OMNI PEARL HARBOR DAY NEWSLETTER #2, DECEMBER 7, 2010. Compiled by Dick Bennett. Another in OMNI’s NATIONAL DAYS series for a Culture of Peace.

OMNI needs a new coordinator of its National DAYS project. WE affirm DAYS for nonviolence, world peace, social and economic justice, human rights, grassroots democracy, defense of the earth and species, 350 PPM, and reject those that promote wars, killing, violence, militarism, warming. Contact Gladys.

This new book exposes the US machinations that led to Pearl Harbor and World War II in the Pacific. Little is more important in preventing wars by aggressor nations than freeing the population from the domination of war-making national myths.

WAR IS A LIE by David Swanson is a thorough refutation of every major argument used to justify US wars, with a focus on those wars that have been most widely defended as just and good. This is therefore a manual for critical thinking to be used in debunking future lies before future wars have a chance to begin.

“David Swanson despises war and lying, and unmask them both with rare intelligence. I learn something new on every page.” — Jeff Cohen, founder of FAIR and author of Cable News Confidential.

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Here’s a summary of what Swanson argues about the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941, pp. 57-65. (Also read chapter 4 on whether the US should have entered WWII.)

The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, that famous “Day of Infamy,” illustrates another type of “defensive war,” “one that follows a successful provocation of aggression from the desired enemy.”

By a vote of 85 to 1 in 1928 the US Senate had ratified the Kellogg-Briand Pact “that bound—and still binds—our nation and many others never again to engage in war.” But President Roosevelt wished to assist Britain and its allies against the Nazis. By 1934 he had begun to expand US military bases in the Pacific. In 1935 General Smedley Butler in War Is a Racket ridiculed the buildup and war games maneuvers in the western Pacific. By 1939 the US Navy had a plan for “an offensive war” against Japan. By 1940 the US was loaning China money and planning to send them bombers. By 1941 the US was training the Chinese air force and plans were prepared to bomb Japanese cities. On July 25, 1941 the US froze Japanese assets and with Britain cut off oil and scrap metal to Japan, all posing a potent threat to Japan’s existence. On November 15, 1941 Army Chief of Staff George Marshall briefed the media on preparations for “an offensive war against Japan.” On Dec. 1, a meeting in the Oval Office discussed likelihood of Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor within a few days. The attack on Pearl came Dec. 7. Only Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin (R., Mont) voted against (Read summary of her reasons pp. 64-65 that add to the evidence of provocation.) Swanson’s conclusion: WWII in the Pacific was not a defensive war; rather it was a colonial, imperial contest over control of resources, and Japan, direly threatened by embargoes, attacked the central US imperial base at Pearl Harbor.

Swanson covers all US wars, so we might not expect him to have read every relevant book on each of the wars. Yet it is odd that he does not cite the book that supports his case in several hundred
Roland Worth, Jr., No Choice But War: The United States Embargo Against Japan and the Eruption of War in the Pacific (McFarland, 1995). Worth finds much to blame in both countries for causing World War II in the Pacific. He expresses no sympathy for Japanese militarism and aggression. But he also shows “the pivotal role of the U.S.-led economic embargo in pushing Japan over the edge into overt hostilities against the West. In other words the U.S. decision to embargo 90 percent of Japan’s petroleum and two-thirds or more of its trade led directly to the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.” “It was not just a matter of Japanese imperialism; the misjudged American response [of total embargo] sealed off the possibility of a peaceful solution or even of ‘hot cold war’” and pushed the Japanese “beyond the point of no return” (ix-x). (This book is in OMNI’s library.)

So on this December 7, 2010, let us grieve over yet another war of horrific slaughter and mass murder (read John Dower’s War Without Mercy). Let us not celebrate the so-called “victory” of WWII in the Pacific; rather let us celebrate with a loud and concerted voice the banning of war in the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact of 1928, the United Nations Charter of 1945, and the International Criminal Court’s decision to prosecute crimes of aggression in 2010.

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