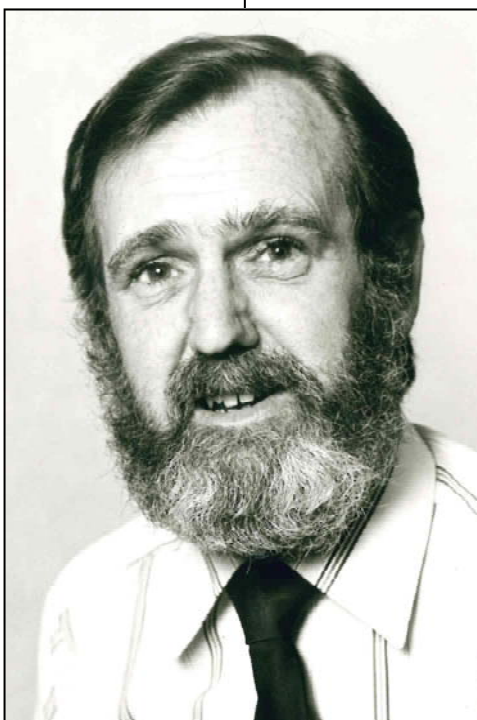
Ron's style of working was often pastoral in its impact. He took great trouble to go from house to house, from family to family, to keep people in touch.

He was committed to helping others, optimistic about the future and recognised that we could achieve so much more together than we could alone. He sought to enlighten and inform those who worked alongside him.

Stephen Lennon, who worked with Ron as a Missos'

organiser in the '80s, describes him as a gentle man with fierce convictions.

That was perhaps nowhere more evident than in his enduring interest in the peace movement. He was a genuine internationalist – which was no easy thing during the Cold War.



In 1959 the ALP's Coburg branch elected Ron as its representative on the Coburg Peace Committee, which was affiliated to the Congress for International Cooperation and Disarmament.

His commitment to the peace movement resulted in him being denied a visa to enter the US.

In 1982, he was selected by the Trade Union Peace and Solidarity Committee to be a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly's Second Special Session on Disarmament. He was questioned several times about his visa application by an official at the US consulate, who asked him if he was a member of the Communist Party.

On his third visit to the consulate, Ron was told that he had been refused a visa because the Congress for International Cooperation and Disarmament was a Communist-front organisation.

"When I asked how they reached that conclusion," Ron said later, "the officer said that it was on a list they had."

The real reason why Ron and five other Australians – three of them also prominent ALP members like him – were denied a chance to take part in the UN disarmament session remains mysterious.

Even at the height of the Vietnam War, other Australians who were members of the Congress for International Cooperation and Disarmament, such as Jim Cairns and Jean McLean, had been allowed into the US.

Ron was disappointed by what he called "the bloody-minded attitude of the US government", but the experience only strengthened his resolve to work for peace.

His personal style was marked by an extremely dry sense of humour that could sometimes be misunderstood.

I remember a factional opponent asking

*"If everyone demanded peace instead of another television set, then there'd be peace." - John Lennon*

him what he had done with how-to-vote cards that he had been given to letter-box.

As someone who was always conscientious and fastidious in such matters, Ron was insulted by the implicit suggestion that he might have done something improper.

He replied: "I bloody well burnt them!"

It was not the answer to give to such a humourless and literal-minded man, and Ron ended up having to appear before a party committee to explain something he hadn't done.

Those who knew him best relished that sense of humour, as they appreciated all the qualities that made him special.

It was not only the union and the Labor Party that benefited from Ron's capacity for unswerving loyalty.

Even recent events did nothing to dent his attachment to the Essendon Football Club.

And his greatest loyalty of all was to his life partner, Anna, with whom he found great happiness.

### ***Vale Ron Spencer, a great Australian***

#### **Coming Event**

- **Join the People's Climate March!**  
**Friday 27 November at 5.30 pm**  
Meet at the State Library
- **161 yrs Eureka Stockade Anniversary**  
**Wed 25 November 6:30 - 9:30pm**  
The Eureka Hotel, cnr Victoria & Church Streets, Richmond.
- **Fair Go for Pensioners AGM and Christmas Lunch**  
**Wed 2 December 11am - 1:00pm**  
AMWU Conference Room,  
251 Queensberry Street, Carlton South.

#### **Executive Chairperson:**

John Speight

#### **Executive Vice Chairperson:**

Len Cooper

#### **Secretary:**

Romina Beitseen

#### **Treasurer:**

Keith Stodden

#### **Vice Chairpersons:**

Paul Conway

Luke Hilakari

Andrew Irving

Senator Gavin Marshall

Ann Sgro

• *CICD Annual AGM: Tue 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2015, Trades Hall, 5.30 pm.*

• *Don't forget 2016 membership affiliation, form included.*

• *Listen to CICD's Alternative News program: Community Radio 3CR (855AM) every Sunday mornings at 9.15am.*

