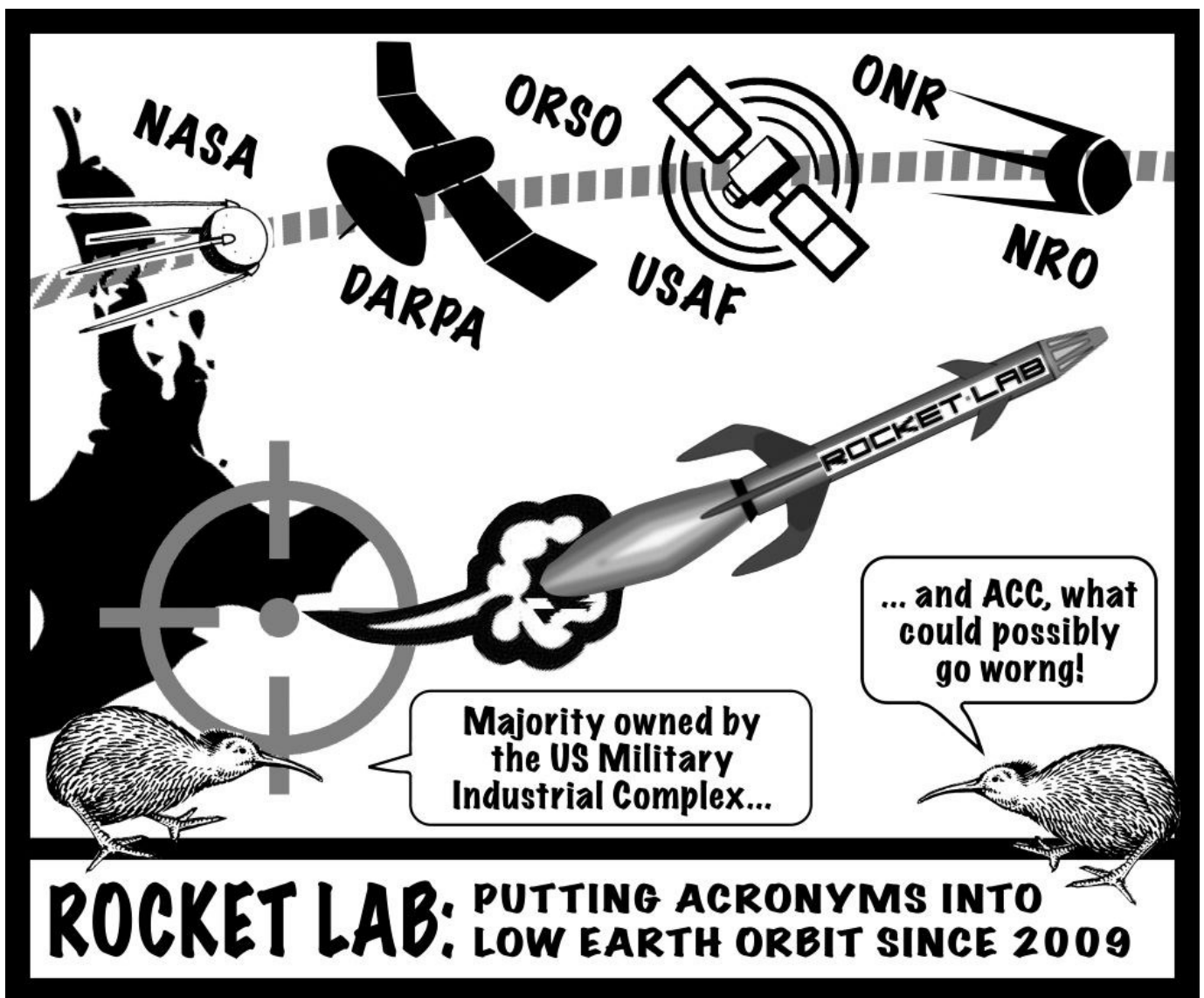


Journal of the Anti-Bases Campaign

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A NEW US BASE IN NZ

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Rocket Lab & Lockheed Martin; Weapons Expo Abandoned; NZ Spies & Torture; Nicky Hager Wins Against Spies & Cops; Aussie Peace Movement; Geopolitics; Spying Past & Present

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Glossary of acronyms on cover graphic:

- NASA** - National Aeronautics and Space Administration;
- DARPA** - Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
- ORSO** - Operationally Responsive Space Office
- ONR** - Office of Naval Research
- NRO** - National Reconnaissance Office
- USAF** - United States Air Force
- ACC** - Accident Compensation Corporation

Cover: *Graphic by Ian Dalziel.*

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TIME TO RECOGNISE ROCKET LAB FOR WHAT IT IS

A US Facility For The US Military & Spies On NZ Soil

By Murray Horton

Rocket Lab was originally touted as a shining example of Kiwi innovation. It continues to be so touted, under the present Jacinda Ardern government. But, in fact, it is now simply the NZ subsidiary of an American company, one with major ownership by Lockheed Martin, the world's biggest weapons manufacturer (including of nuclear weapons).

Satellite Launches From Mahia Peninsula

Rocket Lab's clients, whose payloads it launches into space from its Mahia Peninsula facility (between Wairoa and Gisborne, on the North Island's east coast), include a whole range of US military, intelligence and surveillance agencies. Those payloads are satellites but new generation ones, much smaller than previous generations of satellites. It is directly contributing to the militarisation of space. A central theme of Trump's Presidency is that the US must be able to "dominate space" and wage war in, and from, space.

So, let's call it for what it is – a US facility for the US military and spies on NZ soil. As such, it is as much a base as the Waihopai spy base, which has been of great interest to the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) for more than 30 years. More so actually, as Waihopai is nominally a "New Zealand" spy base, operated by the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), which is a State spy agency. Rocket Lab is both American-owned and privately-owned, so it is a corporate contractor to the US military and intelligence empire.

Unlike its rockets, Rocket Lab itself and the truly alarming nature of what it does, and for whom, has tended to fly under the radar. As per yet there is no campaign targeting Rocket Lab and its NZ launch base (it also has a tracking station on the Chatham Islands, way off to the east of the NZ mainland). That will hopefully change as the New Zealand people find out the true story. Some have led the way to alert us to this outfit. None more so than regular *Peace Researcher* writer, the indefatigable Dennis Small. Ironically, Dennis has written more on the subject in the other publication which I edit, namely *Foreign Control Watchdog*.

For example: "A current egregious example of badly misplaced technological exuberance is the enthusiasm currently demonstrated in Parliament by MPs for what is being promoted as NZ's new space industry. For instance, on 20/6/17, Parliament had its second reading of the Outer-Space and High-Altitude Activities Bill, instrumental in launching the legal and logistical support framework for the US aerospace corporation Rocket Lab in Aotearoa/NZ".

"The Bill provides licensing and regulatory legislation for this American transnational corporation, which aims at putting customers' satellites into orbit. The company has a NZ subsidiary. Indeed, New Zealander Peter Beck, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Technical Officer (CTO), has been the company's guiding light since its launch. Beck actually founded the company in 2006".

"MPs celebrated the passage of this Bill as expressive and symbolic of NZ's embrace of high-tech industry and engineering. Yet, along with American global venture funds Khosla Ventures and Bessemer Venture Partners, Lockheed Martin is also an investor (Rocket Lab, *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rocket_Lab). Lockheed Martin is 'the world's largest defence contractor', getting 78% of its revenues from military sales, and receiving nearly 10% of the funds paid out by the Pentagon (Lockheed Martin, *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_Martin)".



Rocket Lab CEO Peter Beck with PM Jacinda Ardern

Greens Enthusiastic About It

"It was quite extraordinary to see the Green Party so enthusiastic about NZ becoming the 11th country joining the space industry (Parliament TV, 20/6/17). MP Gareth Hughes, who is usually on the ball about environmental issues, waxed lyrical about Rocket Lab and NZ becoming a participant in exploiting space. Like so many other MPs exhibiting the toys for boys' ethos, Hughes saw this foreign investment as tapping into, and fostering NZ ingenuity, research, and development; and, of course, 'entrepreneurialism' in vital high-tech engineering industry".

"He said it was 'one of the most enjoyable Bills' to work on; and that it was 'incredible', 'exciting', and 'fantastic' (ibid.). To be sure, he was over the Moon about it! Meantime, the technocratic pollution of space increases with so much man-made space junk and debris. The political Establishment and the media are jointly promoting Rocket Lab as 'a nationalistic kind of achievement' and extolling the 'space economy as the way to go (e.g. 'Peter Beck: Space Pioneer', *Press*, 1/7/17)". *The Green Party has been silent about Rocket Lab since it entered into partnership with the Labour/New Zealand First Coalition government, which came to power at the 2017 election. Ed.*

"But all this enthusiasm for a space industry in Aotearoa/NZ not only violates sound environmental princi-

ples, it displays a stunning naivety and ignorance about the global reach of the US military machine. Not only is Rocket Lab now an American TNC, it is also a fast track for integrating NZ deeper into the US military-industrial complex ("Corporate Conditioning Neo-Liberal Conformity: Mainstream Media Inc And Co", Dennis Small, *Watchdog* 145, August 2017, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/45/07.html>).

And, from *Watchdog* 148, August 2018 (Dennis Small, "From 'Big Bang' Space Race To Trashing The Planet": The Struggle Against The Global Corporates", <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/48/08.html>): "Peter Beck was instrumental in founding Rocket Lab in 2006 ('10 Things About Rocket Lab', *NBR*, 27/5/17, <https://www.nbr.co.nz/article/10-things-about-rocket-lab-ck-203485>). It did not take long before Rocket Lab got involved in the American military-industrial complex".

DARPA

"In 2010, Rocket Lab worked on a project for the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA – the US Department of Defense agency that gave the world the Internet. The DARPA contract involved 'a viscous liquid monopropellant (VLM) fuel that was thixotropic – neither a solid or a liquid... 'the result of this work was demonstrated to US military clients in 2012' (ibid.)".

"So, a key project in Rocket Lab's early development was for DARPA, an outfit central to the structure and functioning of the US military-industrial complex, an outfit paving the way to Armageddon. Rocket Lab cultivated further links with American capital, its military, and space industry. In 2013, it got backing from Silicon Valley billionaire venture capitalist Vinod Khosla. Khosla Ventures' investment level, along with others, has never been disclosed (ibid.)".

"Rocket Lab has come to specialise in firing off Electron rockets to launch small satellites relatively cheaply, and, so, able to compete in the emerging market for such launches. After Khosla & co., it went on to hook up with the world's biggest armaments firm. 'In 2014, another funding round saw US military and aerospace giant Lockheed Martin invest in Rocket Lab, along with Bessemer Ventures, and more money from Khosla and (Sir Stephen) Tindall' (ibid.)".

"Rocket Lab, heartily cheered on by the NZ political Establishment and the media, was due to make its first commercial launch in July 2018 from Mahia Peninsula, Hawke's Bay (for background see 'Today Is A Huge Win: The World Responds To Rocket Lab Launch', *NZ Herald*, 22/1/18, https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=11979604)".

The gushing adulation of Rocket Lab by the political and media Establishment is encapsulated in this quote, also picked up by Dennis: "If we had another 50 of him ('entrepreneur' Peter Beck), and another 50 of Rocket Labs (now a US-owned and military-oriented company), we would be sweet!" (*TVNZ's Q&A presenter Corin Dann*, 20/5/18).

"She'll Be Right" Attitude

An extremely good and more recent analysis of Rocket Lab was written by Ollie Neas in *The Spinoff*, ("She'll Be Right' Attitude To Rocket Lab Putting Nuclear Free NZ At Risk, Experts Say": <https://thespinoff.co.nz/business/17-05-2019/shell-be-right-attitude-to-rocket-lab-putting-nuclear-free-nz-at-risk-experts-say/>, 17/05/19):

"Before the first rocket took off from Mahia Peninsula on the East Coast two years ago (in 2017), MPs considered whether they should clarify

that New Zealand's new space industry would be strictly for peaceful purposes. Politicians from across the spectrum championed the proposed law enabling rocket launches, and welcomed the new era of high-tech business and scientific research that was about to begin".

"But some MPs noticed a problem. Much of the technology central to space launches – from the rockets themselves to the payloads they carried – could be used to support military activities as easily as they could socially useful purposes, such as researching climate change or combating illegal fishing in the Pacific. One solution they considered was to include the words 'non-military' in the law's purposes provision. Another was to specify that launches must be for 'peaceful purposes'. But MPs decided that such wording could rule out obviously useful technology like GPS (global positioning system), which is run by the US Air Force".

"Instead, a compromise was reached. 'Peaceful purposes' would be replaced with a reference to New Zealand's international obligations that it not put nuclear weapons in orbit or test weapons on celestial bodies. Although close observers might have spotted that this left a gap through which all kinds of military activities might slip, for many of the MPs who took to their feet in the House the fundamental objective of the legislation was clear".

"The intention is with this legislation that it be non-military", said Labour MP David Parker, who a year later would become the Minister responsible for New Zealand's space regime. Two years on New Zealand has emerged as an established launch site for US military clients, with the majority of launches so far carrying payloads for the US Department of Defense. Documents obtained by *The Spinoff* reveal that as MPs reassured themselves of the law's peaceful intent, the Government was already considering requests for launches in potential contravention of that".

"Ministerial briefings show that since at least May 2017 the Government – first National, and then the new Labour coalition – has been planning for launches on behalf of US military and security agencies. The launches are welcomed as deepening New Zealand's security collaboration with

the Trump Administration. Meanwhile, officials have warned of the likely pushback if the public learned of the true nature of these activities".

NRO; US Special Ops Command; Secret Client; Et Al

"Because of this risk officials advised the Government to develop a joint communications strategy with Rocket Lab around US government payloads, highlighting the benefits to New Zealand and limiting public disclosure of the details. These launches are set to continue and may even include launches for the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), one of the US's most important intelligence agencies. While Rocket Lab and Government officials continue to emphasise the civilian benefits of its rockets, experts warn that New Zealand may be adopting a dangerous 'she'll be right' attitude to its new space industry".

"Two launches have carried payloads for the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, the Pentagon agency that conducts cutting-edge research for the US military. A third was for the US Air Force and US Army Space and Missile Defense Command. A recently announced fifth launch will carry a payload for US Special Operations Command, a wing of the US Department of Defense that undertakes covert missions around the world".

"Terry Johanson, a lecturer in Defence and Security Studies at Mas-

sey University and a retired major in the New Zealand Defence Force, says that these cargoes appear to be laying the groundwork for the proposed US Space Force, which Donald Trump announced last year (2018). 'The payloads they're sending up there, to track ballistic missiles from China and Russia, to create a communication web in space and to track debris and objects in orbit, are setting up the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance side of their Space Force', he says".

"The first of the DARPA payload seeks to improve the performance of a kind of radar that can detect missiles and stealth aircraft, while the second DARPA mission is aimed at testing an antenna intended for missile defence, among other uses. The US Air Force launch includes a payload that will capture imagery allowing the US Army to test synthetic aperture radar, a surveillance and reconnaissance tool that enables images to be captured in the dark and through cloud. This technology has also been tied to space-based missile defence systems".

"The recently announced Prometheus payload for US Special Operations Command is a reconnaissance satellite to support special operations missions. Future similar launches seem likely. In September (2018) the head of the New Zealand Space Agency, Peter Crabtree, met with officials from the National Re-



connaissance Office in Virginia to discuss the New Zealand regulatory process, according to itineraries obtained by *The Spinoff*. The NRO is one of the five major US intelligence agencies”.

Suspicious deepened when Rocket Lab refused to reveal the identity of one of its seven clients during a June 2019 launch window for satellites, citing that old favourite – “commercial sensitivity” (*Press*, 19/6/19, Tom Pullar-Strecker, “Secret Client For Rocket Lab”, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/113564986/confidential-payload-aboard-rocket-labs-sixth-orbital-mission>).

It Makes NZ A Target In Other People's Wars

Another very informative article is “Launching Into Trouble”, by a writer identified only as Pablo, on *Kiwi Politico* (7/5/19, <http://www.kiwipolitico.com/2019/05/launching-into-trouble/>, 7/05/2019): “With regard to legal matters, it is worth asking what legal framework is in place governing the use of NZ assets and soil for foreign military satellite launches. Foreign military deployments in NZ are governed by formal agreements, as are NZ Defence Force (NZDF) deployments on foreign lands in support of bilateral or multilateral missions”.

“Exports of sensitive, dedicated or potential ‘dual use’ (civilian and military) technologies by NZ companies require special export licenses and, in some cases, prohibitions apply to said exports to specific countries. But what is the framework governing foreign military use of NZ-based launchers? As far as I know neither the NZDF or any other Government agency have been part of a foreign military satellite launch in NZ, so there is no legal precedent for specifying the terms and conditions governing that activity, much less launches conducted by a NZ-based private firm on behalf of a foreign military partner”.

“That matters because launches of foreign military non-weaponised payloads, even if they involve signals and technical intelligence gathering technologies, are largely non-controversial and can be covered under the rubric of ‘scientific research’ in any event. But without specific clauses in NZ law prohibiting the launch of foreign military weapons platforms from NZ soil and/or by NZ companies, the field is open for that to happen”.

“With space weapons platforms undergoing the miniaturisation mania that has impacted all aspects of combat from drones to autonomous infantry fighting machines, it is only a matter of when, not if they will be deployed (if they have not been already. India and China have both recently tested satellite-killing probes against low Earth orbit [LEO] targets and Russia and USA have long had larger sized offensive hunter-killer satellites tracking each other’s military communications space platforms, even if these are little more than ‘dumb’ bombs that are guided into the target in order to destroy it). So, the scene is set for the eventual deployment of space weaponry from NZ territory”.

“The question is whether there is a legal basis to permit or prohibit foreign military satellites, especially weaponised satellites, being launched from NZ soil with NZ technologies. I am unsure if that is the case one way or another and have heard of no Parliamentary or Ministerial discussion of the matter. Amid all of the applause for Rocket Lab there has been no pause given to consider the implications of its partnership with a foreign military, albeit a friendly one”.

This article concludes that Rocket Lab’s Mahia Peninsula launch site becomes a “potential target”, meaning that New Zealand itself becomes a target. “Small satellites are difficult to target once deployed, so space warfare planners in countries that have the ability to do so and are antagonistic to Rocket Lab’s foreign military client/sponsors’ will aim to prevent their deployment from the Mahia Peninsula. That means that they have likely added Launch Complex 1 to their potential target ‘packages’ in the event that great power hostilities break out on Earth or in space”.

“As it turns out, the low cost and quick launch capabilities offered by the Electron booster also make it a great choice for rapidly replacing military satellites of all kinds when lost to hostile action, so prudent military planners will ensure that Rocket Lab’s vehicles do not get off the ground should push comes to shove. And given that NZ air space and launch sites are less defended than similar territory in larger countries, the relative ease of launching pre-emptive or follow up strikes on Launch Complex 1 encourages its

targeting by adversaries of Rocket Lab’s foreign military partners”.

“That means, of course, that NZ could be drawn into a land/space war in which it is not a principal but where its soil and facilities are used by one or another party to the hostilities. So, the bottom line is this: does NZ have any control over or even say in who and what Rocket Lab gets to work with? Is there any contingency plan in place for the possibility that association with a foreign military in commercial space ventures could lead to the uninvited and untoward intervention of another foreign military power on NZ soil?”.

Rocket Lab Is An American Company

And it needs to be made clear that Rocket Lab is not a New Zealand company, as it is misleadingly represented by its cheerleaders in the Government (from the Prime Minister down) and media. It certainly started off as one but that was then and this is now (actually it’s been now for quite a long time). Rocket Lab is now merely the NZ subsidiary of an American company. Here is a succinct summary:

“It took some of the gloss off Rocket Lab’s first commercial flight when I saw a CNN report describing the company as ‘a scrappy American startup’. The *New York Times* and *Forbes* have also claimed Rocket Lab as an American company, while the BBC called it a ‘US startup’. Our Kiwi ingenuity success story has been claimed by the Yanks. And the annoying bit is they do have a point. There is constant background noise about Rocket Lab’s ownership”.

“When I suggested on social media that it would be better for New Zealand’s image if Prince Harry and Meghan Markle toured Rocket Lab’s new Auckland plant rather than go gumboot throwing, Auckland man Vaughn Davis shot back, ‘Dude, they’re British royal family so why would they tour a US company?’ When I asked Peter Beck whether his company was Kiwi or American, he didn’t shirk from waving the Stars and Stripes”.

“Look, we’ve been an American company and proud of it for many years”, he said. ‘The New Zealand element is very important and very special to us but we never tried to hide the fact we’re a US company

and this is where New Zealand companies go wrong in the fact that if you want to be a large, successful global company, it's very difficult to be that out of New Zealand'. He added, 'Instead of lamenting the fact we've lost a company from New Zealand, we should be celebrating the fact that a company has got so large that it needs to go global'".

"Rocket Lab is now incorporated in the US, and its rockets are made at its Huntington Beach, California, factory, which is much larger than its recently opened assembly plant in Auckland. And yet, most of Rocket Lab's 200+ staff are in New Zealand, and half of its 180 hires in the year ahead will be in NZ - all high-value jobs. The company did just name its first launch site in the US (NASA's Wallops Launch Facility in the US state of Virginia) and Beck says it's actively scouting for a site in the UK, with one in Asia to possibly follow".

"But he adds that as Rocket Lab chases a \$3b+ pipeline of satellite launches over the next four years and ramps up to weekly flights, Mahia Peninsula will remain its highest frequency launch site. Our relatively liberal regulatory environment helps, Beck says, but it's mainly because our airways and shipping lanes are, by international standards, nearly empty".

"R&D (research and development) is based in New Zealand, and Beck plans to keep it here (which is good, given taxpayers have chipped in via Crown agency Callaghan Innovation, which has provided matching R&D funding worth up to \$25m). And all flights, wherever in the world, will be wrangled from the company's new mission control cen-

tre in Auckland" (*Newstalk ZB*, 13/11/18, Chris Keall, "Is Rocket Lab Even A New Zealand Company?", <https://www.newstalkzb.co.nz/opinion/chris-keall-why-cnns-rocket-lab-report-bugged-the-hell-out-of-me/>).

To add insult to injury, the New Zealand public has had its money put into this American-owned contractor for the US military and spies, via a shareholding stake bought in 2018 by ACC (the Accident Compensation Corporation). Whatever happened to the need for such NZ public funds to only make ethical investments? What is ethical about profiting from the militarisation of space and assisting the US to wage war both in, and from, space?

Worried About Protestors

The powers that be are acutely sensitive to the "risks" posed to Rocket Lab by any protests. Here's a couple of quotes from Ollie Neas' *Spinoff* article cited above ("She'll Be Right' Attitude To Rocket Lab Putting Nuclear Free NZ At Risk, Experts Say": <https://thespinoff.co.nz/business/17-05-2019/shell-be-right-attitude-to-rocket-lab-putting-nuclear-free-nz-at-risk-experts-say/>, 17/05/19):

"In the May 2017 briefing to (National Minister Simon) Bridges, the (Government's) NZ Space Agency suggested the Government should convey to the US that it was pleased the new space industry 'will enable us to broaden and deepen our security collaboration'. Bridges was also advised that one of the risks was the reaction of the New Zealand public".

"Certain groups are opposed to New Zealand's security relationship with the US, and it is possible that

such groups would be motivated to disrupt launches if they were aware that US government security payloads were being launched from New Zealand,' the briefing says" (emphasis added). And: (Labour Minister David) 'Parker says he's comfortable with the degree of disclosure around US government launches, and that the Space Agency is developing a process for the proactive release of payload information. The Space Agency's own advice indicates this is a fragile peace".

"Even a single protestor could have a disproportionate effect on space launch activities from New Zealand', one briefing says. This risk can be managed, but only to an extent" (emphasis added). Enough said. Let's start the conversation about what to do about it. As is the case with the Waihopai spy base, Rocket Lab's Mahia Peninsula launch site is in a remote location.

(As an aside, it is worth noting that the original plan was to locate it on Birdlings Flat, near Christchurch. That would have been far more convenient for the elderly protestors of the Christchurch-based Anti-Bases Campaign. But despite parochial Canterbury boosterism for it, the company set up on the east coast of the North Island, not the east coast of the South). However, this is a company that also has a mission control centre and assembly plant in our biggest city, Auckland (Levene Place, Mount Wellington, to be precise). So, come on people, let's get stuck in to close down this privately-owned, American-owned contractor of the US military and spies on New Zealand soil. ■

LOCKHEED MARTIN Not Wanted In NZ

By Warren Thomson

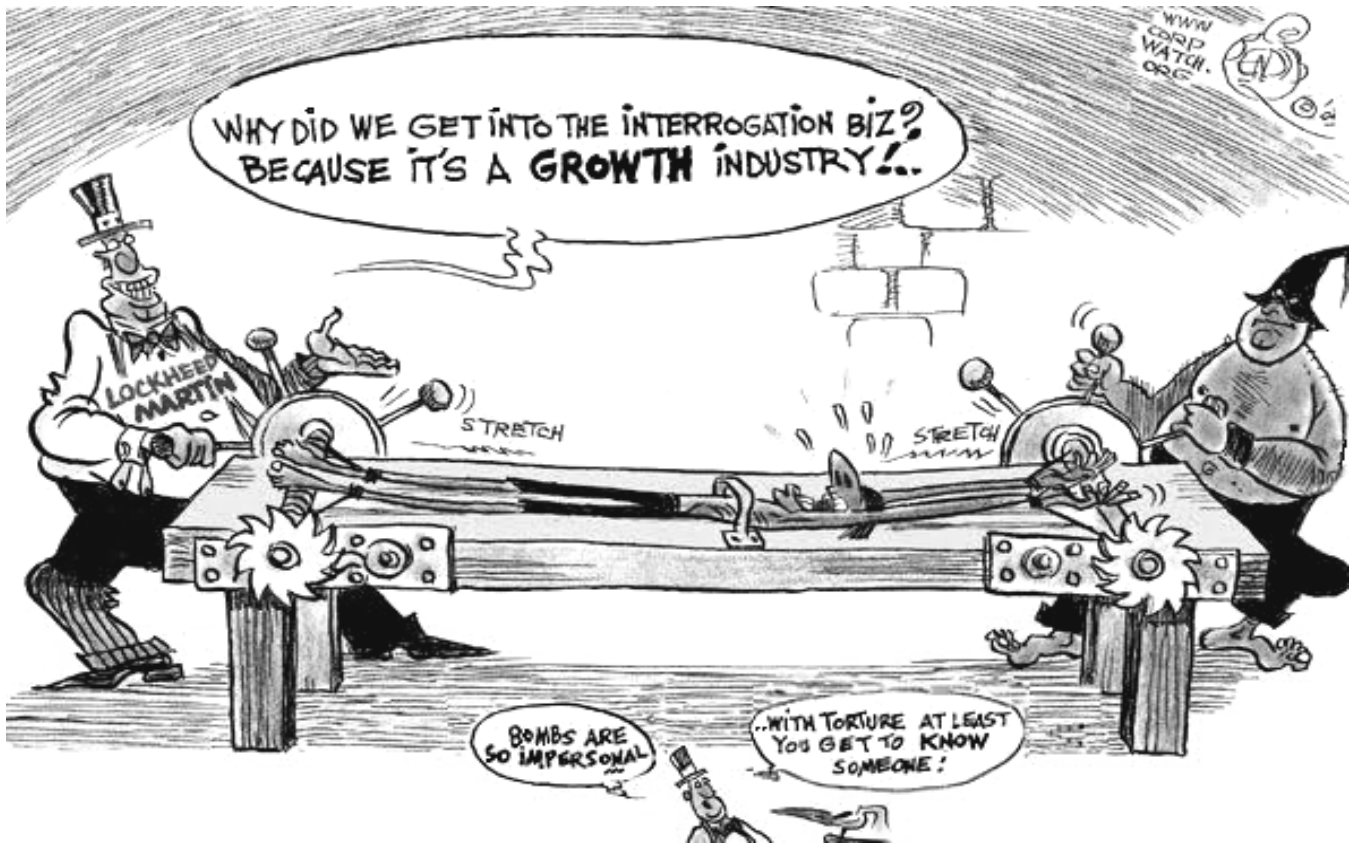
Lockheed Martin (LM) is one of the largest companies in the aerospace, defence, security, and

technologies industry. The corporation's offensive [!] and defensive arsenal includes air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles, drones, naval rockets and missiles, fire control and sensor systems, fire support systems, missile launchers, missile defence systems, and anti-tank weapons. Lockheed Martin developed the F-22 Raptor fighter jet and is currently producing the F-35 fighters for obscene amounts of money.

NZ's old C-130 Hercules aircraft are LM products (still maintained by LM in NZ today), as are the old P3 Orions (which are in the process of be-

ing replaced by the new P8-A Poseidons, which are manufactured by fellow US transnational corporation, Boeing). LM is a leading producer of advanced military communications satellites and is testing laser beam weapons on US Navy ships. In August 2019, the US Army awarded LM a contract for a multi-year hypersonic weapons development in support of the Army's focus in long-range "precision" strike missiles (info from LM Website).

Lockheed Martin got \$US35.2 billion from US taxpayers in 2017, more than many Federal agencies, ac-



cording to the *Washington Post* (16/2/18). Of Lockheed Martin's \$US51 billion in sales that year, nearly 70%, (that \$35.2 billion), came from sales to the US government. *The Post* commented that Lockheed's Government sales were nearly what the Trump Administration proposed for the entire State Department budget in 2018. The corporation's Website reports revenue of \$US53.76 billion in 2018, and a workforce of 105,000.

In August 2016, Leidos information technology (IT) company merged with Lockheed Martin's Information Systems & Global Solutions (IS&GS), making the new entity the global defence industry's largest enterprise in provision of government technology. As of February 2019, the new company has 32,000 employees.

Key Part Of US Spy Machine

While it is not clear how much control LM has over Leidos, the significance lies in the fact that Leidos and its four competitors employ approximately 45,000 contractors with security clearances who are key employees at the US National Security Agency (NSA), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and other agencies. The 8,000 operatives employed by the merged company do everything from analysing signals for the NSA to tracking down sus-

pected enemy fighters for US Special Forces in the Middle East and Africa.

Edward Snowden estimated that, in 2013, the number of intelligence personnel was about 107,000. In Congressional testimony in 2013, when \$US18.6 billion was allocated for the Department of Defense's Military Intelligence Program (MIP), the Pentagon said it employed a total intelligence workforce of 183,000, including civilian and contractor employees, plus uniformed military. Lockheed Martin's Leidos merger made it a significant contributor to Washington's global spy system. As Edward Snowden demonstrated, many thousands of these civilian workers and military personnel have access to classified personal and business data.

Why Is This Significant For PR Readers?

- Lockheed Martin is heavily involved in surveillance and information processing for the CIA, the FBI, the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Pentagon. According to one of LM's senior managers: "Cyber security has never been as crucial to global security as it is today NSA is leading the charge of developing the next generation of cyber experts ..., and we're very proud to support them in that mission" (LM Website, 22/4/10).

- And several thousand of the LM civilian workers have security clearances involving spy-related work. We need to know more about any connection our Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) has with this Five Eyes operator, as well as being wary of its key role in global spying.

- LM is one of the biggest shareholders in Rocket Lab (RL, see lead article in this issue). According to former Vector Chairman, Michael Stiassny, Rocket Lab escapes media scrutiny although "... (it) is actually significantly owned by Lockheed Martin, which ... produce(s) weapons that kill people" (*NZ Herald, Opinion*, 13/11/18). It also launches satellites which have significant military and/or surveillance capability, including some Planet Lab surveillance satellites and some from Spire Global which specialises in tracking ships and aircraft.

- Many of the LM rocket launches involve military and/or intelligence operational equipment. Even in the unlikely case that RL is not directly supporting surveillance and tracking activities, it is under the control of one of the biggest military/intelligence operatives in the world.

- LM were leading supporters of the NZ Defence Industry Association's annual forum. Thanks to some

dedicated peace activists, after years of confrontational protest and successful local government lobbying, the NZDIA decided not to hold their weapons/equipment bazaar in 2019. We should be grateful, especially to Auckland Peace Action and Organise Aotearoa, for getting rid of this tumour (see article elsewhere in this issue).

- But this country still has too many, often secretive, links with LM's military and surveillance activities. With LM being a leading player in cyber security systems and surveillance technology, questions need to be asked not only about the activities of Rocket Lab, but also about GCSB connections with LM.

In terms of conventional military activity in NZ, LM talks about their fo-

cus on "... delivering sustainment capability to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and NZ Police". Their Website describes provision of new equipment for a range of Government services (not enumerated) and providing services through teams based at Trentham, Waiouru, Linton and Burnham.

Here they list fleet maintenance and automotive repair to both military and commercial equipment, weapons repair of small arms, support weapons and light guns, and electronics and instrument repair, amongst other items. They "... provide a wide range of managed simulation services affording customers an end to end solution in both live firing and simulation experiences" (retrieved 11/9/19; LM NZ Website).

Corruption & Dishonesty

Significantly, LM has a long history of corruption and dishonesty. In 2006 one subsidiary manager was sent to prison and the corporation has paid out on a number of lawsuits related to fraud and deception. *Wikipedia* says there has been 59 instances of misconduct since 1995. Some of their weapons contracts are extremely objectionable; for example, supply of weapons and technology to Saudi Arabia. Lockheed Martin has recently won a \$US1.47 billion mega-contract to build the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defence system for Saudi Arabia (*Defense-world.net* Website, 20/7/19).

In August 2019, LM announced the launch from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station of their AEHF-5 satel-



2019 WEAPONS EXPO ABANDONED

"Aggressive Protesters" Claim Victory

By Murray Horton

For several consecutive years *Peace Researcher* (PR) has been reporting on the ever-growing and spectacularly successful protests at the New Zealand Defence Industry Association's (NZDIA) annual forum, better known as the weapons expo. Sponsored by the likes of Lockheed Martin, the world's biggest arms manufacturer, it was a showcase for international and domestic arms merchants to hawk their wares.



Palmerston North Weapons Expo march, 2018

lite which completes a geostationary ring of five satellites delivering global coverage for “survivable, highly secure and protected communications for strategic command and tactical warfighters”. And in terms of “warfighters”, there has never been anything like the Lockheed Martin F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. Over its projected 60-year life span, it’s expected to cost more than \$US1 trillion, making it the most expensive weapons programme in US history.

Australia is expected to take 72 of these extraordinarily expensive killing machines. The F-35 programme has been riddled with problems and Pentagon officials responsible for it admitted in 2017 (*News.com.au*, 23/9/17) they were seriously considering dumping aircraft already delivered because of the difficulties and

costs of getting them to the required standard. Since December 2015 Lockheed has had a \$A867 million seven-year contract to train Australia’s military pilots.

Besides the corporation’s history of fraud, their employer ethics are questionable. William Beem, who worked at Lockheed Martin, claimed: “I’ve worked for Lockheed Martin, and Martin Marietta before it. No matter the name of the company, I always ended up working for some of the worst managers I’ve ever experienced in my life”.

“I think it is a horrible company that does not uphold the core values it forces upon its employees. When the crap hits the fan, and it does so daily, I witnessed some of the worst and most unethical behaviour that

could exist in a US company” (*Quora* - a question and answer Website. Answered 24/10/16). *PR* notes that we do realise all companies have disaffected staff who want to bag their employers!

LM is one of the worst of the enormous military/intelligence/industrial corporations that impose, or try to impose, Washington’s will on the planet. There is much to learn about NZ’s connections with this titan, about how our spooks relate to it, and about how Rocket Lab is integrated into its operations. Nothing here for *PR* readers to be happy about. ■

It was attended by the Ministry of Defence, NZ Defence Force and other NZ government agencies involved with national security. These annual protests included not only the usual marches, rallies and meetings (very well attended in all cases) but also non-violent mass blockades by hundreds of people which stopped delegates getting in and disrupted the smooth running of the violent death business. Mass arrests have been common.

Most recently, in 2018, the expo was held – for the first time – in Palmerston North. Despite the Mayor talking up Palmy as a “defence hub” (hosting both an Army and Air Force base) there was a weeklong mass protest against it, including both blockades and arrests. You can read Liz Remmerswaal’s report in *PR* 57, June 2019, <http://www.w.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/PR57.pdf>. For most of its life, the expo was held in Wellington – apart from 2016, when it was in Auckland. You can read Emma Cullen’s report of the 2017 Wellington protests, blockades and mass arrests, in *PR* 54, November 2017, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr54.pdf>.

Mosques’ Massacre A Game-changer

Civic leaders had expressed unease over the use of Council-owned venues for the expo over recent years (not to mention the bad publicity and

disruption from the accompanying protests). After the March 2019 Christchurch mosques’ massacre, the Mayor of Palmerston North (the same Mayor who talked up the expo as being a good fit for the so-called “defence hub”) said that the Council would likely distance itself from events related to guns and armaments. It duly cancelled the scheduled April 2019 New Zealand Tattoo, having decided that the military displays of firearms, aircraft and explosives was no longer appropriate.

So, the writing was on the wall for the weapons expo, which was scheduled for October 2019. In September the NZDIA announced that it wouldn’t hold an expo in 2019. Naturally, it tried to put a positive spin on the demise of its showpiece, saying that other arms industry events in Australia offset the need for one in New Zealand (funnily enough, it had never raised that argument in previous years).

But the NZDIA knew who to blame, namely those whom it called “aggressive protesters”. This, and the post-Christchurch public revulsion at displays of weapons of death and destruction, put paid to this showpiece of the arms industry. Let’s hope that its disappearance is permanent and that it never makes a second appearance in Palmerston North, nor anywhere else for that matter. Well done, team! ■

IPAN CONFERENCE 2019

By Liz Remmerswaal

Liz Remmerswaal is National Director of World Beyond War Aotearoa NZ.

The fifth conference of the Independent and Peaceful Australia (IPAN) Network was held in Darwin in August 2019. I attended, feeling it was important to contribute and represent New Zealand, with the support of World Beyond War and Anti Bases Campaign (ABC). It was my third IPAN conference and this time I was the only New Zealander (*ABC’s Murray Horton had also attended the previous conference, in 2017 in Melbourne. Ed.*). I was asked to update the conference about what is happening in the peace movement in Aotearoa New Zealand, and I also talked about the importance of addressing the consequences of colonisation and of working together effectively and sustainably.

My brief mihi and pepeha in Te Reo Maori resonated with the local elders, and I finished my talk with a rendition of “Blowing In The Wind” co-led by a colleague with audience

participation, as we often do at home. The conference was entitled "Australia At The Cross Roads". IPAN is a relatively young but active organisation made up of over 50 groups from churches, unions and peace groups, set up to lobby against subservient support by Australia to United States war initiatives. It was held this time in Darwin to give strength to the locals who question the current policy of hosting the large US military base which is so visible in this area.

"Give 'Em The Boot"

Around 100 participants came from all around Australia, as well as guests from Guam, and West Papua. The highlight of the conference was the 60 strong protest outside the Robertson Barracks asking the 2,500 US Marines housed there to leave. Entitled "Give 'Em The Boot" the idea was to present them with a mounted boot sculpture created by Nick Deane as well as some Tim Tams- a favourite apparently - but unfortunately no-one was available to receive the presents.

The line-up of speakers was impressive and built on the themes of recent years. The "Welcome To Country" was given by Ali Mills, representing the Larrakia people, who has been involved in the cultural life of Darwin for many years, and whose mother Kathie Mills, who took part, is a recognised poet, playwright and songwriter. It's difficult to summarise the entire content of such a weighty and interesting gathering, but for those who have time it is possible to watch the recordings: <https://www.facebook.com/IndependentAndPeacefulAustraliaNetwork/videos/>

The conference celebrated the success of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) in establishing a United Nations Treaty signed by 122 countries, but not by Australia, which puts it out of step with most of its neighbours. Dr Sue Wareham launched their latest report entitled "Choose Humanity" and also brought along ICAN's 2017 Nobel Peace Prize medal for all to see.

Guam, Greens, MAPW, Unions

Lisa Natividad, indigenous Guam Chamorro representative, who had spoken at a previous IPAN conference, didn't have much good news to report since the last time unfortunately. Guam is currently an unin-

corporated territory of the US though its people have no voting rights there. One third of its land area is controlled by the US Department of Defense.

That has brought a number of environmental and environmental problems including radiation exposure and contamination from PFAS fire-fighting foam*, as well as excluding people from their sacred sites for traditional practices. The saddest statistic was that due to the lack of jobs for young people on the island many of them join the military with tragic results. The number of young people who die as a result of military engagement is very high, five times greater than the proportion in the US. * PFAS = *per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances*. Ed.

Jordan Steele-John, the young Green Party Senator, is an impressive speaker who is carving out a niche as the spokesman on Peace, Disarmament and Veteran Affairs, the renamed Defence portfolio. Jordan reflected on the tendency to glorify war rather than promote peace and his desire to champion conflict resolution. He spoke of the huge challenge of climate change action in the region as well as criticising the Government's dramatic reduction in spending in diplomacy which undermines relationships with other countries.

Dr Margie Beavis from the Medical Association for the Prevention of War (MAPW) gave a thorough overview of how Australians are being denied full use of public funds and how the social costs, for example, of post-traumatic stress disorder

(PTSD) often cause domestic violence and impact on women. Warren Smith from the Maritime Union of Australia spoke about union concerns about the projected \$A200 billion to be spent on material purchased for aggressive engagement by the Australian Defence Force and the increasing number of jobs lost through automation. Peace and justice is a strong focus in the union movement in Australia.

West Papua, Independence, Environment, Indigenous

Susan Harris Rimmer, Associate Professor from Griffith University in Brisbane, spoke of the importance of engaging with the political discourse on the topic of how to keep Australia safe, how an independent Australia taking a new direction in its foreign policies could benefit the people of the Pacific and build a sustainable secure and peaceful future. Other impressive speakers were Henk Rumbewas who spoke of the rising tensions in West Papua and the failure of Australian foreign policy to address the rights of West Papuans, and Dr Vince Scappatura, from Macquarie University, on the Australia-US alliance in the context of rising tensions with China.

On the environmental impacts we heard Robin Taubenfeld, from Friends of the Earth, on the extent to which preparing for and enacting war impacts on humankind's ability to address climate change and environmental damage; Donna Jackson from the Rapid Creek community group on behalf of the Larrakia people on the contamination of Rapid Creek and other waterways in the Northern Territories; and Shar



Molloy from the Darwin Environment Centre on the impact of a buildup of military forces land air and sea on the local environment.

New Network

John Pilger came in on video sharing concerns on how China was perceived as a threat in the area rather than being under threat, as well as how whistleblowers such as Julian Assange are unsupported, while Dr Alison Bronowski also gave an overview on diplomatic trends. Several very positive moves came out of the conference including the plan to establish a network of organisations, in particular those in Australia, New Zealand, Pacifica and Southeast Asian nations, aimed at sharing knowledge and standing together as advocates for agreed aims for peace, social justice and independence, opposing war and nuclear weapons.

The conference also agreed to support for a Joint Code of Conduct for the South China Sea, uphold the UN Charter and the Treaty for Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, support the people of West Papua and Guam in their struggles for independence. I also agreed to endorse the ICAN campaign to ban nuclear weapons, and to acknowledge the aspiration of Indigenous people for sovereignty and self-determination. The next IPAN conference will be in 2021 (they are biennial affairs) and I would recommend it and the organisation to anyone interested in making a difference in our region, and I look forward to how our joint network will contribute to discussion and action during these difficult and challenging times. ■

◀ IPAN members give US Marines the boot at their Darwin base. Photo by Liz Remmerswaal

▶ George Bush's Vice-President, Dick Cheney, the champion of waterboarding torture

NZ SPIES USE INFORMATION COLLECTED FROM CIA-TORTURED DETAINEES

By Warren Thomson

An inquiry four years in the making has concluded that NZ spies, particularly the Security Intelligence Service (SIS), has been using information that was collected from prisoners that were tortured. The Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IG) investigated whether the SIS and/or the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) were in any way involved with the US Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) infamous rendition and torture programmes.

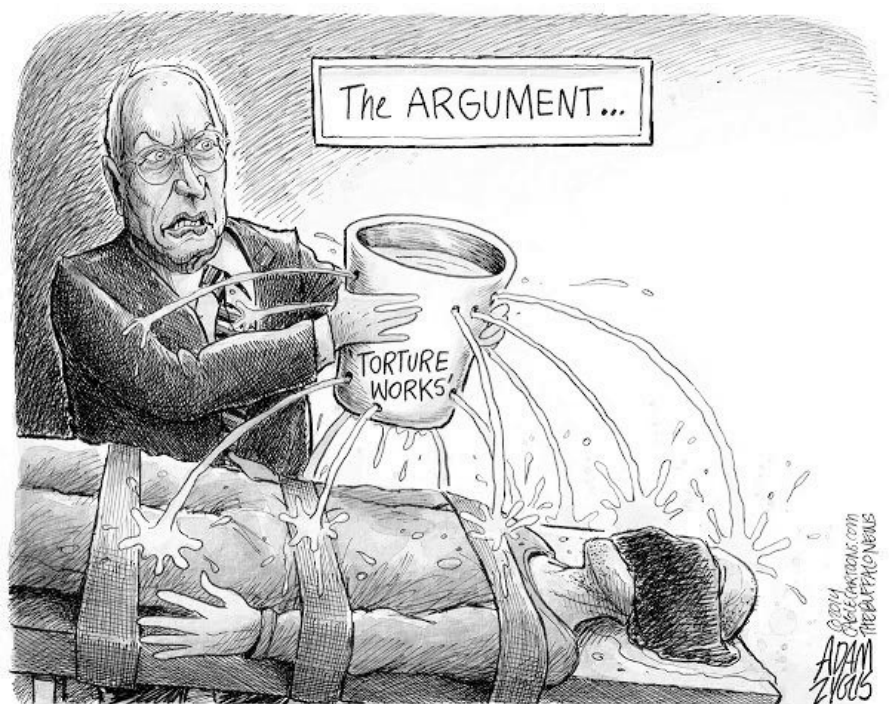
Both the SIS and the GCSB received many reports that were obtained from prisoners (read "suspected terrorists") who had been tortured. The IG's conclusion, publicly released in 2019, was that the NZ spooks were not directly complicit in torture or ill-treatment of the victims. However, despite the best efforts of the NZ spy watchdog, it has to be questioned how successful such investigation can be, given the constantly revealed

practices of the spies in covering their tracks. Also, the inquiry was narrowly focused on activities related to Afghanistan, and the years 2002-09.

Key Points

Some of the more significant points made in the IG's report state: (my emphasis)

- "I have to conclude that they were vulnerable to being involved in **complex foreign state activities which raised legal risks**" (paragraph 86).
- "that there was an unspoken general rule **that one did not ask direct questions about the operations of Five Eyes counterparts**".
- "The former Directors did not agree that they had an obligation, whether statutory or otherwise, to ask questions of their counterparts when credible allegations about acts of torture by partner agencies came to light" (paragraph 128).
- "In November and December 2002, there was ... correspondence between the CIA and the NZSIS about Abu Zubaydah". (paragraph 162); "the victim was waterboarded 83 times as part of his interrogations. The then NZ Director of Security wrote to five other New Zealand government agencies, providing **intelligence obtained from his interrogations**".
- "Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was captured in March 2003. ... It is now public knowledge that commencing



shortly after his capture, he was waterboarded 183 times as part of the CIA interrogation. We located a considerable number of intelligence reports from his interrogations on file, sometimes with several reports from the same date” (paragraph 165).

- “In June and July 2003, there was some correspondence between the CIA and the NZSIS about this detainee. **The Service provided questions for the CIA to put to the detainee and received an intelligence report in response**” (paragraph 168).

Whitewashing “Professionalism”

So, the NZ spooks, especially the SIS, knew their associates were torturing prisoners, kept quiet about these human rights abuses, used information from the interrogations, and supplied questions to be used while the detainees were being tortured. The Ardern government has accepted the report and buried it. While the report referred to the “professionalism” of the SIS and GCSB (which allowed Directors Hampton and Kitteridge scope to whitewash their houses) there has to be questions raised about whether we want a “professionalism” which involves the rendition and torture of victims of the War on Terror.

In addition, the IG inquiry found that our spooks did not have adequate training and/or were not given the support they needed – particularly

the GCSB lot. The Minister for Covering Up Spook Failures and Deficiencies, Andrew Little, claims the problems are historical and later legislation has changed how the spies operate. Hard to see what recent changes would have made any difference as to how we run with the Five Eyes pack, human rights violations or no.

And we will probably never know what the SIS and the GCSB managed to keep hidden from the public; unless some whistle-blower comes to light in the future. We should remember that Edward Snowden documents in 2013 revealed that the GCSB won an award from the US National Security Agency (NSA) in 2009 for tracking Bangladeshi “terrorists” that were handed over to their local Gestapo for torture; which demonstrates not only the nasty nature of some of the work our spies do, but also that the narrow limitations of the IG’s inquiry may have meant that other and more appalling connections to our allies’ activities were not uncovered.

British Inquiry

The real conclusion to be taken from the findings is the affirmation that, through Five Eyes, our spies are entangled with a nasty bunch of thugs (and hackers) who are quite prepared to trample over any human rights to advance their own particular goals, and particularly the political and financial domination of Washington and to some extent London. Both

the CIA and the British MI6 have been outed as employing torture. A British Parliamentary investigation (even though it was prevented from interviewing key spy personnel) found that UK intelligence agencies were involved in dozens of episodes of torture and rendition, mainly in partnership with the US.

The UK planned, agreed to or financed 31 rendition operations, British intelligence officers consented to or witnessed the use of torture on 15 occasions, and on 232 occasions agencies supplied questions to be put to detainees whom they knew or suspected were being mistreated (*Guardian*, 14/10/19). Currently there is a push in Scotland to investigate 13 CIA rendition flights through Scottish airports; on at least one occasion authorities were actively prevented from inspecting a CIA plane to determine whether it illegally held detainees.

When the current Director of the CIA, Gina Haspel, worked as a CIA field officer in 2002 she oversaw the torture of a terrorism suspect and later took part in an order to destroy videotapes documenting the brutal interrogations at a secret prison in Udorn Thani, in the north of Thailand. The overseas detention site in Thailand was at one point run by Haspel. Trump and other central members of the current US Administration support waterboarding. Is this really a club that we want to belong to? ■

SPOOKY BITS

By Warren Thomson

SIS Search Unlawful

The Security Intelligence Service (SIS) has been found guilty of unlawful activity after it went after investigative journalist Nicky Hager’s phone records to try and find his sources for his book “Other People’s Wars” (reviewed by Jeremy Agar in *Peace Researcher* [PR] 42, November 2011, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr42.pdf>. Ed.).

“The SIS used ‘intrusive investigatory powers’ without caution and without the required threat to national security, Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IG) Madeleine Laracy has ruled” (*Press*, 11/10/19). The spooks suspected an Army officer of giving inside information to Nicky and collected the officer’s communications metadata to try and match it with that of the journalist. SIS Director Rebecca Kitteridge has been forced to acknowledge another failing of her agency and needs to understand that the failure to see the difference between attempts to harm NZ’s security or defence and democratic activism or investigation is a clear affirmation of the need to abolish the SIS.

The ruling has particular significance for several reasons. The first is that the IG has been willing to

make a clear ruling against SIS illegality. The second is that a firm statement has also been made in terms of protection of a journalist’s sources – an absolutely vital element of a working democracy. There has not been nearly enough comment about this in the NZ media. Another point is that activities of the NZ spooks continue to proceed outside the law. Who watches the watchers is more pertinent than ever.

(As this issue of *PR* is being edited, the Government is introducing a Terrorism Suppression (Control Orders) Bill to “strengthen counter-terrorism laws and support the deradicalisation of New Zealanders returning from overseas” (*Press*, 17/10/19). Justice Minister Andrew Little has a long record of backing the spooks and we should be mak-



Nicky Hager at launch of his book "Dirty Politics", 2014

ing sure that no failures to discriminate between legitimate activism and "terrorism" are entrenched in this new Bill).

Search Of Home Illegal

As well as being a victim of unlawful SIS operations, Nicky Hager was also the target of an illegal Police raid. On October 2, 2014, police searched Nicky's house for ten hours. They were seeking evidence about a hacker who provided information for Nicky's book "Dirty Politics" (reviewed by Jeremy Agar in PR 48, November 2014, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-bac-kissues/pr48.pdf>. Ed.). The High Court ruled in December 2015 that the search warrant and the subsequent search were unlawful because Police failed to mention that Hager was a journalist when applying for the warrant.

After the High Court decision, former Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei asked the Independent Police Conduct Authority (IPCA) to investigate whether any Police officers were guilty of misconduct; Police policy on media-related search warrants; and decision-making process which led to the search warrant. The IPCA has now come up with a finding that Police did not deliberately deceive a judge when they failed to mention that Hager was a journalist

while applying for the search warrant, and that the unlawful search of his Wellington home in 2014 was the "result of unwitting neglect of duty" and "did not amount to misconduct by any individual officer".

The IPCA did conclude that the application for the search warrant also failed to sufficiently address whether the officers had reasonable grounds to believe they would find relevant evidence at Hager's home. Its application was too broad when it came to digital evidence and would have captured "a great deal of correspondence" which had nothing to do with "Dirty Politics".

"The Authority ... considers that Police did not even come close to demonstrating that the officer making the application had reasonable grounds to believe that the Police would find evidential material," Judge Doherty said in his report. The IPCA also found that the Police failed to fulfil their duty of candour when they seized private information about Hager from Air New Zealand, Paypal, NZ Customs and Jetstar.

(PR would again like to emphasise the point that while these Police failings are very serious, at least there is a transparent process of oversight. When the process concerns the spook agencies there is much less likelihood that transgression re-

lated to warrants, or lack thereof, will be revealed and dealt with). Nicky's lawyer, Felix Geiringer, said the report shows that Police now admit many unlawful acts. However, that was not always the case.

"For a long time, they denied them, including to the High Court under oath", and: "They also withheld documents that provided evidence of those breaches and made untrue statements about what was in those documents and why they were being withheld" (*Daily Blog*, 20/8/19). And Nicky himself was disappointed that there were no recommendations of any consequences for the many breaches of law by Police. This is another in a long line of cases where the Police have been found by the courts to have acted unlawfully in actions against protestors or activists. It has to stop.

New Inspector-General Of Intelligence And Security

In the middle of 2019 Cheryl Gwyn finished as IG - the person responsible for the impractical role of oversight of the GCSB and the SIS. Given that it is impossible to prevent the spooks concealing files, caching data with Five Eyes partners, and/or outrightly lying about their activities - all of which are hallmarks of spy agencies - Gwyn should be given some credit for her efforts to investi-

gate the spooks.

Especially since her predecessors were incompetent or unwilling, or both. She made a real effort to address issues such as the links to torture (see related article elsewhere in this issue) and the problems of warrants. She implemented new measures such as an IG support group of citizens, and her annual reports contained significant critiques of both GCSB and SIS.

Since 1 August 2019, the Acting Inspector-General has been Madeleine Laracy, the former Deputy IG, who was responsible for issuing the ruling against the SIS described above. She was appointed deputy for a three-year term in September 2017. Immediately before this role, Laracy, who has an LLB (Hons) from the University of Auckland, was Director of the Public Defence Service, which is the part of the Ministry of Justice responsible for providing legal aid criminal defence services.

Anti-Bases Campaign Misses Out

The GCSB is offering Malware-Free Networks (MFN), a cyber threat detection and disruption service, to a broad range of New Zealand's nationally significant organisations. Apparently, Anti-Bases Campaign is not a "nationally significant organisation" as we have not been offered any cyber protection. The new infrastructure will support a number of other Government agencies in the sector, most notably the spy agencies, the military, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Police.

This project will "help to improve security arrangements across Government, facilitate better collaboration between the NZIC (NZ Intelligence Community) and their domestic and international partners, and improve the reliability and resilience of the tools used by the intelligence and security sector" (GCSB Website).

Given that distributing malware is a key component of the GCSB's Five Eyes partners' strategies, it would be interesting to know whether the GCSB software could actually be a Trojan Horse. While the Website declares that: "These capabilities cannot be used for purposes other than cyber security" and: "They operate with the explicit agreement of the or-

ganisations we protect", we should accept these statements on the same basis as the oft-repeated denials about spying on Kiwis previously.

And we should recognise that the GCSB initiative is another step in further entrenching the agency as the white knights saving NZ from cyber bandits. Playing the goodies is a great way to smokescreen the nefarious surveillance activities of the spooks. This "Cryptographic Products Management Infrastructure (CPMI) project to upgrade the New Zealand Government's cryptographic infrastructure" will be completed in 2019.

Aussie Police Raid Journalists On Behalf Of Spooks

While NZ authorities have made some attempt to monitor Police and/or spy raids on journalists, a particularly egregious affair in Australia has aroused protest from a number of Aussie media reps. The home of the Political Editor of Sydney's *Sunday Telegraph* (hardly a bastion of progressive politics) was raided in June 2019 as Police hunted the source of confidential correspondence revealing information about the spying capabilities of the Australian Signals Directorate (the GCSB's Five Eyes partner).

Some of the information had been used in ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) broadcasts in 2017. Some of the documents leaked to ABC revealed misconduct of Australian special forces in Afghanistan, including accusations of unlawful killings. But some of the outcry about the Police raids centred on the fact that the coppers had rifled through the female correspondent's underwear drawer on the basis that that was a likely place for her to hide a thumb drive.

Bernard Lagan (*Listener*, 29/6/19) commented that Australia has enacted about 75 national security and anti-terrorist laws since the 9/11 attacks in the USA and that the people in charge of domestic security have "arch-conservative" views, and that Australia's huge security intelligence complex is largely run by ex-military officers. The stories at the top of this *Spooky Bits* column show that NZ is also not free of these anti-democratic forces. And recent Governments have also passed a string

of laws expanding spook powers. Who will watch the watchers?

GCSB Pals Press For Even More Spying

In October 2019, Five Eyes allies sent a letter to Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg pressuring him to create a backdoor into its encrypted messaging apps that would allow governments to access the content of private communications. Since Apple fought a successful legal battle to refuse spies access to its applications, the agencies have been labouring to gain back door access to social media platforms.

According to the *Guardian* (4/10/19) the letter called on Facebook not to "proceed with its plan to implement end-to-end encryption across its messaging services without ensuring that there is no reduction to user safety and without including a *means for lawful access to the content of communications* (PR emphasis) to protect our citizens".

In March 2019, Zuckerberg announced plans to integrate its messaging apps, Facebook Messenger and Instagram, with WhatsApp and set up end-to-end encryption across the entire Facebook empire. But law enforcement agencies (especially the spies) claim encrypted communications protect criminals and terrorists. The UK Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) has suggested that Silicon Valley companies could develop technology that would silently add a Police officer or intelligence agent to conversations or group chats.

But it is not only groups like Anti-Bases Campaign who oppose "backdoors". Many security experts argue that it is impossible to provide limited access to encrypted communication without weakening privacy overall. "When a door opens for the United States, Australia, or Britain, it also opens for North Korea, Iran, and hackers that want to steal our information," said Neema Singh Guliani, the senior legislative counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union. "Companies should resist these repeated attempts to weaken encryption that reliably protects consumers' sensitive data from identity thieves, credit card fraud, and human rights abusers".

The whistle blower Edward Snow-

den criticised the governments' request on Twitter, saying: "If Facebook agrees, it may be the largest overnight violation of privacy in history" (*Guardian*, 4/10/19). In 2018 German researchers said there were already security flaws in WhatsApp that could allow intruders to insinuate themselves into group chats. The research showed a flaw in the app's group-chat feature undermines its end-to-end encryption promises. WhatsApp's servers could "effortlessly" insert new people into an otherwise private group even without permission from administrator (*Wired*, 1/10/18).

Five Eyes officials have also announced a data access agreement to allow law enforcement agencies to demand certain data directly from the other country's tech firms without going through their own governments first. Requests for data from foreign technology companies were previously submitted to governments and could take months to finalise.

UK Govt Eliminates Torture Inquiry

The UK government is being taken to court over its refusal to hold a fully independent, judge-led inquiry into UK involvement in rendition and torture. The legal action is being brought by human rights NGO Reprieve, Tory David Davis MP and Dan Jarvis MP for the Labour Party (*Reprieve Website*, 10/10/19). Jarvis, the Labour MP, served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He says in his experience soldiers behaved within the law, (which *PR* is dubious about) but there was evidence other agencies may have behaved differently.

Former Tory PM David Cameron promised that there would be a judge-led inquiry into repeated allegations that the security services were complicit in torture and rendition. Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) held a restricted inquiry. The ISC accepted its findings could only be treated as provisional, as Downing Street had blocked it from interviewing multiple witnesses, and the option of a judge-led inquiry was held open. But just before Tory PM Theresa May departed from office in 2019, the decision was taken to have no wider judicial inquiry.

The ISC investigation found in 2018

that British intelligence agencies were involved in dozens of episodes of torture and rendition, mainly in partnership with the US. The UK planned, agreed to or financed 31 rendition operations, British intelligence officers consented to or witnessed the use of torture on 15 occasions, and on 232 occasions agencies supplied questions to be put to detainees whom they knew or suspected were being mistreated (*Guardian*, 14/10/19).

The recent investigation by NZ's former Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (see article elsewhere in this issue) decided there was no clear evidence of NZ spooks being directly involved. Whether or not we accept this verdict, the Government still needs to face up to the fact that much of the operations of our Five Eyes allies involve vicious criminal and morally repugnant activities.

MI5 Wiped Hard Drives To Conceal Information

In another clear example of the difficulties of monitoring spook activities it has been revealed that, in a 2002 inquiry, the UK security service MI5 wiped secret information from computer hard drives being held by an inquiry examining the murder of solicitor Pat Finucane. Details of a visit by MI5 to Judge Cory's London offices in 2002 - corroborated by the inquiry's senior counsel - are contained in a BBC *Spotlight* programme (BBC, 8/10/19).

Spotlight was told that MI5 was concerned the inquiry's computer system was insecure and a leak could expose the identities of informers. MI5 told the judge's staff they were removing all the inquiry's hard drives in the interests of national security. They were erased before being returned. Finucane was a prominent solicitor shot 14 times by Northern Ireland loyalists at his family home in north Belfast in 1989. The case suggests that British spooks were supporting death squads during Northern Ireland's "Troubles".

Retired Canadian judge Peter Cory, head of the inquiry, recommended a public inquiry into the killing, but one has yet to be held. Mr Finucane's family believes State collusion in his murder went to the top of Government. In 2019 the UK Supreme Court ruled that a 2011 investigation

into Finucane's murder was ineffective and failed to meet the standards required under human rights law (*Guardian*, 8/10/19).

More Court Challenges To Five Eyes Illegalities

In the first half of 2019, the civil liberties group Liberty was engaged in court battles in the UK against Five Eyes spying. In its latest challenge to the 2016 Investigatory Powers Act (IPA), Liberty charged that Government surveillance practices breach human rights law and bulk hacking by the intelligence services to access electronic devices represents illegal intrusion (*Guardian*, 17/6/19). At the end of July 2019, it was reported that Liberty had lost their anti-snooping case but would appeal against the ruling.

The basis of the case was that the Investigatory Powers Act represents a wide expansion of bulk secret surveillance powers and undermines articles 8 and 10 of the European Convention On Human Rights, which guarantee privacy and freedom of expression (*note that the European Court of Justice has ruled the British spying illegal. Ed.*). Liberty's barrister warned of the "inherent dangers" of bulk hacking powers, by which the intelligence services could take "remote control of a device, for example, to turn mobile phones with cameras into recording devices ... or to log keystrokes to capture passwords," thereby potentially overriding any encryption.

Other powers in the Act, he said, "permit the interception or obtaining, processing, retention and examination of the private information of very large numbers of people - in some cases, the whole population. They also permit serious invasions of journalistic and watchdog organisations' materials and lawyer-client communication." [ibid].

The statements reflect exactly the kind of surveillance used by the NZ Police against investigative reporter Nicky Hager; but note the significant factor that when the spooks use these powers their secret operations are usually never disclosed. The British National Union of Journalists has supported the Liberty case, arguing that there are insufficient safeguards in the Act to protect confidential journalistic sources.

Most importantly, Liberty challenged Five Eyes efforts to gain back doors into communications (see above). “Vulnerabilities that have been built into software to allow law enforcement access cause real and significant risks that third parties could exploit them” (ibid). One example given is the “WannaCry online attack”, where hackers infected hundreds of thousands of computers worldwide with ransomware in 2017.

This clearly demonstrated how meddling by the spooks can have serious unintended consequences. The lawyers representing the Crown came up with the usual verbiage about protecting society from terrorists and nasty criminals but at least refrained from the oft-used rationale of the need to catch sex offenders and child molesters.

The *Guardian* comments that in Parliamentary debates about the Investigatory Powers Act, the Government insists the spies have conducted only targeted searches of data under legal warrants in pursuit of terrorist or criminal activity, *and that bulk interception was necessary as a first step in that process* (PR emphasis).

And this is what happens in NZ with the GCSB claiming it does not carry out mass surveillance, because it only keeps bits of immediate interest. We are expected to believe that the spooks permanently dispose of vast masses of data that are not concisely focused on the matter of investigation. The analogy would be our GPs wiping out everything in our medical records that does not relate to the flu shot we came in for last week.

How A Secret US Cyberweapon Backfired

On June 4th, 2019, the *New York Times* (NYT) reported that hackers had seized Government computer systems using one of the National Security Agency’s own hacking tools (note the date was *not* April 1). The news service of the *Times* said a group of online criminals held the city of Baltimore’s computer system hostage for nearly a month, paralysing basic Government functions. The city struggled to cope with this cyberattack by digital extortionists which froze thousands of computers, shut down email and disrupted real estate sales, water bills, health

alerts and many other services.

And not just in Baltimore. Security experts told the *Times* that “EternalBlue attacks” involved cyber criminals zeroing in on other vulnerable American towns and cities, from Pennsylvania to Texas, paralysing local governments and driving up costs. The paper went on to say: “But here is what frustrated city employees and residents do not know: A key component of the malware that cybercriminals used in the attack was developed at taxpayer expense a short drive down the Baltimore-Washington Parkway at the National Security Agency, according to security experts briefed on the case”.

Since 2017, when the NSA lost control of the tool, EternalBlue, it has been picked up by State hackers in North Korea, Russia and, more recently, China, to cut a path of destruction around the world, leaving billions of dollars in damage. In the previous year, the cyberweapon had boomeranged back and was now showing up in the NSA’s own backyard (NYT, 26/6/19).

Other media confirmed these attacks. The *Politico* Website reported ransomware attacks paralysed Baltimore’s computer networks, shutting down the systems that collect parking ticket fines and water bills and hackers took out City Hall’s help line in Akron, Ohio, during a major snowstorm. In Lincoln County, North Carolina, sheriff’s deputies had to take crime reports with pen and paper as their computers went dark.

Politico said the wave of ransom-seeking cyberattacks struck at least 80 state and local government agencies and further noted that a complicating factor was that Federal agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) want to investigate and prosecute but the private sector and state and locals may want to get back on line as fast as possible by simply paying a ransom (*Politico*, 28/9/19).

Another “Security” Case

In another case that exposed the US government’s embarrassing failure to secure its secrets, a 54-year-old former National Security Agency contractor pleaded guilty in March 2019 to taking classified documents home. The accused agreed to a

deal likely to put him in prison for 8-10 years (*New York Times*, 28/3/19).

Russians Cracked FBI Communications Systems

For several years Russian spies made critical intrusions into FBI communications systems which allowed Moscow agents to escape FBI surveillance and communicate with sensitive human sources, check on remote recording devices and even gather intelligence on their FBI pursuers, former officials have said. The discovery of Russia’s capacity to crack certain types of Government encryption was very unnerving, according to these sources.

Huffington Post (HP, 16/9/19) says it was apparent to US agencies from about 2012 that Russian spies in American cities had knowledge of the location of undercover FBI surveillance teams, and, likely, also the actual substance of FBI communications. Some officials thought a mole might be operating. Officials also feared that the Russians may have devised other ways to monitor US intelligence communications, including hacking into computers not connected to the Internet.

This was the real reason why on December 29, 2016, the Obama Administration announced that it was giving nearly three dozen Russian diplomats just 72 hours to leave the United States and was seizing two rural East Coast estates owned by the Russian government. The *HP* report is based on a Yahoo investigation which had contacted more than 50 current and former intelligence and national security officials, most of whom requested anonymity to discuss sensitive operations and internal discussions.

Are All Human Rights Advocates Created Equal?

A leading human rights campaigner and head of a prestigious London art gallery is the co-owner of an Israeli cyberweapons company whose software has allegedly been used by authoritarian regimes to spy on dissidents, the *Guardian* has revealed in an article which is the subject of legal action (14/6/19). Socialite Yana Peel, a self-proclaimed champion of free speech, co-owns NSO

Group, a £790m Israeli tech firm, according to corporate records in the US and Luxembourg. NSO is the subject of multiple ongoing lawsuits and has been criticised by human rights groups, including Amnesty International, which has asked Israel's Ministry of Defence to revoke the company's export licences.

But alleged targets of NSO's technology, which has been described as having capabilities to rival those of government spy agencies, such as the US National Security Agency, have decried the alleged use of such powerful technology against them. Human rights groups, activists, and surveillance experts have accused NSO of licensing its powerful Pegasus software to countries, including Saudi Arabia, that have used it to target individuals, hack into their phones, and monitor their communications.

Israel Spied On The White House

The US government has concluded that Israel was likely behind mysterious surveillance equipment placed near the White House, and other sensitive locations, *Politico* has reported, citing three former senior US officials. The miniature surveillance devices, colloquially known as "StingRays", mimic regular cell towers to fool cellphones into giving them their locations and identity information.

Formally called international mobile subscriber identity-catchers or IMSI-catchers, they also can capture the

contents of calls and data use. The devices were likely intended to spy on President Donald Trump, one of the former officials said, as well as his top aides and closest associates — though it's not clear whether the Israeli efforts were successful (see *fighterjetsworld*, 13/9/19).

Epstein, Thiel And Israeli Intelligence

In a report from the *Information Clearing House Website* (9/9/19), Whitney Webb describes the Orwellian strategies of an accused sex offender, a Rightwing entrepreneur beloved of NZ's National Party, and the ubiquitous Israeli spook organisations. *PR* does not have the resources to evaluate what is reality and what might be conspiracy theory, but a summary of the article follows and *PR* readers can make of it what they may.

From official investigation into the late Jeffrey Epstein after his arrest, it is stated that the Israeli company Carbyne911 received substantial funding from the disgraced billionaire. Carbyne911, or simply Carbyne, develops call-handling and identification capabilities for emergency response services in countries around the world. The supplied software entails technology that allows operators to tap into the communications of the countries involved. The company was also funded by former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and by Silicon Valley venture capitalist and prominent Trump backer Peter Thiel.

Carbyne, according to Webb, is no ordinary tech company, "as it is deeply connected to the elite Israeli military intelligence division, Unit 8200, whose 'alumni' often go on to create tech companies — Carbyne among them — that frequently maintain their ties to Israeli intelligence and, according to Israeli media reports and former employees, often blur the line between their service to Israel's defence/intelligence apparatus and their commercial activity".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, according to the writer, had a deliberate policy of placing Unit 8200 members in top positions in transnational tech companies. Another funder of Carbyne is Peter Thiel (who was controversially given NZ citizenship by the Key government). His own company will profit from the Trump Administration's proposed hi-tech solutions to mass shootings.

The President (US's worst ever?) wants tech companies to detect mass shooters before they strike, and Thiel's company Palantir claims to have developed "pre-crime software" for such use. Palantir is a contractor for the US intelligence community and also has a branch based in Israel. Thiel is a donor and advisor to Trump.

Webb also claims the Trump Administration is set to use a controversial database first developed as part of a secretive US government programme as a means of tracking and flagging potential American dissidents for increased surveillance and detention in the event of a vaguely defined "national emergency." The policy is being jointly developed by individuals connected to both American and Israeli intelligence.

In another article relating to the machinations of Israeli politics and intelligence, Associated Press reported (*Press*, 8/6/19) investigative TV revealing "that one of the country's richest men hired Israeli intelligence firm Black Cube to dig up dirt on a Cabinet minister". Idan Ofar hired Black Cube — an organisation of former Israeli spooks — to undermine a plan to raise taxes on his drilling and mining interests. The organisation is also suspected of trying to discredit Obama officials working on the Iran nuclear agreement, helping African dictators, and trying to protect the reputation of Harvey Weinstein.



Peter Thiel (left) with Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu

Israeli intelligence is ruthless and far-reaching. And it is impossible to say how far the Trump Administration would go in terms of surveillance of dissidents, or to say how much of the above is accurate. *PR* notes that WhatsApp has had to improve its security after it emerged in 2019 that a flaw had been exploited by an Israeli spyware company, which allowed special software used by intelligence agencies to covertly take control of a person's phone (*Guardian*, 30/7/19).

US Spooks Protect Their Own

An American woman who admitted driving on the wrong side of the road and killing a young British motorcyclist in August 2019 promptly fled to the US (despite having told British authorities she had no plans to do so) and is being protected by the US National Security Council and Trump himself. She is the wife of a US diplomat and the US claimed diplomatic immunity for her. The accident occurred outside the RAF Croughton base in Northamptonshire; the base is a centre for US intelligence operations. The woman's family address in the USA is a short distance from CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia.

The UK government has not backed the Police inquiry and is more intent on preserving its "special relationship" with Washington over the incident. In another classic inane comment, Trump said in defence of his decision to prevent the woman returning to UK that "every driver has driven on the wrong side of the road at some point".

Some Illegal Phone Data Collection "Accidental"

The *New York Times* (26/6/19) reported that the National Security Agency (NSA) "discovered" in October 2018 that it was collecting information about domestic phone calls and text messages that it had no legal authority to gather. The *Times* cited newly disclosed documents in the latest example where the NSA has experienced "technical difficulties" complying with rules when trying to handle large volumes of Americans' domestic phone records.

The NSA blamed the incident on an unidentified telecommunications provider, saying that agency technicians had noticed a problem with the data that the company was sending, and stopped accepting the information in order to fix it. The episode came to light in documents the American Civil Liberties Union had obtained via a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit. The Agency currently hunts for "hidden terrorist cells" under the USA Freedom Act of 2015, which will expire at the end of 2019 unless Congress extends it. This is almost certain, although in the recent past the arcane processes of Congress have resulted in spook legislation running out before it could be reset.

More Targeting Of Activists As "Terrorists"

In 2014 the FBI classified Helen Yost, a 62-year-old environmental educator as a potential threat to national security. She's been arrested twice for engaging in non-violent civil disobedience. According to hundreds of pages of FBI files obtained by the *Guardian* through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit, and interviews with activists, Yost and more than a dozen other people campaigning against fossil fuel extraction in North America have been identified in domestic terrorism-related investigations (*Guardian*, 24/9/19).

The FBI's 2013-2014 investigation of Keystone XL activists in Houston violated internal guidelines designed to prevent the Bureau from infringing on constitutionally protected activities. The investigations opened in 2013-14 were closed after the FBI concluded that the individuals and organisations had not engaged in criminal activity and did not pose a threat to national security.

The *Guardian* says the new FOIA documents reveal the Bureau's motivation for investigating a broad cross-section of the environmental movement and its characterisation of non-violent protesters as a potential threat to national security. We should remember that these investigations took place under Obama and would likely be given much more scope under the current Rightwing Administration.

What About Huawei?

As the Five Eyes agencies tie themselves in knots over how to treat the Chinese tech giant Huawei, a recent short piece in the *Press* (17/8/19) is of interest. Quoting the *Wall Street Journal*, the article says that, in 2018 in Uganda, Huawei technicians helped local spooks to crack the encrypted WhatsApp communications of a well-known singer turned politician. Police then raided a local music event and arrested a number of anti-Government citizens.

The same article reports that Huawei helped the Government in Zambia to access phones and Facebook pages of bloggers criticising the Government. They were then arrested. These examples may show the dangers of Huawei, or they may show the dangers where an autocratic government is established with advanced surveillance capabilities, or it may just demonstrate that the CIA is back to its old tricks of inserting articles into the international media which advance US interests.

The Dangers Of Facial Recognition Technology

Hannah Devlin at *Reddit.com* (5/10/19) has written a thought-provoking article on new uses of facial recognition technology. The following is a summary of her article. "It can pick out shoplifters, international criminals and lost children in seconds. But as the cameras proliferate, who's watching the watchers?"

A wine bar owner in London has launched Facewatch, a fast-track crime-reporting platform that allows clients (shops, hotels, casinos) to upload an incident report and CCTV clips to the Police. A £3,000 camera system at the entrance to his bar is using off-the-shelf software to carry out facial recognition analysis. The company he established has since rolled out the "service" to at least 15 large retailers; it can upload photographs of people suspected of shoplifting, or other crimes, to a centralised rogues gallery in the cloud. Facewatch provides subscribers with a high-resolution camera that can be mounted at the entrance to their premises, capturing the faces of everyone who walks in.

These images are sent to a computer, which extracts biometric information and compares it to faces in the database. If there's a close match, the shop or bar manager receives a ping on their mobile phone, allowing them to monitor the target or ask them to leave; otherwise, the biometric data is discarded. It's a process that takes seconds. Face-watch's owner says it will have 5,000 cameras across the UK by 2022. The cameras have been tested by the London Metropolitan Police at Notting Hill Carnival, a Remembrance Sunday commemoration, and at the Westfield shopping centre in Stratford, east London.

(But if local business people can so easily set up these systems you can guarantee that spy agencies will also have this equipment; only it will be much more advanced, more refined, faster, and perhaps, more ubiquitous. Or they can simply tap into the private systems to collect data. Arguably buying into this "public" system could escape use of warrants. Ed.)

In May 2019, Ed Bridges, a Public Affairs Manager at Cardiff University, launched a landmark legal case against South Wales Police. He had noticed facial recognition cameras in use while Christmas shopping in Cardiff city centre in 2018. When he noticed the cameras again a few months later, at a peaceful protest in Cardiff against the arms trade, he was even more concerned: it felt like an infringement of privacy, designed to deter people from protesting. South Wales Police have been using the technology since 2017, often at major sporting and music events, to spot people suspected of crimes, and other "persons of interest".

In contrast with DNA and fingerprint data, which normally have to be destroyed within a certain time period if individuals are arrested or charged but not convicted, there are no specific rules in the UK on the retention of facial images. The Police National Database has snowballed to contain about 20 million of which a large proportion have never been charged or convicted of an offence (PR emphasis). Unlike DNA and fingerprints, this data can also be acquired without a person's knowledge or consent. ■

GEOPOLITICS AND CRISIS

Redressing The Roots Of Conflict

By Dennis Small

"You do not think surely", said the West Indian novelist "with sudden anger, 'that the whites will ever allow a coloured people to get too powerful? They've ruled us all so long, they wouldn't know how to stop. They'll bomb China to hell, you'll see, and any other coloured country that becomes big enough to frighten them'" (*The Race War: The World-Wide Conflict Of Races*, Ronald Segal, Penguin/Pelican, 1966/7, p446).

"The Iraq War was the biggest issue for people of my generation in the West. It was also the clearest case, in my living memory, of media manipulation and the creation of a war through ignorance" (Julian Assange, WikiLeaks founder).

"With the scrapping of a landmark arms control agreement (the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty [INFT] between the US and Russia), the US announced plans to test a new missile amid growing concerns about emerging threats and new weapons" ("US To Test New Missile After Arms Treaty Axed", Press, 4/8/19).

"India's decree (in August 2019) to revoke Kashmir's autonomy after seven decades was met with outcry in neighbouring Pakistan and fears the disputed territory would spiral further into violence" ("Outcry As India Revokes Kashmir Autonomy", Press, 7/8/19).

"North Korea says leader Kim Jong-un supervised a live-fire demonstration (in August 2019) of newly developed short-range ballistic missiles, intended to send a warning to the US and South Korea over their joint military exercises" ("Launches 'A Warning'", Press, 8/8/19). North Korea claims that US/South Korea "war games" violate the recent arrangement for ongoing peace talks.

"July (2019) was Earth's hottest

month ever recorded..." ("Roasting Earth Sets New Record", Sunday Star Times [SST], 4/8/19). Meanwhile, the Antarctic, the Arctic, and Greenland continued to melt under extreme temperatures, while wildfires raged across Siberia to northern Alaska (ibid.). By August 2019, the Amazon and other tropical rainforests were being ravaged again by blazes lit by human hand.

"So, here we are. National are climate denying, Trump-invoking dangerous fools, who are the poster boys for late stage capitalism's dying throes, our very own timid gods of death" ("National Are Lighting Political Dumpster Fires While The Amazon Burns", Standard¹, 27/8/19, – from Weka's analysis inspired by a Twitter image of National's neo-liberal fire lit to consume Government regulations, while ignoring the flames of planetary ecological catastrophe. Suicidal stupidity rules, OK?!).

"It's absolutely inevitable that we will see conflict move into space," says Michael Schmitt, Professor of Public International Law and an expert in space warfare at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom ('It's Going To Happen': Is The World Ready For War In Space? Guardian², 15/4/18).

In commenting on the startling Houthi drone attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil facilities in mid-September 2019, NZ security specialist Paul Buchanan most admirably called out the horrible hypocrisy of America's support for the continuing Saudi assault on Yemen's people, still suffering the world's worst humanitarian crisis (1 News At Midday, TVNZ1, 16/9/19). The US, of course, blames Iran for the attacks on the Saudis.

Expounding on the theme of white supremacy and anti-immigrant/refugee antagonism, Naomi Klein cites the racist mosque murders in Christchurch, NZ, as an instance of this emerging syndrome. We need deep positive change ("Naomi Klein: 'We Are Seeing The Beginnings Of The Era Of Climate Barbarism'" Stuff³, 16/9/19. She was being interviewed about her new book "On Fire: The Burning Case for A Green New Deal Here").

The United Nations regularly appeals to world leaders and their peoples for urgent action on challenges like global warming and socio-

inequities (e.g., “High-Level Political Forum Opens Ministerial Segment Amid Calls For Urgent Action In Tackling Global Injustice, Effects Of Climate Change”, *Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*, 16/7/19).

The various quotes highlighted at the start of this article point up the enormous challenges that now confront humankind on the global scale. As continually emphasised in *Peace Researcher* (PR) over the years, we need unprecedented collective and cooperative international action in dealing pre-emptively, positively, and effectively with this range of threats to our existence – a range that has so lamentably compounded and grown grimly over time!

Our political systems are badly out of kilter in both facing up to, and dealing to these threats. There are more evil and mad leaders now in power, riding the tides of the far right and neo-fascism. *Things have got so crazy and surreal that the American President has even suggested bombing hurricanes with nuclear weapons to combat global warming in the ultimate capitalist stupidity!* (“No, Mr. President: A Nuclear Blast Won’t Stop A Hurricane”, *Press*, 28/8/19). Somehow, those of us who are older and concerned have to forge better working links with the activists of the younger generation. We must work to quickly build a far more integrated and comprehensive global movement committed to meaningful change for social justice, sustainability, and peace.

Seizing The Moment!

We need to be cognisant of the forces currently shaping trends into the future, and how we can harness the positive dimensions of social factors for the better. Already, youthful international movements like **Extinction Rebellion**, **350.org** and **Generation Zero** (Generation Zero – A New Zealand Climate Change Movement⁴) are calling for real action on the **climate crisis** and global warming, and are having some telling impact.

There are plenty of positive aspects that can be developed for the future in addressing related issues of geopolitics, sustainable development, and the requirements for mediation and peace-making. The fact that European Union (EU) nations have rallied to rein in Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro’s plan to raze the Ama-

zon is highly significant. They have used a combination of carrot and stick measures in applying due pressure on President Bolsonaro & co. In this case, while Bolsonaro may complain about alleged “colonialism”, protecting the tropical rainforests of Amazonia is very much in the essential interests of all humankind.

The huge Amazonian rainforests, of which those in Brazil are the most extensive, are indeed part of the commons like air and water – all so absolutely vital for our survival. They contribute to the great planetary web of life, not only in their crucially important function of climate regulation and atmospheric stabilisation, but with their teeming biodiversity and intricately woven ecosystems.

Similarly, rainforests elsewhere in Latin America, as well as in Africa and Asia, are suffering similar depredations. Climate change is accelerating and aggravating the trends of ecological degradation and simplification long flagged by environmental experts and human ecologists. The sudden downgrading of a viable planetary habitat during the neo-liberal era, which has spanned over a generation, is now proving disastrous for us all. *We must help grow the rebellion and resistance worldwide against the forces making for extinction!*

Geopolitics And The Generation Of War Crimes

In recent years, the most outrageous of war crimes being committed by the Anglo-American axis has been in connection with the continuous onslaught on the people of Yemen, the poorest country in the Middle East. This onslaught has got minimal attention by the mainstream media despite Yemen suffering the world’s worst humanitarian crisis, as signalled so often and so desperately by the UN (e.g. “Nowhere Is Safe To Hide In War-Torn Yemen, Say UN-Appointed Rights Experts”⁵, 3/9/19).

While both sides in Yemen’s war are guilty of human rights abuses, the country’s sufferings are very much due to Western barbarism and its deployment of the most modern firepower, as used by the proxy forces of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). All this has gone hand in hand with an ongoing blockade imposed for more than four years now. Essential infrastructure,

above all water supply, has been targeted and severely disrupted by the Saudi proxy coalition, engendering the spread of cholera, and other afflictions.

In fact, malnutrition and cholera are rife, with “an estimated 24 million people – close to 80% of the population – (needing) assistance and protection” (“Humanitarian Crisis In Yemen Remains The Worst In The World, Warns The UN”, *UN News*⁶, 14/2/19). The majority of civilians killed in hostilities have been the victims of Saudi-led airstrikes (*World Report 2019: Yemen*, Human Rights Watch⁷). Most damningly, it can be well said that the highly selective and grossly biased treatment by the Western media of the Yemeni conflict reflects the banality of evil in our times.

This treatment is a standard of our own media performance in Aotearoa/NZ. Overall, it stands to date in glaring contrast to that dished out to enemies (current and potential); rivals; or likely prey for the agents of predatory capitalism - from Syria to Venezuela. For example, TVNZ and its news channel TV1 have been very true to form, avoiding any inconvenient reference to the suffering of Yemen’s people and its perpetrators as much as possible.

It is highly significant and indeed so symbolic that poverty-stricken Yemen was the experimental testing-ground for America’s drone warfare. Yemen was intimidated into submission by flagrantly illegal acts of State terrorism (“The Sorrows Of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, And The End Of The Republic”, Chalmers Johnson, Verso, 2004, p27).

Stop The Missile Rattling!

You see, it is perfectly fine for the Anglo-American axis and their mates to inflict hell on Yemenis, murdering and starving children. But it is obviously a step too far for the Houthis to try and defend Yemen by hitting back at Saudi oil facilities. The horrible hypocrisy of the West is a constant. Our Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister, Winston Peters, who over the years has been a keen cheerleader for American foreign policy, hopes that the “perpetrators” of the attacks on Saudi oil are stopped (*1 News At 6pm*, 18/9/19). *Just imagine if Peters had expressed similar concerns about the tragically victimised people of Yemen and the condemnation of the*

perpetrators involved!

However, since Peters is prepared to defend “the use of white phosphorus in Iraq”, apparently anything can go (*Anti-Bases Campaign Update*⁸, 26/6/19). Geopolitical morality is eminently self-serving, however blinkered such perceptions and understandings might be in the long run.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump, of course, has been boasting of being “locked and loaded”, and so primed ready to blow up our world at a moment’s notice. His crazy National Security Adviser John Bolton may have gone, but the Administration still bristles with belligerent warmongers. While coming to office proclaiming a purported will to keep the US out of wars, Trump & co. have instead been ramping up levels of conflict across the planet. Trump took over the White House anyway, vowing to break the nuclear deal with Iran.

Since the attacks on the Saudi oil supplies, Trump has again been gearing up for war, accusing Iran of firing the missiles from its territory. “Iran has denied any involvement in the strikes” (“Rush Diplomacy As Iran Rules Out Talks”, *Press*, 19/9/19). Its Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has, however, offered an olive branch, calling on the Trump Administration to return “to the 2015 nuclear deal that Tehran struck with world powers” (*ibid.*).

He also called on the Saudis and their backers “to end the Yemen war” (*ibid.*). The way is open for negotiations on peaceful solutions to the crisis. People concerned for peace should rally everywhere to press their governments to act for this cause, and its implementation in the Middle East, as well as in other regions. As time goes on, the stakes could not be higher, given the state of the world.

Rocketing To Doom?

Of course, new problems keep arising. So often, they keep coming simply as a function of systems operating in fulfilment of missions that they are already programmed to achieve. Western industrialised civilisation with its worship of technology and machine culture just keeps churning these problems out (“The Pentagon Of Power: The Myth Of The Machine”, vol. 2, Lewis Mumford, Martin Secker & Warburg

Ltd., 1970/1).

Writing back in 1970, the great path-finding environmentalist Lewis Mumford observed that: “... ‘the conquest of space’ has proved, if temporarily, the only substitute yet available for harnessing the immense consumptive needs and destructive powers of the mega-machine, without actually bringing about the catastrophic end of the machine itself in collective deeds of calculated genocide, which would defoliate the planet and exfoliate the human race” (*ibid.*, p308). Capitalism reached Heavenward in technocratic exultation.

Yet now, in 2019, we stand trembling on the very brink of mass, mutually induced genocide generated by the space race and its integrally connected momentum to space warfare (“It’s Going To Happen”, *op. cit.*). As Mumford also noted: “Like the supersonic plane and the intercontinental ballistic rocket, both designed to carry nuclear warheads, the space rocket is primarily a feat of imaginative military strategy” (“The Pentagon Of Power”, *op. cit.*, p304). It is a fundamental expression of human power, for good or ill. But it is highly symbolic as a weapon of war.

Exuberance in machine power is currently coming home to roost with a suicidal vengeance – *unless we act pre-emptively in time!* And the key to this is getting informed and blowing away the bullshit of the Western political Establishment as purveyed by its crony zombie mainstream media; and consequently mobilising in positive, pre-emptive mass action for peace.

A Rocket Laboratory For The End Times?

In his most important revelatory study of the Pentagon’s project to develop the capability for a nuclear first strike, Robert Aldridge has a chapter on “Space Warfare” (“First Strike! The Pentagon’s Strategy For Nuclear War”, South End Press, 1983, chapter 8). As a former design engineer for Lockheed’s nuclear ballistic Polaris and Trident missile systems, Aldridge opened this particular chapter (in 1983) with a very pertinent observation:

“During my lifetime, I have watched the growth of the public enchantment with outer space – from Buck Rogers of the late 1930s to Star Wars of today ... The Pentagon and

the Kremlin also share this affinity to space but their fascination is grounded in a more pragmatic and deadly purpose. They seem intent on making Star Wars a reality. The arms race has expanded into space. Virtually all military operations – from spying to communication – depend on satellites. And these celestial outposts are becoming a focus for hostilities” (*ibid.*, p211).

For decades now, the political culture in Aotearoa/NZ – and, indeed, Western culture in general – has been ruled by a “Americanised” neoliberal outlook. Central to this outlook is the celebration and promotion of what is called “entrepreneurship” and “entrepreneurs”, euphemistic terms for “capitalism” and “capitalists”. Intimately linked with the constant striving for technological innovation and “**fairy tales of eternal economic growth**” (*Greta Thunberg’s brilliantly pithy phrase at the UN Climate Action Summit, in September 2019, that has so upset capitalist ideologues around the world!*), these concepts are closely tied to both war and space.

In recent years, probably the most cited case of NZ entrepreneurship is the founding and establishment of the company Rocket Lab. Initiated in Auckland in 2006 by Peter Beck, “Rocket Lab is (now) a private American aerospace manufacturer and ‘smallsat’ launch provider with a wholly owned NZ subsidiary” (Rocket Lab, *Wikipedia*⁹). It is headquartered at Huntingdon Beach, California, US.

Heedlessly Locking In Doomsday For Godzone?

Lockheed Martin (the former Lockheed), the world’s biggest arms and aerospace company, is a major shareholder. This transnational corporation (TNC) has a significant presence here in Aotearoa/NZ. Its NZ workforce is said to be “primarily focused on delivering sustainment capability to the NZ Defence Force (NZDF) and NZ Police” (New Zealand, Lockheed Martin¹⁰). *We should all take heed!*

Lockheed’s Programme Alexander provides logistical, engineering, and maintenance services for our defence forces, as delivered by a workforce of over 200 people at five sites across NZ/Aotearoa (*ibid.*). So, our security systems are now tightly bound into the American military-industrial complex and its warmon-



Rocket Lab CEO Peter Beck with one of his rockets

gering infrastructure.

Planet Earth is the complex's oyster, as exemplified by Lockheed Martin. This TNC boasts how it is ensuring that artificial intelligence (AI) "powers 'multidomain' systems for the military", and is "accelerating missions across air, sea, land, space and cyber". Its tentacles are thus reaching everywhere. In the most absurd, horrific, and surreal fashion, many of the most technologically sophisticated of humankind are spreading their means of totalitarian destruction around the planet, with the apparatus for space warfare now systematically enveloping us all. *In killer ape fashion, they obviously actually revel in obscene over-kill!*

Mesmerised By The Mega-Machinery Of Death

From early on in its career, Rocket Lab both worked for, and was assisted by, American space and defence agencies. Crucial to its development has been its links with the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the key outfit in the military-industrial complex for research and its ensuing technological applications.

DARPA's role in reality is to contribute to the looming causes of World War III (WWIII), i.e. unless the global peace and anti-nuclear movements can mobilise the peoples of the world to prevent this fate: – *to pre-empt the activation of the machinery of megadeath!* But in Aotearoa/NZ it has been quite stunning (*however predictable this might be*

on one level!) to see the suicidal stupidity of our political Establishment and its culture in the case of Rocket Lab; and the virtual exultant worship of this symbol of looming self-immolation.

This TNC has been warmly and enthusiastically embraced by the Establishment and the zombie mainstream media as a model NZ company, for Heaven's (*or rather Hell's?*) sake! And this has all happened in a way that evokes the sense of Freud's "death instinct" (Thanatos) at work! As PR Editor Murray Horton aptly points out, in the lead article in this issue: "Rocket Lab was originally touted as a shining example of Kiwi innovation. It continues to be so touted under the present Jacinda Ardern government".

But "Rocket Lab's clients, whose payloads it launches into space from its Mahia Peninsula facility, include a whole range of US military, intelligence, and surveillance agencies. It is directly contributing to the militarisation of space. A central theme of Trump's Presidency is that the US must be able to 'dominate space' and wage war, in and from, space" ("Time To Recognise Rocket For What It Is: A US Facility For The US Military & Spies On NZ Soil".). Rocket Lab is very much part of Trump's newly proclaimed Space Force.

For sure, as an arm of the American military-industrial complex, Rocket Lab takes particular pride in its continuing contribution to militarising space, for instance by firing off

DARPA payload satellites into the heavens (e.g. "Rocket Lab Successfully Launches R3D2 Satellite For DARPA"¹¹). *Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Peter Beck gets into raptures about it all, always trying to camouflage the military aspects with crap about the purported civilian benefits of such launches!*

In an excoriating series of articles, Ollie Neas of the *Spinoff* has revealed the perfidy of Rocket Lab and how this American space warfare outfit is further undermining our pretence of nuclear freedom (e.g. see his: "'She'll Be Right Attitude' To Rocket Lab Putting Nuclear Free NZ At Risk, Experts Say"¹², 17/5/19). Ollie Neas is an outstandingly admirable exception to the overwhelming majority of our "walking dead" media!

Parliamentary Bullshit Shoots Sky-High!

Yet our Parliament has certainly been in raptures about Rocket Lab, which might well remind one of the "Rapture" supposedly to be enjoyed by fundamentalist Christians as they get transported up safely into the Heavenly realm as the final curtain falls. *It has all been quite something to behold!* (courtesy of Parliament TV). Lamentably enough, all of the political parties in Parliament have at one time or another been rapt with Rocket Lab and so, in reality, cheerleading for space warfare and WWIII! In this dimension (*and there are others!*), our Parliament is riddled with gross ignorance, denial, and stupidity.

In presenting the Venture Capital Bill in Parliament, Economics Minister David Parker, the Minister of the Environment and also the Minister of Trade & Export Growth, waxed lyrical about getting our “ecosystems” right, meaning here economic networks (Parliament TV, 27/8/19). His neo-liberal use of the term “ecosystem” reflected his expressed concern about the lack of venture capital in Aotearoa/NZ, citing as an example here how sad it had been that Rocket Lab had had to go offshore to raise capital. In this regard, and again there are others – *including the central contradiction of free trade destroying a viable habitat for humankind!* – Parker’s trade and environment roles stand in stark contradiction. Rocket Lab, to be sure, represents the ultimate forces of self-destruction.

Embracing Thanatos

Besides Parker, other Government MPs were similarly wistful for a greater identity with Rocket Lab. Labour MP Greg O’Connor even said that if we owned Rocket Lab (i.e. if it were adequately capitalised as a private company from within our own country), we would then have real pride in what Rocket Lab is sending up into space! (ibid.).

So, let’s get clear on this. According to O’Connor and clearly so many other MPs across Parliament, we would then be taking such pride in all the US’s military-oriented equipment, i.e. facilities designed for space warfare; murderous, invasive special operations; etc. Apparently, these things would represent NZ’s own especial contractual effort towards global welfare.

And NZ is already functioning, to a very considerable extent, as a cog of Anglo-American imperial rule and its gathering geopolitical confrontations. Our membership of the so-called “Five Eyes” intelligence/covert action club guarantees this. Both main political parties, National and Labour, have been set, to date, on giving Rocket Lab the greasiest of public relations (PR) hype in close collaboration with the conservative mainstream media (“Time To Recognise Rocket Lab For What It is”, op cit.). They have been very intent on suppressing democratic discussion, debate, and above all, protest (ibid.).

National Goes Off The Planet!

On the same day in Parliament

(27/8/19), David Carter, National MP and former Speaker of the House, went up a gear, extolling Rocket Lab and CEO Peter Beck in lavish terms (Parliament TV, op. cit.). You see, Peter Beck had been an inspirational “entrepreneurial” speaker at the National Party’s annual conference in July 2019

Carter certainly found Beck inspiring alright. He praised him and his company to the skies, *and beyond!* So, the National Party is a pre-eminently zombie celebrant of space warfare as driven by American arms manufacturers and nuclear war planners. It finds particularly heartening inspiration in a home-grown agency of the doomsday industry. For certain, Rocket Lab really took off and gained momentum in the near decade during which National was in power.

More generally, over the last few decades, space has become the trendy theatre for new warfighting technologies. It has become the new open frontier in which to systematically organise and prepare for the self-destruction of our species, along with most other of Earth’s animals. Competition has been hotting up in the race to oblivion (“It’s Going To Happen”, op. cit.). So, we must assiduously expose and counter these crazy evil applications of human ingenuity.

Writing back in 2006, Dr Clayton Chun of the US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, observed that: “The US has unlimited space capabilities compared to any potential rivals” (“Defending Space: US Anti-Satellite Warfare And Space Weaponry”, Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2006, p57). But in the 21st Century, he recognised that rival powers like Russia and China have also greatly boosted their own capabilities in both the spheres of space warfare and defence.

As Dr Chun himself outlines in his overview of the state of play by 2006, these other nations had already developed some very sophisticated capabilities indeed (ibid.). Yet while National enthusiastically embraces space warfare, whatever its own spin, the Coalition government is also deeply implicated in these militarist trends. We need to turn up the searchlights and heat lamps on this space war stuff and the role of Rocket Lab.

Ravening Rabid Right

American technological innovation and its profit-driven priorities are bending Western society more to the far Right of the political spectrum. Social and environmental costs are mounting. From space warfare to global warming, National and ACT, its tiny far Right partner party in Parliament, regularly lead in peddling ignorance, stupidity, and denial of the blatantly obvious. Greed and short-term self-interest are their watchwords. They are wedded to Trumpism and economic growth at the expense of ecosystems and climate change.

In pursuit of their goals, their policies are shot through with globalist capitalist contradictions. National, indeed, is corruptly rotten with money from wealthy Chinese businessmen while rooting for Trump’s Space Force. It is intricately entrapped in the entangled coils of the geopolitical games of eagles and dragons. National would follow the US in supposedly countering “aggressive and violent actions by State and non-State actors around the world” (“International Affairs: Discussion Document”, NZ National Party, 2019, p5). Among several examples, National cites “the conduct of Russia towards Ukraine”, and what it calls “the abhorrent disregard for democracy and human rights in Venezuela” (ibid.).

So, let’s get this right. National is a loyal client collaborator of the world’s worst State terrorist and rogue nation, a country with a hugely grim record of aggression and violence on any objective scale of measurement and assessment. Furthermore, in regard to the examples above, the record again is damning. The US blatantly orchestrated the overthrow of a democratically elected government in the Ukraine, and has worked for many years to crush democratic socialism in Venezuela, using both overt and covert means.

Crony Genocide And Bullish Blindness

But then National learnt its methods and propaganda from “Five Eyes” club collaboration when in Government during the US-instigated Indonesian genocide (1965-70)! As noted, National obviously backs America’s murderous strategy in the war on Yemen, and all its other systematic dirty work around the globe. It would also enthusiastically join in with America’s illegal imposition of

economic sanctions on designated enemies, thus flouting the UN and the “multilateral rules-based system” that National claims to uphold (ibid., e.g., p2 & p6). To this end, it has introduced an Autonomous Sanctions Bill (ibid., p6).

We need to remember that National was clearly a co-conspirator, however tacitly, when the Reagan Administration tried to subvert the fourth Labour Government, and the establishment of our nuclear-free zone. *Apparently, all this is “Defending Our Values”!* It is indeed outrageous that this is yet another subject – and such a crucially important one – that is effectively *verboten* for public discussion and review. A conspiracy of silence prevails due to the Rightwing corporate media, so distinguished by foreign control and influence (especially American); and even an intimidated political Establishment so far as it relates to the Left.

In its egregious hypocrisy, National extolls the US for promoting “democracy, freedom and security around the world” (ibid., p10). The Party is, in reality, a morally bankrupt cynical proponent of Anglo-American State terrorism and imperialist hegemony (“On Western Terrorism: From Hiroshima To Drone Warfare”, Noam Chomsky & Andre Vltchek, Pluto Press, 2013). Most ironically, at the same time, National's enthusiasm in following Chinese money is leading it deeper into growing contradictions, given the compounding geopolitical confrontation between the US and China (“International Relations”, op. cit., e.g., p10 & p22).

Again, this kind of cynically unethical behaviour goes hand in hand with the Party's commitment to “Dirty Politics”, and an increasing shift towards Rightwing extremism (“The Rise And Rise of Neo-Fascism?: Countering A Clear And Present Danger!”, Dennis Small, *Foreign Control Watchdog* 151¹³, August 2019; for a really funny satirical “send-up” of National's obnoxious politics, see “Trump It Up”, in the *Standard*, 12/9/19). *We have a problem, Houston!*

Overshoot Into Space War?

At this stage in the evolutionary overshoot of the human species, we have reached a phase where space, space exploration, and space travel are being reinvented in American-

orchestrated hype as the new frontier. Greedy narcissistic billionaires like Elon Musk, Richard Branson, and Jeff Bezos are the exemplars of this evolutionary dead-end exuberance and fantasy.

Global capitalism is grinding down on the limits of growth, although most Western politicians are still effectively “off-the-planet” in denial, including those in Aotearoa/NZ. Indeed, our own politicians regularly demonstrate this syndrome in Parliament, constantly quibbling about the rate of economic growth, in conjunction with economists, business representatives, and media commentators. The big question for them is whether growth is fast enough, as constantly hyped up by National, and to Hell with the biosphere. Meantime, the Earth races to melt-down, while nations lurch further down the pit of resource wars.

Let us return at this point to former Lockheed rocket scientist Robert Aldridge's grim warning about the militarisation of space, the touted final (yet endless) frontier. Again, back in 1983, Aldridge concluded his chapter on “Space Warfare” with the following paragraph: “Today's enchantment with Star Wars is not confined to the movie houses and video arcades. Pentagon war rooms are preparing for the real thing”.

“Space could well be the battleground of the future but we cannot deceive ourselves that the fighting will be confined there. *The war that starts in space will likely engulf this planet in nuclear fire*” [my emphasis] (“First Strike”, op. cit., p225). The heavens would rain down Hell on Earth in a Biblical-type Armageddon, punishing us for our sins, above all for that of Cain. Rocket Lab and its NZ arm are militarist corporate agencies directly contributing to the ultimate final solution for everyone. *Yet again, we appeal for sanity in the face of this mad militarism, hand in hand with peace activists around the globe!*

Reactionary Politics On The Loose

On the domestic front in the West, Rightwing extremism is dividing the political Establishment to an increasing extent. A graphic illustration of this mounting division comes from our own political system in Aotearoa/NZ. To quote Robert G Patman, Professor of International Re-

lations at the University of Otago: “It is extraordinary that just months after a devastating attack at two Christchurch mosques by a white supremacist terrorist, some senior NZ politicians have sung the praises of the UK's new far Right PM Boris Johnson” (“Beware Boris”, *Sunday Star Times*, 4 /8/19). As well as our Deputy PM Winston Peters, the Leader of the Opposition, Simon Bridges, has also heartily endorsed Boris Johnson as the new British PM (ibid.).

Internationally, our own PM Jacinda Ardern has been contrasted with US President Donald Trump. She has been praised for articulating an alternative cooperative, compassionate vision to that of Trump's belligerent racism and intolerance. So, it has been the height of irony that Winston Peters has actually lauded the elevation of far Rightist and Trump soulmate Boris Johnson to the position of the British Conservative PM. Most bizarrely, Peters even “likened (Johnson) to Winston Churchill” (ibid.).

Yet, ironically, if we abjure the conventional Anglophile image of Churchill, and instead take account of his horrible racism and imperialist pretensions, then there is some truth in the comparison, albeit with not quite the meaning that Peters intended. To amplify the irony, Winston Peters has himself played on the “Winnie” theme in his own personal interest in the past.

Cosying Up To The CIA And Crony Foreign Confreses

Peters was even seen back in the 1980s as posing as “The Great White Hope” in his role as a de facto US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agent trying to undermine our establishment of a nuclear free zone (see “Lest We Forget: The Maori Loans Affair”, by Murray Horton, in *Watchdog* 149¹⁴, December 2018). Peters, of course, has a very chequered record with regard to a range of issues going back a long way. This record has included his very prominent and remarkable role, just mentioned above, in the CIA-contrived “Maori Loans Affair” during the fourth Labour government (ibid.).

In the course of his own close examination of Peters' American connections, PR Editor Murray Horton cites the earlier detailed study of Peters' involvement in the CIA-

concocted “Affair”, titled “Winston Peters: The Great White Hope”, by Nuclear Free Kiwis (NFK), published in *PR* 19¹⁵ (first series), June 1988, online; for more on Peters' admiration of the American rogue state, see also Murray's “Not Very Great Expectations At All” in *PR* 54¹⁶, November 2017).

It is highly unfortunate that the inevitable “horse-trading” negotiations to set up the Labour-headed Coalition government has meant that foreign affairs and defence are dominated by the US-aligned perspective of New Zealand First, with its Leader, Winston Peters, being both Deputy PM and Minister of Foreign Affairs. As well, NZ First Deputy Leader, Ron Mark, a former Army officer, is the Minister of Defence.

At the same time, ironies are running amok as ever! On a trip to China in September 2019, National Leader, Simon Bridges, was obviously in open pursuit of more money and covert political assistance for his Party. He lavishly praised the Chinese Communist regime to high Heaven and freely consorted with its “secret police” chief (his denial aside), as facilitated by a fellow National MP, who has been accused of being a Chinese spy (e.g. “Simon Bridges Rejects Claim He Met With China's Head Of ‘Secret Police’”, *Newshub*¹⁷, 10/9/19). Bridges got well ridiculed in some quarters on his return home (ibid.). But, on the whole, the mainstream media are happy to grease the corporate money trail and cover for National.

Initiating True Independence – An Urgent Task Ahead!

So then, on the one hand, we have the hands of US-aligned NZ First Party Winston Peters and Ron Mark at the foreign policy/defence helm of the Coalition government, orienting Aotearoa/NZ to the rest of the world in line with an increasingly aggressive, dangerous, and disruptive geopolitical strategy. It should be added here that so much of US strategy is also very much in tune with that of the National Party (“International Affairs”, op. cit.).

National itself pirouettes about between China – on the economy, and eliciting monetary hand-outs for the Party's own benefit – and the US for militarist posturing (e.g. against Venezuela or Iran). It grovels openly and obsequiously for Chinese money from a still titular Communist gov-

ernment, in ways that would have been roundly lambasted by the mainstream media if carried out by a Left wing party. At the same time, it is always eager (except regarding China) to join in the latest bout of warmongering and geopolitical confrontation as orchestrated by the US.

Yet, on the other hand, Aotearoa/NZ is supposedly nuclear-free, with an independent foreign policy. Ironically again, Labour and the Greens have been indicating this viewpoint to some extent, especially via PM Jacinda Ardern's most admirable work on both the domestic front (especially in relation to the terrorist mosque murders in Christchurch) and the international scene.

To be fair, too, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters has very commendably resisted pro-US kneejerk reactions on various contentious international issues, calling for proper evidence, e.g., regarding alleged chemical attacks by the Syrian government. But his overall orientation is of deep concern. While we can also be most grateful to NZ First for breaking the pernicious hold of the National Party on our political system – *after almost a decade rife with National's debilitating, poisonous attack “Dirty Politics!”* – we need to get NZ First to honour our proclaimed nuclear free policy, which in reality lies so tragically in tatters today, pretty well much just a posturing charade.

Breaking The Ties That Bind?

Murray Horton applies the Filipino term “AmBoy” (“America's Boy”) to Peters, and it can equally well be applied to Ron Mark. *Overall, both Peters and Mark give plenty of indications of being committed agents of the American military-industrial complex and its drive towards WWII! So much for the pretence of putting NZ first!! Come on, man up! – shake off that horrible “death instinct”!* Incidentally, this writer is a firm supporter of the current Coalition government, whatever the criticisms I might make. In my opinion, while there is always lots of room for improvement, the return to power of the Rightwing “Dirty Politics” National Party would be disastrous, and very damaging across many dimensions.

The current Government is taking some really meaningful and long

overdue action on sustainability and greater equity, as well signalling initiatives for better international cooperation, e.g. the Christchurch Call to properly control hate speech on Internet social media, and so implement substantial improvements in the practices of the tech giants like Facebook and Twitter. Our PM Jacinda Ardern has achieved very impressive progress to date on this project, particularly the gains on her 2019 visit to New York and the UN.

A recent Government initiative to encourage “greener” trade is another progressive step to be commended. Overall, we must urgently revive the spirit, and genuine independence of Aotearoa/NZ's nuclear free/peace stance, as articulated back in the 1980s. Aotearoa/NZ should be an international leader in charting ways forward to a better future. Our country should be the kind of exemplary model that humankind so desperately needs these days – on climate change; nuclear disarmament, sustainability; mediation and peacemaking; etc.

Intensifying Internal Political Ironies

We can only hope – *and do our best to bring into effect* – that the Labour/Green Party branch of the Coalition government can come to exert greater effort in the direction of national independence and peacemaking on the global scene. For this to happen, the peace/anti-nuclear movement must rally more actively, along with all likeminded non-government organisations (NGOs) and individuals.

We certainly have plenty of grounds for urgent action, given the gathering shift in the West to the far Right, even neo-fascism, and dangerous geopolitical confrontation. Furthermore, the shift to the far Right now reaches very extensively and dangerously right up to the very top of the political order, above all in the US. And, for the moment at least, America and its mate and client state Britain are locked together in a new extremist alliance.

As Professor Patman aptly points out in regard to Britain's new leader: “(Boris) Johnson has a history of xenophobic remarks, being economical with the truth, and demonising the European Union [EU] (“Beware Boris”, op. cit.). In his article, Patman pays particular attention to Johnson's demonisation of the EU,

and its implications.

Whereas Patman says, Aotearoa/NZ ascribes to “an open and rules-based system of international relations”, as expressed in the UN and norms such as multilateralism, the record of Boris Johnson and his mates is the very opposite – certainly to a very large degree. It is one of devious manipulation, and even blatantly criminal behaviour (ibid.). Consequently, the appropriate authorities in Britain have taken investigatory and legal action against Johnson & co. on Brexit.

Who Has the Gold Makes The Rules, OK?

With regard to the earlier pro-Brexit campaign and its successful referendum, the resulting documented charges and proven criminal convictions are damning. The record clearly shows how the far Right has been able to rot both British law and democratic procedure. And the far Rightists have been able to raise a lot of money for these purposes. They have wealthy backers. “The UK’s officially designated regulatory body, the Electoral Commission” has adjudged “that the three organisations advocating Brexit – Vote Leave, LeaveEU, and BeLeave – were all guilty of serious offences . . .” (ibid.). Vote Leave was fined accordingly as the result of ensuing legal procedures.

Clearly, the 2016 Brexit referendum result was the outcome of highly illegal machinations and the calculated perversion of the democratic system. This “dirty politics” comes under the same rubric of subverting democracy that Trump’s Republican Party has been practising in the US (see: “The Rise And Rise Of Neo-Fascism”, op. cit.; “Democracy In Chains: The Deep History Of The Radical Right’s Stealth Plan For America”, Nancy MacLean, Scribe, 2017).

At the very core of so much of this “dirty politics” was the firm Cambridge Analytica, founded by crackpot American far Rightist Steve Bannon, former close adviser to Trump, and still a conspiratorial ideologue and player in the Administration’s shadowy, paleo-conservative background. *We are talking here, of course, about shades of extremism, since the Trump Administration itself leans heavily to neo-fascism!*

A major political scandal erupted in early 2018 “when it was revealed that Cambridge Analytica had harvested the personal data of millions of people’s Facebook profiles without their consent and used it for political advertising purposes” (Facebook-Cambridge Analytica Data Scandal, *Wikipedia*¹⁸). “So, Johnson’s Vote Leave organisation was involved in one of the biggest electoral scandals in modern British his-

tory”, and is currently subject to continuing criminal investigation, and, as we have noted, punitive fines (ibid.).

American Republican President Donald Trump and British Conservative PM Boris Johnson now jointly represent (again for the moment at least) the far Right face of the Anglo-American axis, something not seen since the neo-con/neo-liberal era of the 1980s with the Reagan/Thatcher combination in power. *And the current duo of Trump and Johnson are even wackier!*

Brazenly Blustering Windbag Boris Goes Bonkers!

A glaring irony of the enthusiasm of Winston Peters for the politics of Boris Johnson is that Peters, as a lawyer, prides himself on his knowledge and experience in this field. Bizarrely, then, Johnson is not only guilty of criminal activity in subverting democracy but he has cavalier contempt for “an open and rules-based system of international relations” so desired by NZ. Most ironically, yet again, Boris Johnson has now plunged Britain into a dramatic constitutional crisis. His suspension of Parliament in order to facilitate Brexit resulted in a storm of controversy.

He faces fierce accusations of breaking a raft of laws and hallowed conventions, and of once more try-



ing to undermine British democracy itself. Since the findings of the courts that his prorogation of Parliament is illegal, Boris has his back to the wall. Significantly, the paleo-conservative ideology, such as it is, driving the reactionary Right as manifested in the Trump-Johnson duo, comprises various motivations more and more out of line with a considerable body of conventional corporate interests. It is indeed causing much angst in certain quarters, e.g., big sectors of American agribusiness like the pork industry, which are finding their exports squeezed by Trump's trade wars with China.

Certainly, for his part, Johnson's clownish premiership almost immediately put the British political system into a chaotic circus, and raised serious economic concerns! Exit from the EU could usher in a host of downsides and costs for the whole country. To be sure, Professor Patman's warning about Boris Johnson as British PM was borne out very, very soon.

Beware Boris & Co, And The Far Right Bloc

Moreover, the very fact that the Conservative Party could actually elect the boorish Boris Johnson to the Prime Ministership constitutes a hugely damning count against the ruling class. Johnson's record of racism, lying, criminally undemocratic politics, misogyny, etc. is obviously the acceptable standard of behaviour for the Conservatives (certainly most of them), who make up less than 1% of the total UK electorate.

Meantime, the ruling American Republican Party (or GOP [Grand Old Party]) has been rightly labelled by analysts and critics like Noam Chomsky as the most dangerous organisation in the world today. And now we have the Trump Administration in power, with its capitalist faction/faction calling the shots! We ourselves have been warning in *PR*, *Watchdog*, and other publications for many years about the dangerous trends to Rightwing authoritarianism, and even neo-fascism in the West. At present, our worst fears are coming true. The call for urgent, pre-emptive action is more imperative than ever!

Thankfully, given Boris Johnson's rapidly compounding failures in office to date, and the mounting strength of opposition against him –

including within his own Party – Johnson's grip on power looks very shaky indeed. His quick ousting, if it were to happen, would be a really good blow delivered against the far Right. Meanwhile, his mate Donald Trump is now even facing an impeachment inquiry, something certain expert analysts have been predicting from the start (see especially "The Case For Impeachment", Allan J Lichtman, William Collins, 2017/18).

Trump is under the gun, accused of trying to get the Ukrainian government to help him in his campaigning against potential Democrat Presidential candidate Joe Biden. The Anglo-American axis is now in the midst of a joint unprecedented constitutional turmoil. There is yet a real danger that serious social divisions might really start to deepen on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the resulting disruption, trends to authoritarian rule could accelerate. In the conclusion to his article, Professor Robert Patman stresses the need for NZ to reject "the forces of far-Right extremism" with its "failure to uphold the rule of law" ("Beware Boris", op. cit.). Both democracy and global cooperation are in imminent peril from far-Right forces and we must certainly help repel these forces.

Racial Divides In International Politics

Back in the 1960s and 70s, there was very widespread discussion and debate on the question of "race" in both domestic and international relations (e.g., "The Race War", op. cit.; "Race, Conflict And The International Order: From Empire To United Nations", Hugh Tinker, in *The Making Of The 20th Century* series, Mac-Millan Press Ltd., 1977). From the civil rights' movement in the US to the world stage of UN conferences, social conflict and corresponding ethnic tensions were often high.

These years, indeed, were an era of direct confrontation at times between the rich capitalist West and the Non-Aligned Movement or "Third World", which was struggling to throw off the shackles of colonialism and imperialist control. A central issue focused on getting a fairer deal for the raw materials that the poorer countries supplied to the so-called "developed countries".

The UN's General Assembly overwhelmingly endorsed a New Inter-

national Economic Order (NIEO) in 1974 but the West strongly opposed this proposal. The rich countries soon sabotaged it. In these controversies of the 1960s and 70s, the ties of colonisation and empire and what they meant to so many people of European extraction were starkly evident. The white racist regimes of southern Africa became a particular focus of dissension and touchstone of identity.

"At successive conferences of Commonwealth PMs, the Africans arraigned Britain for failing to do its duty concerning (white-ruled) Rhodesia. A marked division occurred between Britain (and to a lesser extent Australia and NZ) as against the countries of the 'New' Commonwealth. It was noticed that in the white countries the argument that the whites of Rhodesia were their 'kith and kin' was frequently employed by politicians and others on the Right" ("Race, Conflict And The International Order", *ibid.*, p69). From late 1975 in Aotearoa/NZ, certain National government Ministers and MPs like Bert Walker figured very prominently in the usage of such racist messaging. PM Robert Muldoon was himself a belligerent proponent of white solidarity.

More generally, the white racist dimension during this era was clearly delineated on the world stage. As indicated, this dimension incorporated a whole range of issues: from the collective Third World bid for fairer trade to racial strife in South Africa and Rhodesia, and the European colonisation of the Palestinian people in the Middle East. "An ideological link between South Africa and Israel as the two outlaws of white racism was thus ... emphasised by the representatives of the black and brown world" (*ibid.*, p126).

Colonial Legacies And Race Flare Again As Burning Issues

In Aotearoa/NZ, as evident from close research, the sense of white solidarity was, in fact, sadly, a major aspect of our country's culture. "New Zealanders showed themselves to be highly sensitive to the feelings and opinions of South Africans (and Rhodesians) who were white, and highly insensitive to the problems and aspirations of those who were black" ("Retreat From Apartheid: New Zealand's Sporting Contacts With South Africa", Richard Thompson, (Oxford University Press, 1975, p98).

For certain, NZ figured dramatically on the world scene over apartheid in South Africa, being insensitive enough to dispatch “a rugby football team to tour South Africa almost immediately after the Soweto killings” in June 1976 (“Race, Conflict And The International Order”, op. cit., p125). The National government's facilitation of this tour drew the fire of outraged African nations, which boycotted the Montreal Olympics in July 1976 in response.

However, in November 1976, the UN General Assembly enforced “the symbolic isolation of South Africa” with a set of “harshly critical resolutions” (ibid., p126). NZ was moved to finally abandon the “the long-held policy of 'keeping politics out of sport'”, at least for the moment (ibid.). In the case of its relations with South Africa, this policy had just been an obvious farce anyway as racial discrimination was fundamental practice in that country's sport. “(Worldwide), all the strands in the Third World's struggle against racism were being interwoven” (ibid.).

But, of course, intense controversy about NZ-South Africa sporting ties was to continue – both domestically and internationally – with the 1981 Springbok tour of NZ/Aotearoa, and also later with the 1986 so-called “Cavaliers” tour of South Africa by an unofficial NZ rugby team. If sport could cause such controversy, no wonder the struggle to expose and contest economic exploitation remains so difficult, and even more fractious than ever, in our own times!

Racism Rolls On

Recent media commentary here in NZ/Aotearoa on the 2019 death of Zimbabwe's former dictator Robert Mugabe shows that white racist attitudes and values are still very prevalent in our country. For instance, in its news presentation of the death of Mugabe, TVNZ painted a very ugly portrait of this African leader (*1 News At 6pm*, 6/9/19). It even referred to Mugabe's “death squads”, a term rigidly abjured in regard to Western – and most notoriously American – State terrorism. As usual, however, TV1 demonstrated its egregious hypocrisy.

It is estimated that the forces of Robert Mugabe murdered some 20,000 of his own citizens. This was an outrage and rightly condemned,

among other crimes against his people. Yet NZ is a member of the “Five Eyes” spy/covert action club, which orchestrated the Indonesian genocide (1965-70), accounting for an estimated 400,000 to three million victims. A National government was in power here at the time.

Later, Sir Donald (Don) McKinnon, a National Party Deputy PM and Foreign Minister, became a prominent cheerleader for the brutal Suharto dictatorship that had taken over Indonesia in the bloodbath against the Communists and other Leftists. McKinnon was also the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations from 2000 until 2008.

Reporter Paul Hobbs presented an item in TV1's overall report on Robert Mugabe's death that featured an angle about how McKinnon had tried to get Mugabe to moderate his draconian policies. But while 20,000 deaths were apparently too much for McKinnon to swallow, some possible three million murdered Indonesians has been ok, at least according to the record of the then National government and its follow-up over the years.

Aotearoa/NZ has accepted very few black African immigrants over the years but it did welcome some 10,000 mostly white Rhodesians. The TV1 report included one of these former white refugees calling Mugabe “evil” (ibid.). It referred to the dictator's “State-sanctioned land grab” of white farms, and the ensuing economic costs. In sum, TV1 conveyed the general very simplistic and grossly biased impression of a wronged white minority at the hands of some very nasty black usurpers.

Imperial Hegemony

Robert Mugabe was certainly a brutal dictator and proved a hugely tragic disappointment for Zimbabwe. But white responsibility for the country's plight has been side-stepped again in time-honoured Anglo-Saxon mode (for background see, e.g., “Rhodesia: White Racism & Imperial Response”, Martin Loney, Penguin African Library, 1975; “Zimbabwe: A Land Divided”, Robin Palmer & Isabel Birch, Oxfam Pubs., 1992).

Britain repeatedly failed to properly pressure the ruling white minority to face up to the evils of the system of social injustice through which they had built their comfortable lifestyles and material standard of living. His-

torically, white Rhodesians had commandeered by force the country's best land for themselves, and this issue was at the heart of the racial divide. Out of the inevitable violence came the current distressing societal legacy.

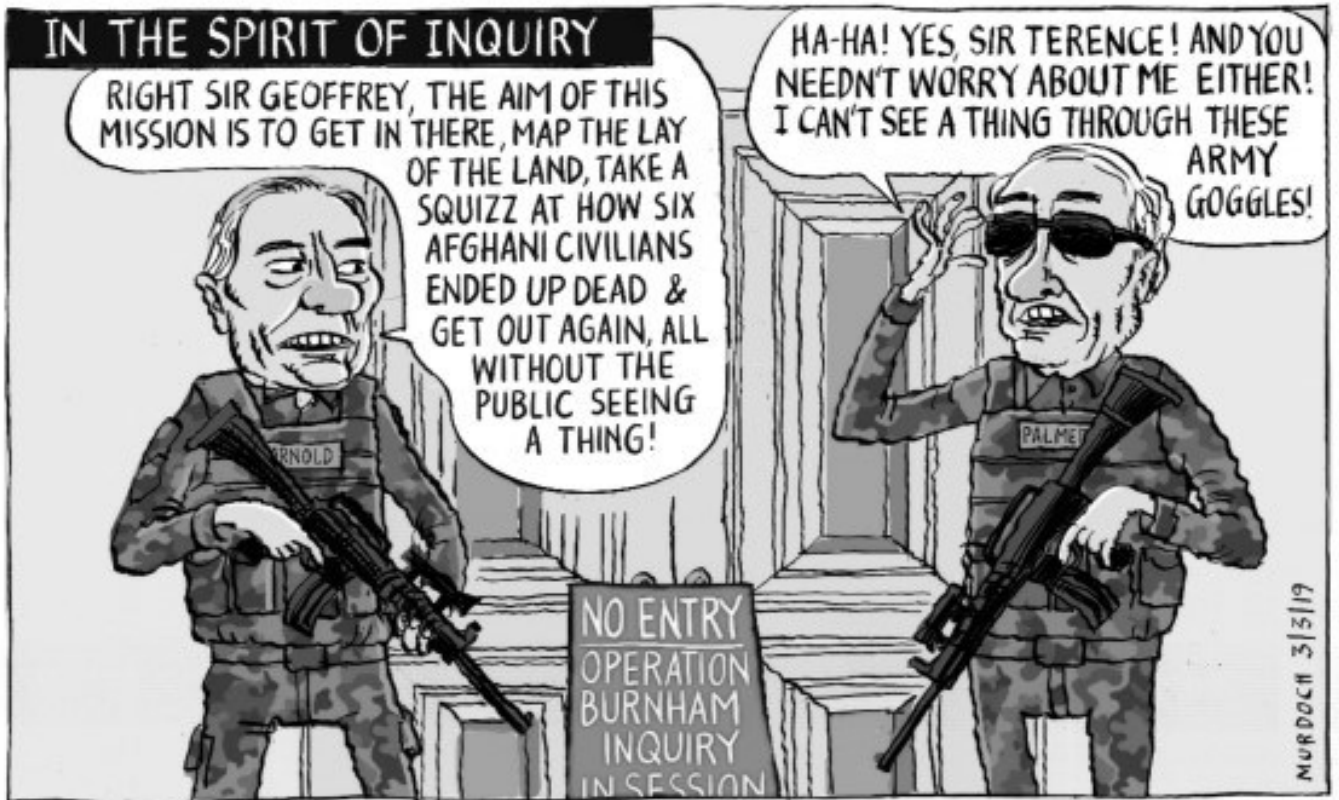
From Rhodesia to Iraq, and from Venezuela to Syria, the West's imperial reach has stretched out in one pernicious form or another. The “intellectual foundations” of the imperial hegemon, the US, were rooted in racism. This ideology has been “a European-derived, militaristic vision of imperialism backed by nothing more substantial than the notion that the manifest destiny of the US was to govern racially inferior Latin Americans and East Asian” (“The Sorrows Of Empire”, op. cit., p51). In recent times, Trumpism has connected with the British legacy in Africa, and what the President calls “shit-hole” nations. *Racism rules, ok?!*

It is quite sobering that at the very time Aotearoa/NZ is moving to include in its school curriculum the mandatory and better teaching of our own history in race relations, the myths around “kith and kin” still flourish, as peddled even by State-owned TVNZ. The newly announced education programme will cover Maori-Pakeha interaction in some detail, including the Land Wars. Yet white Pakeha culture, as fostered by our Anglo-American heritage and its current manifestations, can be so selectively self-serving in its morality. We have just seen this demonstrated by TV1's coverage of the death of Robert Mugabe, along with other similar media items about his death.

Compounding Contradictions

There are surely some outstanding contradictions and ironies written in the historical global record up to the present day. For certain, as continually stressed, the problems are ultimately very deep-rooted. “The problem after (the 1956) Suez (Crisis), obviously, was that just as Arab nationalism had earlier posed a threat to Britain, the US now had to attempt to control and shape Arab nationalism's and Islam's complex, diverse, and mercurial nature, and avoid assuming the role of its new principal enemy” (“Confronting The Third World: United States Foreign Policy 1945-1988”, Gabriel Kolko, Pantheon Books, 1988, p84).

But, in the 21st Century, America's



Sharon Murdoch, 3/3/19

struggle to dominate the Middle East and beyond has ensued in the terrorist “War on Terror”, and the host of horrendous, unravelling consequences. Peoples in an area stretching from North Africa, across the heart of the Middle East, and into Central Asia, have long suffered from the West’s predation of fossil fuels, as well as other minerals such as uranium; and all the various, closely related geopolitical objectives in competition with other powers. Imperial reach today, of course, stretches around the globe – from Iraq to Venezuela, and from Nigeria to the Falklands/Malvinas.

Stark Choices For The Future

“Washington is still waging a worldwide counterinsurgency (COIN), with (*more than 800!*) military bases that span the globe” (*Why Trump Now? It’s the Empire, Stupid*¹⁹, 9/6/16). Over the last decade or so, US special forces have conducted thousands of operations in a wide range of countries (e.g. “The American Empire’s Long Reach”²⁰, 19/2/19; “US Special Operations Forces Deployed To 149 Countries In 2017”, *War Is Boring*²¹, 15/12/17).

Western publics, as their militaries became more interventionist in foreign lands, were increasingly put on a more antagonistic footing towards a range of overseas enemies. These “enemies”, to be sure, were

so often cynically contrived and manufactured by the West’s propaganda machine. All this has deepened social prejudices and perverted understandings of what was, and is, really going on.

An example is the State terrorist strategy of drone warfare. “President Trump is making it harder to know how many civilians the (US) government kills by remote control”, especially in places like Yemen, Pakistan, and North Korea” (“The Secret Death Toll Of America’s Drones”, *New York Times*²², 30/3/19; “Afghanistan: Shocking Disregard For Civilians As US Drone Strike Adds To Death Toll”, *Amnesty International*²³, 19/9/19). Serial killing is just a routine practice for American Presidents.

Today, too, President Trump can actually preach an evil reactionary nationalism in neo-fascist mode. He does so brazenly, even at the very seat of multilateralism, the UN itself. This institution is ironically located in New York, where Trump proclaims at the very UN building itself that the future belongs to tribalist nationalism and “patriotism” (e.g., in a speech there in September 2019). Trumpism thus openly and unashamedly condemns humankind to Social Darwinist conflict and war. *In certain very critical ways, it’s Hitler all over again!*

This mind-blowingly stupid and vile vision contrasts starkly with that laid out at the UN during the same month of September by our own PM, Jacinda Ardern. She admirably appealed for multilateralism – for collective, cooperative action in dealing with climate change, and other challenges to our existence. Working together internationally towards positive strategies and solutions is the only hope for human survival.

Lies, “Fake News”, And Cover-Ups

“Official lying increases exponentially as imperialism and militarism take over” (“The Sorrows Of Empire”, op. cit., p298). The American military see propaganda as one of its major new functions” (ibid.). In Aotearoa/NZ, “the ongoing inquiry into Operation Burnham, a 2010 Special Air Service (SAS)-led raid in Afghanistan in which it is claimed civilians were killed”, has cast very serious and increasingly convincing charges against the NZ Defence Force (NZDF) of a calculated cover-up of the truth (“Credibility Dilemma For NZDF”, *Press* editorial, 21/9/19; “Ex-SAS Leader Stays Quiet”, ibid.).

The NZDF evinces all the signs of lying and propaganda in line with American militarist strategy. After all, it has long been for the most part a subordinate agency of the military-



Sharon Murdoch, 20/10/19

industrial complex. To be sure, Operation Burnham was a typical North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NA TO)/US death squad “kill or capture” raid on remote Afghan villages in which the NZ SAS took a leading role (“Hit & Run: The New Zealand SAS In Afghanistan And The Meaning Of Honour”*, Nicky Hager & Jon Stephenson, Potton & Burton, 2017). Ultimately, it has been alleged that the “primary purpose of the cover-up” was to protect those responsible “from being held accountable for their decisions and actions”, something all too familiar (*ibid.*, p108; “Civilian Casualties ‘Entirely Plausible’”, *Press*, 18/9/19).
*Reviewed by Jeremy Agar in *Peace Researcher* 53²⁴, June 2017. Ed.

Growing Geopolitical Contortions And Confusion

Meantime, uncertainties and confusion continue to spread on the geopolitical scene. Some thorny problems are getting more convoluted and intractable. For example, until October 2019, Kurdish fighters in the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were backed by the US but are considered by NATO-aligned Turkey as “terrorists”. Then, Trump abruptly abandoned the Kurds, opening the door for Turkey to attack across the border into Kurdish Syria. Such confusion and lack of clarity for Western publics can increase unease and uncertainty, thus inducing more neg-

ative reactions.

Most ironically, the big American TV networks like CBS now seem torn between critical coverage of alleged war crimes in Syria’s north-western Idlib province, as inflicted by Syrian/Russia aircraft targeting hospitals and medical centres, while warning as well about the danger of an ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) revival. Apparently, militant Islamist ideology is simmering away in refugee camps sheltering the family survivors of dead or captured foreign fighters.

Yet the current tragedy of Syria owes a great deal to US-driven support for fundamentalist fighters. It has been the height of the calculated hypocrisy of the Anglo-American axis that this bloc has instigated, funded, and used the so-called “White Helmet” brigades in order to highlight the regime’s bombing of civilians (see my “Growing Challenges For Peace: Compounding Geopolitical Confrontation, Insurgency, & Counter-Insurgency”, in *PR* 55²⁵, June 2018).

Sickeningly, these civilians have been deliberately put in harm’s way by the backing of the axis for rebels and jihadists located in civilian areas. We heard continually about how ISIS was cruelly using civilians as shields in both Syria and Iraq. In practice, the Anglo-American axis

has long used the lives of civilians as pawns, both directly and indirectly.

This has been a Western strategy deliberately designed to garner domestic public antagonism to Assad, and so corresponding support for the “rebels”. Horrendously enough then, the militarist Anglo-American axis has therefore sacrificed many thousands of civilian and children lives, and countless injured and traumatised victims. It has done so to try and keep the civil war going for its own geopolitical purposes (*ibid.*).

Compounding Conflicts And Confrontations

Internecine conflict continues to plague Syria and its people. For instance, it was reported in August 2019 that: “Syrian regime forces carried out an air strike near a Turkish military convoy ... in a rare example of Damascus directly confronting Turkish troops operating inside Syria” (“Assad’s Fighter Jets Attack Turkish Convoy”, *Press*, 21/8/19). The Syrian government had earlier accused the convoy of “carrying weapons for rebels” (*ibid.*).

Similarly, in Lebanon, another theatre of internecine conflict involving outside forces as well, dangerous tensions are increasing. Israeli prosecution of armed attacks on Hamas in the Gaza Strip and the persecu-

tion of the Palestinians there has overlapped with regular Israeli military assaults on Lebanon and Syria. The Israeli-Egyptian blockade of Gaza is a key cause contributing to this regional conflict.

By the end of August 2019, the Lebanese Army was firing on "Israeli surveillance drones over southern Lebanon. The Army, which only has assault rifles in its fight against the drones, wants to 'protect its sovereignty after an Israel drone strike on Hizbollah territory in Beirut'" ("Army Targets Israeli Drones After Beirut Attack", *Press*, 30/8/19).

Given these latest armed exchanges, the UN Security Council well warns that "violations of the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon in the latter country's south 'could lead to a new conflict that none of the parties or the region can afford'" ("Security Council Warns Of New Conflict", *Press*, 31/8/19). Again, more peace-making and mediation efforts are urgently required. We must back the UN more than ever in its peace-keeping efforts.

One big plus of late has been the call by France for better relations with Russia. "Jean-Yves Le Drian, the French Foreign Minister, said a prisoner exchange between Russia and Ukraine had created a 'window of opportunity' to ease tensions" ("Time Is Right' To Bring Russia In From Cold", *Press*, 11/9/19). Hopefully, this appeal is a harbinger of better things to come.

Standing Up For Peace-Making And Mediation

The American public is certainly primed with regular expectations of military engagement overseas. Unfortunately, public acceptance is widespread for drone warfare and constant special forces' interventions in a multitude of countries. "A majority of Americans (67%) say terrorism should be a top priority this year (in 2019), though this varies greatly by party" (*State Of The Union 2019: "How Americans See Major National Issues"*²⁶, 4/2/19).

The Republican Party and the ruling Administration are deeply aggressive on a number of overseas issues ("US Foreign Policy As Bellicose As Ever"²⁷, 10/5/19). At the same time, on the other hand, many Americans appear to be more and more concerned about the Trump Administration's international postur-

ing. Earlier in 2019, there was even a bipartisan Congressional attempt to try and rein in the Administration's war on Yemen, given the still unfolding, horrendous human cost inflicted on the inhabitants of this tragically suffering country.

As highlighted earlier, Yemen, of course, is in recent years the country most malignly and hypocritically side-lined by the crony Western media in their subservience to geopolitical imperatives. For sure, to strongly reiterate, the Anglo-American axis is Nazi-like in its evil persecution of this country (e.g. "Britain Could Stop The War In Yemen In Days. But It Won't", David Wearing, *Guardian*²⁸, 3/4/19).

There is actually a deep connection between the Christchurch terrorist gunman and the State terrorism of the Atlantic Alliance in its siege of Yemen, and its ongoing depredations in a host of other countries, whatever the specific form taken. The American peace and justice movement, along with its allies in Aotearoa/NZ and elsewhere, has a huge task with which to grapple. But the vision is clearly articulated ("A Green New Deal Needs To Fight US Militarism"²⁹, 8/5/19). There is surely great positive potential in the mass movements of young people organising and marching for action on global warming.

The challenges of climate change and the threat of nuclear war are now intimately interlinked (see my "Tackling The 'New Abnormal' Of Dangerous Politics", in *PR* 57³⁰, June 2019). *Overall, we will have to work a lot harder in networking, campaigning, etc! But there are now millions worldwide in the generation growing up who may well rally to our banners!!* The survival of humankind, along with that of so many other species with which we share this wonderful planet, surely depends on it.

The Angst Of Population Growth

A key precipitating motivation for my own political activism way back in the past was in response to the vicious use of perfectly valid environmental concerns about human population growth ("Environmentalism In NZ: The Potential For A Neo-Anarchist Approach", in *New Zealand Environment*, "The Fast Track" edition, Spring 1979, pp22-26). Some Rightwing ideologues back in the late 1960s/early 70s promoted a

totally anti-human genocide of poor people, above all those living in the "Third World". This was the modern emergence of the "let them starve" and "let them drown" school.

It was highlighted by the express declaration of the prominent American biologist and environmentalist Garrett Hardin that we would have to cut off the hands of those people trying desperately to clamber aboard the lifeboat in which the already well-off were ensconced. Hardin expounded this argument in his notorious essay "Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor" (*Wikipedia*³¹).

He expounded and elaborated more generally on his thesis of human development/evolution in a famous and widely discussed essay, "The Tragedy Of The Commons" in 1968 (*Wikipedia*³²). Hardin's thesis has been open to varying and quite contrary interpretations, despite the avid articulation of his own particular political ideology in other contexts.

Lifeboat Ethics And the Gospel Of Racial Genocide

In 2018 in Aotearoa/NZ, Hardin's "lifeboat theory" was brought home to our shores here but only if one was already aware and sensitive to the issues involved. NZ sociologist, Professor Paul Spoonley, an expert on the far Right, has signalled how: "The visit by (two Canadian white supremacists) Stefan Molyneux and Lauren Southern in 2018 highlighted NZ was now part of the alt-Right and its conspiratorial views about Muslims, the media and politicians... White nationalism was (is) back" ("Are We Racist As ...?", Philip Matthews [more excellent work by this journalist], *Press*, 14/9/19).

Lauren Southern, who is banned from Britain because of the risk of racial incitement to civil disturbance, should have been banned outright from coming to Aotearoa/NZ. Southern has actually participated in activities directed by white European nationalists at preventing rescue ships trying to save drowning refugees in the Mediterranean (*Wikipedia*³³). In other words, she has been a participant in the strategy enjoined by Professor Garrett Hardin to drown the poor at sea. *Lauren Southern is thus demonstrably evil and, indeed, should be in prison for her despicable actions!*

But in Aotearoa/NZ, we have a far

Right front group called the Free Speech Coalition NZ (FSCNZ) which aims at facilitating hate speech and racism. It has spent more than \$200,000 to date in an effort to affirm “the speaking rights of (the) two Canadians” named above (“NZ’s Rightwing Turn Up In Force For Controversial Free Speech Case”, *RNZ News*³⁴, 4/9/19).

The FSCNZ claims that the Auckland City Council broke the law in banning the alt-Right Canadian activists from speaking at a Council venue. It can be seen that this outfit has wealthy backing for its legal case. Most significantly, this episode illustrates how fractions of the corporate Right are deliberately cultivating and facilitating the views and actions of the far Right. *Neo-fascism is on the rise!*

Jordan Williams of the corporate-backed NZ Taxpayers’ Union is a frontman for the FSCNZ. The group bristles with other Rightwing figures – including Don Brash, Stephen Franks, Lindsay Perigo, Michael Bassett, David Cumin, and Malcom Moncrief-Spittle. A few so-called “Left-leaning” people are also members of the FSCNZ, most notably Chris Trotter (“There’s No Such Thing As Free Speech”, *Standard*³⁵, 11/7/18).

A key strategy of the far Right in these times has been the very cynical use of the issue of free speech to peddle their own hateful propaganda (“The Rise And Rise Of Neo-Fascism”, op. cit.). Professor Spoonley, who has studied the far Right after the Christchurch terror attacks (on two mosques on 15/3/19), says of the hard core of militant white supremacists in Aotearoa/NZ that these people “appear unrepentant and still incredibly hostile” (“NZ’s Far Right Still A Threat”, *Sunday Star Times*, 7/7/19).

The Challenges Of Human Ecology

Garrett Hardin, a professor of human ecology, certainly had some very real insight into the problematic nature of the human condition, its evolutionary trajectory in the biosphere, and the mounting pressures on us as a species (Garrett Hardin, *Wikipedia*, *ibid*). Unrestrained population growth is undoubtedly a fundamental problem for our species, as flagged by Hardin, and many other biologists and human ecologists, let alone environmentalists in gen-

eral (see, for example, Paul Ehrlich’s “Population, Resources, And The Environment: Issues In Human Ecology”, PR Ehrlich & Anne H Ehrlich, WH Freeman & Co., 1970; & his “The Population Bomb”, Balantine, Friends of the Earth Book, Pan, 1968/71).

To deny otherwise is to deny that the human species is a biological animal like any other animal, and that a species can overshoot its’ carrying capacity. Western civilisation’s ruling myth is that humans are intelligent enough to somehow substitute for nature by the innovation and application of technology. In turn, such hubris can be seen as a function of its evolutionary role in the growth of the Earth’s dominant species (*however fleeting it might prove to be if we do not act in time!*)

Again, so far as the human species is concerned, the critical issues relate to tackling the problems of economic growth on a small fragile planet by creating a circular, far more sustainable economy in the transition to a carbon-free/neutral, much lower production/consumption system; and sharing the world’s resources fairly; while effecting humane population control.

Contesting The Commons

But, like economist Thomas Robert Malthus, Professor Hardin’s proposed solutions for dealing with this problem were unashamedly barbaric – in a nutshell, let the poor starve and the boat-people drown, and even help them on their way if we can. He was an enthusiastic Malthusian Social Darwinist of the worst kind. Hardin wanted to deliberately sacrifice the lives of other human beings, indeed the most vulnerable, in order to further his own interests, and those of his nationalist tribalism.

Hardin was thus ready to defend his fortuitously fortunate and privileged position in life at any human cost. We can well apply the epithets to him of “far Rightist”, “neo-fascist”, and such-like, including “evil” (e.g., “The ‘Tragedy Of The Commons’ Was Invented By A White Supremacist Based On A False History, And It’s Toxic Bullshit”³⁶, 7/3/19).

Yet, as indicated, we also need to acknowledge the validity of some key understandings of Hardin’s human ecology, at the same time as we vigorously reject his Social Darwinism. For instance, take his pro-

found recognition of what has been called: “Hardin’s First Law of Human Ecology”, i.e. “We can never do merely one thing. Any intrusion into nature has numerous effects, many of which are unpredictable” (Garrett Hardin, op. cit.).

New technologies always have environmental costs, one way or another. Some, of course, may indeed be a lot more beneficial long-term than others. We can then justify their regular application, taking account of the costs and benefits of their overall life-cycle and impact. In sum, we have to be alert to the various costs and benefits in evaluating any innovations.

Furthermore, Professor Garrett Hardin was certainly correct in his thesis about the monumental human failure to understand and act preemptively on one of most basic ecological issues of all – the carrying capacity relationship of an animal species population to its environment; and how the competition for resources can influence the course and outcome for a particular animal species. The global resource war has long been in play, and increasing in intensity in the 21st Century (“Resource Wars: The New Landscape Of Global Conflict”, Michael T. Klare, Metropolitan/Owl, 2001).

But Hardin was clearly very happy to enjoy the resources and profits extracted by the American industrialised empire for the cultivation of his own privileged lifestyle. In the years immediately post WWII, the US was consuming about half the total of world resources used annually. It still consumes a very disproportionate share for the size of its population. Its global reach for exploitation of peoples and ecosystems has been enormous, and is ongoing – now in rivalry with the rising power of China, and other ambitious powers.

Social Darwinism Reborn

Professor Garrett Hardin himself had four children, since he regarded himself as intelligent enough to breed! But his prescriptive maxim for the poor was that: “the freedom to breed is intolerable”!! Hardin-type Social Darwinism has overlapped into politico-economic movements like neo-liberalism, neo-conservatism, and libertarianism – all deeply rooted in actuality in American capitalism with its technocratic exuberance and ever-expanding frontier.

He was even against the Welfare State in his own country. In so many ways, then, Garrett Hardin's views are expressive of Trumpism and other forms of the far Right. His type of Social Darwinism thus serves as a pseudo-intellectual rationale for this increasingly menacing extreme of the political spectrum.

As I observed above, Hardin's famous thesis on the "Tragedy of the Commons" - a wider, more cerebral view of the human predicament - has in fact proved to be both very influential and controversial in interpretation ("Oxford Dictionary Of Environment And Conservation", Chris Park, Oxford University Press, 2007/8, p456). Some of what Garrett Hardin had to say on the matter can even be interpreted as a direct (*if ironic, in wider context!*) condemnation of capitalism, globalisation, and free trade, when construed in terms of the implications dictated by the laws of human ecology.

To be sure, Professor Hardin concluded in his original (1968) essay on the "Tragedy Of The Commons" that: "each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase (his wealth) without limit - in a world that is limited. *Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons* (my emphasis). Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all" (ibid.). Capitalism, indeed, promotes the freedom to plunder the commons of the Earth's environment - its lands, seas, forests, minerals, air, etc. The free market is ultimately a planetary wrecking machine!

Capitalising On The Commons?!

Professor Garrett Hardin illustrated his thesis by the abuse of traditional commons land as he defined this situation. Villagers competed for pasturing their livestock. Individuals set out to maximise their gains by competing to employ as many animals on as much land as they could utilise. But, of course, the commons can be managed very differently. "Although common resource systems have been known to collapse due to over-use (such as in over-fishing) many examples have existed, and still do exist, where members of a community with access to a common resource cooperate or regulate to exploit those resources prudently without collapse".

"Elinor Ostrom was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics for demonstrating exactly this concept in her book 'Governing The Commons', which includes examples of how local communities were able to do this without top-down regulations" ("Tragedy Of The Commons", op. cit.). It can be most pertinently added here too that: "The Tragedy Of The Commons' analogy applies . . . to common property resources, including the atmosphere, the oceans, and the wilderness" ("Oxford Dictionary Of Environment And Conservation", op. cit.).

Adam Smith's doctrine is thus neatly turned on its head! Neo-liberalism, for certain, is eventually self-destructive. But Hardin himself, as emphasised, was a neo-Malthusian of the worst kind. He would withhold food from starving children and cut off the hands of drowning boat-people. In practice, tragically enough, the Anglo-American axis has led the West in implementing Hardin's avowedly Social Darwinist ideology about the competition for the resources of the planetary commons.

(For background and analysis of Hardin's ideology see: "Live And Let Die: The Tragedy Of Hardin's Social Darwinism"³⁷; for an alternative vision, focused on environmental sustainability and social justice, see "Whose Common Future?: Reclaiming The Commons", *Ecologist*, Earthscan Pubs., 1993). This Anglo-American strategy is more extreme than ever today although assiduously camouflaged, rationalised, and shielded by the mainstream media.

Obviously, if we embrace the principles of common and genuine humanity, we need to share the Earth's limited resources as cooperatively as possible. We need to do this in working for more sustainable lifestyles, including humane and far more effective birth control policy and practices. Female empowerment and promotion of women's rights are critical in achieving this. One of the great ironies of Trumpism is that President Trump has cut foreign aid for birth control provisions, while stepping up the firewalls - from immigration barriers to State terrorist incursions - to avowedly protect the US against the world's poorest people (naturally called "terrorists", "rapists", or some other pejorative label).

Commitment To A Rapidly Transformed Globalism

Given the global crisis signalled by the UN and its call for concerted worldwide action, concerned citizens in every country need to respectively encourage and pressure their governments to address the challenges as much as they can. Worsening climate change/global warming; fracturing societies; deepening inequalities; compounding geopolitical confrontations; etc., demand collective international action on an urgent and, indeed, supreme scale.

Here in Aotearoa/NZ, we face continuously the suicidal stupidity of vested capitalist interests, as represented in particular by National and ACT, and their related backers. As well, we have to deal so often with misleading, grossly biased, and even hostile elements of the mainstream media. The dominant system is riven with contradictions and confusions. But we must soldier on. Heartening progress is being made in certain spheres of activity, on both the domestic front and international fronts.

We should build as positively we can on the well-deserved mana already achieved by our PM Jacinda Ardern on the international scene. We have to get our Government and relevant agencies to move further into the fields of peace-making, mediation, and positive, pre-emptive action. We must ultimately move to real neutrality and independence. *Plenty of big challenges ahead!*

End notes:

- ¹ <https://thestandard.org.nz/national-are-lighting-political-dumpster-fires-while-the-amazon-burns/>
- ² <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/apr/15/its-going-to-happen-is-world-ready-for-war-in-space>
- ³ <https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/climate-news/115816496/naomi-klein-we-are-seeing-the-beginnings-of-the-era-of-climate-barbarism>
- ⁴ <https://www.generationzero.org>
- ⁵ <https://news.un.org>
- ⁶ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1032811>
- ⁷ www.hrw.org
- ⁸ <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/updates/update-2019-06-26.html>
- ⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rocket_Lab
- ¹⁰ <https://www.lockheedmartin.com/en-us/search.html?q=new%20zealand>

- ¹¹www.rocketlabusa.com
- ¹²<https://thespinoff.co.nz/business/17-05-2019/shell-be-right-attitude-to-rocket-lab-putting-nuclear-free-nz-at-risk-experts-say/>
- ¹³<http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/51/10.html>
- ¹⁴<http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/49/15.html>
- ¹⁵<https://www.scribd.com/document/33725401/Peace-Researcher-Vol-Issue19-June-1988>
- ¹⁶<http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr54.pdf>
- ¹⁷<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/politics/2019/09/simon-bridges-rejects-claim-he-met-with-china-s-head-of-secret-police.html>
- ¹⁸https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook%E2%80%93Cambridge_Analytica_data_scandal
- ¹⁹<https://www.thenation.com/article/why-trump-now-its-the-empire-stupid/>
- ²⁰<https://www.thenation.com/article/america-empire-war-terror-counterterrorism/>
- ²¹<https://warisboring.com/u-s-special-operations-forces-deployed-to-149-countries-in-2017/>
- ²²<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/30/opinion/drones-civilian-casualties-trump-obama.html>
- ²³<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/09/afghanistan-shocking-disregard-for-civilians-as-us-drone-strike-adds-to-death-toll/>
- ²⁴<http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr53.pdf>
- ²⁵<http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr55.pdf>
- ²⁶<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/02/04/state-of-the-union-2019-how-americans-see-major-national-issues/>
- ²⁷<https://www.conterpunch.org/2019/05/10/us-foreign-policy-as-bellucose-as-ever/>
- ²⁸<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/03/britain-war-in-yemen>
- ²⁹<https://jacobinmag.com/2019/05/green-new-deal-fight-militarism-imperialism>
- ³⁰<http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/PR57.pdf>
- ³¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifeboat_ethics
- ³²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garrett_Hardin
- ³³https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lauren_Southern
- ³⁴<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/398063/nz-s-right-wing-turn-up-in-force-for-controversial-free-speech-case>
- ³⁵<https://thestandard.org.nz/theres-no-such-thing-as-free-speech/>
- ³⁶<https://boingboing.net/2019/03/07/scientific-fraud.html>
- ³⁷<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/152390842000259668> ■

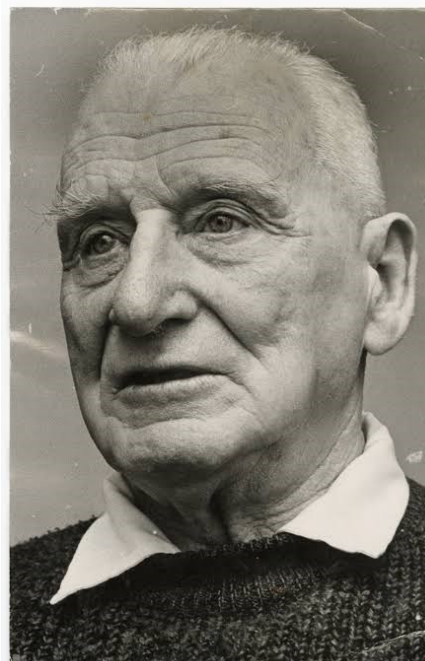
REVIEWS

By Jeremy Agar

A COMMUNIST IN THE FAMILY

Searching For Rewi Alley

by Elspeth Sandys
Otago University Press, 2019



In China there are numerous statues of Rewi Alley (1897-1987). One of the many photos in Elspeth Sandys' intriguing account of her journey of discovery of the man she had thought to be her uncle is of the current President Xi Jinping's father, who was a big shot in the Red Army. Alley in fact knew all sorts of important people, Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai among them.

In the country of his birth there is but one memorial to him, in Springfield, inland from Christchurch, where Alley lived for the first month of his life. It is one of two sculptures there, the other being of a doughnut. For the next nine years the family lived a few kilometres away in Amberley, where the only public monument is to another fiery tempered Cantabrian, Charles Upham (but elsewhere in the narrative the Alley memorial joins it, having been absent-mindedly transferred to Amberley).

Having a Communist relative would have been an embarrassment to a family which seems to have been more or less a typical example of provincial New Zealand. A brother was an All Black; a relative trained Phar Lap. It was certainly not to Sandys' father's taste. He told her early on: "Your uncle's a filthy commie". Neither would Alley's own father, a harsh primary principal, have been keen. Sandys, who has a long record as a novelist and memoirist, wanted to know what made Uncle Rewi tick? What did he believe? Would she like what she found?

An early discovery was that she had been adopted so Rewi was not a blood relative after all. This might have helped the author by providing a degree of separation, a lessening of direct personal involvement. At any rate the result is a thoughtful, nuanced discussion. She has no trouble being objective about a very complex man.

From Shanghai OE To Gung Ho Cooperative Movement

After Amberley, Dad transferred to Christchurch. Rewi left school in the middle of World War 1 and was soon fighting in France, where he was wounded in battle. Always restless, back in NZ Rewi was a partner in a scrubby Taranaki farm which was never viable. When Alley went to China politics had nothing to do with it. It was meant to be an OE thing. In Shanghai he was a fireman, then a factory inspector. The latter must have been a depressing episode: in a city run by unaccountable Europeans, where the locals were virtual slaves, a factory inspector's job was surely a mockery, and it would have been what tipped Alley into activism.

Shanghai in the 1920s was notorious for its wild expats, but it seems that Alley lived moderately enough. China attracted a generation of adventurous Westerners. In 1938, for instance, in Wuhan they included Peter Fleming (brother of author Ian Fleming, the creator of James Bond, Agent 007) and writers WH Auden, Christopher Isherwood and Ernest Hemingway.

Meanwhile, the rest of the country was chaotic. Warlords, no more than local bullies, ruled some parts, so the Nationalist Kuomintang (KMT), under Chiang Kai-shek, formed an alliance with the new Communist forces supposedly against the warlords. Chiang's real enemy came to be Mao. After Japan added to the mess by invading Manchuria in 1931 – and bombing Shanghai the next year – Chiang let it be known that while the Japanese were a “disease of the skin”, the Communists were a “disease of the heart”. He unleashed his White Terror, what he was pleased to call “the holy work of extermination” of his compatriots.

Alley's huge reputation is based on what he called Gung Ho, translated as Work Together, a cooperative movement that grew to 500,000 different factories*, turning out goods for the army throughout unoccupied China. Gung Ho was conceived by a study group in Shanghai. Besides Alley, the group included the American Edgar Snow and a frequently mentioned New Zealander, James Bertram.** Many of the factories were in caves. A visiting Geoff Chapple (who wrote one of several previous biographies of Alley) saw in him “the god of digging the long drop where it could not contaminate the well water”. Chapple was talking of Alley's inexhaustible pragmatism and resilience.

* The 500,000 figure presumably totals all factories, including those established in the 30 years after 1942, during which Alley was removed from the movement by Mao, whom Sandys suggests was “jealous”. Rewi had been too successful. The number of factories in 1942 is put at 100,000. ** “James Bertram (1910-93) was a New Zealand Rhodes scholar, a journalist, writer, relief worker, prisoner of war and a university professor”, *Wikipedia*.

For ten years from 1966 the Cultural Revolution raged. Contact with foreigners was forbidden and apparently Alley's life was in danger. It was only Zhou's intervention on his behalf that kept him out of trouble. Sandys sees a parallel with the French Revolution of 1789, when the Jacobins unleashed the Terror. In this comparison the so-called Gang of Four played a role comparable to that of the Jacobins and Mao that of Robespierre. After they

were ousted, Alley, who Sandys says hated Mao, was reinstated in his Gung Ho.

Both Celebrated & Spied On

You'd think that in the West the news out of China would have rendered Alley as politically incorrect, too dangerous to know, but his visitors in the 1970s included Pierre Trudeau, Gough Whitlam and Ted Kennedy. It seems that attitudes towards China fluctuate according to circumstance. There's the Cold War China, the Red Peril China that so alarmed the US after Mao turned up in Peking (as it was then called) in 1949. And before that there was the racist concept of “yellow peril” China. But the China which attracted liberal politicians and intellectuals was the China of freedom fighters resisting corruption and exploitation. And for liberal intellectuals it always helps if the oppressed you are championing are exotic.

This ambivalence played out in Alley's four visits back to NZ. From the 1960s on he was followed by the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service – the State spies – and for a while the NZ Broadcasting Service stipulated that his name never be mentioned on air. Yet both before and after this time, Alley was often celebrated, and in surprising ways and by unlikely people.

In 1948, for instance, the UK government wanted to confer a knighthood on him and a Foreign Office man travelled by sea and then by truck across China to get Alley's agreement in person. It did not happen, as the Gung Ho founder thought the offer “a ridiculous thing”. So, it is not surprising that the Norman Kirk government in 1970s' NZ invited Alley to give talks or that the next Labour PM, David Lange, dubbed him “our greatest son”. But who in NZ said he should be knighted? Don Brash, that's who. And we read that Alley got on just fine with Piggy Muldoon.

Matters Chinese were always throwing up surprises. One great friend of Alley's was the wife of the thug Chiang Kai-shek. Support in general was widespread. Funding for the co-operatives flowed from the USA and other Western countries. In NZ CORSO (Council of Organisations for Relief Services Overseas) was a significant ally. Alley had helped establish the many China friendship societies which helped maintain

public awareness.

Wouldn't Have Liked Capitalist China

Alley's dislike of Mao would have played a part in his initial support for Deng Xiaoping when he freed up the rules to allow some private property. Sandys, though, is sure that her man would not be at all happy with how China is going these days, posing rhetorically the question, Is Xi anti-corruption or is he anti opponents? The answer is surely the latter. Sandys offers a spectacular statistic: the 200 richest Chinese have wealth totalling \$NZ720 billion. All of them are members of the Communist Party.

Alternating with her account of Rewi's life, Sandys relates the story of her recent family trip to China, where they trooped around sites which were important to their famous relative. There is more ambivalence here too. The locals, she says, were unfailingly friendly and polite, but exhausting too, always hurrying them along to the next exhibit and the next statue. The family spent many days on a bus, bumping along a huge country, while guides sang “Three Blind Mice”. You sense some disappointment that the reality of “long drop” Rewi has been sanitised, sometimes to the point of obliterating any memory. And she admits to having tired of the food.

In this she was like Rewi himself, endlessly (privately) conflicted but always fascinated. China, she says frequently, is so complex that it is always surprising. For Rewi, she concludes, China was an “essential harmony of body and spirit, of yin and yang, beginnings and endings, life and death, Confucianism, Taoism, Communism, Buddhism, Christianity”. Sixty odd years ago the influential historian Arnold Toynbee was widely derided for putting Chinese civilisation at the centre of global culture. Sandys is suggesting something along these lines, but, unlike Toynbee, doing so modestly and implicitly.

He Wasn't Ideological

The themes of ambivalence and complexity extend essentially to Rewi Alley himself. Much of his motivation was negative. He worked with the Communists not out of any theory or doctrine but because they sprang from the roots of daily life. And they were not murderous warlords or torturing Nationalists or ex-

exploitative Europeans or invading Japanese. Most of all they were not imperialist Americans. It was not until Alley visited a ruined Korea shortly after its war that he became confirmed in his hostility to US policy. US power was the biggest bully, certainly in more recent times.

So, there was never any sense that the commie in the family was ideological in the usual sense that the epithet suggests. There is no mention of his reading Marx and the boys and no instance of him pondering dialectical materialism. He did not mind being seen as a Communist, but to him it connoted a fight for better living conditions for an impoverished society (at that time back in NZ, children who did not tuck into their porridge were enjoined to think of “the starving millions”. At least I was). To be a commie might have been a disgrace, but to stick up for a fair go – which was Alley’s ethic - is core Kiwiana. And what better example in our national history of number-eight-wire thinking?

There’s a final ambivalence, the answer to the author’s original motivation. Just what did she conclude about her “uncle”? He was impatient, bad tempered and a poor, if prolific, poet. She touches on the question of whether Alley was gay, a matter which recent comment on the book has featured. She does not reach a conclusion except to say that there is no reason to think it relevant to understand his life. What matters is that Lange was right. “Uncle” Rewi, with all his eccentricities, was a great man. ■

DEAD LETTERS

Censorship And Subversion In New Zealand 1914-1920

by Jared Davidson
Otago University Press, 2019

Jared Davidson is a Wellingtonian, identified as an “archivist by day and a labour historian by night”, and a member of the Labour History Project. He is interested in “history from below”, one that looks not at kings and presidents but at the usually ignored and forgotten. This approach is better suited to reveal what daily life is like for ordinary people and the characters in this highly original account are very ordinary.

Most of the letters that Davidson presents were penned by workers, the “precariat” of a hundred years ago, who scrounged labouring jobs in mines and quarries and the wharves. Fortunately for us, what they had to say is always entertaining, often amusing, but more often sad. They come to us now as a great irony of history, as they exist only because they never got to the intended recipients. The letters had been impounded by the State and stored in the archives. That’s where Davidson began his research.

World War One Censorship

The epistolers might have been humdrum but the times were any-

thing but. The story covers the years between 1914 and 1920 when World War One made men mad. Yes, men. The State, that is, the Government and the bureaucracy, was entirely male, as were all those involved in the frontlines in Europe and Gallipoli.

The times being what they were, the men presiding over New Zealand were not into equality for women at the best of times. But these were the worst of times. The barbarity of the trenches might have been half a world away, but who knew what might happen if Germany won the war. Hysteria and panic were the almost inevitable result. The Hun might have spies. There might be terrorists.

So, it is not surprising that women were targeted, as were workers and foreigners and Leftists, and if you were a German woman like Marie Weitzel struggling to make ends meet in Te Aro and Petone, while venting her contempt for the Government and Britain, the Police were alarmed. It did not help that Weitzel did not attempt to moderate her manner when in public. She was the sort of woman who is always – and the blurb does not let us down – said to be “feisty”. She gave the State ample cause for concern as she hosted socialist meetings in her Wellington flat. Police observers were alarmed to see scruffy foreigners turning up at her front door on a regular basis.

At a time when xenophobia was the default setting, it was always going to be that people who looked a bit different or who spoke with a strange accent were going to be suspect, as are many of the scribes we see here. There’s a Norwegian

man, for instance, who echoes Marie’s rants against the British, both employing an array of extravagant insults to convey their contempt.

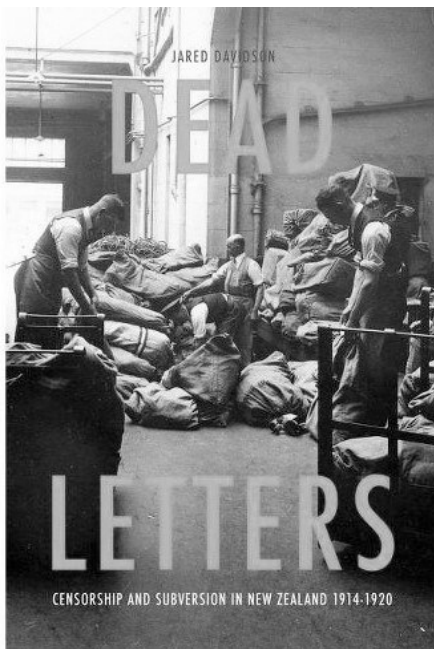
NZ: Little Britain

To contemporary readers it might seem odd that these arrivals in NZ railed against a culture on the other side of the world but it was not because of a common European background or because the war was being waged nearby. Everything told them that while they might be geographically antipodean, politically, culturally and socially they might as well have been in the UK.

They were told so: official NZ called itself British and World War One-era officials saw themselves as Britons (and for a long time after that too. A New Zealander travelling overseas was still being issued with a passport identifying her as a “British subject” two generations later. By the way, passports were introduced in the period under review, an emblem of the newly compromised globe).

What the State was telling Marie is that in NZ skins were white and beliefs were conventional, that is conservative and Christian – which in turn meant Catholic or mainstream Protestant. It was not only Germans or Norwegians – and of course the many Chinese - who were not British. Neither were Maori. Both the latter were “Other”.

This racial distinction did not deter these southern Britons from referring to their new country as Maoriland. Yet when a racially “pure” German like Marie Weitzel or a racially “pure” Norwegian like Even Christensen were found to have views seen as subversive their ethnicity



did not help them. There would have been an unspoken assumption that people so white yet so ungrateful were letting the side down and needed to be curbed before the rot of their heresy spread.

Conflict was expressed most starkly over conscription. This was adopted by the NZ government, forcing radical opposition to the war into a direct confrontation with State power. Any hint that someone was interfering with the drive to mobilise young men to go and die in the slaughter in France, Belgium and Turkey was to be curbed. In all 287 were charged with sedition or for uttering disloyal remarks. Davidson points out that in the UK itself, with many times NZ's population, 422 were so charged. NZ, far from the fray, was much the more repressive.

In Australia, though, a referendum on conscription failed, which is why several of the letters here were posted to Aussie addresses. Anti-war workers had gone there to escape the draft. Their messages to back home are in the book because the Australian censors had sent them back across the Tasman to the spies in Wellington.

In Australasia these recent migrants were often Irish (which might be why Australia rejected conscription). Irish hostility to orthodox opinion would often have been deepened by events in the old country because it was in 1916 that the Easter Rising in Dublin marked a turning point in Anglo-Irish relations. From then on, Irish independence was ultimately going to happen. The violence

heightened Irish opposition to Britain, but within NZ, Davidson reports, some saw it as proof that the Irish were unfit to be considered as Britons.

Others, identified by a historian as "part of the 'lace curtain' Catholic bourgeoisie found Irish events a source of embarrassment, threatening to undermine a carefully cultivated accommodation between the Irish ethnic identity, centred upon the Catholic Church, and civic respectability amid NZ's Anglo-Protestant majority population".

Foreign Lesbian Interned As Enemy of The State

One of the few censored correspondents not to be working class or radical was a Wellington doctor who just before the war had been praised by the Prime Minister, Bill Massey, for her Health Home in Miramar, opposite where Peter Jackson's Weta Workshop is now. Hjelmar Danevill was in trouble partly because she was Danish, but mostly because she was a woman who dressed in men's clothes. So, she was not true-blue Kiwi.

This leads Davidson into a discussion of early 20th Century views on lesbianism, a disposition which bewildered. When the Bolshevik Revolution intervened in 1917, there were further misplaced grounds to suspect the doctor, who never received the missives sent from women in town who variously admired her professionally and personally. Danevill was interned on Somes Island. Upon her release she left for San Francisco with the wife of a vicar.

So many confusions. Was the Miramar doctor singled out because she was clothed unusually? Or because she spoke with an accent which could have been Danish? Or was it because she seemed to be an intellectual with arty friends? It should not surprise that those who did not conform to the national stereotype – what came to be called the rugby, racing and beer culture – were suspect. A hundred years ago, no country would have been free from comparable - and many cruder - manifestations of ignorance and prejudice. But alone, that would not have been enough to maintain the hysteria.

Militant Unions & Workers The Target

That needed the true target of busi-

ness and its Government wing: worker and trade union militancy. In 1913, that is, just one year before the war erupted, New Zealand had gone through the most bitter labour disputes in its history. Strikes had been broken up by the overwhelming power of the State, helped along by "Massey's Cossacks", young farmers riding into town.

The tension was sharpest at the waterfront, where worker morale was tough. The security of ports and exports was vital to the agricultural economy and ports came to be places where State power was massed against workers. From ports sheep went out dead and men came back broken. A century ago, of course, there were no thoughts of health and safety. Davidson reports that in just one 12 months period in the middle of the war, there were 451 accidents on the Wellington and Lyttelton wharves alone.

If the fire of oppression was set by the needs of the generals and the bosses, it was lit by the happy circumstance that many of the watersiders – perfect scapegoats - were often recent immigrants like Even Christensen. They were to become fodder for sensational news as when a ship out of Wellington, bound for Melbourne, exploded, hit by a mine laid by a German U boat. That's not what a panicking nation believed. The *Port Kembla* had been sabotaged while in port. German agents had struck, obviously enabled by domestic German and Scandinavian wharfies.

Had a reasonable regard for national security been the justification for the censorship and internment, all of the targets of State terror – even the Danish doctor – would have been released immediately the war in Europe ended in November 1918. Instead, some lingered in detention until 1920, as Massey and his mates made overt attempts to anticipate disaster capitalism by entrenching their assault on freedom. Only reluctantly did the Government relent.

From our often smug and self-righteous distance it's easy to revert to the glib knowledge that the Government was composed of old white men so what would you expect. This belief might satisfy emotionally but as a way of thinking about our identity as New Zealanders its comic book superficiality does not help.

People – including the early 20th Century version of liberal progressives - were different then, unused to different cultures. The fact that there is scant record of any push back from universities or the wider population was not only because they were cowed.

Davidson's conclusion that the events of 1914-1920 need to be assessed equally from both an economic and a cultural perspective is judicious, one that his absorbing narrative backs. If you are interested in what we are like as a nation and how we came to be like it, this book is essential reading. Now that the schools, at last, are to be compelled to teach our history, they would do well to put "Dead Letters" on the curriculum. A theme to be emphasised is identity. What a great starting point. ■



AMERICA'S COVERT WAR IN EAST AFRICA

Surveillance, Rendition, Assassination

by Clara Usiskin, Hurst and
Company, London, 2019

The opening chapter in this analysis of the American "War on Terror" relates some barbaric details of torture, the victims being subjected to some thoroughly nasty abuse. The tortured are almost always connected to Islamic groups which worry the US as they threaten to carry the mayhem in the Middle East across the Red Sea into the Horn of Africa and down into Kenya and Uganda.

Clara Usiskin has been looking at East Africa for some time and her account is as detailed as any that's likely to become available. She's alarmed not just because the treatment of suspects is rough, but because the power that is being wield-

ed is unaccountable. Prisoners have been transferred to all sorts of places in the wider world – Europe, Guantanamo, to the US itself – and there seems to be no check on who is doing what. Officialdom is happy not to know.

It's called "rendition". The term originally applied to Southern US slave owners contracting bounty hunters to track down and return freed slaves who had escaped to the North. Usiskin traces its present use to the Bill Clinton Presidency. She says that rendition is what happened to Egyptians in Afghanistan whom the US had found expedient to use as foot soldiers against the former Soviet Union in the 1980s. When they were no longer needed in the cause of the mujahedeen and might return home, they were a potential threat to the Egyptian State, a key US servant, so they were "renditioned" to where nasty outcomes awaited.

Legacy Of British Divide & Rule Strategy

After 1998, when Islamists attacked the US Embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, the violence got worse, always aided and abetted by traditional local tensions. In Kenya the British colonists had always played on tribal divisions in order to divide and rule and their imperial

map had arbitrarily plonked a large minority of ethnic Somalis inside Kenya, where the Police do not need outside encouragement in order to torture and kill them.

Uganda, with its own sorry history of civil chaos, sent troops to Somalia. Usiskin makes the case that it did so at least partly because with an unemployment rate of 50% the Government needed to soak up men who would otherwise be jobless, and, having done so, needed to give them something to do with their American weapons.

There is discussion about the Somali pirates who not long ago were hijacking ships in international waters. An often-cited explanation has been that they did so because foreign fishing corporates had ruined their livelihoods. Usiskin thinks that a more robust explanation is that Somalia is what has come to be called a "failed state" with no ability to keep the peace. The pirates were opportunistic. They are now out of business, possibly because ships now might carry armed guards. ■

CAFCA/ABC ORGANISER ACCOUNT

Financial Report For Year Ended 31 March 2019

James Ayers, Organiser Account Treasurer

Presented to Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa Annual General Meeting 23rd September 2019

	2019	2018
Income		
Pledges ¹	\$20,928.20	\$23,950.20
Donations ²	\$19,487.94	\$ 9,267.45
Interest ³	\$ 1,790.62	\$ 3,115.82
Other	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Total Income	\$42,206.76	\$36,333.47
Expenditure		
Contractor ⁴	\$42,436.00	\$41,792.00
Internet/phone	\$ 1,481.48	\$ 1,348.01
Printer	\$ 61.70	\$ 80.00
Other	\$ 160.00	\$ 81.10
Total Expenditure	\$44,139.18	\$43,301.11
Cash surplus (Deficit)	-\$ 1,932.42	-\$ 6,967.64
Summary		
Opening Funds	\$19,184.55	\$26,152.19
Add surplus (deficit)	-\$ 1,932.42	-\$ 6,967.64
Closing total funds	\$17,252.13	\$19,184.55
Represented by		
Term deposit Kiwibank	\$13,409.15	\$12,986.29
00 Account Westpac	\$ 3,842.98	\$ 6,198.26
Total Organiser Account funds	\$17,252.13	\$19,184.55

Notes

¹ Pledges are regular contributions (usually fortnightly or monthly) from members

² Donations are irregular contributions (usually one-off or annual) from members
2019 income includes a single \$10,000 donation from one member

³ Interest income is received from Organiser and CAFCA term deposits

⁴ Contractor is paid the equivalent of the living wage ■

PEACE RESEARCHER WELCOMES YOUR FEEDBACK

Peace Researcher is published by the Anti-Bases Campaign. The Editor is Murray Horton; the Layout Editor is Becky Horton. It covers a range of peace issues with emphasis on foreign military bases and intelligence topics. Contributed articles will be considered for publication based on subject matter and space requirements. We are particularly interested in reports of original research on peace topics in Aotearoa and the wider region of Australasia and the Pacific. We welcome your feedback and constructive suggestions on how we can improve.

Our address is:

Peace Researcher
PO Box 2258, Christchurch 8140, Aotearoa/New Zealand
e-mail: abc@chch.planet.org.nz

You can read *Peace Researcher* online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-home.html>

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You Won't Be Able To Pay Your ABC Sub By Cheque After February 2020

Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) banks with Kiwibank, which has announced that, after February 28, 2020, it is completely quitting cheques. Meaning that it won't accept deposits of cheques from any bank (including its own) after that date. **Therefore, to pay your ABC sub, make a donation, register for a Waihopai protest, etc – you will have to:**

Make the payment online by Internet banking,

OR

You can personally deposit cash at any Kiwibank branch.

Our bank account details are:

**ABC
Kiwibank
7 Waterloo Quay, Wellington
389000 0619007 00**

Please include your name and "Sub" or "Sub and Donation" or "Waihopai registration" as references so that we can identify your payment, and please email abc@chch.planet.org.nz when the deposit has been made so that we know to look out for it.

If you wish to make a donation to the separate CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account (which exists solely to provide Murray Horton's income), you will not be able to do it with a Kiwibank cheque after February 28, 2020. Cheques from any other bank are fine – the Organiser Account is with Westpac, which still accepts cheques (so far).

Online donations can be made to:

CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account
Westpac, Sydenham Branch, Christchurch.
030866-0300063-00. ■

JOIN ABC AND GET *PEACE RESEARCHER*

Peace Researcher is the newsletter and journal of the Anti-Bases Campaign, Box 2258, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. If you would like to join ABC, the details are below. All ABC members receive *Peace Researcher*.

Membership is \$20 per year (ABC is not registered for GST)

Overseas subs: Australia \$NZ25; Rest of world \$NZ30. Donations welcome.

You can pay online by internet banking, or personally deposit cash at any Kiwibank branch.

Our bank account details are:

ABC
Kiwibank
7 Waterloo Quay, Wellington
389000 0619007 00

Please include your name and "Sub" as references so that we can identify your payment, and please e-mail abc@chch.planet.org.nz when the deposit has been made so that we know to look out for it.

If you're a new member, please e-mail us your name, postal address, e-mail address and phone number/s. ■