

PACIFISM 3. When pacifism is criticised it is generally in view of a conflict that is at the stage of a shooting war. The argument invariably is: 'Pacifism is treason - we must support our soldiers, we must defend our nation and our freedom, our way of life.' However, this line of reasoning is flawed - instead of being against pacifism, it is an argument against past, wrong policies. It is the decision to go to war that imperils our soldiers, nation, freedom, way of life - once the shooting starts, all are in strife. Let me use an analogy: In the distance there is a fierce bushfire. The wind changes, the blaze comes your way. All the firefighters can do is contain the fire and protect the neighbouring houses; your own house - encroached on by dried shrubs - is destroyed. One minute you are at peace - next all is lost. Clearly, once the fire was at your house, little could be done. Any protective measures (clearing of dry shrubs) only had a chance of preventing your loss, had they been implemented well before the fire reached you. It is the same with war and pacifism: Once we are at war, the damage is done. Pacifism is an investment in our future: To affect a present war, pacifism had to have been applied in the past - but applied now, pacifism will prevent future wars.

*The principle with fires and wars is the same:
They are best prevented - not contained.*

What does it mean to apply pacifism now? We must alleviate poverty around the world, all people must be given equal opportunities, democracy must be encouraged - importantly, using peaceful means, rather than force - freedom and autonomy must be granted to all ethnic groups. There is but one reason why we have terrorism and wars: Countries with superior economies and firepower suppress others. Their post-colonial policies reflect their leaders' capacity for denial when it comes to making themselves aware of the Confucian rule of Mutual Reciprocal Respect:

'If you want freedom and prosperity for your people, give other people freedom and prosperity' - i.e. politicians ignore the Golden Rule: Do to others as you want done to yourself. Furthermore, policy-makers do not comprehend or admit that it is not only their counterparts who make mistakes - they deny their own propensity for wrong decisions that need reviewing. Pacifism will prevent wars and bring about peace by providing equality, prosperity and self-determination to all the world's people - once the mind-set of leaders is imbued with compassion and understanding.