

Preventing War and Promoting Peace: A Guide for Health Professionals, edited by and William H. Wiist and Shelley K. White, Cambridge UK, Cambridge University Press, 2017, 364(pp), £85.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781107146686, \$US85.00 (e-book), ISBN 9781108515542

Before beginning this review, I should issue a disclaimer. I was asked to contribute to this book (declined) and a few chapters in this volume cite work I have authored.

Further. I am part of the Primary Prevention of War Group of the Peace Caucus of the American Public Health Association which led this effort and makes up much of the authorship. I have great respect for the expertise of the editors and chapter authors. I will attempt to be critical and as disinterested a reader as possible.

The book serves as an excellent primer for those interested in militarism, imperialism, and corporate power in the US and their intersection, as they affect the health of the American population, and much of the rest of the world. The Introduction sets up these relationships, beginning with an account of the brutal colonization of Indigenous people. US readers may find echoes in Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* and in the films of Michael Moore and Oliver Stone. These works illustrate US power on a continuum, from its violent founding as a Republic, to its current imperial policies. It is an Empire with bases in over 60 countries, and troops in twice as many, all with the purpose of guarding Pax Americana abroad, while at home, weapons systems development is protected by weapons systems based in each US Congressional district.

The first section. The Health Effects of War and Weapons of War,— including their impact on combatants, civilians, and the environment. It covers the political economic and social costs of development and use of weapons of mass destruction on health, compared to political economic and social needs. The section includes a lot of generalities and the data is sometimes dated, for example on landmines and small arms. It would benefit from addressing controversies related to mortality figures in war, the measurement of indirect and direct casualties as for example with the 2003 war on Iraq and including data from *Small Arms Survey*. For a US audience more discussion of the impact of small arms within the US is warranted. However useful and timely are discussion of the recent trend by the US to use drones to minimize risk to US personnel, their legality and how their use can fuel terrorism.

The second section, Social Determinants of War, should be of special interest to a public health audience. It is an analytic examination of militarism, revealing interesting facts on the role of contractors and the corruption of academia. Further it describes how ethnic conflict and the news and entertainment industry fuel conflict.

The third section, Preventing War and Promoting Peace, may serve as a guide, providing details to facilitate action in the US on primary prevention of war. It brings together legal and ethical elements, historical perspectives, and analysis of pacifism and civil disobedience. It further provides an introduction to complex systems monitoring, and offers practical tips on preventing military recruitment in schools, and on developing advocacy skills: all meant to provide tools for peace promotion.

The final sections on teaching, with examples of courses and conferences and research, are rather brief.

Overall this is an excellent read, and I learned a lot. There are issues with typos, spaces, spelling (of John Locke), grammar (*less casualties*) as often occurs with a book's first printing. The book is rich with information, and the references are mostly good. It should be useful for courses, as well as for the novice, casual reader. The largely US focus and US based authorship (albeit with authors from a variety of academic disciplines: public health, medicine and nursing, as well as law, sociology, psychology, political science, and peace and conflict studies) may limit interest among those in warzones.

The first section on armed conflict is much briefer and less academic than volumes such as *War and Public Health*. It seems more designed to set up other sections than be a definitive academic account. *Peace through Health*, which I co-edited, had more on mechanisms and examples from warzones. This book is meant more as a primer for activism, principally in the US context, and as such, adds to the field, and should be empowering for students and others trying to make change within the US.

But is this really a guide for health professionals as opposed to academics, citizens working in public health and others, using a health perspective, as indicated by the title? I would argue that it is more for the latter audience. It is encouraging that positive reviews are provided by Sandro Galea, Dean, Boston University School of Public Health and Vicente Navarro at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and editor of the *International Journal of Health Services*. It would be a great step forward if these concepts could be embedded in Public Health schools.

Levy BS and Sidel VW (eds). *War and Public Health*. 2nd edition Oxford Oxford University Press 2008 *in collaboration with the American Public Health Association*, pp. 485 (paperback)

Arya, Akshaya Neil, and Joanna Santa Barbara. 2008. *Peace through health: how health professionals can work for a less violent world*. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press.