



Applications for 2012 Peace Scholarships open on Human Rights Day

10 December 2011

Applications for White Poppy Peace Scholarships for research during the 2012 academic year opened today, Human Rights Day, on the sixty-third anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The Peace Scholarships comprise at least two grants that are awarded each year to assist students at any tertiary education institution in Aotearoa New Zealand with research into the impacts of militarism, militarisation and warfare; alternatives to militarism, militarisation and warfare; or collective non-violent responses to state violence. Information about how to apply for and support the Peace Scholarships is included below.

The Peace Scholarships open on Human Rights Day each year to draw attention to the link between militarism and human rights. While the link between armed conflict and gross violations of human rights is obvious, the link between militarism and human rights is perhaps less well known.

The United Nations was established in 1945 to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and for member states to live together in peace with one another as good neighbours.¹ As one way to progress these worthy goals, the UDHR was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948 in recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.²

Yet sixty-six years after the UN was established, the vision of the UN Charter and the UDHR has not yet been fully realised, in part because of the dominance of the ideology of militarism - “the policy of maintaining a military organisation in aggressive preparedness for war”³ - which has a negative impact on the enjoyment of economic, civil, cultural, political and social rights around the world.

One way this can be readily illustrated is by looking at the prioritisation of military expenditure over social spending. Last year global military expenditure was more than \$1,630 billion (USD), an average of more than \$4.4 billion a day. By way of contrast, on average, twenty nine thousand children under the age of five die every day from mainly preventable causes – lack of access to adequate food, clean water and basic medicines. That is one of the prices paid, the collateral damage that is seldom talked about, for maintaining armed forces in a state of combat readiness around the world.

Among the other harmful effects of militarism is the acceptance of the belief that violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict, an acceptance that seldom occurs in other aspects of daily life, and the way this actively prevents the exploration of other ways of resolving conflict. Militarism is what keeps the global cycle of violence going round and round in a downwards spiral.

¹ Charter of the United Nations, Preamble

² Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble

³ Collins English Dictionary, William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1986, 2nd edition

The purpose of the Peace Scholarships is to increase understanding of the role of New Zealand governments (past and present) in the global cycle of violence; of the impacts of militarism, militarisation and warfare here and overseas; and of alternative ways of resolving conflict.

*** About the Peace Scholarships**

The Peace Scholarships comprise at least two grants that are awarded each year to assist with research into:

- the impacts of militarism, militarisation and warfare;
- alternatives to militarism, militarisation and warfare; or
- collective non-violent responses to state violence.

The Peace Scholarships are for students at any tertiary education institution in Aotearoa New Zealand. Each grant is a minimum of \$1,000 - one is for a Maori or Moriori student, with the other/s open to any student with New Zealand citizenship or permanent residency.

The Peace Scholarships are entirely funded by donations, including those collected during the White Poppies for Peace Annual Appeal (17 to 24 April). The number and amount of the grants awarded annually is determined by the amount raised during each year.

*** How to apply for a Peace Scholarship**

Guidelines for applicants are available at <http://www.peacescholar.org.nz> and the application form is available on request from email peacescholarship@ymail.com The deadline for applications for Peace Scholarships to assist with research in the 2012 academic year is Friday, 9 March 2012.

*** How you can support the Peace Scholarships**

There are two ways you can support the Peace Scholarships - by making a donation, or by helping to collect donations for white poppies, an international symbol of remembrance for all the casualties of war and of peace. Your generosity will help to promote peace by directly supporting research into militarism, militarisation and warfare.

To make a donation by cheque, please use the form at www.converge.org.nz/pma/poppiesform.pdf or if you would prefer to make a donation by direct credit or internet banking, please email White Poppy Peace Scholarships peacescholarship@ymail.com and we will provide the details for you. A tax credit receipt is sent for all donations.

To support the Peace Scholarships by collecting donations for white poppies:

- if you can assist with the White Poppies for Peace Annual Appeal, 17 to 24 April, please fill in and return the form at <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/poppiesform.pdf> or email White Poppies for Peace whitepoppies@ymail.com
- if you would like to have white poppies available at a peace event at any time during the year, please email whitepoppies@ymail.com with your request.

Thank you.