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## Magic Bullet

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# Magic Bullet

## **Abstract**

Two of the most powerful types of corporations in the world today are those that produce pharmaceuticals and weapons. While the corporations are concerned with increasing their profits, we wonder if their products have any magical powers.

[India ink on rag paper]

This poster explores the military-industrial complex. The weapons industry profits through imperialism. The pharmaceutical industry profits through by taking advantage of people's illnesses.

The poster has multiple interpretations, hopefully encouraging the viewer to participate by asking relevant questions, such as:

“What is that person drinking?”

”Are they pills or bombs?”

“Medicines cure us - how can a pill be dangerous?”

“Are those people being bombed?”

“Are they harvesting bombs?”

“We can see inside that person, so why can't we see inside the jet fighters?”

“Who is making the person swallow that pill?”

“Why do we have bombs/pills?”

“What is freedom?”

The form and function are intertwined. It is black and white - and yet there is a dialectic which is grey.

This is an example of the posters I have been making, which can be cheaply reproduced and displayed in public places such as schools. The aim is to invite questions and discussions, by provoking or pointing out contradictions - and to encourage answers and progressive solutions. I am not trying to be anti-science, but to

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find ways to use science for people's real needs, rather than for their destruction. I am asking for medicine (or other chemicals) which really help, rather than for magic bullets.

A literal interpretation of the poster could be that it is showing a company such as Union Carbide (Dow Chemical) which, after World War II needed to come up with some new uses for some of the chemicals it had developed for warfare. They figured out how to use some to make chemical fertilisers, and to sell them to people in countries like India (calling it a green revolution). Union Carbide set up a factory in Bhopal, where they did not have to pay much for labour, and where they did not have to worry about safety requirements. This resulted in the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, in which thousands of people were killed and many more were harmed, and continue to be harmed due to exposure to the chemicals they left behind when they abandoned the factory. It is important to realise that this is not just one isolated story. It is a systemic problem which is inevitable in a capitalist system - because in capitalism profit has to be the bottom line.

#### **Author/Artist Bio**

Karen Haydock has been doing research and developing teaching/learning materials and methods at the intersections of natural and social sciences, visual art, and language. She has a PhD in biophysics and has been living and working in India since 1985. She is a well-known illustrator and designer of materials and methods in science education, and has also taught art, biology and other sciences at primary to post-graduate levels.

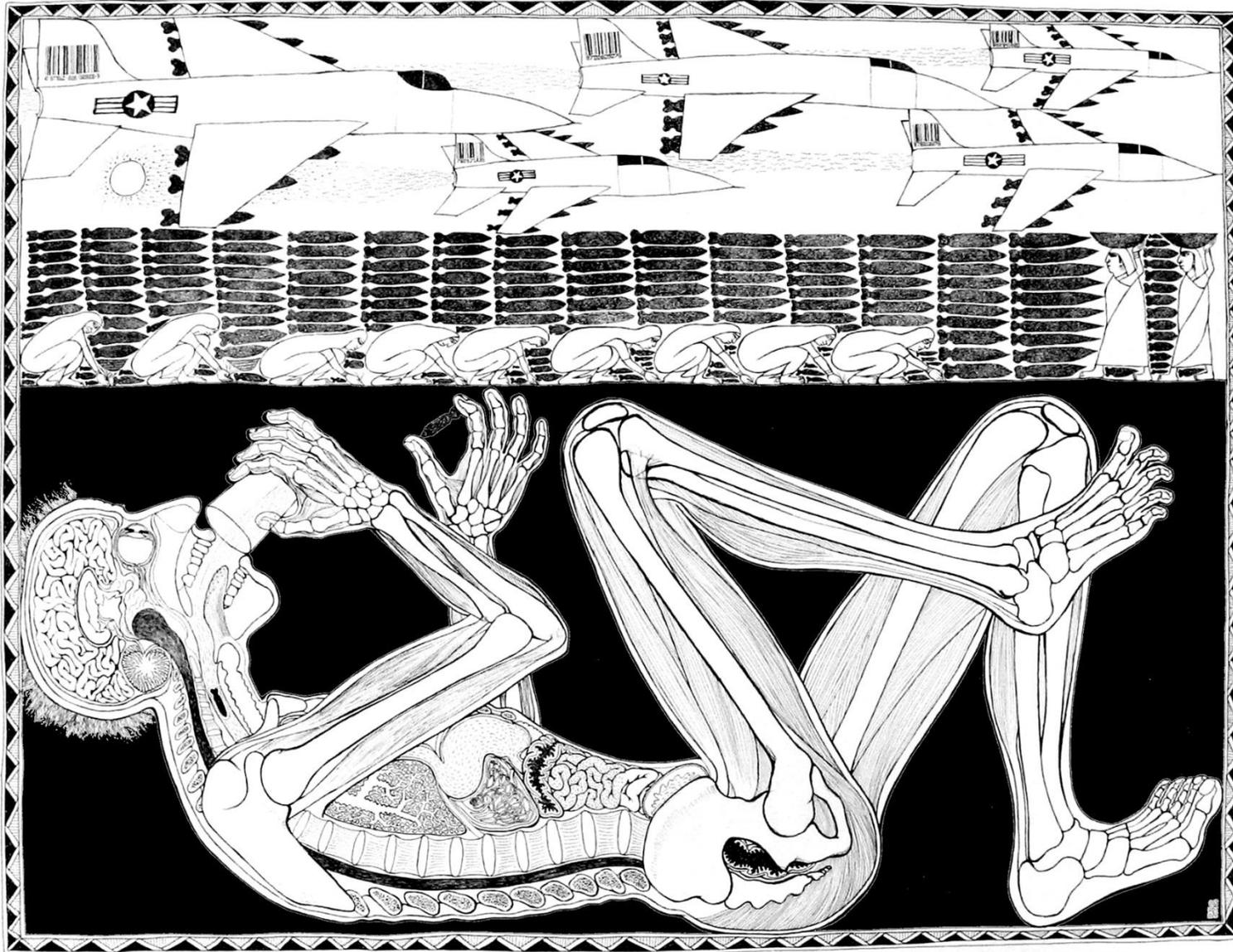
#### **Keywords**

weapons, pharmaceuticals, military industrial complex

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