

Opinion



Photo Beal Sainte-Jone

Methuselah Revisited

by Shaun Cody

Headlines yesterday trumpeted the fact that Ottawa has banned mandatory retirement. Talk about knuckling under to special interests. If there was ever a case of reverse discrimination, this is it.

The new measure will allow 65 year old people who are completely financially "set for life" to continue working, turning a blind eye to the fact that they have pensions to retire on. Granted many people receive immense satisfaction and gratification from their work and do not want to leave it. They don't want to be forced to retire from a job they enjoy.

But what about positions that remain filled by people who work only for personal satisfaction while qualified, eager, and enthusiastic young people - that means you, university graduate - remain unemployed or underemployed. Airline pilots and various other occupations are still subject to mandatory retirement. Why? Because "an upper age limit is necessary to

ensure efficiency, economy, and safety."

Yet the government feels there are numerous roles that can exist without regard to trivialities such as efficiency, safety, and economy. And whether or not bright young people, people with new ideas and innovative approaches, remain underemployed or possibly never are employed in a profession they trained for and based dreams upon, doesn't bother the government.

The government has stooped to a disgusting level of emotional politics. It has ignored the need for change, innovation, and opportunity. It has ignored the need for positions for qualified young people. What about 20 years down the road, Mr. Crosbie? There has to be some way people over 65 years of age can continue to contribute meaningfully to the economy and can continue to seek satisfaction in their profession while not selfishly denying jobs to young Canadians.

War Toys Harmful?

reprinted from *The Goliard*

by Don Stroschein

Since the re-introduction of the GI Joe doll three years ago, the sales of war toys have climbed by 350 per cent to a record \$842 million per year.

The past Christmas season's hottest selling item was called the *Transformer*. Anything from a toy insect to a toy car "transforms" into a gun-slinging robot. It is a "war toy" greatly demanded by kids aged four to eleven years old.

War toys are now the leading category of toy sales, making up five of the six best-selling toys in the U.S. Selling war toys is a profit making business for some; and a source of concern for others. The only nonviolent toy in the top selling category are Cabbage Patch Dolls.

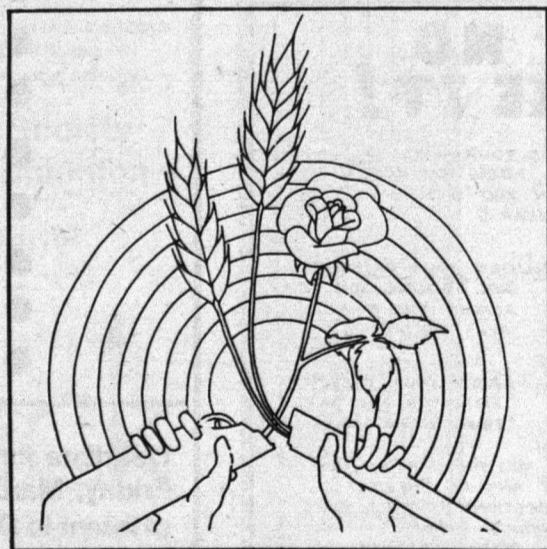
A total of 214 million individual war toys have been sold in the U.S. in 1984. All five war toys sets are promoted by violent cartoon programs with war themes. The average American child will have seen 800 advertisements last year promoting violent toys. The Kelowna Peace Group is continuing in its efforts to focus greater public interest on the issue of the increasing number and massive sales promotions of toys of violence and war.

The group defines a war toy as "a play-thing which is a representation of war materials: guns, tanks, spacefighters, missiles and warships. Also figures of soldiers: GI Joe, Action Man, Robot Warriors, Rambo and computer games which simulate violence and war" are included in this category. According to the Group, "war toys teach the children to resolve a conflict through violence and force using instruments to wound and kill."

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops Social Affairs Commission, on December 15, 1982, said, "Toys and games affect how children will develop as persons. If their games lead them to believe that aggression and destruction are acceptable, they will have all the more difficulty in seeing the importance or even the possibility of working for peace."

Through games children learn about their future in society. Parents have a key role in channelling the energies of their children towards creative rather than destructive activities.

Neal Kyle, a psychologist in mental health at the University of B.C., said, "Playing with war toys is more



likely to promote aggressive behaviour in children than to act as a catharsis," adding that the effects on children of playing with toys can be likened to the effects on children of watching television.

The evidence, on the whole, fails to support the "catharsis theory", which argues that children find an outlet for aggressiveness by watching violent T.V. But research shows that watching violence in real life, some children will be more prone to use aggression if they are habituated to seeing violence on T.V.

Kyle reasons that, like T.V. viewing, playing with war toys teaches children to behave combatively in the real world. Kyle says parents should more carefully consider whether or not to buy their children toys like guns.

"You have to wonder if parents have thought about the situation," he said.

According to a press release by the Kelowna Peace Group, "People who believe that such toys are harmless and cite their own experiences as a child with similar toys should consider that the world is now in a very critical period where each day the threat of total nuclear destruction is ever present. Now more than ever we should explore every avenue for promoting peaceful behaviour. This is one measure in which we can all participate."

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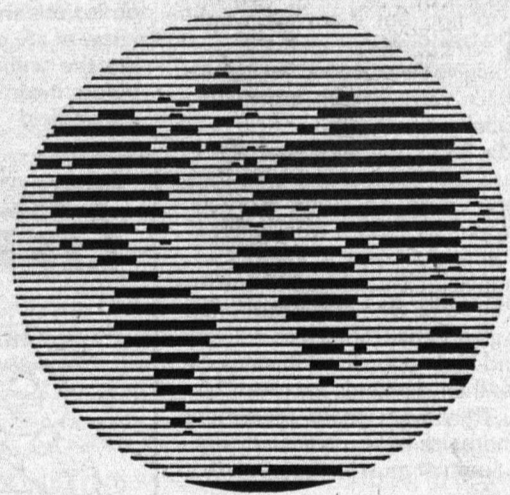
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