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The pacifist—Harold Steele

In March 1957, a six-paragraph article in the communist newspaper *Daily Worker* sparked the interest of Britain's security service MI5. The newspaper reported that Harold Steele, a 63-year-old 'white-haired and keen eyed' ex-poultry farmer from Great Malvern, Worcestershire, intended to 'go out to the Pacific and sail into the H-blast area'.¹

Steele had a long history of pacifist protest. While studying at Exeter University during the First World War, he refused the offer of an officer's commission if he enlisted. As a conscientious objector and member of the No Conscription Fellowship, believing that 'Christianity and socialism forbade any resort to war', he was court-martialled five times and sentenced to seven years' hard labour.² After three years in prison, he was only released in April 1919, months after the war was over.

Decades later, despite poor health, limited income and three children to feed, he was still campaigning for peace. Steele's protest against the British nuclear tests in the Pacific, which took him to Japan in 1957, symbolised the growing passion in the United Kingdom against nuclear weapons testing.

1 'Will sail to H-test area', *Daily Worker*, 19 March 1957, annotated and filed in CO1036/513.

2 Biography in commemorative program, *International Conscientious Objectors Day ceremony*, London, 15 May 2014. Available at: www.ppu.org.uk/nomorewar/download/May15commemorativev2.pdf.

CONFIDENTIAL

OUTWARD TELEGRAM

70

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES

TO FIJI (Sir R. Garvey)

Code

PAC/AU 3

Sent 26th April, 1957.

10.15 hrs.

PRIORITY
CONFIDENTIAL
No. 105.

Your telegram No. 105.

Harold Steele.

Aged 63 years, retired poultry farmer said to have been imprisoned for 3 years during first World War for refusal to serve in Forces. Was member of Peace Pledge Union in last war and appears to be bona fide pacifist but not subversive.

2. Reuters correspondence confirms he was informed by person named that he proposed to fly to Fiji. No mention of this has appeared in U.K. press and neither B.O.A.C. nor QANTAS can trace any passage booking for him. Latest press reports say he now plans to travel to India to see if he can obtain a boat there to sail to Pacific but attempts to raise money have so far been unsuccessful.

3. His resources seem very limited and unless he could obtain local backing in Fiji it is doubtful whether he could do much harm. As it seems unlikely he will come to Fiji it would only create unnecessary publicity to declare him a prohibited immigrant at this stage. In any case it would seem preferable to take action against him under section 8(5)(b) of Immigration Ordinance if necessity arises. Final decision is a matter for you but please consult me before taking action against him.

4. I will inform you if I obtain any definite information about his intention to visit Fiji.

UK security forces tracked the movements of British pacifist Harold Steele from London to Japan

Source: Colonial Office file CO1036/513.

Steele's protest also highlights the role of Britain's intelligence agencies as the 'missing dimension' in the history of Britain's postwar imperial decline.³ In the 1950s, Britain's intelligence agencies—MI5, the Secret

3 Calder Walton and Christopher Andrew: 'Still the missing dimension: British intelligence and the historiography of British decolonisation' in Patrick Major and Christopher Moran (eds): *Spooked—Britain, Empire and intelligence since 1945* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Cambridge, 2009).

Intelligence Service (SIS) and the Government Communications Headquarters—played a central role in Empire management. They helped create intelligence services in Commonwealth nations like Australia, monitored dissident forces across the British Empire and sought to counter Soviet active measures in British dependencies. At the same time as they were spying on anti-colonial nationalists, MI5 posted Security Liaison Officers to all the British dependencies that were moving towards political independence, and offered to set up intelligence services for the newly independent nations. The Colonial Office maintained its own Intelligence and Security Department (ISD), led by a former MI5 officer.⁴

While lacking the rigour of today's cyber monitoring, the UK National Archives holds files from the 1950s related to protests by Steele and other activists against the Grapple nuclear tests. These include newspaper clippings, letters, telegrams and diplomatic cables sent between London, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Governor's office in Fiji, the British Embassy in Tokyo and Foreign Office bureaus in Honolulu and Tahiti.⁵

With thousands of UK military personnel involved in preparations for Operation Grapple, there was growing public awareness of the looming tests. Opinion polls showed that nearly half the British population were opposed to the tests, echoing the concern shown in Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the Pacific islands. The National Council for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons Tests (NCANWT)—the forerunner of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)—soon had 100 branches around the United Kingdom. NCANWT launched a series of public appeals, campaigning in the Labour Party to halt the tests.⁶

4 The files of the Colonial Office Intelligence and Security Department (ISD) can be found in the UK National Archives under the code CO1035. For a recent study on the role of UK intelligence services in Britain's withdrawal from Empire between 1945 and 1965, see Calder Walton: *Empire of secrets—British intelligence, the Cold War and the twilight of Empire* (Harper Press, London, 2013).

5 Some of the newspaper clippings, telegrams and letters cited in this chapter are collated in 'Protests against the H-bomb tests in the Pacific', Colonial Office archives CO1036/513.

6 CND was only founded in January 1958, spurred by public awareness of Britain's nuclear contribution to the Cold War and the United States' deployment of nuclear forces to UK air bases and submarine bases in Scotland. See Richard Taylor: *Against the bomb—the British peace movement, 1958–1965* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1988).

The cautious advocacy of the NCANWT, however, was not militant enough for small socialist and pacifist groups. Surveying the British disarmament movement and 'the new pacifism' in 1962, radical activist Nicolas Walter explained:

The British unilateralist movement sprang not from the formation of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in January 1958, nor even from that of its parent, the National Council for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons Tests, in February 1957. It was really brought to life by Harold Steele's proposal to enter the Christmas Island tests zone early in 1957, which led to the formation of an Emergency Committee for Direct Action against Nuclear War and which followed years of grinding work by dedicated pacifists.⁷

* * *

Harold Steele's idea to travel to Christmas Island was inspired by a circular letter from Takeko Kowai of the 'Peace Protection Association of Toyohashi Citizens' in Japan. Kowai, the wife of the president of Aichi University, circulated a call for direct action to peace activists in the United States, France and Britain, seeking international support to oppose the British nuclear program in the Pacific. This followed earlier protests by her Peace Protection Association against US and Russian atmospheric testing.

With support from other pacifists linked to the Peace Pledge Union (PPU), Harold Steele and his wife Sheila announced in March 1957 that they would travel to Tokyo. Their aim was to join a protest fleet to sail to the central Pacific and halt the Grapple hydrogen bomb tests. In London, the Emergency Committee for Direct Action Against Nuclear War was formed the following month to raise funds to support the planned direct action, with sponsors including philosopher Lord Bertrand Russell, playwright Laurence Houseman and comedian Spike Milligan.

At a press conference organised by the PPU, Steele told journalists:

The time has come when someone must make a real move to stop the H-bomb tests. My wife and I will willingly sacrifice ourselves to prove to the world the horror of this devilish device. Personal considerations are

7 Nicolas Walter: 'Direct action and the new pacifism', *Anarchy: A Journal of Anarchist Ideas*, No. 13 (special edition on Direct Action), Freedom Press, March 1962, p. 89. For discussion of the Emergency Committee, see Lawrence Wittner: *Resisting the bomb—a history of the world disarmament movement, 1954–70*, Vol. 2 (Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 44–45.

secondary. My three children—much as I love them—are not important. If I should die, I commend them to the care of my Quaker friends. I believe this demonstration will shake the conscience of man out of its lazy acceptance of the H-bomb and all its horrors.⁸

By the time of their public declaration, however, the Japanese Government had not yet given a visa for the Steeles to travel to Japan. Harold Steele told reporters:

The Japanese government is formally opposed to anything like our plan, but I believe that privately officials support us and are touched by our intentions. My wife and I are prepared to end our days in pain to prove how horrible effects of nuclear radiation can be. The time has come for someone to make a real move to stop the tests.⁹

In late April, noting publicity about the planned protest, the Foreign Office directed the British consulates in Hawai'i and Tahiti to report if either Steele or his wife 'come to notice in your territory'.¹⁰ But with the start of the test series looming and the trip to Japan uncertain, Harold Steele began to look at other options, such as travelling alone to the Pacific via India or Fiji.

After Steele sought permission to travel to the region via Fiji, the Governor in Suva requested advice from London as to whether he should forbid entry to the peace activist. Internal discussions within the Foreign Office noted that the Governor 'is likely to be advised that he should grant Steele a visa, but advised that the latter's continued stay in the island should be contingent on his not disturbing the peace'.¹¹

The other option of India had many attractions. As a peace activist who campaigned alongside Quakers and other pacifists influenced by Gandhian traditions of non-violence, Steele noted that 'my feeling is that I shall find in India, which owes its existence to Gandhi and his principles, a sympathetic orientation of mind'.¹²

8 'We will risk our lives to prove the bomb is evil', *Sunday Pictorial*, 24 March 1957.

9 'Malvern couple refused visas for "suicide" plan', *Birmingham Post*, 27 March 1957. Sheila Steele did not accompany her husband to the Pacific and fades from the public record after this initial publicity.

10 Restricted telegram from Foreign Office, London to UK consulate, Honolulu, 26 April 1957. CO1036/513.

11 Letter, marked Confidential, from H. C. Hainsworth, Foreign Office, London, to R.W. Selby, British Embassy, Tokyo, 27 April 1957, 1242/318/57. CO1036/513.

12 'Prepared to die on a Pacific atoll—pacifist's H-bomb protest', *The Scotsman*, 9 May 1957.

The other attraction of India was the potential to link up with two young British war resisters, 25-year-old David Graham and 21-year-old Ian Dickson, who were already in New Delhi. Both men had refused to be conscripted for UK national service, and had hitchhiked to India with hopes to travel on to Japan or to Fiji to join the nuclear testing protest. The British Embassy in Tokyo reported to London:

According to the *Times of India*, Graham has already spent a term in jail for refusing to be conscripted. I do not know whether this might give the authorities in Fiji an excuse to frustrate their efforts should this be thought desirable or necessary.¹³

Embassy officials also expressed concern that Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of newly independent India, had given his 'blessings and good will' to the young protesters.¹⁴

Graham and Dixon were also eager to meet with Steele in New Delhi to obtain funds before travelling to Japan to mobilise a protest fleet. However, with only £500 of the proposed £5,000 originally pledged in England, funds were tight and it was clear that the protest fleet would be difficult to organise at short notice.

The British state was deeply interested in the peace activists' possible subversive (i.e. communist) connections.¹⁵ After the *News Chronicle* reported that Steele's travel itinerary might include India, an annotation on the newspaper clipping in his intelligence file asks: 'Any news?' The handwritten response:

Only that he is assessed as a bona-fide pacifist and as a member of the Peace Pledge Union in the past. If he has otherwise subversive links, it would be known. I suggest we write him off.¹⁶

13 Letter from T.W. Aston, British Embassy, Tokyo, to H.C. Hainsworth, Permanent Under-secretary's Department, Foreign Office, London, 10 May 1957 (marked 'Restricted Def.55/66/50'). CO1036/513.

14 'Protests to sail into or near the danger area', Telegram no. 137 from R.W. Selby, British Embassy, Tokyo to Foreign Office, London, 12 April 1957. CO1036/513.

15 UK Government concern that communists in the Pacific would support Soviet 'anti-colonial' propaganda is documented in 'Communism—Pacific' PAC 182/777/01, CO1036/859 and 'Australian and New Zealand interest in communism in the Pacific', PAC 182/777/02, CO1036/860.

16 Handwritten note in Colonial Office file 'Protests against the H-bomb tests in the Pacific', CO1036/513.

Throughout April and early May 1957, UK diplomats and intelligence officers were closely monitoring whether Steele, Graham and Dixon would manage to travel to the Asia-Pacific region. The archives contain a long series of letters and telegrams between London, Tokyo, Suva, Honolulu and Tahiti trying to track the protesters' movements. A confidential letter from the Foreign Office in London to the British Embassy in Tokyo notes:

In view of the conditions which the Japanese government has imposed for any visit by Steele to Japan, it seemed remotely possible that, if he can raise the necessary funds, this man will try to approach the danger area from some other jumping off point. For this reason we have telegraphed Honolulu and Tahiti asking for news as it comes to notice, since we must take all reasonable measures to prevent Steele from obstructing the tests.¹⁷

An article in the *Fiji Times* on 17 April reported that Steele had booked an air passage to Fiji on 5 May. In a telegram from the Governor's office in Fiji to the Foreign Office on 18 April, marked 'immediate and confidential', the Deputy Governor in Suva reported that:

Steele is alleged to have told reporters that he hopes to arouse some kind of protest among the Fijian population against proposed nuclear test in the Pacific area ... I should be grateful if you would make appropriate enquiries and inform me whether you consider Steele should be declared to be a prohibited immigrant under section 7(c) of Immigration Ordinance 1947.¹⁸

The reply from Secretary of State for the Colonies Alex Lennox-Boyd to Governor of Fiji Sir Ronald Garvey noted:

His resources seem very limited and unless he could obtain local backing in Fiji, it is doubtful whether he could do much harm. As it seems unlikely he will come to Fiji it would only create unnecessary publicity to declare him a prohibited immigrant at this stage. In any case it would seem preferable to take action against him under section 8 (5) (b) of Immigration Ordinance if necessity arises.¹⁹

17 Letter from H.C. Hainsworth, Permanent Under-secretary's Department, Foreign Office, London to R.W. Selby, British Embassy, Tokyo, 27 April 1957 (marked 'Confidential 212/244'). CO1036/513.

18 Inward telegram from Fiji to Secretary of State for the Colonies Alex Lennox-Boyd: 'Immediate confidential number 105', 18 April 1957, registered in London 20 April 1957. CO1036/513.

19 Outward telegram from Secretary of State for the Colonies Alex Lennox-Boyd to Governor Sir Ronald Garvey, Fiji, 'Priority/confidential number 105', 26 April 1957, (marked 'Confidential Pac/Au 3'). CO1036/513.

The wonders of the bureaucratic mind at work! Article 7(c) of Fiji's *Immigration Ordinance 1947* allowed a person to be declared a prohibited immigrant to a British colony if 'the entry of the said person into the Colony is likely to be prejudicial to the peace and good order of the Colony and should be prohibited'.²⁰ In contrast, Article 8(5)(b) of the Act allowed entry to the colony, but then granted powers to the Principal Immigration Officer to 'order a person forthwith to leave the Colony' if he or she 'behaves in a manner prejudicial to the peace or good order of the colony'.²¹

This Cold War concern over 'subversion' in Fiji followed a 1956 visit by Alex MacDonald of the Colonial Office ISD, who travelled to Suva to advise the Governor on the organisation of intelligence services in the British colony.²² MacDonald, who had served as a British police officer in India and Malaya and then returned home to become an MI5 officer, was seconded from MI5 in June 1954 to work as the Security Intelligence Adviser to the Colonial Office. This led to the establishment of the ISD the following year. Between 1954 and 1957, MacDonald made 57 trips to 27 different British overseas dependencies, including visits to Fiji and the Western Pacific Commission, to train a new generation of intelligence officers in the British colonies.²³

Uncertain of his own travel plans, Steele remained eager to highlight opposition to the Pacific tests:

Perhaps I can persuade other people to persuade the authorities to change their minds. If not, then I feel I must make my own personal protest in the area of detonation, whether the result is mutilation or death.²⁴

20 Colony of Fiji: *An ordinance to make better provision of control of immigration*, 3 December 1947, Article 7.

21 *Ibid.*, Article 8. See also 'Deportation of UK subjects or protected persons from colonial territories': replies to circular from Alan Lennox-Boyd, Secretary of State for the Colonies. Colonial Office ISD file 121/01. CO1035/113.

22 A.M. MacDonald: 'Report on organisation of intelligence in Fiji', reports by Security Intelligence Advisers, January–December 1956, Colonial Office ISD file 118/49/01. CO1035/107. See also 'Organisation of Intelligence Services in the Colonies: Fiji', 1 January 1956–31 December 1957, Colonial Office ISD file 65/49/01. CO1035/48.

23 For details of Alex MacDonald's career in MI5, the Colonial Office ISD, Kenya and Cyprus, see Calder Walton: *Empire of secrets*, op. cit., pp. 140–145.

24 'Prepared to die on a Pacific atoll—pacifist's H-bomb protest', *The Scotsman*, 9 May 1957.

The Japanese Government finally granted a visa to Steele on condition that he would not undertake any actions that would endanger human life. But too late: he was unable to reach Japan before the first Grapple test, conducted on Malden Island on 15 May. Steele flew first to New Delhi, where he met with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, noting:

Mr. Nehru wished me well and his whole bearing and attitude of speech showed he was not opposed to my mission.²⁵

He then flew on to Tokyo on 16 May, still hoping to mobilise support from the Japanese peace movement. Graham and Dixon could not find a way to join him for the Pacific protests. The Commonwealth Relations Office reported to the Foreign Office:

They are thought to have left Delhi on 28 May taking a devious route hitchhiking from port to port in an attempt to get a cheap passage, since their funds are very low. In view of this, it is difficult to predict when they will turn up here, but it is certainly now seems that Tokyo and Fiji need no longer have any fear of their turning up there.²⁶

* * *

On 17 May, two days after the first British test on Malden Island, there were protests across Japan involving an estimated 350,000 people. In Tokyo, 20,000 students held a demonstration against the test, surrounding the British Embassy. That night, 3,000 school students also held a lantern procession.

A delegation of four peace activists met with embassy officials, delivering a copy of a message for Prime Minister Macmillan and calling for the immediate halt of any further tests at Christmas Island. The delegates also asked for Britain to join an agreement between the United States and Soviet Union prohibiting nuclear testing. However, British officials reportedly told the delegation:

We think that the influence of the last nuclear test on mankind is negligible. We have heard enough of the demand for the agreement of prohibition of the tests, and we are in no mood for answer to you [sic].²⁷

25 'Pacifist seeks to demonstrate against H-tests', *Florence Times* (US), 16 May 1957.

26 Letter from T.W. Aston, Commonwealth Relations Office to G.A.C. Witheridge, Ministry of Supply, 5 June 1957. CO1056/513.

27 *No More Hiroshimas, the news of the Japan Council against A and H-bombs*, Vol. 4, No. 9, May 1957, pp. 3–6.

One of Steele's first acts in Tokyo was to meet with diplomats at the British Embassy to argue his case for a halt to further tests. Reporting to London after the meeting on 18 May, diplomat R. W. Selby noted: 'Steele was at pains to point out that his mission was in no way political. It was essentially humanitarian and, he supposed, religious.' Ending his report, Selby noted that 'naturally for his sake and everyone else's sake, I hoped that his mission would be a flop and that he would have a happy journey home'.²⁸

Over subsequent days, however, the British activist engaged in a series of meetings and newspaper interviews. Steele visited a dozen Japanese students who were conducting a hunger strike in a park opposite the British Embassy, telling them that he 'came here in good hope and with a firm determination to join in protesting nuclear tests'.²⁹

On 22 May, as the Executive Council of the Japan Council Against A and H Bombs debated the pros and cons of deploying a protest fleet into the danger zone, Steele told the meeting that direct action was the only way to halt the tests.³⁰

But with funds running short, Steele was increasingly frustrated by the difficulties of gaining firm commitments for action. A proposed meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister Mitsujiro Ishii was repeatedly delayed. Organising a vessel for the protest fleet was much harder than expected. There were also significant differences between affiliates of the Japan Council, with some urging direct action, but others arguing the protest boat proposal was 'adventurous' and likely to damage public opinion. Some Gensuikyo executive members sought alternatives 'drawn up so as carefully to give no ground to the opposition that this was something of a suicidal nature, like kamikaze attack by Japanese forces had resorted to during the Pacific war'.³¹

Steele's frustration boiled over, as the Japanese debate on direct action echoed his own experience in the British disarmament movement. He told a reporter from Reuters that the Japan Council 'had let the side down. They had gone into this thing with plenty of steam but had fizzled out'. As with peace movements in Britain, 'the societies are constantly

28 Letter from R.W. Selby, British Embassy, Tokyo, to H.C. Hainsworth, Foreign Office, London, 24 May 1957, 1242/338/57, marked Confidential. CO1056/513.

29 Reuters report published in *Milwaukee Journal*, 18 May 1957.

30 Reuters Tokyo press cable, 22 May 1957. CO1036/513.

31 Detailed reporting of the internal debates within the peace movement is found in *No More Hiroshimas*, op. cit., pp. 3–6.

arguing, splitting hairs and going around corners. I fear that Japan's peace movement, which is very young, is in danger of developing the same weakness'.³²

Without the capacity to mobilise an extensive protest flotilla, the Japan Council still organised other protests. Regular reports from Reuters' Tokyo office carried news to Europe, the United States and Australia, while the Pacific islands media gave coverage to protests in Japan, such as a front-page report in the *Fiji Times* of another 15,000-strong rally in Tokyo.³³

The British Embassy in Tokyo sent daily reports to London on the efforts by Japanese peace activists to organise ships to travel to the test site—with barely suppressed glee that these efforts were unsuccessful.

From Kochi, on the south-east coast of Shikoku Island, activists continued to mobilise for the protest. The Kochi Prefectural Committee for the Prevention of Nuclear Tests on Christmas Island had planned to send a steamer with 27 crew and eight demonstrators on board to the area near the danger zone for 100 days, for both a symbolic protest and to collect samples of radioactive fallout. Soon after the first test on Malden Island, the British Embassy reported that the Japan Council was supporting the Kochi Prefectural Committee with ¥3.5 million, as a contribution towards the ¥8.5 million cost to hire and outfit fishing boats to travel to the test zone.³⁴

However, on 19 May, four days after the first test on Malden Island, the British Embassy noted that the Kochi committee 'announced cancellation of its plan to send vessel to the testing grounds in view of danger of contamination from first test'.³⁵

Hundreds of letters condemning the tests were then given to the captains of two Japanese fishing boats *No. 3 Koho Maru* and *No. 5 Ryoji Maru* to throw into the sea near the test site. These ships sailed on 30 May, carrying journalist Takei Hajima from the Communist-aligned *Akahata* newspaper, displaying banners that said 'Stop the H-Bomb Tests' and

32 Reuters Tokyo press cable, 22 May 1957. CO1036/513.

33 'Tokyo H-bomb protest', *Fiji Times*, 31 May 1957, p. 1. Beyond the Asia-Pacific region, Steele's visit received coverage in papers as diverse as the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Australia), *Manchester Guardian* (UK), *Milwaukee Journal* (USA) and even the *Florence Times* (Alabama, USA).

34 Letter from R.W. Selby, British Embassy, Tokyo, to H.C. Hainsworth, Foreign Office, London, 17 May 1957, 1242/318/57, marked Confidential. CO1056/513.

35 Telegram from British Embassy in Tokyo to Foreign Office, London, 19 May 1957. CO1056/513.

‘Japanese fishermen are not laboratory rabbits!’³⁶ The British Embassy in Tokyo confidently reported that the fishing boats ‘would not go anywhere near the danger zone’.³⁷

* * *

The protests in Japan and the Pacific islands were amplified by actions in Australia and New Zealand, as churches, unions and peace groups began to criticise the British tests.³⁸

On 27 May 1957, following the first test on Malden Island, the President-General of the Methodist Church of Australasia, Reverend Harold Wood, wrote to the British Secretary of State for the Colonies expressing concern about the nuclear test on Christmas Island. Conveying a resolution of the General Conference of the Methodist Church, Reverend Wood called ‘for the abandonment of the tests that have begun in the Pacific’ and urged the British Government:

to consider the most unfortunate position of the inhabitants of the various Pacific island groups in many of which the Methodist Church is conducting its overseas mission work ... We are prompted to respectfully remind you of the very great danger of radioactive fallout on the scattered islands of the Pacific and also the deplorable psychological effect on primitive people because of the nuclear tests. We remind you that most of the native people concerned are, directly or indirectly, under the administration of the British Colonial office.³⁹

In June, Steele returned to England, his dream of sailing to Christmas Island still out of reach. But the whole experience drove him on, to focus public opinion in Britain on the UK testing program. Under his enthusiastic gaze, the Emergency Committee for Direct Action Against Nuclear War was transformed into the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War (DAC) in April 1958 ‘to assist the conducting of non-violent direct action to obtain the total renunciation of nuclear war and its weapons by Britain and all other countries as a first step in disarmament’.⁴⁰

36 *No More Hiroshimas*, op. cit, p. 6.

37 Confidential telegram No. 191, British Embassy, Tokyo, to Foreign Office, 27 May 1957. CO1056/513.

38 Barbara Carter: ‘The peace movements in the 1950s’ in Ann Curthoys and John Merritt: *Better Dead than Red—Australia’s first Cold War 1945–59* (Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1986), p. 67.

39 Letter from Reverend Harold Wood, President-General of the Methodist Church of Australasia, 27 May 1957, with covering letter by D.J. Dery to D.A. Lovelock, 11 June 1957. CO1056/513.

40 Direct Action Committee (DAC): *Policy Statement*, 10 April 1958.

More militant than CND, the DAC launched a new campaign of civil disobedience against nuclear weapons, with protests and sit-ins against the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE) at Aldermaston, US Polaris submarine bases in Scotland and Britain's own nuclear missile force.⁴¹

A failed quest? Harold Steele's dream of sailing a boat into the middle of the Pacific nuclear test zone went unfulfilled, but his vision inspired many others. In 1958, US pacifist Albert Bigelow planned to sail the *Golden Rule* from California to Enewetak Atoll in the Marshall Islands, to disrupt the US military's test series codenamed Operation Hardtack.⁴² When Bigelow's yacht was seized by the US Coast Guard off Hawai'i, a former US naval officer Earle Reynolds took up his voyage, and sailed the yacht *Phoenix* to waters off Bikini Atoll. Reynolds, his wife Barbara and children later sailed to the USSR to protest against Soviet nuclear testing.⁴³

More than a decade later, the rusting fishing trawler *Phyllis Cormack* was renamed the *Greenpeace*, and sailed from Vancouver in 1971 attempting to halt US nuclear tests in the northern Pacific. Greenpeace activists and other mariners aboard the *Vega*, *Fri*, *Rainbow Warrior* and other vessels bedevilled the French state in the waters off Moruroa Atoll until France's nuclear testing program ended in 1996.⁴⁴ In the 1980s, Bill and Lorraine Ethell mortgaged their home in Australia and took three children aboard the *Pacific Peacemaker*, sailing across the Pacific to challenge the regional deployment of nuclear-armed US Trident submarines.⁴⁵

Harold Steele's tradition of moral witness and 'bodies on the line' had taken root in the Pacific—a lesson learnt by a new generation of climate activists.⁴⁶

41 'Two protests against the hydrogen bomb 1957', Appendix XI in Andrew Bone (ed.): *Détente or destruction 1955–57, collected papers of Bertrand Russell*, Vol. 29 (Routledge, New York, 2005). See also 'From Operation Gandhi to the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War (DAC)', *Nonviolent Resistance*, 22 March 2015. After a series of protests, the DAC later merged with the Committee of 100, led by the philosopher Bertrand Russell, to continue its tradition of militant protest.

42 Albert Bigelow: *The Voyage of the Golden Rule* (Doubleday & Company, Garden City, NY, 1959). Thanks to Dale Hess for introducing me to this tradition of Quaker protest.

43 Earle Reynolds: *The Forbidden Voyage* (David McKay Company, New York, 1961).

44 Michael Brown and John May: *The Greenpeace Story* (Dorling Kindersley, London and New York, 1991).

45 Win Olive: *Voyage of the Pacific Peacemaker* (Wild & Woolley, Glebe, 1999).

46 For the connection with a new generation of environmental campaigners, see Nic Maclellan: 'Young Pacific islanders are not climate change victims—they're fighting', *The Guardian*, 22 September 2014.

This text is taken from *Grappling with the Bomb: Britain's Pacific H-bomb tests*, by Nic Maclellan, published 2017 by ANU Press,
The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.