

War toys: not a game

BY BETH HAYWARD

HERE IS a growing awareness among parents and society about the affects of war toys on children. People are becoming aware that these guns and toy soldiers coupled with the violence on television could be feeding a society that is already full of hate and aggression. No one is an expert on this issue but everyone has an opinion. I talked with mothers who don't like these toys and children who don't miss them.

"There are so many ways, I think that they are taught to act out any feelings of anger [and] aggression," said parent Emily Levi Purdy. The response of another parent was simply, "I hate war toys."

Children react differently to the absence of war toys but they understand why they don't have any. "They can kill people," said seven year old Neil, when asked why his parents do not give him any war toys. Levi Purdy say of her children, "I'm sure they miss them, it's hard, the third child is the most difficult."

The argument of some people who have no problem with war toys is that they are for fun, not to be violent. "When [war] is

brought out in the form of a toy, they make it like a game," says Debbie MacIntosh, a parent and a teacher. With all the wars in our country's history it almost seems a sin to reduce its seriousness for a game. MacIntosh feels the Gulf War was glamorized for adults. The Gulf War's media coverage made it look more like a game than any war before. "I think they should just talk it over," said Neil. "We should fight for our country not by having wars but just doing other things about it," added ten year old Alison.

At the risk of sounding sexist it must be said that the appeal of war toys is much greater for boys than girls. "There's mostly boys on the commercials and they show them playing with [war toys]," said Alison. "Mostly boys like guns better than girls do," she added.

Neil explained that he has played with dolls but not when other boys around because they would make fun.

"There's just so much pressure on them," said Levi Purdy. This stereotyping in advertising and generally all television could easily explain why war continues to be a male game.

With all this concern about the long term effect of war toys

it seems strange that more isn't being done to get rid of them. There are certainly many other things for children to play with and do. Alison plays cards, sports, games and she draws and reads. "We're starting to be a much bigger game family,"

said Levi Purdy.

"I don't think they should make them," said Neil. It seems unfortunate all children haven't learned this concern. War toys aren't a game, they teach children to be aggressive and glamourize

the cruel reality of war.

Activists are not losing hope as they struggle to keep war toys out of their homes. "I'm sure we're not making our kids psycho-maniacs... yes, I am hopeful, I am," said Levi Purdy. ☺

Out of rocks and bricks

Making monumental peace

BY SCOTT RANDALL

METRO YOUTH for Global Unity see peace as more than an end to war. The group is currently working to build a peace monument on the Dartmouth waterfront near the ferry terminal and has also developed a peace survey and gathered results from 3,000 high school students in the metropolitan area.

Metro Youth is working for peace by focusing on its prerequisites such as the equality of men and women and the elimination of prejudice of all forms, and other principles and ideas taken from the Baha'i Faith, Christianity, and many other religions as well as the works of many past and present builders of peace.

According to Rachel Farabakhsh, contact person for the group, the peace monument will be designed by Keith Graham, a prominent local architect. Graham has also designed the Needham Bells monument, the Halifax Police station and the Nova Scotia Archives. The monument will include rocks and bricks from all the countries of the world. The rock is to symbolize the earth that we all share and the brick our ability to shape and restructure. The purpose of the monument is to help educate and to inspire people to work for many different causes that can lead to world peace.

Rocks and bricks have been collected from about 25 countries worldwide such as Turkey, China,

Germany, South Africa, Chile, Belgium, Argentina, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Cyprus, Portugal, Barbados, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Mexico, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Ivory Coast, Guinea Bissau, New Zealand, Bolivia, and Cuba. China has sent a piece of their Great Wall. Germany has sent a piece of the Berlin Wall. Italy has sent a piece of their finest marble that was used by Michelangelo. Mexico has sent a pre-Columbian gavel. Saudi Arabia has sent a rock and a brick from outside of Mecca.

The peace survey questioned students on their attitudes to many aspects of peace. It included questions on how they would treat immigrants who moved onto their street, if they would accept a native as Prime Minister, if they would laugh at a racist joke, or if they thought peace was inevitable. The results have been compiled and will be presented at the different high schools in the area as well as the Department of Education.

The group was formed in the summer of 1989 by friends who were mostly either Baha'i or Christian. The purpose was to work for peace with practical, local projects that would have a global perspective. It was meant to include youth from all backgrounds, races, religions, genders, etc. Members have such diverse backgrounds as Inuit, Salvadoran, Arabic, and East Indian. This is felt by Farabakhsh to be both a pleasure and an enriching experience.

The group also held a conference at the McInnes Room at Dalhousie in the fall of 1989 with the themes of equality between men and women and the elimination of prejudice. The conference had speakers on topics such as multicultural education as well as group discussions on different topics. From this conference the idea of having a peace survey originated to find out the attitudes of youth about peace but also to get them to think about it and its diverse implications.

Anyone interested in joining the group or wanting more information can call Rachel Farabakhsh at 463-4387.

1. "Since 1945, tens of millions of people have died in more than 100 wars." (Project Ploughshares)

2. "A quarter of the world's nations are involved in armed conflict." (Project Ploughshares)

3. "In the past forty years, the number of people living in absolute poverty-without basic human needs of food, water, shelter, health care and education-has grown, despite extraordinary economic and technological advances." (Project Ploughshares)

4. "Governments on average have supplied one soldier per 43 people, in comparison with one

doctor for every 1,030 people." (Project Ploughshares)

5. "Despite its size and importance, the international arms trade

spend on foreign aid." (Project Ploughshares)

8. "Canada spends 11% of its total budget on military arms for defence." (Joint Action Committee and Peace Council)

9. "Canada spent \$12.36 billion on military spending in 1990 alone." (Union Labour at Our Times)

10. "In 1990, Ottawa spent 12.3 times as much on the military as on the Department of the Environment (down from 14.4 times as much in 1988-89) and 4.2 times as much on the military as on foreign aid (up from 4.0 in 1988-89)." (Canadian Peace Alliance)

11. "Canada exports about two-thirds of its military production to the United States and, in return, 96% of the military commodities imported into Canada come [from] the United States." (Project Ploughshares)

12. "Canada is fast becoming known as the 'weapons testing capital' of the western world: nuclear-capable fighter planes criss-cross Labrador, cruise missiles practice stealth runs in Alberta, and nuclear-capable submarines do target practices with torpedoes off Vancouver Island." (Project Ploughshares)

13. "There are five low-level

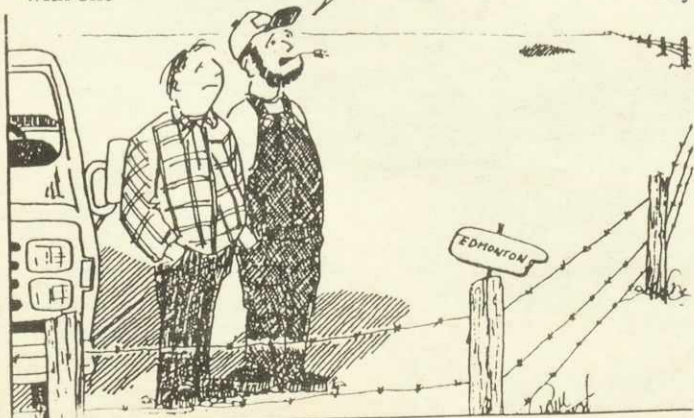
DID YOU KNOW?

is virtually uncontrolled. It is not subject to any form of international monitoring or negotiation." (Project Ploughshares)

6. "Over one trillion dollars per year is spent on equipping and maintaining the world's armed forces." (Project Ploughshares)

7. "The world's richest and most industrialized countries spend on average 5.4% of their annual wealth for military purposes, 18 times what they

DARNEDEST LOOKIN AIRPLANE I EVER DID SEE!



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