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Militarism: welfare or warfare? Dominant ideology challenged



Edwina Hughes from Peace Movement Aotearoa (centre) who visited Golden Bay last week, pictured with members of the Golden Bay Peace Group, Peni Connolly (left) and Paddy Brennan. Photo: Anita Peters.

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Last week, the Golden Bay Peace Group hosted two public lectures by Edwina Hughes, the long-time convenor of Peace Movement Aotearoa.

The national networking organisation focuses on peace issues, social justice and human rights. It co-ordinates the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Aotearoa New Zealand, the Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, and the World War 1 Centenary Peace project, as well as being contacts and advocates for a large number of other disarmament-related issues.

Edwina spoke on the subject of "Militarism: Welfare or Warfare?" and the serious outcomes of militarisation for peace and

planet. She focused on the huge costs and consequences of militarisation in times of peace, including military spending.

Edwina explained that all countries with armed forces demonstrated disproportionate spending in relation to other crisis issues that each of them faced.

In New Zealand, the costs of militarisation have consequences on other services — the social welfare system, health and mental health services, the justice system, the environment and climate change. Thus homelessness, poverty and other social problems plus environmental crises are made worse by protecting the country from the threat of war.

"Increasing militarisation is a choice

that successive New Zealand governments have made, indicating their priorities," said Edwina. "Allocating \$3.67 billion (an average of more than \$70.7 million per week) for military spending in this year's budget—in addition to the \$20 billion announced last year—is an appalling waste of public money which could be used for socially useful purposes. It is especially shocking at a time when 28 per cent of children live in a family with an income below the poverty line and the number of homeless is more than 41,000 and still rising."

There is also a contradiction in that while New Zealand has an excellent "Say No To Violence" campaign, ...

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Something cool to do in the holidays



Rec Park Centre holiday activities are part of the Tasman District Council recreation programme.

On Monday, with the first day of sunshine, eleven children between five and nine years, attended the safe cycling session on the netball courts. After a refresher in safety and

a check of tyres, saddles and brakes there was a follow-my-leader course with riders dismounting to cross the "make believe" road. The energetic group gained confidence weaving in and out of cones, retrieving a tennis ball, criss-crossing in figures of eight and attempting a stationary balance. There

was high energy and happy laughter and a fun-filled start to the school holidays.

The safe cycling session was run by Sara Chapman and Wouter de Maat. The activities continue on 11, 12 and 13 October. Contact: recparkcentre@gmail.com.

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WELFARE NOT WARFARE

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... military personnel are able to go into our schools to promote the message that it is OK to use violence to resolve conflicts and to kill people in wars overseas. Edwina cited the recent phenomenon of New Zealand children being subjected to militarisation through the increase of military academies in schools and army youth development programmes in the Pacific.

Edwina quoted research that found the cost of global military spending in 2016 was more than \$US4.6 billion every day, yet in the same year on average, 16,160 children under the age of 5 died every day through lack of adequate food, water and medicine.

Global military spending during peacetime, and its costs and consequences based on activities of only the 10 largest armed forces in the world, involves 9.3 million personnel, 29,500 aircraft and 4000 warships. This causes significant environmental damage but also keeps the cycle of violence going, along with social deprivation.

When our armed forces are not engaged but in preparation for active warfare, they protect the fisheries, conduct search and rescue and offer disaster relief and humanitarian assistance.

Edwina used Iceland as a model for New Zealand to consider. Our armed forces could instead be converted to a civilian coastguard used for maritime surveillance, civil defence, search and rescue and humanitarian relief in the Pacific, thus freeing up millions of dollars of military expenditure.

"That's the discussion we need to have in New Zealand," she said. "What is our place in the world, what are we best suited for? The thing is to get people to think about alternatives. The threats today are totally different; climate change, but also climate justice, poverty, homelessness. Those are the major threats for us – there is no military threat to justify increasing militarisation."

<http://www.facebook.com/PeaceMovementAotearoa>
<http://www.converge.org.nz/pma>

Anita Peters

Science and strategy reign

Sheer brainpower has been pumping at the Motupipi School lately with two fun learning events, the Science Fair and the chess tournament.

The fair involved the whole school and ultimately parents and grandparents too. Many students tried their own experiments at home. Some of the juniors blocked off the bag bay to create a glowing ultraviolet light display with tonic water and water, plus fluorescent pictures. Each class conducted its own experiments before the children invited their parents in and explained the exhibits.

"We've had lots of positive feedback from parents just loving to see that science is alive and well in the school," said principal Mark Cullen.

The annual local chess tournament was hosted by Motupipi School in the adjacent Motupipi Hall. The top four Years 3-6 players from Motupipi, Central, Takaka and Collingwood Schools were sent to strut their mental stuff. Apart from the thrill of the game, the kids were keen to learn the traditions of chess as well—the handshake and respectful attitude.

"It's a really good day because the kids get to meet each other in a nice, non-threatening way," said Motupipi teacher Jodie Grant. "This tournament is important because it often involves kids that aren't sporty; it gives a special opportunity for



Children deep in concentration at the Interschool Chess Tournament. Photo: Anita Peters.

academic kids to really shine in a healthy interschool competition."

The school with the highest total of points receives a cup, and individual players are awarded gold, silver and bronze medals for the highest points. All players receive a Participation Certificate.

"They all worked really hard to get to this tournament," said Jodie. "It might involve a competition within a class and then interclass competitions, so there's a lot of chess being played before this actual day. I think it's also a good life skill. They need to be clever and strategic in their game plan. It's like a giant

puzzle. The better players have that special awareness...being able to see the big picture, being able to read what your opponent's going to do. Some kids are very good at that."

Anita Peters

Chess results. Years 3 & 4 Overall points trophy: Motupipi School. Individual Placings: 1st: Lowri Lee (Central Takaka School); 2nd: Teru Green (Motupipi School); 3rd equal: Aonghus Garbutt (Motupipi) and Angus Tennant-Brown (Motupipi). Years 5 & 6 Overall points trophy: Motupipi School. Individual Placings: 1st: Lief Osbourne (Motupipi); 2nd: Joe Gee (Motupipi); 3rd: Hugo Bowker (Collingwood).

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Janszoon a valuable opportunity for Motupipi School students

Motupipi School has a strong parent base available for the many out-of-school activities requiring transport help, including the regular visit to Wainui/Taupo Point.

Motupipi is one of three schools (with Golden Bay High and Motueka High School) linking with Project Janszoon and DOC to keep one specific area tidy in Abel Tasman National Park. That includes a variety of learning-based activities, from tree planting and tree identification to studying birds. Erosion research includes data-gathering and record-keeping. The seniors do an orienteering course around Taupo Point to learn how to use a compass, and since this area is famously the site of Abel Tasman's visit on his discovery of Golden Bay, history lessons are par for the course.

"You don't really know exactly where it all happened,

but we point out where Abel Tasman would have moored, where the canoes might have come from, possibly where the attack happened," said Motupipi School principal Mark Cullen. "You can tell the story; it's visual."

The children also learn local Māori legends, such as that of the cave taniwha Ngararahuarau, whose scales became rocks on the Takaka Hill.

Mark believes this involvement has benefited the wider school community by introducing more parents to the park.

"It's also a real leadership opportunity," he said of the four youth ambassadors representing each of the three schools on a committee. "The high school kids are really good about encouraging and nurturing our little ones."

The idea will possibly expand to include other schools.

Anita Peters

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