



MARTY BRANAGAN

GLOBAL
WARMING,
MILITARISM

AND NONVIOLENCE

THE ART OF ACTIVE
RESISTANCE



Global Warming, Militarism and Nonviolence

The Art of Active Resistance

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First published 2013 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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ISBN 978–1–137–01009–4

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Typeset by MPS Limited, Chennai, India.

Dedicated to

Belinda, Francesca, Emily and Ronan

Gillian and David Branagan

*My comrades who have locked-on to the Pearly Gates:
Shane, Natalie, Hans, Cedar, Jarrah from the South East
Forest Alliance, Jenny Ryde, Diane Ingram, Owen Howlett,
Chris Robinson and Andy Frame*

*Ongoing struggles of the Kokatha, Penan, Goolarabooloo,
Mirrar and nonviolent activists everywhere*

Holy Grail

Woke up this morning from the strangest dream
I was in the biggest army the world has ever seen
We were marching as one
On the road to the Holy Grail

Started out seeking fortune and glory
It's a short song but it's a hell of a story
When you spend your lifetime trying to get your hands
On the Holy Grail

But have you heard about the great crusade?
We ran into millions, but nobody got paid
Yeah we raised four corners of the globe
For the Holy Grail

All the locals scattered, they were hiding in the snow
We were so far from home, so how were we to know?
There'd be nothing left to plunder
When we stumble on the Holy Grail

We were full of beans
But we were dying like flies
And those big black birds, they were circling in the sky
And you know what they say, yeah, nobody deserves to die

You know I, I've been searching for an easy way
To escape the cold light of day
I've been high and I've been low
But I've got nowhere else to go

There's nowhere else to go

I've followed orders
God knows where I've been
But I woke up alone
All my wounds were clean
I'm still here
I'm still a fool for the Holy Grail

Oh yeah I'm a fool for the Holy Grail

(Mark Seymour, *Hunters and Collectors*, 1992)

Foreword

As a lifelong peace activist, it is encouraging to see the two most significant campaigns to save our planet and its peoples from annihilation coming together. The efforts of anti-war campaigners and the work of environmental activists both seek to save humanity's future but too often they are viewed as disparate. Marty Branagan's book brings them together in an important fusion.

The greatest threat to the Earth's environment and to human and planetary survival is the possibility of nuclear war, added to significantly by the spread of weapons to outer space, and constant armaments testing, production and stockpiling, all of which contribute to global warming.

Fundamental change is needed to meet the global environmental threats. Fundamental change means economic and social change, and a new politics built on the new economic base. This requires a new kind of government, one which is made up of representatives of the people, a government prepared to challenge the power of the monopolies in the interests of the people and the environment.

We have perhaps two decades to address the crisis of climate change and to prevent catastrophe. What humanity does now will determine the future of planet Earth. Difficult political and social choices will have to be made. Who will make those choices, and how? Will people be the victims of change or will we fight and win changes which will benefit us and our children?

Marty Branagan's persuasive book addresses these issues, arguing that the military-industrial complex is a major (but largely unrecognised) polluter of the Earth and that a long-term solution to global warming requires the rapid scaling down of the militarism that permeates societies around the world. It presents a compelling case that a viable alternative to militarism is non-violent conflict resolution, 'active resistance' and 'artistic activism'.

This book deals with confronting issues, and is invaluable in the way it combines rigorous analysis with detailed examination of historical and current praxis and, importantly, offers solutions. Dr Branagan provides us with a brief history of how nonviolence has been successful against even the most ruthless of regimes and examines why it has rarely been given credit for this. He destroys the myth that nonviolence is a weak option or that it only works against 'civilised opponents', arguing that the British Raj, for example, was a formidable opponent for Mahatma Gandhi.

He makes an interesting contribution to debates about the value of non-violence when he argues that it is fundamentally more revolutionary than violence, confronting criticisms by some on the Left that it is a middle-class

option. Nonviolence, Dr Branagan argues, aims not just for the physical removal of an unpopular government, for example, but also for deep-seated societal change on many levels.

There are intriguing sections in this book including, for example, his examination of some extraordinary women who have been at the forefront of social change. An original perspective is offered with the examination of 'artistic activism', the significance of the arts and humour in nonviolent social change. He argues that the importance of artistic activism in reaching large audiences cannot be underestimated. He also examines the new directions this artistic activism is taking (for example, via the internet). Art forms such as street theatre, music and banners are used widely by activists but this use is rarely examined rigorously by theorists. Dr Branagan argues, however, that these art forms inspire and assist civil disobedience, fortify its participants, create solidarity and multiple foci of protest, prevent violence, attract media attention and educate audiences on a variety of levels – emotional and physical as well as intellectual.

Taking its dialectic between analysis and activism further, the book concludes with a call to action against militarism, providing a valuable guide to planning campaigns and engaging in nonviolence, using a diversified strategy of grassroots action.

Global Warming, Militarism and Nonviolence is a valuable work which identifies the military-industrial complex as a major polluter of our planet and analyses the fundamental link between militarism and climate change.

Dr Hannah Middleton

Spokesperson, Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition

Australian representative on the Board of the

Global Network Against Weapons in Space

Former Executive Officer, Sydney Peace Foundation, University of Sydney

Former Mayor of Greenwich, UK

Preface

In 1983 I became involved in one of the world's largest nonviolent blockades, at the Franklin River in Tasmania, Australia. This extraordinary event turned my world view upside-down, opening my eyes to environmentalism, politics and nonviolence, and their inter-related nature.

With the world also faced with nuclear annihilation through the Cold War's 'Mutually Assured Destruction' (MAD) philosophy, the slogan 'Protest and Survive' seemed particularly apt. I attended many more environmental and peace actions, becoming involved in street theatre and music. I joined a small network of 'professional protesters' (a misnomer because we were never paid – even by 'the communists'!) that travelled to blockades around Australia, and occasionally overseas. In-between, I learned permaculture on intentional communities, worked different jobs, and did radio programmes on student and community stations.

This was a poverty-stricken and emotionally difficult life, so I began a career in visual arts. But this is a long process, especially for activist-themed, rural-based art, so, with the new responsibilities of parenthood, I also commenced a PhD in the relatively new discipline of Peace Studies. I considered that my protesting experiences constituted emic (insider) research, and that, despite its limitations and biases, participant-observation gave unique perspectives that could rarely be gained by movement outsiders. Reflecting on two decades of activism, I tried to ascertain how nonviolence had succeeded or failed, how it had evolved, and what had been the role of the arts in social change.

I had first considered the links between peace and environmentalism at anti-nuclear blockades. Later, helping create a Master of Environmental Advocacy degree at the University of New England inspired me to further examine these links. The social, economic and cultural impacts of militarism are well documented, but the environmental effects have largely been neglected.

In a world with so much fear, perceptions of disempowerment, and pessimism, I wanted to write something positive and widely accessible. So this book is not so much about the problems of global warming and militarism, as *what to do about them*. It is about nonviolent, creative responses to a global crisis of unprecedented proportions. It is about how to resist, in a holistic way, the whole array of violence we face – military, ecological, structural and cultural violence – with innovative activism and alternative forms of living as a planetary community.

While nonviolence and artistic activism are examined in depth, space limitations mean that issues such as global warming, militarism, and violence,

on which there is a plethora of scientific, anthropological, psychological, and sociological literature, are given as broadbrush overviews, as are the 'constructive programme' suggestions in the final chapter. For these issues I have provided multiple references to publications that shed more light on them.

The first chapter is unashamedly 'alarmist', facing the reality of global warming and related biodiversity and peak oil crises. It takes a new tack, however, by exposing militarism as the elephant – or rather tank, fighter plane and destroyer – in the room of global warming.

It describes the extent and influence of the military-industrial complex, so powerful that its massive carbon 'footprint' and environmental destruction is largely above scrutiny and regulation.

The huge proportion of taxpayer money that supports militarism is not available for environmental, education, health or social programmes. Addressing global warming means reducing militarism drastically and quickly.

The good news is that militarism is not essential. The rest of the book offers nonviolence as a viable alternative to militarism, showing that the peace-building efforts of millions around the world are having an effect. It exposes some of the misconceptions surrounding nonviolence, showing that there is a significant gap between public perceptions of nonviolence and the reality of what it can achieve. It demonstrates that it can be effective in a range of situations, including against formidable opponents, and that it has a proven ability to remove dictators and oppressive regimes, resist environmental damage, police human rights and aid democratisation movements.

The book also shows that, far from being a doctrine set in stone by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr, nonviolence is an evolving praxis with numerous new developments. These include the tactical innovations of 'active resistance', 'internetworking', and 'artistic activism', all of which make nonviolence more effective than ever. The evolution of these is described through Australian case studies of environmental, peace and social justice campaigns, told from an emic perspective and involving the words of activists and this author's writings at the time, to impart some of the colour, intensity and *zeitgeist* of the actions. The book then explores recent international developments such as the Zapatista, Global Justice, Arab Spring and Occupy movements, demonstrating the importance of emerging information and communication technologies. It concludes with suggestions about developing nonviolent campaigns and grassroots resistance to global warming – things that ordinary citizens such as you and I can do. I hope you will find the exploration of nonviolence as inspirational as I have.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to the following people and organizations:

The Nano/Lawler and Branagan extended families for their unstinting support.

Christina Brian and Amanda McGrath, and everyone at Palgrave Macmillan for their continued encouragement and wise suggestions.

Tony Lynch, Ariel Salleh, Brian Martin, Carmel Flint, Michael Fox, Simon Mellor, John Jeayes, Tony Whan, Miranda Gibson, John Seed, South East Forest Rescue, North East Forest Alliance, Karl-Eric Paasonen, Rebecca Spence, Bert Jenkins, Bob Boughton, Siri Gamage, Karin von Stokirch, Helen Ware, Shirley Rickard, the School of Humanities, University of New England, Adam Blakester, Doug Westhorpe, Jarrah Schmah, Sustainable Living Armidale, Jo Leoni, Paul Kristiansen, Abby Page, ABC Classic FM.

And particularly the Anaiwan people on whose land this book was written.

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Permission to reproduce the cartoon in Figure 1 was kindly granted by Clay Butler, www.sidewalbubblegum.com.

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Tony Whan and South East Forest Rescue: Figures 10–13, 16–7, 19–21, 30, 34, 35, 40.

John Jeayes: Figures 26, 28, 31, 33, 39.

Bob Weeks: Cover photo.

John Seed: Figure 22.

David Kemp: Figure 27.

Marty Lawler: Figure 42.

Matthew Newton: Figure 18.

Jeremy Bradley: Figures 14, 23, 25, 32.

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List of Acronyms

AABCC	Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ACF	Australian Conservation Foundation
AIDEX	Australian International Defence Equipment Exhibition
ALEC	Arid Lands Environment Centre
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANC	African National Congress
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
BUGA UP	Billboard-Utilising Graffitists Against Unhealthy Products
CANC	Cycle Against the Nuclear Cycle
CANVAS	Centre for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies
CBD	Central Business District
CEACC	Canadians for Emergency Action on Climate Change
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNFA	Coalition for a Nuclear Free Australia
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DCs	Developed Countries
DECCW	Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water
DOT	Diversity of Tactics
ERA	Energy Resources of Australia
EU	European Union
EZLN	Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista Army of National Liberation)
FCNSW	Forestry Commission of New South Wales
FIBL	Forschungsinstitut für biologischen Landbau (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture)
FoE	Friends of the Earth
FRB	Franklin River Blockade
GAC	Gundjhemí Aboriginal Corporation
GE	General Electric
GHGs	Greenhouse Gases
GLW	Green Left Weekly
GM	Genetically Modified
IAD	Institute for Aboriginal Development
ICNC	International Center for Nonviolent Conflict
ICT	Information and Communication technologies
IMF	International Monetary Fund

IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel into Climate Change
JAG	Jabiluka Action Group
LDCs	Less Developed Countries
MAPW	Medical Association for the Prevention of War
MIMEC	Military-industrial, media and entertainment complex
Milex	Military expenditure
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
MP	Member of Parliament
NAFI	National Association of Forest Industries
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAG	Nomadic Action Group
NEFA	North East Forest Alliance
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NVA	Non Violent Action
PJSA	Peace and Justice Studies Association
PM	Prime Minister
RAAF	Renegade Activist Action Force
RAG	Rainforest Action Group
RAN	Rainforest Action Network
R&D	Research and Development
RIC	Rainforest Information Centre
SA	South Australia
SAC	Stop AIDEX Campaign
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
SCCC	Southern Cross Climate Coalition
SEFA	South East Forest Alliance
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SMH	Sydney Morning Herald
SU	Sydney University
TWS	Tasmanian Wilderness Society
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WA	Western Australia
WCCAG	Wild Cattle Creek Action Group
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

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1

Introduction: Global Warming and Militarism

Global warming¹ is a huge and complex issue, and part of a wider environmental crisis, which includes an unprecedented loss of biodiversity. Linked to the carbon dioxide (CO₂) created by burning fossil fuels – one of the main causes of global warming – is the issue of peak oil, where declining availability of oil will have major impacts on most nations. This chapter will give a brief overview of these issues. Its major focus, however, is on militarism's enormous but rarely-discussed contribution to these environmental and resource depletion crises. It will examine how militarism is exempt from most environmental scrutiny, and diverts resources away from addressing environmental issues. We also take a look at the military-industrial complex, the interconnected web of industries and governments that profits from and promotes militarism.

Global Environmental Crisis

The consensus of the international scientific community is that the world is warming. Greenhouse gases, a natural constituent of the atmosphere, are essential for maintaining habitable conditions on earth. However, the levels of these gases need to be finely balanced; too little or too much and overall global temperature may be significantly affected.² Global warming refers to the effects generated by rising levels of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the Earth's atmosphere (the 'greenhouse effect'), trapping heat from solar radiation within the atmosphere and leading to increases in average global surface temperatures.³ The initiation of numerous feedback loops, difficult to predict, escalates the problem.⁴ Global warming is not, as is often stated, just a threat but a current reality; the decade from 2000–2009 was the warmest on record,⁵ and average global temperatures are likely to increase by 2–4 degrees over the next 100 years, although significantly greater increases are a possibility.⁶

The evidence for global warming is overwhelming. In fact, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the international body

appointed to investigate the phenomenon, has been overly cautious, probably because of a barrage of pressure from vested interests and political conservatives. It has significantly underestimated, for example, the likely extent of sea level rise in the 21st century. Despite controversy over the rate of glacial melting,⁷ the best evidence is that the rate is accelerating.⁸ The East Antarctic ice sheet, previously believed to be stable, has now begun to melt on its coastal fringes. The West Antarctic ice sheet continues to melt rapidly.⁹ Over the last seven years, sharply rising temperatures in the Arctic have caused a rapid increase in the amount of methane being emitted from melting permafrost, adding further to global warming.¹⁰ In Canada's James Bay region, the limit of the Arctic permafrost has retreated northwards by 130 kilometres over the last 50 years.¹¹

Consequences of Global Warming

Global warming has the potential to significantly impact on life on earth by altering weather patterns and events, environments, sea levels, and the ability of our planet to sustain both plant and animal life.¹² Climate scientists predict severe impacts on humans from even the most conservative of climate change estimates, with the costs of inadequate action growing exponentially.¹³

Global warming of only 1°C may have dangerous consequences (this threshold was previously thought to be 2°C). One study concludes that an average warming of 3–4°C (which means 6–12°C on land), previously thought to be associated with CO₂ concentrations of 500–600 parts per million by volume (ppmv), is now possible with concentrations of only 360–420 ppmv,¹⁴ a range that the February 2012 concentration of 393.53 ppmv¹⁵ is already in, and this is rising at 2 ppmv per annum. A 4°C future would lead to a 40 per cent reduction in rice and maize production, the collapse of many ecosystems and is probably incompatible with an organized global community.¹⁶ This is extremely alarming, not 'alarmist'.

Climate change is recognised by major scientific institutions and world leaders as the 'single most pressing issue facing society on a global basis'.¹⁷ Although some groups choose not to acknowledge this, even the ones who do, see it as something in the future. However, the World Health Organization has estimated that *already* some 150,000 people die each year from the effects of climate change.¹⁸

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Global Humanitarian Forum estimates 300,000 deaths per year and a cost to the global community of over \$125 billion annually. It claims that climate change's 'silent crisis' is seriously affecting hundreds of millions more, and that the effects are growing in such a way that they will have a serious impact on 600 million people, almost 10 per cent of the world's population, within 20 years. Almost all of these will be in developing countries: 'Climate change is the greatest emerging humanitarian challenge of our time... [T]he first hit and