

Applications for 2015 Peace Scholarships open on Human Rights Day

9 December 2014

Applications for White Poppy Peace Scholarships for research during the 2015 academic year will open tomorrow on Human Rights Day (10 December), on the sixty-sixth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The Peace Scholarships are awarded to assist students at any tertiary education institution in Aotearoa New Zealand with the costs of research that includes analysis of one or more of these topics: the impacts of militarism, militarisation, military deployment and / or warfare; alternatives to militarism, militarisation, military deployment and / or warfare; opposition to militarism, militarisation, military deployment and / or warfare; military recruitment practices and messaging; state construction of national identity based on militarism and militarisation; the military-industrial complex; or media coverage of militarism, militarisation, military deployment and / or warfare. Research may be on the historical and / or present-day aspects of any of the above topics. 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-nine 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 human 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 \$1,747 trillion (US\$) - on average, almost \$4.8 billion (US\$) every day. By way of contrast, on average, twenty four 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.

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 grants that are awarded to assist with the costs of research that includes analysis of one or more of these topics:

- the impacts of militarism, militarisation, military deployment and / or warfare;
- alternatives to militarism, militarisation, military deployment and / or warfare;
- opposition to militarism, militarisation, military deployment and / or warfare;
- military recruitment practices and messaging;
- construction of national identity based on militarism and militarisation;
- the military-industrial complex; or
- media coverage of militarism, militarisation, military deployment and / or warfare.

Research may be on the historical and / or present-day aspects of any of the above topics. 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, and the quality of applications.

*** 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 2015 academic year is Sunday, 1 March 2015.

*** 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, military deployments 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.

Information about how you can support the Peace Scholarships by collecting donations for white poppies is available at www.whitepoppies.org.nz Thank you.

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