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The JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF PEACE AND CONFLICT is the annual journal of the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, with its office at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, 900 Reserve Street, Stevens Point, WI 54481. Officers are Executive Director Geoff Bradshaw (Madison Area Technical College), Associate Director Terence Roehrig (Cardinal Stritch University), and Administrative Director Kathryn Blakeman. The Institute is committed to a balanced review of diverse perspectives. Views of the authors are their own. The Journal is a refereed journal. To purchase a copy, send $15 to the Wisconsin Institute at the above address.

CALL FOR PAPERS: The 2006-2007 issue of the Journal will publish a variety of scholarly articles, essays, poetry, and book reviews on topics such as war, peace, global cooperation, domestic violence, and interpersonal conflict resolution; including questions of military and political security, the global economy, and global environmental issues. We wish to promote discussion of both strategic and ethical questions surrounding these issues. Our audience includes scholars with a wide range of interests within the academy and educated members of the general public. Contributors should avoid discussions accessible only to specialists in their field. Submissions are accepted on a continuing basis. Contributors should first contact the office at wiinst@uwsp.edu for a brief style sheet.
# Journal for the Study of Peace and Conflict
## 2005-2006 Annual Edition
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EDITOR’S FORWARD

This issue of the *Journal for the Study of Peace and Conflict* continues the journal’s tradition, dating from the publication of the first issue as *Viewpoints* in 1991, of addressing issues of war, peace, and human justice from diverse perspectives. The first section features a group of four outstanding papers from recent annual conferences of the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies. Ian Harris and Patricia Mische, noted peace scholars and educators, begin with a perceptive analysis of the relationship between peace and environmental education, suggesting fruitful ways for applying strategies for achieving peace to the solution of global environmental issues. In the second essay, philosopher John E. Fields carefully explores theories of social trust and their implications for protecting human rights, especially in light of the present “war on terror” in the United States. Richard Hudelson, also a philosopher, follows with a perceptive critique of the radically individualistic libertarian theory of “negative” human rights, arguing that Confucianism may form the basis for an alternative and more communal conception of “positive” human rights. In the fourth essay, theologian Michael A. Ketterhagen examines the Himalayan Tradition and its emphasis on meditation and inner personal transformation as a means to achieve nonviolence.

Following these papers is a series of opinion pieces. Political scientist David M. Smith explores the reasons for the drastic decline in antiwar activism in the United States after the outbreak of the Iraq War and suggests steps to revitalize the movement. Holger Henke, likewise a political scientist, follows with an assessment of the significance of the conclusion of World War II, examining changing perceptions of the war’s meaning and lessons relevant for the present world. Next, historian and peace scholar Kent Shifferd presents a summary and defense of the peace theology of Thomas Merton, one of the major figures in twentieth-century Christian thought, quoting extensively from Merton’s writings and including a useful chronology of his life and publications. A short book review section follows, and the issue concludes with the “History of the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies,” an overview of the first twenty years of this journal’s sponsoring institution, jointly authored by Ian Harris, Dick Ringler, Kent Shifferd, and William Skelton.

This issue marks my first foray into journal editing, and I must apologize for any delays and missteps resulting from the learning process. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the authors and contributors to this issue, to the referees who read and evaluated manuscripts, to my colleague Eric Yonke who by default took on the role of associate editor and adviser, and especially to Kathryn Blakeman, my other associate editor, who skillfully performed the lion’s share of the editing, formatting, correspondence, and other tasks essential to the production of the journal.

William B. Skelton
Emeritus Professor of History
University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point
On the Relationship between Peace Education and Environmental Education

By Ian Harris and Patricia Mische

Abstract

This paper argues that the inchoate fields of environmental education and peace education can learn from each other about various strategies for peace. For too long these budding academic disciplines have ignored each other. The health of the human species depends upon environmental sustainability. Peace theory provides examples of strategies like preventative diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding that can inform environmental efforts to preserve resources. Likewise, the inter-relationships of natural systems provide important lessons for the human community. The preservation of human society depends upon humans adopting policies that promote ecological security.

“Social justice is not separate from ecological justice because human life is not separate from nature.” (Rebecca Martusiwicz, 2001 p. 395)

In their efforts to address the complex forms of violence in human communities, peace educators often overlook the devastating impact of human violence upon the Earth, its ecosystems, and the various species that inhabit it. Likewise, environmental educators often overlook the importance of peace to environmental sustainability. Because these linkages between peace and the natural environment are not well understood, most governments still develop public policies around definitions and paradigms of national security that center on global military and economic competition while excluding or giving low priority to ecological sustainability (Mische, 1994).

This essay will address some of these shortcomings, outline some relationships between education for peace and education for environmental sustainability, and propose ways in which they can enhance one another. Many violent conflicts take place over natural resources; conversely, wars and war preparations are extremely destructive to natural systems. Peace educators have insights on ways to resolve conflicts that may be of value to environmental educators; and environmental educators have insights about natural systems that can contribute to a sustainable peace.

Peace Education and Environmental Education

Peace and environmental education both fall within the tradition of education for social responsibility where teachers help students learn about pressing problems and search for solutions. Peace education is concerned about violence and seeks alternatives to violence (Harris, 1988; Smith and Carson, 1998). It includes the study of conflict, conflict avoidance, and conflict resolution between individuals, groups, and nations. Peace education has tended to focus on violence and conflict in human interactions. Ian Harris has stated that the ten goals of peace education should be: to appreciate the richness of the concept “peace;” to address fears; to provide information about security systems; to understand violent behavior; to develop intercultural understanding; to provide for a future orientation; to teach peace as a process; to promote a concept of peace accompanied by social justice; to stimulate a respect for life; and to end violence. (Harris, 1988, p. 17) He also emphasized that a peaceful pedagogy must belong to any attempt to teach
about peace. The key ingredients of such a pedagogy are cooperative learning, a democratic community, moral and environmental sensitivity, and critical thinking. An essential question for peace educators is: What causes human violence and what can be done to stop it?

Environmental education is also concerned about violence but has focused on human-Earth interactions and the damaging effects of human activities in the biosphere. Environmental education teaches ways to live more responsibly and sustainably on the planet. Environmental education has three main goals:

- To provide opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment, and skills needed to protect and improve the environment.
- To encourage pupils to examine and interpret the environment from a variety of perspectives—physical, geographical, biological, sociological, economic, political, technological, historical, aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual.
- To arouse pupils’ awareness and curiosity about the environment and encourage active participation in resolving environmental problems. (Palmer, 1998, p. 20)

Devastation of the natural environment poses a serious threat to human existence. In the immortal words of J. Alfred Prufrock, “That is the way the world ends. Not in a bang but a whimper.” (Eliot, 1936, p. 107) Environmental educators help students become aware of ecological crises, give them tools to advance environmental sustainability, and teach them how to use resources in renewable ways. (Verhagen, 2002) Education about the environment emphasizes how humans are embedded in, and dependent on natural systems:

- Rather than seeing nature as other—a set of phenomena capable of being manipulated like parts of a machine—the practice of ecological education requires viewing human beings as one part of the natural world and human cultures as an outgrowth of interactions between our species and particular places. (Smith and Williams, 1999, p. 3)

Environmental education addresses the sources of human destruction of the natural world. Peace theory and peace education can provide insights into how to transform human behavior that might lead to ecocide into behavior that promotes environmental sustainability.

The French philosopher, Blaise Pascal, observed that human beings are “running carelessly towards a precipice.” (Quoted in Nastase, 1982, p. 185) This metaphor applies accurately to environmental crises; excessive human consumption, toxic pollutants, and other unsustainable human practices ultimately kill human beings as well as exterminate thousands of species on this planet. Both environmental education and peace education try to make students aware of this abyss and offer skills to avoid such destructive behaviors.

Peace educators teach ways to minimize human harm to natural systems and develop an appreciation for human participation in natural processes and interconnectedness to all beings in the life community. Their goal is “to have humans live in peace with nature,” appreciating that their own survival and health depends upon the health of water, air, plants, and animals. Inevitably, some conflict exists in human-nature interactions, just as there are inevitable conflicts in interhuman relations. The goals of peace education as related to environmental education include preparing students to live responsibly within the life community, nurturing and preserving its rich diversity, and not exceeding the limits of its self-renewing capacities.

Negative and Positive Peace

Peace theory provides an important distinction between negative and
positive peace. (Galtung, 1969)
Negative peace is the absence of physical violence such as war or environmental destruction. Positive peace is the absence of structural violence or systemic injustice. Expressed as a presence rather than absence, negative peace can be defined as the presence of norms, policies, structures, and practices to prevent or end physical violence that undermines human life and Earth’s functioning integrity. Positive peace can be defined as the presence of norms, policies, systems, and practices that respect human dignity, meet human needs, and uphold social and environmental justice and the sustainability of human and nature communities. Both negative and positive peace imply a commitment to nonviolence in human interactions within the human community and within the larger community of life.

Is it possible for humans to be nonviolent in their interactions within the life community? Doesn’t the act of eating – whether a carrot or a cow – constitute an act of violence? Humans have to eat. And modern livelihoods and commerce depend upon obtaining and using resources – processes that entail disrupting natural systems. Likewise, nature itself would seem to evolve violently. Volcanoes, earthquakes, tornadoes, fires caused by lightning, and predators hunting and eating their prey all seem violent. But such Earth processes should not be equated with human acts of violence; they are part of Earth’s tremendous evolutionary creativity. (Berry, 1984) These creative processes have produced the conditions in which life has emerged and proceeded toward increasing diversity. The overall direction of these interactive Earth processes has been toward greater life. We may see the “eating” of members of one species by those of another as violent. But a more appropriate view is offered by conservationist, Aldo Leopold, in his ground-breaking 1949 essay on a “Land Ethic” and by the biologist, Elisabet Sahtouris in _Gaia: Living Systems in Evolution_ (1989). As they see it, in the community of life, all beings are nurtured and sustained by other members of the community. Soil, water, sun, and microbial life nurture plants that in turn nurture animals who nurture one another. All go back to the soil contributing to an ongoing process of regeneration and self-renewal. Predators help prevent other species from overpopulating and thus contribute to a healthy planet. Each species and element plays a part in the life and health of the whole community. The Earth is like a single cell in the universe. Humans are not “over” this cell, but part of it. We will live or die as this single cell lives or dies. (Berry, 1979) We need to learn to live as responsible members of the larger life community, extending our sense of ethics to the whole. We can eat from the whole, but we also have to help nurture it.

Such understandings of the natural world open us to new understandings of “peace.” Like the Earth, peace is not a passive, static, steady, or finished state. It is an active process in which tremendous creativity is expended in an effort to balance conflicting forces and find equilibrium. It is also a process of mutual nurturance of the conditions that will help sustain human and other members of the community of life.

Aristotle compared nature to a “doctor doctoring itself.” Human violence that destroys nature systems – e.g., a wetland to build a resort – is the antithesis of Earth’s creative, self-renewing and healing processes.

**Peace Strategies**

Peace theory examines a variety of approaches to peace, including preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. (Boutros-Ghali, 1992; Berlowitz, 1994; Forcey & Harris, 1999; and Galtung, 1975)
Preventive diplomacy, as defined by the United Nations, is “action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts, and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur.” The goal is to “ease tensions before they result in conflict—or, if conflict breaks out, to act swiftly to contain it and resolve its underlying causes.” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992, p. 11) Measures include confidence-building (e.g., arrangements for the free flow of information, exchanges of military missions, monitoring of arms agreements); information gathering, and formal and informal fact finding; early warning systems (e.g., concerning environmental threats, nuclear accidents, natural disasters, mass movements of populations, the threat of famine, and the spread of disease); and demilitarized zones to separate potential belligerents. Preventive diplomacy has counterparts in everyday lives in family, community, workplace, and other settings.

Peacemaking, as defined by the UN, is “action to bring hostile parties to agreement by peaceful means.” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992, p. 11). There are a wide variety of peacemaking methods, including negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and the use of the World Court or regional courts. Such means of resolving conflicts appeal to agreed-on standards of fairness and justice and accepted authorities. When parties to a conflict feel that their concerns are heard and that they are treated equitably and fairly by legitimate authorities, rather than being forced to submit, the resulting peace is likely to be more stable and enduring. Peacemaking is also used by ordinary people in everyday life – in families, communities and the workplace.

Peacekeeping, as used by the UN, refers to the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field to help prevent or stop violence between hostile parties. UN peacekeepers traditionally could be deployed only with the consent of all concerned parties and were prohibited from taking sides or using deadly force except if they were personally attacked. The purpose of peacekeepers is generally to serve as a buffer between conflicting parties so as to prevent armed combat and assure that preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacebuilding processes can effectively proceed. In recent years UN peacekeepers have sometimes been deployed to prevent one country from attacking another, or for humanitarian intervention (e.g., to assure that food gets through to refugees or to stop genocides within a country). The UN also has been granted the authority by member states, under Articles 42 and 43 of the UN Charter, to take military action to restore peace and security when peaceful means have been exhausted and failed, but the Security Council has not so far made use of these powers. Instead, it has sometimes authorized member states to take action on its behalf (e.g., following the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War).

The term “peacekeeping” is also sometimes used at the level of nation states to mean their use or threatened use of deadly force to deter aggression or defend citizens from attack. Commonly referred to as “Peace Through Strength,” this approach involves the maintenance and use of national military forces to stop violence. Among the difficulties many peace educators have with this approach is that military forces, and many weapons systems, can be used for aggression as well as defense. Military build-up by one country undermines confidence in its intent and can be very destabilizing, catalyzing an arms race or pre-emptive strikes by countries fearing aggressive intent. Another difficulty is that governments with authoritarian or imperialist ambitions may manipulate peoples’ genuine concerns about security to “justify” pre-emptive strikes or aggression against another country, or to suppress legitimate dissent or opposition against repression at home.
Legitimate peacekeeping strategies fall in the category of negative peace, in that they aim to prevent or stop hostilities. Many peace educators teaching about this strategy for peace are concerned about the ethics and/or long-range efficacy of using violence to stop violence or settle disputes. Besides inherent contradictions, violent solutions often take a heavy toll on human life and may actually perpetuate rather than resolve hostilities.

Moreover, the use of military force often has a devastating impact upon natural systems. (Mische, 1993, 1995; Eisendrath, 1992; Hastings, 2000; Ehlen and Harman, 2001) Wars and the preparation for war have devastated many ecological systems, from coral reefs where navies practice maneuvers and air forces do target practice, to fields planted with landmines and water poisoned with toxic chemicals. Nuclear weapons threaten widespread destruction of the natural world and untold harm to human health and undermine the security of the very people they are supposedly made to protect.

Peacebuilding, employed by the UN in post-conflict situations once violent hostilities have ceased, is a comprehensive strategy to prevent a recurrence of violence and to sustain peaceful relationships among and between different sectors of society at local, national, and regional levels. Methods employed may range from “disarming previously warring parties, repatriating refugees, monitoring elections, advancing human rights, reforming or strengthening governmental institutions, and promoting a vibrant civil society and formal and informal processes of political participation.” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992) Whereas peacekeeping and peacemaking are reactive, seeking to end and resolve conflicts once they have flared up, peacebuilding is preventive and tries to redress the causes of conflict. Peacebuilding is related to both negative and positive peace in that it aims to prevent the recurrence of physical violence and warfare, but does so in a way that addresses underlying conditions of structural violence and social injustice that cause conflict. It aims to develop conditions where human needs and human rights are realized and human dignity is respected. Peacebuilding strategies attempt to replace repressive laws, norms, and institutions with attitudes, policies, institutions, and laws that will advance social justice and make peace sustainable. Like other strategies above, it has applications in homes, communities, and workplaces as well as within and between states.

Applying Peace Strategies in Environmental Education and Action

Prevention

The maxim, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” applies to both peace and environmental protection. Preventing war is the best way to safeguard peace, and preventing environmental harm is the best way to assure a healthy planet. Preventing violence costs much less than cleaning up after wars and environmental disasters. And prevention spares the suffering, death, and social, economic, and health problems that result from war and environmental destruction.

The political and military admonition, “if you want peace, prepare for war,” simply has not proven true. Peace research shows that countries that prepare for war usually get it. (Boulding, 1978) The wisdom offered by peace studies is that, “if you want peace, prepare for peace.” Preparing for peace means taking precautionary steps to prevent war; it means developing domestic and international diplomatic, political, economic, social, and inter-cultural systems and relationships that are strong enough to withstand strains and tensions that could lead to war. A precautionary principle is also the first step in environmental protection. Rather than waiting until a new technology causes environmental harm,
and then requiring the public whose health has been damaged to prove that it has caused their health problems, the precautionary principle requires that those introducing new technologies and products must prove -- before they introduce it -- that it will not cause harm.

Many other measures used to prevent war are also employed to prevent ecological harm. These include information gathering and sharing, monitoring environmental conditions, early warning of environmental threats, freedom of environmental information, and democratic participation. Citizens as well as governments need timely access to environmental information if they are to take effective action for environmental protection.

Additionally, both environmental and peace educators work to supplant worldviews, values, and practices that support violence with those that will enhance the prospects for peace and ecological security. Preventive diplomacy, for example, aims to help parties in conflict move from polarized win/lose postures to win/win solutions. Environmental and peace educators facilitate processes whereby parties to a conflict can find common ground, affirm mutual interests, and build bridges to transcend differences and address each other’s deepest concerns. Similarly, ecologists help people understand that they share common ground as part of a community of life and have a mutual interest in protecting their shared lifeline.

Both peace and environmental educators proceed from the premise that worldviews and systems rooted in a will to conquest, dominance, and power over the other are inimical to true security and well-being. They enable students to explore and develop alternative worldviews, values, and practices that will support sustainable communities and a sustainable peace. In this they share UNESCO’s view that since war and violence begin in the minds of people, it is in the minds of people that peace needs to be sowed and nurtured. As Patricia Mische has observed:

Human destruction of the earth begins first in the mind, when we objectify it (see it as object rather than subject of creative life processes) and, psychologically distancing ourselves from these processes, gradually devalue, deny or succumb to collective amnesia concerning our integral relationship and participation in those processes. A similar mental process is undergone as prelude and psychological preparation for war. The “other” is first seen as distinctly “other,” as alien, “enemy,” then as subhuman and monstrous and “deserving” destruction. (Mische, 1986, p. 2)

Mische suggests that if we are to rid the world of the scourge of war and environmental destruction we need to deconstruct the worldviews and myths that underpin and reinforce violence against nature and other humans. Underlying both forms of violence is allegiance to the myth of domination and conquest.

The myth of conquest requires enemies and heroes – i.e., a polarization of opposites; a sense of the other as totally “other” and apart from self. The myth has to do with power – power used against or over or at the expense of the other. In this myth, one is seen as increasing one’s own power to the extent one succeeds in subduing, controlling, depriving, or destroying the power of the other – whether the power of nature or the power of another person or society. (Mische, 1986, p. 5)

. . . Two powerful archetypes of the conquering hero (usually depicted as masculine) in the American ethos are the lumberjack conquering nature and the soldier conquering foreign places and peoples. . . . In the Vietnam War, the destruction of nature and the war system both
came together in powerful ways when the land itself was seen as enemy, and weapons were devised to assault nature as well as people and cities. Rambo is a modern version of the myth of the conquering hero taken to an extreme in mindless destruction of nature and people. (Mische, 1986, p. 6)

“Rambo is the personalization of war, the reduction of it to its pure elements of men facing each other in all their anger, toughness, power, confusion, and fear,” says Gordon Fellman (1998, p. 108). Rambo, a soldier who executes U.S. policy in Vietnam, represents a society devoted to war that has gone amok, using Agent Orange to destroy the environment as part of imposing its will on people seen as enemies.

This archetype of a militarized male hero was made bigger than life on the giant screen and became deeply rooted in the minds and psyches of young people aspiring to heroism. Such archetypes are not easy to uproot. As Patricia Mische has noted: The myth of the hero as conqueror is very deep and pervasive. It will not disappear by merely bewailing or attacking it. Attacking it gives it more energy and attraction. It needs to be replaced by a new, deeper myth of the hero, one in which heroic stature and power is not achieved at the expense of the other, whether of nature or other humans, but rather through mutual empowerment – what psychologist Rollo May defines as integrative power, or power with the other. This would include a sense of empowerment in and with nature, as well as through integral relationships with other human beings. (Mische, 1986, p. 6)

The new hero is one who works to prevent violence and to resolve conflict not by using force, but by bringing conflicting forces into a renewed and deepened sense of relationship with a sense of responsibility to the common good.

Peacemaking

Peacemaking is akin to preventive diplomacy in that it brings together opposing forces to resolve conflicts, but usually after conflicts break out or when hostilities are at a crisis point. In its broadest sense, peacemaking begins with the commitment to talk about tensions and relies upon the tools of creative problem-solving – genuine communication, effective listening, step-by-step problem solving, and shared decisions about actions. Peacemakers are facilitators – ones who help conflicting parties negotiate a peaceful resolution of differences.

Just as peace education saw the growth of conflict-resolution education in the 1990s as a response to increased levels of violence in schools, similarly, environmental educators have seen a growth in demand in response to environmental crises such as massive deforestation, desertification, global warming, acid rain, the depletion of fishing stock, the extermination of an average of one hundred species a day, shortages in clean water, population growth, soil erosion, and widespread pollution. These interactive and compounding environmental problems may have social and economic impacts that in turn lead to conflicts and civil strife that may grow to insurgency warfare or even international strife. Diplomats, government leaders, and environmental activists try to facilitate a solution to environmental crises and conflicts by bringing together people from different backgrounds to reach mutual agreements that will simultaneously protect natural resources and prevent or resolve conflict over them.

Environmental conflict resolution applies conflict resolution techniques to environmental disputes and has two main concerns: 1) to facilitate agreements to end actions that are harming the environment and causing
conflict, and 2) to facilitate agreements on values, norms, and laws that will protect natural systems against future degradation or harm.

Environmental negotiators bring multiple stakeholders together to agree on ways to regulate their activities so as to both meet human needs and sustain the integrity of nature systems. (Mangun and Henning, 1999) These negotiations are complex, involving environmental activists, engineers, scientists, pressure groups, politicians, bureaucrats, industrialists, developers, the media, lawyers, and lobbyists. (Gorcynski, 1991) They generally concern energy conservation, wildlife regulation, forests, water, resource management, outdoor recreation, pollution control, urban and regional environmental policies, and international environmental administration. (Sjostedt, 1991) Humans need to agree to limit their use of resources and environmental impacts within the bounds of sustainability and Earth’s regenerative capacities. This becomes increasingly important in the face of increasing human populations and rising consumer demands.

Peacemaking within environmental education also aims to help students develop a relationship of mutuality with the natural world. Peacemaking in this regard suggests that all species are of value and deserve respectful treatment. As J. See, J. Macy, and others (1988) have pointed out, flora, fauna, rocks, water, and air have no representatives in legal court systems. Who speaks for nature?

International nongovernmental organizations and local community-based organizations have played an important role in awakening people to the voice of nature. Many of these groups work collaboratively across national lines in broad scale environmental movements. (Rootes, 1999) These movements include political parties (e.g., Green parties), formal organizations (e.g., the Sierra Club, Audubon Society), and spontaneous groupings (e.g., Earth Action). Their newsletters, advocacy, and protests have informed populations about threats to the nature community. Environmental peacemakers use their rational, ethical, and legal skills to develop norms, treaties, and legislation that will protect nature from human-caused degradation. Examples of such activities include the Clean Air Act in the United States and the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro at which governments agreed on several major intergovernmental treaties and numerous nongovernmental groups held parallel conferences and made commitments to collaborative initiatives for environmental sustainability.

Through these and other environmental peacemaking initiatives, humans are gradually moving toward norms that respect Earth’s functioning integrity and agreeing to regulate their behavior to stay within the limits of environmental sustainability. But this work has been largely reactive and piecemeal – too little, too late after irreparable environmental damage has occurred. These initiatives need to become more proactive and comprehensive.

Peacekeeping
While many peace educators question the ethics and efficacy of using violence to stop violence, they appreciate that violence and warfare – whether against humans or nature – need to be stopped. It is difficult to advance peacemaking and peacebuilding without first bringing a cessation to the killing and destruction. Likewise, it is difficult to sustain a healthy planet without first stopping activities that degrade or destroy nature systems.

Crimes of mass environmental destruction may ultimately be as grave as crimes against humanity. Human health and survival depend on healthy water, air, soil, plants, and animals,
and human activities that undermine a healthy planet also undermine human life. Toxic and radioactive pollutants are both ecocidal and homicidal. Humans do not live over or apart from the Earth; we are of and in the Earth. Whatever befalls the Earth, befalls humans. As members of a larger community of life we are utterly dependent on the healthy functioning of all members of this larger community. Thus, human behavior that intentionally or carelessly causes extensive or irreparable harm to life systems needs to be stopped by legitimate authorities entrusted with the public welfare.

Since many threats to the environment are trans-boundary or global in scope, resolving them requires recognized authorities at regional and global as well as local and national levels that are entrusted to protect the common good. At most local and national levels there are now forest rangers, water, fishing, and food inspection agencies, as well as police and judicial authorities entrusted with specific aspects of protecting nature systems. As in other legitimate law, implementation and enforcement relies heavily on the common sense and willing compliance of law-abiding citizens. But in cases where belligerent behavior undermines public safety and the common good, laws may need to be backed up by the threat of force, fines, imprisonment, or other coercive measures. While increasing numbers of countries have developed means to assure compliance with environmental protection laws, measures to assure compliance with international laws are still very weak.

What is an environmental crime? The world community needs to agree on a clear definition before questions of compliance can be effectively addressed. The United Nations is currently facilitating international dialogue and negotiations to arrive at an accepted definition. If successful, it will be a step toward more effective international environmental protection. However, the question of compliance and how to deal with belligerents will also need to be addressed. Governments alone have not caused environmental damage and alone cannot stop it. The private sector and individuals also need to be held accountable. Just as an International Criminal Court and war crimes tribunals have been advanced as means to hold individuals accountable for crimes against humanity and other gross violations of human rights, so some are proposing an International Environmental Court as a means to hold individuals and corporations accountable for crimes against the environment. If effectively developed and supported by the world community, the existence of such judicial means can serve as both a deterrent and remedy for environmental crimes. But they don’t fully answer the question of enforcement. While most international agreements provide that compliance will primarily be the responsibility of national governments who are party to the agreement, many developing countries lack the means to train and support sufficient numbers of forest rangers and other environmental protectors. Thus, even when good legislation is in place, it may not be enforced.

When effective legal, judicial, and compliance measures are at work, they usually do help to diminish environmental harm, just as effective laws, courts, and police help diminish violence on city streets. But some violence will elude even the most vigilant and conscientious authorities. And police and authorities themselves can be corrupted. Thus, these measures, while making a potential difference, cannot be expected to totally eliminate the problem of violence, any more than peacekeeping alone can be expected to end warfare. Other measures need to be undertaken in tandem.

Peacebuilding
Peacebuilding strategies were developed by the United Nations for post-conflict
situations to rebuild political, social and economic infrastructure devastated by war, and to build the foundations for a just and lasting peace. The goal is to prevent war from recurring by developing peace strengths that can resist and overcome strains that would otherwise lead to violence and war. Peacebuilding goes beyond merely stopping or preventing war (negative peace) and aims to develop systems of social justice and environmental sustainability (positive peace). Peacebuilding proceeds from the premise that if you want peace, prepare for peace. Develop the social, economic, cultural, and environmental conditions that will support a stable peace.

Peacebuilding involves the development of participatory government and a strong and vibrant civil society able and willing to participate in governance. It seeks to advance nonviolent and sustainable communities. It promotes political discourse and standards of justice that guarantee that all people have their rights protected, as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as adopted by the United Nations (1948).

Peacebuilding within environmental education raises important questions about eco-justice. Eco-justice includes a strong focus on the linkages between environmental degradation and racism and poverty. Racial or ethnic minorities and poor people often see their neighborhoods become dumping grounds for toxic waste or sites selected for polluting industries. Eco-justice also points at the enormous disparities between consumption and waste levels in wealthy industrialized countries of the North who use a disproportionate share of ecological capital and resources, and those in poorer sectors of many countries in the South. Environmental and peace educators both are concerned about equitable distribution of the Earth’s resources within sustainable limits of nature systems.

A universal declaration setting forth a set of principles that would provide some beginning standards of eco-justice is the Earth Charter. In 1987, the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development called for a charter that would set forth fundamental principles for sustainable development. The drafting of an Earth Charter was part of the unfinished business of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. In 1994, Maurice Strong, the secretary general of the Earth Summit and chairman of the Earth Council, and Mikhail Gorbachev, president of Green Cross International, launched a new Earth Charter initiative with support from the Dutch government. An Earth Charter Commission was formed in 1997 to oversee the project and an Earth Charter Secretariat was established at the Earth Council in Costa Rica. Successive drafts of the Earth Charter were circulated around the world for comment and debate by nongovernmental organizations, community groups, professional societies, and international experts in many fields. The final Charter was adopted in 1999 and officially launched at the Peace Palace in The Hague on June 29, 2000. Its mission is to establish a sound ethical foundation for an emerging global society and to help build a sustainable world based on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace.

Concepts of justice provide standards for fairness and equity so that all are treated with full human rights and dignity. Concepts of eco-justice envision and seek to achieve a sustainable community where all humans have equal access to the world’s resources within sustainable limits, and the needs of the natural world are considered in making decisions about human activities. Both ecological justice and social justice require that humans accept personal responsibility to preserve resources for future generations.
Conclusions

Both peace education and education for environmental sustainability are energized by a creative vision, for without a vision there is no escape from the psychology of destruction. The failure to see human interconnectedness to the earth processes has contributed to tremendous ecological destruction. The failure to see the interconnectedness of human communities has led to a dependence upon the threat or use of military force. The worldview in which the universe and Earth were seen to be in some final physical form and the nation-states to be a static political form must submit to the new physics and knowledge of a dynamic, interdependent, changing world. In this twenty-first century paradigm, national security is seen to be inseparable from the security of all nations, and the security of all nations is inseparable from the well being of the Earth. The survival of nations and the survival of the Earth will neither follow from clinging to a deadly illusion of absolute sovereignty nor to the myth of conquest, but only to the creative pooling of some sovereignty and totally new approaches to common security.

Both peace and environmental educators have a common goal of stopping the violence, but in human communities there will always be conflicts, and humans must consume natural products. The challenge is to learn to resolve the conflicts nonviolently, to share limited resources equitably, and to live within the limits of sustainability. This will become increasingly important as the twenty-first century unfolds with expanding human populations all seeking a better life. Peace will require environmental sustainability and environmental sustainability will require peace.

Notes


2 Among the peace educators who discuss the relationship between peace education and environmental education are Patricia Mische and Betty Reardon. Among Patricia Mische’s many articles on these relationships see, for example, “The Earth as Peace Teacher” 1988/1991) and “Toward a Pedagogy of Ecological Responsibility” (1992). See B. Reardon. Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective (2001) and B. Reardon et al. Learning peace: the promise of ecological and cooperative education (1994).

3 Other species of peace education include “international education,” “conflict resolution education,” “education for human rights,” and “development education.” Each of these has a form of violence it is addressing and different strategies for achieving peace. (Harris, 2002)

4 For more information see http://www.earthcharter.org.

References:


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Arguing for Human Rights: The Nature and Necessity of Social Trust

By John E. Fields

The Relation of Human Rights to Social Trust

If there is one lesson that human rights educators and campaigners have had to learn and re-learn in every generation, it is this: that without an adequate level of trust in a society, the commitment of that society to human rights is quickly and seriously eroded. When it comes to U.S. history, there are many examples: the First World War, the Second World War, the so-called “Cold War,” and the Vietnam War, to name just a few. What each of these cases has in common is a certain dynamic. Significant numbers of individuals seriously believe that some of their fellow citizens are working for a hostile ideology or foreign power. The consequences of trusting any one of them when it comes to this matter are judged to be too dangerous to risk. And so, various personal and political rights are abrogated in order to establish each citizen’s bona fides – in order, that is, to prove what one cannot trust to be the case. Historically, this has been done in a variety of ways. During the First World War, it was done by suppressing freedom of speech and assembly. During the Second World War, it was done by selectively violating citizens’ rights to property, person, and due process. During the “Cold War,” it was done by surreptitiously monitoring some citizens’ private communications and by promoting the signing of loyalty oaths as a condition of employment.

We appear to be living through another such period right now. Whatever else one might say about the so-called “War on Terror,” it has undeniably brought about a reduction of personal and political rights in the United States. (Indeed, one might argue that just such a reduction is the “War on Terror” in its domestic aspect.) Private communications are now much more accessible to government inspection. The same is true of private bank accounts and personal reading material. Membership in certain religious or political organizations can now make one an automatic target for government investigation. So, too, can contributions to certain charitable foundations. More critically, the conditions under which one can even be said to have legal rights in the United States have dramatically altered, given the president’s new-found “Commander-in-Chief” power to unilaterally declare anyone he chooses to be an “enemy combatant.”

And, just as in World War Two and the Cold War, what is immediately responsible for these changes – or at least the nation’s widespread acceptance of them – is a lack of trust. U.S. citizens know that there is a significant probability that at some point in the near future there will be another terrorist attack in the United States. And many of them worry that some of their fellow citizens will be involved. Thus, they argue, the best policy under the circumstances is not one in which we assume that others are probably inoffensive until we have reason to think otherwise (what we can think of as the very lowest level of social trust). There is too much risk involved in that. Instead, they counsel just the opposite policy. In order to trust some citizens, we must first have definitive proof. And, thus, we must be able to look at their reading materials, their bank records, and their private communications. We must be able to infiltrate their political organizations and their religious institutions and even (on occasion) to incarcerate and interrogate them without prior evidence of guilt. And we must be able to do this whenever we are feeling especially suspicious or untrusting of one of them.
(or some group of them). We don’t have to justify our lack of trust in any particular case according to the usual, pre-9/11, standards of evidence. For if we did, the consequences could well be disastrous. We could be letting go the next terrorist suicide bomber.²

Simply put, therefore, in the “War on Terror,” as in these other historical episodes, fear breeds suspicion. Suspicion leads to a demand for shifting, or at least significantly modifying, the burden of proof in society with regard to trust. And shifting or significantly modifying the burden of proof in society with regard to trust undermines the status of human rights. It does so, at least in part, because so many civil and personal rights require of those who honor them a stance of formal social trust. For example, the right of A to speak freely, if honored by B, C, D, and so on, imposes upon the latter (in one standard interpretation of this notion) the obligation to permit A to engage in a wide variety of vocative activities, unless or until there is conclusive evidence that, in doing so, A has infringed upon someone else’s rights. B, C, D, and the rest cannot justifiably stop A from speaking freely (say, through a legislative enactment) just because they are suspicious that A might violate someone else’s rights. They must have probable cause that she will – and then only in extreme cases, like inciting to riot. Of course, there may be circumstances where it would be in A’s best interest to determine ahead of time if some future piece of A’s free speech would likely land A in trouble. Depending on what the circumstances are, A might even want to run what she’s going to say past a lawyer specializing in libel or a government agency charged with keeping official secrets. But notice that there is no requirement that A do this – at least not in a society structured around a commitment to this right. It is not the job of A or anyone else to prove that A will be trustworthy or reliable in the exercise of her free speech prerogative. To the contrary, the acceptance of free speech as a right entails the formal acceptance of the notion that, with regard to this aspect of her life, A is innocent until proven otherwise.

But this is not the only way in which shifting or significantly modifying the burden of proof in society with regard to trust undermines the status of human rights. It also does so in terms of the psychological attitudes that must be prevalent in a society if any human rights, personal or civil, are to be commonly honored and maintained. It is one thing to suggest that suspicion as a policy is conceptually at odds with the formal stance of trust entailed by the nature of many human rights. For what this implies is that, in carrying out such a policy with respect to a particular right, one will, as a matter of fact, have eliminated or seriously diminished that right, no matter what many might still wish to believe to the contrary. But in undermining the psychological attitudes that are necessary for a society to honor and maintain human rights, one is attacking the foundations upon which even the pretence (or self-deception) that human rights are important to a society is built. For even this pretence or self-deception seems to derive from paying lip-service to a belief with which, in the case of a genuine commitment to human rights, it seems to be almost invariably connected. This is the belief that, on the whole, there is nothing especially dangerous or foolish in giving to others the benefit of the doubt when it comes to many of the most essential aspects of their lives. People, in other words, can have rights, not only because they deserve them (if they do), but because giving them what they deserve will not have any serious negative pragmatic consequences overall.³

Perhaps people shouldn’t need a belief of this kind in order to feel favorably disposed towards human rights. Perhaps, if human beings were a bit more powerful or a bit less concerned about the effect that the bad actions of
others can have upon them, they would be willing to trust others on this basic level even if they had no beliefs one way or the other about the pragmatic consequences of doing so. But, clearly, as things are, rejecting a belief of this kind would lead to significant restrictions on the exercise of various human rights. And clearly, too, it would lead to a widespread diminution of respect for human rights even in principle. It would have, in addition, two further negative consequences. First, it would deprive human rights educators and activists of one of their most effective tools: the ability to point out in a case of this kind the wide gulf between human rights practices and the various human rights ideals that a society at least says that it values. And, second, it would likely lead to substantive changes in the legal structures in which human rights in various societies are embedded. And this is very different (though admittedly much more obvious) than their mere \textit{de facto} degradation.

For those of us who do honor and wish to maintain our civil and personal liberties in their pre-9/11 states, therefore, our mission, during this so-called “War on Terror,” is unmistakable. We must reject the policy of generalized suspicion that has grown up during this time and all that it entails. And we must, in those public \textit{fora} that are available to us, argue in favor of the primacy of social trust in our political and social arrangements – for both its necessity and its overall pragmatic acceptability. And we must do so while at the same time honoring the objective validity of the fear that inspires the policy that we are opposing and acknowledging the need for safeguards sufficient to keep such trust as we are arguing for from degenerating into a dangerous complacency.

\textbf{The Nature of Social Trust}

But if this is the task that is before us, what is the best way in which to perform it? What specific arguments will be the most effective in supporting the case that we wish to make? And what exactly \textit{is} the case that we wish to make in the first place? What are the proper contours of the concept and policy that we are advancing? And what reasons do we have to think that these contours are the right ones?

To clear up some of these issues, perhaps it would be best to begin with what we should avoid – with a view of trust, in other words, that we ought not to adopt – and work our way back to the position that is the most plausible one to embrace. I say this because, as it turns out, there is in the literature a very common notion of social trust that both is the antithesis of the one that I will argue for here and is very commonly accepted among social philosophers, political scientists, economists, and other game theorists. This notion of social trust – a kind of social trust fool’s gold, if you will – is what I will call the \textit{Inductive View of social trust}. In it, what it takes for two or more individuals to be in a relation of social trust is nothing more or less than what the policy of generalized suspicion would also demand. There must be evidence up front that the parties to the relation have one another’s interests in mind.

Noted political scientist Russell Hardin is an important proponent of this view. In his book \textit{Trust and Trustworthiness}, Hardin argues, among other things, that trust is essentially a “cognitive notion.”\textsuperscript{4} It belongs, he says, “in the family of such notions as knowledge, belief, and the kind of judgment that might be called assessment.”\textsuperscript{5} Moreover, in his view, trust is always expressed in terms of a three-part relation. A person S trusts a specific person T with regard to a particular matter M – and then only when S has evidence that T is trustworthy (or, as Hardin puts it, “encapsulates” S’s interests) in this regard.\textsuperscript{6} Generalized trust, according to Hardin, is highly problematic, no matter whether it is directed at a single person – what he
calls a “two-part relation” of trust – or whether it functions as an overall default position in one’s relations with others. Indeed, he describes those who relate to others in the latter way as “naïve” and doubts that there are many who actually trust others in this fashion, despite what survey respondents usually say to the contrary.7

Key to Hardin’s understanding of social trust is his belief that it must be based, in any particular case, on more than just evidence of someone else’s reliability. Trusting someone, according to Hardin, is not the same as recognizing that you and the other person have “incentive compatibility” with respect to some common aim. Nor is it identical with an accurate prediction of what another person is likely to do next. As Hardin puts it, “Immanuel Kant’s neighbors may have relied upon his punctuality in his morning walk to set their own schedules. To trust him, however, would require more…”8 The “more” that is required, in Hardin’s view, is evidence of a genuine commitment on the part of the individual (or individuals) to be trusted. The commitment is to those who, on the basis of the available evidence, are taking the risk to trust this individual (or these individuals) and it must be with regard to a specific set of actions or subject matter.9

In Hardin’s view, therefore, trust would seem to work in the following way. We, as the trusters, begin in a state of neither trusting nor not trusting those around us. At some point, we are driven to seek out relations of trust, perhaps by practical necessity. And so we begin sizing up the purported evidence provided by those around us, evidence in favor of the commitments that each individual claims to have to our interests with respect to various objects and aims. When, and only when, we have established that this purported evidence does, in fact, seem genuine, and that it is probable that the individuals who say that they are committed to our interests actually are, are we permitted to trust them, and then only with respect to the various objects and aims that were part of the focus of our assessment.

Now such a view, as I have said, is fairly popular. And, if you don’t think about it too long, it even seems to make a kind of intuitive sense. But the problem is that it just doesn’t work. There are at least two difficulties with it. One is empirical. The other is conceptual, or logical. The empirical difficulty is that this is not the way in which trust invariably operates. For one thing, as Jonathan Adler points out in his book Belief’s Own Ethics, people will often trust one another automatically, without having engaged in any elaborate prior calculations. When in an unfamiliar town, for example, they will often rely upon the directions provided by a randomly questioned stranger.10 And, if the positions are reversed, they will typically give out such directions with the confident expectation that they will be believed. It is true that no individual trusts every person equally. As Adler notes, in the case of testimony, for example:

We draw all manner of distinctions between classes of potential informants. Car salespersons are not as trustworthy (in their role) as librarians; professional journalists are more reliable than the popular press; Consumer Reports is better than your neighbor for deciding whether a particular car is worth buying.11

But this is poor evidence in favor of the Inductive View of trust. For it is also consistent with the claim that such distinctions were developed against a background of initial trust that continues to operate in those areas where we have no reason to do otherwise.

Related to this is a second empirical problem. And that is that people do not usually assess the trustworthiness of others on an individual case-by-case
basis, using only the rational powers that they have at their disposal at that time. As Trudy Govier has observed, there are “stages and levels of trust” that develop in us over a lifetime. We begin in a position of “innocent trust,” relying unreflectively upon those around us. And, if all goes well, we wind up in a position of “mature trust,” with a much greater understanding of the world and of whom we can and cannot rely upon. But it is not as if these various stages and levels of trust are discreet and unrelated episodes in a person’s life. Earlier ones can have a significant effect on the trust relations that one enjoys later in life. Thus, because one trusts Daddy “innocently,” one comes to believe that teacher, too, is worthy of trust, and so, in time, comes to trust the people that teacher trusts, and the people that they trust, and so on. Eventually, one develops an entire network of individuals with whom one is in a personal trust relation. And so long as none of them does anything to undermine that trust, one continues to rely upon them, despite the fact that the basis for that trust, ultimately, is immature and unreflective. A similar account can be given of trust for strangers, which might ultimately depend on an “innocent trust” of individuals who assured one that, all other things being equal, people should always be given the benefit of the doubt.

These empirical problems, however, are nothing compared to what I take to be the major conceptual or logical difficulty with the Inductive View of social trust. And that is that if the Inductive View of social trust is correct, there is no way for any individual to assess the trustworthiness of another with respect to a particular subject matter. To understand why I say this, we must first remember that, at least in Hardin’s version of the Inductive View, an assessment of another with regard to some object or aim must always be in terms of the commitments of that person to the interests of the individual doing the assessment. A compatibility of interests or mere predictability in behavior will not be enough. And it is easy to see why. Trust is typically thought of as a human relation. And so it must be both mutual and other-regarding.

But if commitments are what are needed here, then the problem is clear. For the only way we are going to be able to obtain well-founded beliefs regarding the commitments of another (as opposed to well-founded beliefs regarding what another just happens to be doing) is by asking the person in question what his or her commitments are. But we are not able to do this in the Inductive View of social trust. Or, to be more precise, we can do it, but we are not able to treat whatever answer we might receive as evidence regarding this person’s commitments. This is because, in the Inductive View of social trust, one needs to have evidence regarding the commitments of another before one can trust him or her with respect to a particular matter. And, thus, in a case where an individual has made a claim about the nature of his or her commitments, one can only trust what he or she has said if one first has evidence regarding the nature of his or her commitments in making this claim – evidence which, given the requirements of the Inductive View of social trust, it would again be impossible to obtain.

So, the Inductive View of social trust is out. But the good news is that there is an alternative, a view of trust that is suggested by the very difficulties that are inherent in the inductive approach. This is what we can call the Presumptive View of social trust. It consists of the notion that one ought to give others the benefit of the doubt with respect to their intentions regarding oneself unless or until one has evidence sufficient to do otherwise. This is a view that has the advantage of not being self-undermining, as the Inductive View of social trust has proved to be. It is also a view that is consistent with what people very often do. It allows for the fact, for example, that people do, as a matter of fact, generally accept what
others say to them about their various inner states – their beliefs, intentions, feelings, commitments, and so on – and that, with respect to a wide variety of topics, all other things being equal, they give each other the benefit of the doubt. And it is a view that, unlike the Inductive View, manages to explain how certain areas of human life, like communication or other social interactions, are possible. For, without such a view, it is difficult to see how conversations between human beings could ever be anything more than mere anthropological exercises or how human beings could ever come to treat one another as anything other than dark and mysterious puzzles to be solved. An individual who, following the Inductive View of social trust, began with a stance of complete neutrality and sought out the evidence of others’ good intentions without having the ability to trust what it is that they said, could not be a lover, friend, family member, fellow citizen, or fellow human being as we normally understand these roles. He or she would be the ultimate outsider – that is, if such an approach to the issue of social trust were even possible.

For these reasons, therefore, it is the alternative Presumptive View of social trust that I believe human rights educators and campaigners would do well to embrace. It is a view that is closer to the facts. It is a view that explains many of the most distinctive features of human life. And it has the advantage – always a nice thing to have – of not being self-undermining, unlike the competition.

**Constraints on Trust**

The problem, of course, with the view as stated is that some people may think that it is just too open-ended. They will allow that, in a fair number of cases, it is perfectly acceptable to rely upon someone without first needing evidence in favor of her or his trustworthiness. But they will point to those instances, and there are many, where we do not do this. For example, it is a little-known fact that, when it comes to ground-based witnesses of airplane collisions or explosions, the National Transportation Safety Board only gathers testimony to satisfy public demand and the statutory requirements. It essentially ignores the accounts generated by such witnesses when it comes to making its final judgments. But on a Presumptive View of social trust, this would seem to be an irrational act on the NTSB’s part, since the members of the Board have no evidence with respect to each of these witnesses in particular that she or he is unreliable. Therefore, there must be something funny about either the National Transportation Safety Board or the Presumptive View of social trust.

But the problem with this objection is that it fails to take into consideration another possibility that might arise in a case of this kind. And that is that, while there may not be a reason in such a case to believe about this or that person in particular that she or he is untrustworthy or unreliable, there may be good reason to believe that, insofar as this person belongs to a class of individuals that has proven to be untrustworthy or unreliable in the past, she or he ought not to be trusted in this case. In other words, the objection leaves out the possibility that one may come into an encounter with another person with evidence sufficient to undermine the trust that one would otherwise have had. And, of course, this is exactly what is going on in the NTSB case. The Board has determined that people are unreliable in cases of this kind. And they have plenty of evidence to back it up. To give one example: when American Flight 587 crashed near Kennedy International Airport in November of 2001, the NTSB interviewed 394 purported witnesses. Of these:

...52 percent said they saw a fire while the plane was in the air. The largest number (22 percent) said the fire was in the fuselage, but a majority cited other locations, including the left engine, the right engine, the left wing, the right wing
or an unspecified engine or wing. Nearly one of five witnesses said they saw the plane make a right turn; an equal number said it was a left turn. Nearly 60 percent said they saw something fall off the plane; of these, 13 percent said it was a wing. (In fact, it was the vertical portion of the tail.)

One sees an even more pertinent example of how this phenomenon works in the consumer advisories issued by the Federal Trade Commission on the safety and effectiveness of so-called “diet pills” and dietary supplements. Although there are in the United States no regulations on the manufacture and distribution of these products, there are some restrictions on what their manufacturers can say about them in advertisements and on the product’s packaging. In enforcing these restrictions, the FTC, since 1994, has sued more than one hundred diet-pill companies for making false or misleading statements about their products. And yet in a study conducted by the Commission in 2003, it discovered that in 2002 at least half of all weight-loss ads contained such statements, leading it to conclude that consumers should treat all such claims as doubtful until proven otherwise.

Cases such as these, therefore, do not serve as counterexamples to the Presumptive View of social trust. Nor does the Presumptive View require of those who hold it that – Prince Myshkin-like – they embrace diet-pill purveyors and sufferers of optical illusions (among others) as paragons of trustworthiness. There is, instead, a way of getting around these sorts of problems with the Presumptive View of social trust. It just involves being a little clearer about what will count as evidence against trustworthiness and where this evidence is permitted to come from.

But, of course, this brings us back to the topic with which I began this paper – and to a possible objection to the basic assumption that I have made about the relation of a proper view of social trust to the status of human rights in our country today. For one might make an argument along the following lines. In regarding certain groups of individuals in this country as unworthy of trust until proven otherwise, I am just following the Presumptive View of social trust, as it has been set forth here. It’s not that my distrust is based on the view that individuals ought not to be trusted until one has good reason to do otherwise. Rather, it is based on the fact that a certain class of individuals has proven to be untrustworthy in the past and that this evidence can and should be used to make judgments about the trustworthiness or untrustworthiness of other individuals who also happen at present to be members of the very same class. In other words, all other things being equal, I would be willing to give certain groups of people the benefit of the doubt and not shift to them the burden of proof with regard to their intentions. But all other things are not equal.

Such an argument strikes me as being a not implausible one to make, except for one small detail: the assumptions that are being made about the nature of the target class. To see what I mean here, consider again the example of the FTC advisory regarding the reliability of claims made for their products by diet-pill purveyors. What if the FTC found out that, in addition to selling diet-pills, a majority of those who were in this business were also Methodists? That they often talked to each other about their various diet-pill schemes every Sunday afternoon right after they finished off with their various Methodist rites (whatever these might be). Would the FTC be wise to warn consumers to look out for Methodists? Presumably, it would not. For the set of diet-pill purveying Methodists would be only a sub-set of the set of all Methodists and there is no reliable link in any particular case between being a member of the larger set and being a member of
the suspect sub-set. Parallel reasoning, it seems to me, must be applied in other, similar cases.

Well, here I am at the end and I have still not yet dealt with the question of the relation between trust and risk. So, let me then just make a few comments in that direction to conclude. It is certainly the case, I would maintain, that there is a relation between trust and risk and that we can see that in a plethora of cases. People are rightly concerned about trusting someone who can “really put one over on me.” And we can see this sort of retreat from trust especially in cases where severe informational asymmetries can have significant repercussions for the person who trusts. Indeed, economists and game theorists study just these sorts of withdrawals of trust with keen interest. They call them “lemons markets,” a term of art coined by Nobel Prize winner George Akerlof to describe a situation where the quality of an offered item in a market exchange cannot be ascertained prior to purchase and so the potential buyer withdraws from the interaction rather than risk serious loss.16

Such withdrawals of trust do make sense in general in the Presumptive View of social trust, given that they are based upon past information about what members of a clearly defined class are likely to do in situations of this kind. But notice that such withdrawals are only going to make sense in particular cases if there is sufficient evidence in that case that the risk associated with trusting is high. Mere possibility and low risk are not going to be enough. Mere possibility and high risk are not going to be enough. What we need to duplicate a situation like that described in the lemons market model is probability and high to moderate risk (assuming that, as rational actors in the world, less than a moderate amount of risk will always be acceptable).

But do we have evidence, in the case of the current “War on Terror” that respecting the rights of our fellow citizens, as they were legally codified prior to the enactment of the USA PATRIOT Act, will incur a high risk to our population? The Administration claims that we do. But many intelligent critics of the political right, left, and center have disagreed. They have argued that the current police powers of state and federal authorities, diligently applied, are more than enough to reduce the risk of a future terrorist attack on U.S. soil. And I have to say, that with that claim, I am inclined to agree.

Notes

3 It was a commonplace of the Cold War era that randomly selected U.S. citizens would routinely describe portions of the U.S. Bill of Rights as “Communistic.”
5 Hardin, p. 7.
6 Hardin, p. 9.
7 Hardin, pp. 9-10.
8 Hardin, p. 5.
9 Hardin, p. 5.
11 Adler, p. 155.
12 Trudy Govier, Social Trust and Human Communities (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), pp. 64-75.
14 Wald, p. 3.
16 George A. Akerlof, “The Market for ‘Lemons’: Quality Uncertainty and the

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Confucianism, Human Rights, and Ethical Theory
By Richard Hudelson

I should begin by confessing at the outset that I am no scholar of Confucian thought. My first encounter with Confucianism came in the mid to late 1960s when I, along with many others of my generation, read William Hinton's *Fanshen*, a wonderful book on the Chinese revolution. Like the Chinese Communist revolutionaries, the book presented a picture of Confucianism as a reactionary ideology serving the interests of rulers over the ruled, fathers over sons, and husbands over wives. My second encounter with Confucianism came some thirty years later, when I began to teach a course in philosophy of religion. The principal text I selected for this course was *Our Religions*, edited by Arvind Sharma. This text includes seven roughly seventy-five-page essays on several of the major world religions. Each essay is written by a first-rate scholar who also writes from his own faith tradition. The essay on Confucianism is written by Tu Weiming. It is this essay which introduced me to a rich and interesting global discussion of "Asian" and "Western" values, a discussion in which a number of scholars have argued that Confucianism is compatible with Western moral and political claims about human rights. The reflections on Confucianism and human rights that follow grow out of this beginning.¹

Let me begin these particular reflections with some comments by Henry Rosemont, Jr. Rosemont is a scholar of Confucian thought. He is skeptical about the possibility of reconciling Confucianism and the Western concept of human rights. The reasons for his skepticism turn on the philosophical foundations of human rights:

My own skepticism is directed not toward any particular moral or political theory in which rights play a role, but toward the more foundational view of human beings as free, autonomous individuals on which all such theories more or less rest. The study of classical Confucianism has suggested to me that rights-oriented moral and political theories based on this view are flawed, and that a different vocabulary for moral and political discourse is needed. The concept of human rights and related concepts clustered around it, like liberty, the individual, property, autonomy, freedom, reason, choice, and so on, do not capture what it is we [Confucians] believe to be the inherent sociality of human beings . . . .²

Rosemont makes at least three distinct claims here: that all rights theories rest on a conception of human beings as free, autonomous, individuals; that this conception is fundamentally at odds with the Confucian belief in the inherent sociality of human beings; and that the Confucian view of human beings is superior to the flawed conception of human beings underlying all rights-based theories. Together, these claims make a powerful case against the prospect of reconciling Confucianism with human rights. A closer examination of them will provide a useful entry into one particular project of reconciliation that seems to me worthy of serious consideration.

Let us begin with the view that all theories of human rights “more or less” rest on a conception of human beings as "free, autonomous individuals." The phrase "free, autonomous individuals" is fraught with difficulties. One particular understanding of this phrase derives from Kant. According to this understanding the human individual is a noumenal reality standing outside the natural universe, capable of exercising free will outside the bounds of the causally determined phenomenal world, and autonomous as a self-governing rational agent. This Kantian
understanding of what it means to be a free, autonomous individual carries with it a great deal of metaphysical baggage. Not all theories of human rights carry such metaphysical commitments. Locke, for example, advances a theory of natural rights on the basis of a deterministic metaphysics and is even open to the possibility that the human individual is wholly a part of the natural order. Similar naturalistic versions of natural law theory can be found among the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers. Nonetheless, for the moment at least, let us focus on the particular Kantian understanding of what it means to be a “free, autonomous individual.” For complex reasons, this Kantian understanding has played a large role in the revival of “rights-based theories” over the last forty years.

This revival of rights-based theories grew out of a critique of utilitarianism. “Taking rights seriously” meant acceptance of rights as “side constraints” on utility maximizing social welfare policies. This view of rights as constraints on welfare maximization readily served the interests of free market libertarians like Robert Nozick, John Hospers, and Ayn Rand. There was a problem, however, about the theoretical foundation for such rights claims. Having rejected utilitarianism and embraced a strong view of rights as constraints on welfare maximization, the new rights theorists needed foundations for rights claims rooted in deontological traditions in ethics. Kantianism provided something like the needed foundation and by the 1980s the juxtaposition of “utilitarian” and “Kantian” approaches in ethics had become a stock piece in academic textbooks with a broad consensus endorsing “Kantian” rights as constraints on utility maximization.

Popular literature supporting free market capitalism used this academic literature to its advantage, often combining it with explicitly religious appeals to the sanctity of the individual and the individual's rights. The power of this marriage of religion and rights-based ethics was apparent in the uproar spread across The Wall Street Journal and the Princeton Alumni Weekly against the appointment of Peter Singer to a position at Princeton. Singer, a prominent supporter of aid to hungry people and of humane treatment of animals, was denounced as a moral monster because he rejected the metaphysical claims separating human beings from the rest of nature which are widely taken in literature of both a Kantian and explicitly religious sort as providing the necessary foundation for human rights. It is this shared metaphysics of the person as an autonomous being enjoying a special status in the universe that Rosemont has in mind as “more or less” foundational for all contemporary accounts of human rights.

Nonetheless, however popular it may be, this particular understanding of the metaphysics of human rights is philosophically problematic. Briefly put, it is extravagantly at odds with the naturalism prevailing in other areas of philosophy. Insofar as contemporary rights-based theories do rely upon such Kantian foundations or upon equally suspect religious notions of ensoulment, such theories are philosophically suspect. In this respect the recent ascendancy of rights-based theories seems fundamentally at odds with the general direction of contemporary philosophy.

Now, of course, it is possible to construct an understanding of human rights that avoids this metaphysical baggage. For example, rule utilitarianism would construe human rights as a system of rules—rights to life, liberty, speech, association, housing, medical care, access to culture, etc.—which, if adopted, would work to maximize the total amount of happiness in the world. But, while the utilitarian approach avoids an extravagant metaphysics, it has its own difficulties. In particular, it takes
happiness as the only inherent good and it does not yield an account of rights as absolute constraints on welfare maximization. From the point of view of free market libertarianism, these are weighty objections to any utilitarian approach to human rights. Thinkers rooted in Kantianism or Western religious traditions also object to the utilitarian approach on the grounds that it erases the line separating humans from animals.

Confucians like Rosemont reject the metaphysics of the person found in the Kantian and religious conceptions of human rights currently prevalent in Western philosophical and popular literature. On the one hand, Rosemont objects to the way such theories privilege negative rights. If the individual really is a free and autonomous being, positive rights of the kind commonly found in the modern welfare state appear to be incompatible with the strong negative rights grounded in this metaphysical status. Rosemont also points to traditional Confucian concerns about family and community as incompatible with the absolutist individualism inherent in this conception of human rights. Rosemont sees this corrosive individualism as the logical consequence of the conception of human beings as “free, autonomous individuals” which he sees as underlying all conceptions of human rights. Having rejected the consequence of this underlying idea, he rejects the various theories of human rights, all of which he sees as presupposing this flawed foundation.

Tu Weiming agrees with Rosemont in rejecting free market libertarianism. He also agrees with Rosemont in rejecting the metaphysical conception of human beings as “free, autonomous individuals” which leads to the libertarian conception of human rights. But he disagrees with Rosemont’s view that all theories of human rights presuppose this flawed metaphysics. The project of Tu and other Confucians who agree with him is to reconstruct the idea of human rights, providing it with Confucian foundations that are superior to the flawed metaphysics of libertarian rights, that provide a more adequate account of the good than the utilitarian tradition, and that avoid the narrow focus on negative rights typical of Western accounts of human rights. In the remainder of this paper, I will sketch what I see as some of the promising lines of thought supporting this project. I will first offer a brief sketch of a Confucian account of human rights. Following that I will conclude with some observations on the meta-ethical issues raised by this project of a Confucian theory of rights.

The Normative Ethics of a Confucian Theory of Rights

As a normative theory of rights, Confucianism has a number of attractive features. First, Confucianism avoids the kind of metaphysical baggage often found in Western conceptions of human rights. From its earliest beginnings it has generally resisted all speculative metaphysics. It does not view the person as a soul inhabiting a noumenal world but as a social being occupying a place in the natural order. Nor is there any presumption of contra-causal freedom of the will.

Second, Confucianism avoids the narrow focus on happiness characteristic of utilitarianism. Confucian humanism is informed by a thicker, psychologically richer, and more plausible, understanding of human beings than the psychological hedonism underlying the utilitarian tradition. The traditional Confucian emphasis on human dignity and the importance of ritual in awakening and preserving this sense of dignity presupposes an understanding of human nature as something other than a utility maximizing machine. Here, like traditional natural law theory, Confucianism directly connects its ethics with an understanding of human nature in ways that support moral constraints on the treatment of human
beings. However, unlike the metaphysical theories commonly found in many contemporary Western accounts of rights, Confucian humanism does not need the concept of an autonomous individual soul to do this.

Third, Confucianism avoids the radical individualism of some Western views of rights. For Confucianism, salvation is communal. The Confucian project aims at building a community of dignified existence. Human rights are not barriers protecting the individual against society so much as shared ways of being necessary to achieving a truly human community. In this consequentialist structure, the Confucian account is similar to a rule utilitarian account of rights. Where it differs is in its communal and psychologically thicker account of the good.

Fourth, Confucianism does not need to deny rights to non-human animals. In Western metaphysical and religious views, humans have rights because of their unique metaphysical status. To attempt to extend rights to animals undermines the very grounds of human rights. This is one of the reasons for the intense criticism of Peter Singer. But since Confucianism rests on a more naturalistic view of human nature, it has nothing to fear from extending rights to animals.

Fifth, the Confucian framework provides a foundation for integrating negative and positive rights. Negative rights are rights like the right to life and liberty which prevent people from treating you in certain ways—killing you or enslaving you, for example. Positive rights are rights which require people to provide you with certain goods—like access to culture or medical care. In views that see human rights as grounded in the metaphysically autonomous individual, all claims to positive rights appear as violations of a natural right to liberty rooted in the metaphysical autonomy of the individual. In framing rights as ways of communal existence necessary for human dignity, Confucianism can better incorporate positive rights into the general theory of human rights.

Sixth, despite this accommodation of positive rights, Confucianism contains within it sufficient resources to ground fairly robust notions of individual liberty. Confucianism calls upon each of us to cultivate our shared humanity in community with others. Historically it has stressed the importance of education in this process. Like Plato, Confucians have thought that the unexamined life is not worth living “for man.” Traditional negative rights like freedom of speech, press, and assembly are necessary for living such an examined life, but so too are positive rights of education, access to culture, food, and medical care. Human rights become necessary conditions for the collective cultivation of humanity. Only within the framework of human rights can we construct a community of dignity appropriate for our nature as human, social beings.

Meta-ethical Observations

Along the lines sketched above it is possible to place a comprehensive system of human rights on foundations rooted in the Confucian tradition. I want to conclude this paper with some brief reflections on the project aimed at doing this. Let me begin by returning to the idea of Confucianism as an authoritarian moral code suppressing the individual in the name of the ruler, the father, and the husband. There can be no doubt that the Confucian tradition has been mined to support authoritarian forms of social life. Authoritarian political leaders like Lee Kwan Yu and some current Chinese Communist leaders have appealed to such an authoritarian version of Confucianism as a system of “Asian values” presenting an alternative to “Western” human rights. Some Confucian scholars who are sympathetic to the human rights tradition have argued that this rigid
authoritarianism rests on a distorted use of the Confucian tradition. They have pointed to texts within the tradition which challenge such authoritarian conclusions, for example, texts which suggest a right of revolution.\textsuperscript{11} It is certainly fair and valuable to mine the tradition in this way, but beyond this I believe there are aspects of the meta-ethics of the project of a Confucian appropriation of the human rights tradition that have interesting implications for ethical theory in general.

Like the sciences, philosophical, religious, and ethical traditions are historical constructions of human making. This is not to say that science or ethics is subjective. We humans make theories but we do not make those theories true. What makes a theory true is that the world is the way the theory says it is. Sometimes we see that our ideas fail. Failure signals the recalcitrance of the world and prompts us to revise our ideas. Such revisions are the stuff of intellectual history, in science and in ethics. Revisions often take the form of a tinkering around the edges. Sometimes they involve a wholesale change in foundations. At other times, revisions take place in the middle ground where a complex mix of assumptions connects theoretical foundations with empirical applications.

For example, a Christian metaphysics of the soul can provide the foundation for an extensive system of human rights, including a right of resistance, or it can provide the foundation for a doctrine of passive obedience. The difference lies in the middle ground network of auxiliary concepts mediating between the metaphysics and the ethics. In the same way, Confucian humanism is compatible with multiple perspectives in ethics, depending upon what additional mediating concepts one adopts. The rigid authoritarian understanding of the “three bonds” developed within the Neo-Confucianism of feudal China. Tu and those who share his project propose a “transvaluation” of Confucian ethics that would abandon the authoritarian principles of the Neo-Confucian tradition and build on “core values” of classical Confucian thought.\textsuperscript{12} It is not at all implausible to argue that in the modern world the cultivation of humanity at the core of classical Confucian thought requires an extensive system of human rights incompatible with such authoritarian traditions. In this way the theory of human rights developed in the West receives a firmer foundation—one more compatible with contemporary metaphysics and better able to incorporate positive as well as negative rights.

Tu understands this project in dialogic terms. He sees us all as participants in an ongoing and open-ended global dialogue. Just as in natural science, the global community responds to new problems and new ideas, making adjustments in the mix of relevant ideas at the periphery, at the foundations, and in the middle ground, to yield a comprehensive theory more adequate both in its foundations and in its applications to the world. It is important to note that the notion of adequacy at stake here is not the idea of global agreement. Just as in science, a theory supported by global agreement can fail. There may be unnoticed contradictions or applicational implications that fail. Rather than agreement, what is at stake here is something like dialectical adequacy.

Ethical theories are rational structures with implications for practice. Just as in science, ethical theory is susceptible to reasoned criticism at foundational, applicational, and middle-ground levels. Appreciation of this point takes us beyond any conventional subjectivist or relativist conception of morality. And, while it may be true that a determined fanatic can accept theoretical or applicational counter-examples that appear to “falsify” an ethical theory, the same can be said of fanatics in the fields of natural science. While in ethics there may be no analogue for scientific truth as agreement with the world, in
ethics as in science, dialectical adequacy provides sufficient grounding for an objective evaluation of competing theories. Tu’s project for a Confucian appropriation of human rights provides an interesting model for progress in an objective and universal ethics.

Notes


3 For Locke’s deterministic account of human freedom see the Essay on Human Understanding, Book II, Chapter XXI, “Of Power.” While Locke’s official view accepts the existence of a human soul distinct from the natural body, he at least entertains the possibility that God could make matter think. On this, see Essay on Human Understanding, Book IV, Chapter III, Section 6.

4 Aristotle’s Nichomachean Ethics is one classical source.


8 While Nozick simply assumes the existence of strong negative rights, at one point he suggests that such rights rest on Kantian foundations (Anarchy, State, and Utopia pp. 30-31). Hospers attempts to derive strong negative rights from each person’s “ownership” of his or her own person, but this assumed prior right of ownership begs the question about the foundations of human rights. Rand claims to be an ethical egoist. In fact, she clearly assumes the existence of strong negative natural rights without offering any justification for this assumption.

9 Hospers provides a very clear formulation of this argument in “What Libertarianism Is” in Liberty for the Twenty-First Century.

10 For a discussion of these and other uses of the Confucian tradition, see Jeremy T. Paltiel, “Confucianism Contested: Human Rights and the Chinese Tradition in Contemporary Chinese Political Discourse,” in Confucianism and Human Rights pp. 270-296.

11 Mencius, for example, appears to endorse the right of a people to revolt against tyranny. On this and other suggestions of a doctrine of human rights in the Confucian tradition, see Julia Ching, “Human Rights: A Valid Chinese Concept?” in Confucianism and Human Rights pp. 67-82. For a discussion of the passage from Mencius, see p. 72.


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The Deeper Implications of Non-Violence in the Himalayan Tradition and the Personal Transformation Necessary to Live a Non-Violent Life

By Michael A. Ketterhagen

The thesis of this paper is that the Himalayan Tradition, often referred to in popular culture as the Yoga Tradition, offers significant personal implications for the use of non-violence, suggesting that the basis of peace in the world is the state of personal transformation of our planet’s people. More clearly stated, the Himalayan Tradition may be the philosophical and scientific ground from which effective non-violent action springs. The Himalayan Tradition’s concept of the nature of life, its definition of the human person, and its philosophical and scientific presentation of what makes for a happy and purposeful life offer valuable and significant material for the discussion of non-violence.

The Himalayan Tradition was first formally introduced to the Western religious world by Swami Vivekananda at the 1893 Parliament of the World’s Religions in Chicago. Since then, many teachers of the Himalayan Tradition, which began in written form with the Vedas, was developed with the Upanishads, and was popularized with the Bhagavad Gita, have come to the United States to share their wisdom. One such teacher of the philosophical and scientific beliefs and practices of the Himalayan Tradition was Sri Swami Rama of the Himalayas. He founded the Himalayan International Institute for Yoga Science and Philosophy of the USA in 1971. The Himalayan Institute was originally located in Glenview, Illinois. It moved to Honesdale, Pennsylvania in the early 1980s, where it is presently located. Swami Rama’s mission was to join the wisdom of the East with the wisdom of the West. He wanted to “create a bridge between East and West, science and spirituality, ancient wisdom and a modern way of life,” as described in the mission statement of the Himalayan Institute. The Institute’s goals and objectives are “to live a healthy life, reclaim a joyful mind, and discover our innate inner being.” The core teachings and practices of the Institute lie in developing “the art of joyful living,” which is “living a peaceful and happy life.” The Tradition promotes social justice and peace through personal transformation of the individual. (http://www.himalayaninstitute.org/Inside/AboutHI.aspx)

Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, a Sanskrit scholar and the successor of Swami Rama as acharya (spiritual head) of the Himalayan Institute, articulates quite persuasively that fighting and wars come from “a superficial sense of I-am-ness.” (Tigunait, Why We Fight, p. 3) In his book, Why We Fight, he speaks from the ancient authority of the Himalayan sages and the wisdom of the Vedas, Upanishads, and Bhagavad Gita, emphasizing the practice of Ahimsa (non-violence) as the path to peace and justice. He further writes in his book, Lighting the Flame of Compassion, that these scriptures proclaim an “unshakable conviction: [namely that] the soul of all living beings is one and autonomous.... When we internalize this knowledge and come to know ourselves as integral to the luminous consciousness that animates all life, we become both fearless and compassionate.” (Tigunait, Lighting the Flame, p. 1)

Walter Wink, professor of Biblical Interpretation at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York City, in his book, The Powers That Be, postulates that the road to justice and peace is the inner transformation of the persons,
institutions, and systems of our world. This inner transformation specifically addresses the spiritual dimension of every organization, institution, and activity. Scott Hunt, author of the bestselling book, *The Future of Peace*, claims that peace rests on the personal transformation of each human being. Hunt, a practicing Buddhist, speaks emphatically about the internal power that drives individuals to work for a peaceful transformation of society. These individuals are driven to work for peace and compassion in the world because they have first transformed themselves.

The path to peace and justice is not confrontation and violent action. The path is non-violence that flows from a deep concern about the well-being of the "enemy." Practicing this belief means personal conversion. The Himalayan Tradition's practices bring about such a conversion, gradually and permanently.

From the perspective of the Himalayan Tradition, "man's true nature is divine, perfect and infinite." (Rama, *Lectures on Yoga*, p. 5) The atman, which is the true self, is pure and unchanging. Often this true self is described in terms of light, brightness, pure love, and peace. This atman is the “divine flame which resides in the reservoir of every human being,” Rama says. (Rama, *Lectures on Yoga*, p. 5) In attempting to define this inner core, Parker Palmer in "The Art and Craft of Formation" quotes Mark Nepo, who calls this reservoir “a spot of grace:”

Each person [says Nepo] is born with an unencumbered spot, free of expectation and regret, free of ambition and embarrassment, free of fear and worry; an umbilical spot of grace where we were each first touched by God. It is this spot of grace that issues peace. Psychologists call this spot the Psyche, theologians call it the Soul. Jung calls it the Seat of Unconscious, Hindu masters call it Atman, Buddhists call it Dharma, Rilke calls it Inwardness, Sufis call it Qalb, and Jesus calls it the Center of our Love. (Palmer, p. 5)

In the developing Western Holistic Health discipline and my own Spirituality and Healing field of study, Dr. Herbert Benson, director of the Body-Mind Institute of Harvard Medical College, refers to this place within each of us as the experience of “remembered wellness.” (Benson, p. 20)

Gary Zukav, an eminent physicist turned metaphysician, describes this true self in somewhat more passionate terms: “You are a dynamic being of Light that at each moment informs the energy that flows through you. You do this with each thought, with each intention.” (Zukav, p. 8)

This true self is a manifestation of Purusha, the cosmic consciousness and Ultimate Reality, according to the Ayurvedic medical tradition. (Lad, pp. 15-19) Ayurveda flows from the Himalayan Tradition and is considered the sister science of Yoga. According to the Samkhya philosophy (one of the seven philosophical systems of India), which is the basis of the Ayurvedic and Yogic literature, human life flows from Purusha (Pure Consciousness) and Prakriti (Creative Action) and manifests itself as the variety of beings in nature. (Lad, p. 17) This pure consciousness (pure existence) is the center of all human life. Actually, it is our identity, says the Himalayan Tradition. (Lad, p. 15; Rama et al., *Yoga and Psychotherapy*, p. 98)

According to the Samkhya philosophy, which Patanjali used as the philosophical basis for his Yoga Sutras, the human being is a being of divine quality and consciousness “covered by” five “sheaths,” called koshas in Sanskrit. (Rama et al., *Yoga and Psychotherapy*, p. 98) Our Western thinking would understand these koshas as dimensions. These five dimensions would be labeled as the physical, energy/emotional, mental, intelligence/intuition, and blissful/joy
dimensions. The expression “covered by,” or “sheath,” in the Sanskrit is
metaphorical, because in actuality there
is no apparent separation between the
sheaths and the atman, the center of
consciousness. They are
“condensations,” metaphorically
speaking, of the essence of the human,
the center of consciousness, the being
of divine quality. Each sheath is a
physical reality which becomes more
and more subtle in its physicality the
nearer to the Self (atman) one proceeds.

The grossest, or most concrete, sheath
is the annamaya kosha, the food
sheath, which is the physical human
anatomy one feeds, exercises, and puts
to bed at night. This is the part of the
human which consists of food (anna),
but is actually an illusive (maya)
covering (kosha) of the true self (atman).
Maya is often translated as “illusion, or
consisting of” but it is much more
complex, referring to the always-
changing nature of an object. Tigunait
defines it as “the primordial force from
which the world of names and forms
evolve. Maya has two main
characteristics: the power to veil and
the power to project. Through these two
intrinsic characteristics it veils the true
nature of non-objective consciousness
and simultaneously projects the illusion
of objective awareness.” (Tigunait, Inner
Quest, p. 179)

The second sheath is the pranamaya
kosha, the energy sheath, or the sheath
consisting of energy which constantly
changes. This is closely connected to
the breath. It is that physical part of us
which gives us the ability to move and
control the annamaya kosha. Our
western culture had not paid much
attention to this energetic aspect of the
human being until recently. Now
“Energy Medicine” is becoming a very
popular area of intellectual and
practical research. C. Norman Shealy
and Caroline Myss in their book, The
Creation of Health; Myss in her book,
Anatomy of the Spirit; and Joan
Borysenko in The Ways of the Mystic,
have brought this new exploration of
the human person to the public’s
attention. James L. Oschman of
Nature’s Own Research Association has
written a detailed explanation of the
“new energy paradigm,” called “Energy
Medicine -- the New Paradigm,”
providing a scientifically supported,
biophysical basis for this emerging
medicine.

The third sheath is manomaya kosha,
the mental sheath, or sheath consisting
of thought waves which are constantly
changing. These thought waves of the
human being include memories and the
faculties of discriminating intellect and
will. The Himalayan Tradition of
understanding the mind is quite
detailed with four very specific aspects
to it. The details of those aspects go
beyond the scope of the present paper.

The fourth sheath is vijnanamaya
kosha, the intellectual or intuitive
sheath, or sheath consisting of
collective understandings and truths
which also constantly change but at a
much slower rate. This fourth sheath is
the true intelligence of the human
being. From it flows all knowledge that
is beneficial to the individual person
and to the whole universe at the same
time. Sonnets, literature, “collective
consciousness,” discoveries for the
benefit of humanity -- all flow from this
sheath. Thomas Edison is rumored to
have accessed this dimension of the
human quite methodically, in order to
envision his many inventions. He
would lie on a cot in his metal-floored
laboratory with steel balls in his hands.
As he relaxed he then began to
experience his deeper intuitive
intelligence, which usually happened
just before he fell asleep and dropped
the steel balls from his hands, waking
him up. He then proceeded to write
down what he saw just before he
dropped off to sleep.

The final sheath is the anandamaya
kosha, the blissful sheath, or the sheath
consisting of bliss, which is also in
constant fluctuation. Bliss is defined as
the total absence of fear and is the
experience one might have just before one falls off to sleep.

This view of the human being is considered a holistic view. In the Western understanding of the human being the first two sheaths correspond to the physical and the energetic/emotional dimensions of the human being, respectively. The last three sheaths, which are the levels of the mind in Yoga’s understanding, correspond to the Western understanding of the rational and intuitive dimensions of the mind. In the Western quantum view, as presented by Deepak Chopra in Quantum Healing, the mind/body is a continuum that cannot be divided. In the Yoga Tradition’s view, all the sheaths are a unity. [See figure 1 at end of article.]

The Himalayan Tradition understands that these five sheaths encase the divine, perfect, and infinite self, which is the true nature of the human being. This self could also be referred to as the “center of consciousness.” This true self is perfect wholeness, therefore perfectly happy and peaceful. The Himalayan Tradition teaches that all we need to do is make the food sheath flexible, strong and rested, calm the energy sheath by calming the breath, and still the mind in order to become aware of the world of intelligence and bliss, the world of self-realized humanness. This lifestyle gives us total access to the divine; therefore, access to the completely whole and happy self. This awakened state, Buddha, is what Buddhist monks and nuns work to achieve.

Identifying with the different dimensions or sheaths of the human is what Pandit Tigunait means when he says humans generally have “a superficial sense of I-am-ness.” The Himalayan Tradition believes that when we identify with the labels or descriptors of any of the sheaths, we are creating opportunities for comparisons that lead to greed, envy, fear and separation. All of these are nourishment for war and undermine peace. All of these identifications lead to violence. On the contrary, when we look at ourselves carefully and observe how we experience ourselves, we do not identify with our body, our energy, our mind, or even our intelligence. Our true self is none of those aspects. Each of us is a center of consciousness (Spirit) that has a mind and a body. We are spiritual beings with minds and bodies. We never die! According to yoga, we never die!

Now, as Pandit Rajmani Tigunait said, “When we internalize this knowledge and come to know ourselves as integral to the luminous consciousness that animates all life, we become both fearless and compassionate.” (Tigunait, Lighting the Flame of Compassion, p. 1) This fearlessness and this compassion lead to the true nature of non-violence. An effective process that permits us to experience our true self, that allows us to act from our divine, infinite, and perfect nature, our pure consciousness, according to the Himalayan Tradition, is raja yoga, the “royal path.” This path leads to the “control of thought-waves in the mind”, which is Patanjali’s definition of yoga found in Yoga Sutra 1.2 (Prabhavananda, p. 19). The modification of the thought-waves occurs during meditation, which is defined as sustained, one-pointed concentration for a period of 12 complete, relaxed diaphragmatic breaths, with one’s head, neck and trunk in a straight line. (Rama, Meditation and Its Practice, pp. 14-19)

B.K.S. Iyengar in his classic, Light on Yoga, says the following about the word Yoga:

[It] is derived from the Sanskrit root yuj meaning to bind, join, attach and yoke, to direct and concentrate one’s attention on, to use and apply. It also means union or communion. It is the true union of our will with the will of God. “It thus means,” says Mahadev Desai in his introduction to the Gita according to Gandhi, “the yoking of all the powers of body, mind and soul to
God; it means the disciplining of the intellect, the mind, the emotions, the will, which that Yoga presupposes; it means a poise of the soul which enables one to look at life in all its aspects evenly.”

(Iyengar, p. 19)

The system of Yoga is called such because it provides the means by which the individual human spirit can be united to, or be in communion with, the Supreme Universal Spirit and therefore attain freedom and liberation, fearlessness and compassion.

Again, the path to peace and justice is the practice of non-violence that flows most directly from a deep awareness that we are spiritual beings—divine, infinite, and perfect. Then we will develop a deep concern about the well-being of the “enemy.” The Himalayan Tradition’s practices of raja yoga and non-violence and the cultivation of this God-consciousness bring about such a conversion, gradually and permanently.

In conclusion, this paper proposes that if people could, as the Himalayan Tradition teaches, truly understand and experience themselves, they would experience a personal transformation that would make them active, non-violent, and compassionate peacemakers in a world desperately in need of such battalions. This personal identification of themselves as divine, infinite, and perfect beings would transform our families, our colleges and universities, our nations, and our world. The natural desire of the human beings to make a difference in the world would be realized by awakening ourselves to our true nature. We will then fulfill the human’s natural desire and purpose—loving service to self and all life.

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**Figure 1. The 5 Koshas.** (Rama, et al., 98)
The Crisis in the U.S. Anti-War Movement
—and How to Overcome It

By David Michael Smith

As the U.S. occupation of Iraq nears the end of its third year, the news from both the war zone and the home front is increasingly grim for the Bush Administration and its allies. Elections engineered by the occupation authorities in late January 2005 have failed to stem a growing insurgency. Almost seven hundred people were killed in May 2005 alone, and it has become clear that U.S. military forces cannot even control Baghdad or the main highway to the airport, much less the rest of the country. Outside the heavily fortified Green Zone, where the occupation headquarters and the Iraqi puppet government are located, the struggle for control of the country is being waged every hour of every day.

More than one hundred thousand Iraqis have been killed since the war began on March 20, 2003, and many more have been injured or displaced. More than two thousand U.S. troops have been killed, and more than twenty-five thousand have been medically evacuated. The economic cost of the war already exceeds two hundred billion dollars. U.S. policymakers’ rhetoric about helping to build a “stable democracy” rings hollow in Iraq, where the vast majority of people want the occupation to end. One public opinion poll there found that 69% of Shiites and 82% of Sunnis favor the withdrawal of U.S. forces. (Zogby International, 2005)

Moreover, as the number of U.S. casualties increases and confidence in the mission decreases, public opinion at home is increasingly turning against the war. A CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll in May 2005 found that 57% of the public said that it was not worth going to war in Iraq. (Cable News Network, 2005) And 56% said the conflict is going badly for the U.S. (Cable News Network, 2005) A CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll in June 2005 found that almost sixty percent of respondents said that the U.S. should withdraw all or some of its troops from Iraq. (Page, 2005) Professor Ronald Spector, a military historian at George Washington University, has suggested that “We have reached a tipping point. . . . Even some of those who thought it was a great idea to get rid of Saddam are saying ‘I want our troops home.’” (as cited in Page, 2005)

Even before the war began, the overwhelming majority of nations and peoples in the world strongly opposed the pending U.S. invasion as an unjustified act of aggression, a violation of international law, and a “crime against peace.” Most members of the United Nations implored Bush to forego an unnecessary and immoral war. And in the months leading up to the war, the largest, most diverse, and first truly global anti-war movement in history developed. Millions of people from Britain to Bahrain, from New York to Nigeria, and from South Korea to Spain became involved in this preemptive peace movement. Former South African President Nelson Mandela, Pope John Paul II, actress Susan Sarandon, British playwright Harold Pinter, Hiroshima Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba, the Dixie Chicks, and many other famous individuals spoke out against a military attack on Iraq.

On February 15-16, 2003, more than ten million people participated in anti-war marches, rallies, and protests in more than sixty countries. (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2003). New York Times reporter Patrick Tyler observed that these historic demonstrations were a reminder “that there may still be two superpowers on the planet: the United States and world public opinion.” (2003) When Bush ordered the attack on Iraq the following
month, millions more took to the streets. Mass rallies across Europe drew crowds too large to count. Workers walked off the job in Greece, Italy, Spain, and several other countries. Demonstrators besieged dozens of U.S. embassies around the world. Large protests were also held in Middle Eastern, African, and Asian countries. Hundreds of thousands of people marched and rallied in New York City, Washington, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

Much of the hard work needed to build the anti-war movement in the U.S. had been done by various peace groups and Marxist and socialist organizations. But the movement was extraordinarily diverse, encompassing labor union activists, people of faith, students and professors, young workers, people of color, immigrants, and many other people. As Stephen Zunes, professor of politics at the University of San Francisco, observed, “This is a much more mainstream movement than the anti-Vietnam War movement was at a comparable stage.” (as cited in Lundstrom, 2002) Vietnam War protest leader David Harris expressed the views of many when he told a San Francisco crowd on February 16, 2003, “We’re here to save our country.” (as cited in Asimov, 2003)

Two years later, with the war going so badly for the U.S. government—and with public opinion more opposed to the war than ever—one might expect the anti-war movement in our country to be bigger, broader, and stronger than ever. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Strikingly, protests and other anti-war activities peaked at the beginning of the war and began to decline in the months that followed. By late May 2003, journalists were asking, “Where have all the protesters gone?” (Donn, 2003) Since then, the frequency, size, and intensity of anti-war demonstrations and related actions have significantly decreased. As Paul D’Amato, associate editor of the International Socialist Review, observed in May 2005, “The strange situation we face now is that more people than ever think the war was a mistake, but the anti-war movement is still fairly weak.” (2005)

What happened to the anti-war movement in the U.S.? How can the crisis in this movement be overcome? If we are to renew and revitalize the struggle to end the war in Iraq, we must have a solid political analysis of how this crisis developed and how it can be overcome. In this writer’s view, it is not difficult to explain why this historically unprecedented anti-war movement has declined so precipitously. Nor is it difficult to identify some of the most important conditions for rebuilding this movement. But peace activists from diverse political backgrounds may reach somewhat different conclusions on these matters. The analysis which follows is offered as a contribution to what will hopefully be a growing discussion and debate on the rebirth of the anti-war movement in the United States.

Decline of the Anti-war Movement

One factor contributing to the decline of the movement after the fall of Baghdad has been acknowledged by virtually all activists. In the wake of the U.S. invasion and relatively quick victory over Iraqi military forces, a profoundly debilitating disillusionment was experienced by many people who had participated in anti-war activities and “who hoped somehow that mass protest would be enough” to prevent the war. (D’Amato, 2005) Among wide sections of the anti-war forces “a perception emerged that the movement was a failure because the Bush Administration went forward with its plans.” (Engler, 2004)

Many people who joined the movement in 2002 and early 2003 were new to political activism. And many of them became involved in order to express their moral outrage at the prospect of an invasion of Iraq. These were unequivocally positive developments.
But the initial success of the U.S. invasion led to the demobilization of large numbers of people who had eloquently expressed their heartfelt opposition to Bush’s war plans, but were not necessarily committed to building the kind of mass political movement that, over time, could force the government to end the war and occupation.

A second factor in the decline of the movement was the perceived need to “support the troops” after the war began. This call by the administration and its allies in both major political parties had a significant impact on the anti-war movement as well as on the general public. But an important distinction can be made here. Although some individuals were influenced by the traditional call to rally around the flag, many others ceased being active because they were afraid to publicly oppose the war once it was underway. Fear of government repression has been one of the dirty little secrets of U.S. history, and Bush frightened more than a few people when he announced that “You’re either with us or against us in the fight against terror” in the aftermath of the tragedy of September 11, 2001. (as cited in Cable News Network, 2001)

Recent concerns about political repression have proved to be well-founded. The American Civil Liberties Union has denounced the government’s use of the USA PATRIOT Act and the Joint Terrorism Task Force to identify, interrogate, and intimidate anti-war protesters and other activists. As ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero has noted, “The FBI’s intimidation and interrogation of peaceful protesters brings back eerie echoes of the days of J. Edgar Hoover.” (2004). Although people of color, immigrants, religious minorities, and radicals have been most vulnerable to renewed repression, the specter of a New McCarthyism has undoubtedly discouraged a broad spectrum of people from involvement in the anti-war movement.

A third factor in the decline of the movement was the abandonment of anti-war protests and related activities by people who thought that the next big battle for peace must be fought at the ballot box in the November 2004 presidential election. In late 2003 and throughout 2004, many opponents of the war chose to invest their time and labor in efforts to nominate and elect a Democratic president who would end the war and occupation in Iraq. This was hardly surprising. Unlike many other nations, the U.S. has only two major political parties, and there is no mass Left party representing the working class majority. As a result, some people involved in progressive U.S. social movements have historically felt compelled to place their hopes in Democratic Party politicians.

However, anti-war activists should have known better than to traverse this well-known path in 2003-2004. Although there are some important differences between the Republicans and Democrats, both are relatively conservative parties aligned with various sections of the capitalist class and committed to the projection of U.S. power and hegemony abroad. (Parenti, 2001) There is a good deal of historical evidence to support the proposition that the Democratic Party is the “graveyard of social movements.” (S. Smith, 2004) Moreover, many Democrats in Congress have supported the war in Iraq, and none of the major Democratic presidential candidates in 2004 called for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces. While the major Democratic presidential candidates were certainly less reactionary than Bush on some important issues, none of them were authentic anti-war candidates.

As D’Amato has pointed out, the effort to elect “Anybody but Bush” ironically culminated in support for Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry, who supported the war in Iraq. (2005) In the U.S. Senate in 2002, Kerry had voted to authorize military action against Iraq. In the 2004 election campaign, he said
that he would have voted the same way even if he had known that no weapons of mass destruction would be found in Iraq. (VandeHei, 2004) Despite their good intentions, “Anybody but Bush” activists ended up sacrificing their own principles and undermining the struggle to end the war when they embraced the pro-war candidacy of John Kerry. It was not only liberals who made this grievous mistake. Some Marxist and socialist organizations joined with liberals and embraced the “lesser of evils” strategy, too. Signally, the result was “an election period where the issue that most concerned millions of Americans—the war—was literally taken off the table because both candidates were for the war.” (D’Amato, 2005)

A fourth factor in the decline of the movement is a deeply flawed analysis of the 2004 election results. Some activists have concluded that the country is moving to the Right and decided that they must “tone down” their opposition to the war. (D’Amato, 2005) What D’Amato has described as further “political sliding” has been manifested in activists’ failure to organize a large national anti-war demonstration during the first eight months of 2005. (2005) In addition, MoveOn.org, the main liberal Democratic Party group critical of the war, has abandoned its focus on the war and “moved on” to other issues like Social Security. (Solomon, 2005) Some peace activists now limit themselves to participating in ceremonies where they mourn the soldiers killed in Iraq but do not protest the war. Other activists are mounting campaigns against corporations like Halliburton and Bechtel for war profiteering but downplay opposition to the war itself.

The notion that Bush’s re-election signifies a national shift toward conservatism does not stand up under close examination. (D. M. Smith, 2004-2005) A New York Times/CBS News poll published in March 2005 found that 63 percent of respondents say “the president has different priorities on domestic issues than most Americans.” (Nagourney and Elder, 2005) Indeed, an April 2005 Gallup poll reveals that Bush’s 45 percent approval rating is “the lowest level of any president since World War II at this point in his second term.” (as cited in E&P Staff, 2005) And on the issue of Iraq, recent poll results make clear that public opinion is increasingly turning against the war. (Cable News Network, 2005; Page, 2005) Mounting public criticism of the human and economic costs of the war, combined with growing awareness of widespread Iraqi resistance to the occupation, provide a solid objective basis for rebuilding the anti-war movement.

A fifth factor in the decline of the movement is the intractable political divisions among many of the organizations involved in the anti-war movement. The two most prominent national coalitions, United for Peace and Justice (UPJ) and Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (ANSWER), basically agree on the need for U.S. troops to be immediately withdrawn from Iraq. However, these coalitions have generally not been able to work together in pursuit of this shared objective. Their political differences go far beyond disagreement over Democratic Party electoral efforts in 2003-2004, which were supported by some UPJ members and opposed by ANSWER. The two coalitions have bitterly disagreed over the desirability of linking other political demands to the call for U.S. withdrawal from Iraq; the timing, location, and format of national anti-war protests; and other issues. The coalitions’ inability to find grounds for principled compromise has led to the scheduling of two separate mass anti-war demonstrations in Washington in September 2005.

The existence of principled political differences among various organizations and individuals in the anti-war movement is understandable. But it is unfortunate that these differences have often prevented people from working
together in a democratic way to build a unified struggle against the war and occupation in Iraq. Some liberals and progressives have sought to exclude or limit the participation of Marxists and socialists in particular events, and some highly publicized cases of red-baiting have occurred in the anti-war movement. At the same time, some Marxists and socialists have engaged in sectarian and divisive behavior that has undermined other activists’ efforts to build a bigger, broader, and more effective anti-war movement.

Revitalizing the Movement

So where do we go from here? What is to be done? How can we renew and revitalize the anti-war movement? Activists from different political backgrounds will certainly continue to discuss and debate these questions. But in this writer’s view, it should be possible for many organizations and individuals to agree on some basic political principles for the next stage of this vital struggle. First, we need to be clear about our primary objective, which should be an immediate end to the war and an immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq. Achievement of this objective cannot be linked to the prospects for survival of the U.S.-installed Iraqi regime, or to the prospects for avoiding “civil war” or “chaos.”

Second, we need to understand that a renewed and revitalized anti-war movement must be developed by the independent political action of working class, oppressed, and democratic-minded people. Such a movement should welcome the growing opposition to the war among some elected representatives and political leaders. But such a movement cannot be led—or limited—by government officials, politicians, or either major political party. At the same time, anti-war activists must redouble their efforts to win back many of the people who tried the electoral route in 2003-2004 and have learned from their mistake. Our movement can offer these people a positive, constructive alternative to the despair and disillusionment which so many of them have been experiencing.

Third, we must be committed to building an anti-war movement that unites women and men of varying ages from different political, racial, and cultural back-grounds. The social composition of this movement—and its leadership—must reflect the demographic diversity of the U.S. population. And activists are going to have to forge the broadest possible principled unity in the struggle against the war while agreeing to disagree on other issues. We should do everything in our power to avoid unnecessary political divisions and minimize sectarian squabbles. Building unity in the anti-war movement will require the rejection of not only anti-communism and red-baiting, but also all forms of sectarianism, opportunism and chauvinism.

Fourth, we must support and promote the development of anti-war tendencies in the labor unions, in workplaces, in communities of color, on the campuses, among people of faith, and among other potentially progressive constituencies. We must help people understand that the hundreds of billions of dollars being spent on the war come at the expense of attacks on essential social programs at home. We must help people understand that the “War on Terror” is being used to justify attacks on immigrants’ rights, renewed racial profiling, and an ominous assault on civil liberties. We must help young people understand the danger of a new draft and the importance of their participation in the anti-war movement. And we must support the growing numbers of men and women in the U.S. military forces who are refusing to fight in Iraq.

Fifth, we must make mass popular mobilization the highest tactical priority of the anti-war movement. The most important examples of progress brought
about in our country have been achieved through mass social movements which disrupted “business as usual,” not through voting and elections. It was such mass protest movements which were largely responsible for the development of Social Security, anti-poverty programs, labor union rights, civil rights reforms, advances in women’s rights, and importantly—the eventual U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam.

The historic protests and demonstrations of late 2002 and early 2003 were not able to prevent the war. But much has changed in the last two years. Today, a majority of the U.S. population recognizes the immense human and economic costs of the war, understands that the occupation has become a quagmire, and supports the return of U.S. troops from Iraq. These dramatically different social and political conditions now provide a much more favorable context for mass popular mobilization against the war—and its impact on the government.

If we are to end the war and occupation in Iraq, we must be able to expand mass protests to the point that we can disrupt “business as usual” and compel the U.S. government to end the war in Iraq. We need to put millions of people into the streets. We need to build a campaign of mass civil disobedience against the war. And as the experience of the U.S. military in the latter stages of the Vietnam War made clear, the development of widespread resistance by U.S. troops stationed in Iraq can play a powerful role in bringing the war to an end.

The challenges and difficulties facing the anti-war movement should not be underestimated. But we can build a broad, powerful, multi-racial, people’s movement against the war in the months and years ahead. Together, we do have the potential—we can develop the power—to end this war, bring the troops home, and enable the Iraqi people to determine their own future.

References:


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“Responsible for What History Will Make of It”:
The Significance of the End of World War II in the Light of Past and Present Conflicts

By Holger Henke

Die Jungen sind nicht verantwortlich für das, was damals geschah. Aber sie sind verantwortlich für das, was in der Geschichte daraus wird. Wir Älteren schulden der Jugend nicht die Erfüllung von Träumen, sondern Aufrichtigkeit. Wir müssen den Jüngeren helfen zu verstehen, warum es lebenswichtig ist, die Erinnerung wachzuhalten.

Richard von Weizsäcker, May 8, 1985

The first part of this article’s title refers to a speech made in 1985 by the then German President Richard von Weizsäcker in which he basically said that the younger generations cannot be held responsible for what happened in Germany during the Nazi regime, but that they will be responsible for how History will think about this time. Weizsäcker’s comment points to a central concern of mine in this article, namely the question of how the commemoration of this most significant period of the 20th century will change, is already in the process of changing. In other words, what can we still learn from World War II as we are about to grapple with the current and future challenges of the 21st century? My motivation is the simple idea that – as already expressed in late 1945 by the philosopher Karl Jaspers – we are what we commemorate.

Whose significance?

The question this title immediately raises is: “significance for whom?” No doubt, this watershed event in world history has quite different meanings for different people. Nonetheless, these particular perspectives can be transcended and there are some general comments which can be made with regard to the significance of World War II. In other words, there are likely to be lessons and meanings that will survive the test of time and the particular perspectives of different generations or people. Still, we need to attend to the nuances as well. Although many historians will tell us differently, History is not just the recording of factual events as they happened. In fact, more importantly, it is about how we explain and interpret what happened, particularly when it involves contentious issues relating to events such as conquest, genocide, forced resettlement, and similar questions including deep moral and ethical dimensions. As the well-known cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall recently expressed the same thought: “...writing a national history is not only to tell yourselves the stories that flatter you; it’s to tell yourself some difficult stories.”

It is from this position that this essay – fully aware of the thin line that often separates a moralistic interpretation of world history from the danger of falling into revisionism – will look at the gaps that exist between the grammar and the rhetoric of the nation.

As the philosopher Alister MacIntyre pointed out, personal history is an important piece in the epistemological puzzle. Writing this essay, the
importance of personal perspectives was also clearly felt. Having been born and raised in Germany, I am an immigrant, not for the first time, but I am also a citizen of the United States. As such, I am concerned with the extent to which World War II still seems to influence the American imagination and public morality of war. While one can count the number of American films that deal with the Vietnam War – deal with it critically – on the fingers of one or two hands, films that deal with Hitler’s Germany are a dime a dozen. Nothing is wrong with that per se – in fact, this fascination is certainly a global phenomenon. I also do not necessarily have any problem with the fact that it renders a rather one-sided view of Germany and Germans. Presumably, Nazi films just make good entertainment. After all, they allow the outside spectator to take a close look at evil without feeling guilty about it. However, it is also possible to take a more critical look at this prominence of World War II lore in popular American culture. The question could be raised, for example, whether this World War II fascination does not conveniently deflect attention from much more difficult interrogations of our own military and political engagements abroad? We will return to this line of reasoning in a little while.

What should be stated at this point already, is that the Shoah – otherwise known as the Holocaust – is not just German history, but also world history. To the extent, therefore, that it has in some way become a part of everybody’s history, we have to be aware that it is heavily imbued with an element of voyeurism – at least at the level of the popular imagination and mass culture. For Jewish people, on the other hand, it will always remain a symbolic marker of their historic victimization, which nowadays, of course, has been turned into a source of nation- and peoplehood. For Germans, finally, the Shoah will always – whether they like it or not – remain the reference point of their role as history’s ultimate perpetrators. And, let us repeat, from this role flows an obligation to be vigilant against – no, critical of – political ideologies and any and all violations of human rights at the individual level, but more importantly where it involves the power of the state, any state, not just the German state.

**On the Uniqueness of World War II**

Two characteristics stand out that make this war different from others. After all, some people may argue that it was just one of many, too many, wars in the long history of humankind – and to some extent they are right to make this observation. However, what makes World War II different is: First, that it was a war on a truly global scale, fought throughout Europe, but also in Africa, Asia, the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, and even in the Caribbean. The numbers alone are staggering. When Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945, thereby officially ending this global conflict, some 55 million people had been killed – most of them civilians. Secondly, and even more importantly, the history of World War II is of course inextricably linked to the odious years of the Hitler regime in Germany and more particularly to the Shoah. This industrial, assembly-belt-like, slaughtering of about 6 million European Jews, and one should add other groups such as Sinti, Roma, Slavic peoples, gays, Catholics, and political dissidents, some total 11 million so-called “undesirables,” based on no other motive than a totally lunatic ideology of racial superiority and a primordial quest for Lebensraum (space), unquestionably marks the absolute low-point in human history.

The singularity of the Shoah is, of course, not a claim that denies other peoples’ sufferings or genocides such as in Rwanda or during the Middle Passage and slavery in the Americas. Genocide is a universal phenomenon. Nor is this claim a contest that would somewhat perversely hold that Germans are the “baddest” soldiers or killers of all, or that one group’s suffering was worse
than another group’s. Abuse, human suffering, and death are, in each case, unique and must not to be compared or ranked against any other individual’s or group’s tribulations. And yet, we have to be clear why we need to say “unique” and “incomparable” when we consider Auschwitz. No matter which example we cite in order to attempt an assessment, there is one clear difference with the Shoah. For the first time in history, the world witnessed the systematic, unconstrained, bureaucratically administered, and industrially organized annihilation of an entire people found “guilty” only because they were inaccurately viewed as belonging to a particular “race.” The “Final Solution” of the so-called Jewish Question, as the Nazis termed it, did not leave any room for doubt or escape, but provided a purely ideological motive for the state-organized erasure from history of an entire people. Herein lies the different nature, the uniqueness of the Shoah: “It was the only time in recorded history that a state tried to destroy an entire people, regardless of an individual’s age, sex, location, profession, or belief. And it is the only instance in which the perpetrators conducted this genocide for no ostensible material, territorial, or political gain.”

There is yet another important aspect which concentration camp survivors such as Elie Wiesel or Primo Levi have explained and which needs to be mentioned here. Many descriptions of the Nazi death camps make the point that the prisoners there did not really die a death that could under any circumstances be called what we usually understand when we speak of death. Rather, they explain, death camp prisoners became part of an assembly belt system that fabricated corpses. Significantly, the SS guards spoke of “figures” (Figuren) rather than of “bodies” or “corpses.” Even if still alive, many of the death camp prisoners appeared to have in spirit already passed the threshold of death, and all that was left was for their body to die as well. Thus, Auschwitz stands for a kind of machine that tried to strip the prisoners of all aspects of their human dignity and did not just take their life, but even deprived them of their death as well. Auschwitz, therefore, became the perverted ultimate fulfillment and cipher of Nazi politics, which propaganda minister Goebbels once described as “the art of making the seemingly impossible possible.”

Germany and the End of World War II

Where does Germany as a country stand today and what do younger generations there make of the responsibility that flows from the historical heritage? It can possibly be said that, collectively, West German society since the end of World War II has gone through distinct phases that are not entirely dissimilar from the five emotional phases distinguished by psychiatrists: Denial, 1945-ca.1960; Anger & Bargaining, ca.1960-ca.1975; Depression, ca.1975-85; and Acceptance, since 1985.

On 8 May 1945, the power of the factual established what had been clear in the mind of most Germans in the weeks and months before the war ended – that a time of great hardship would now begin during which foreign powers would occupy and define the parameters of everyday life. Ten or twenty years later, Germany was back on its feet, however, despite some original plans to dismantle its industrial capabilities. This was in no small measure due to the visionary plans of politicians such as Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman, as well as the generous Marshall Plan from which Germany received some $1.4 billion (1948-52). The Wirtschaftswunder, the economic boom of the post-war years, of Chancellors Adenauer and Erhardt allowed many Germans to simply forget that many little and quite a few big Nazis continued to wield considerable power at various levels, up into the highest echelons of government. There was hardly any public discourse about
what had happened during the Nazi years and how it could have happened. “We didn’t know what was going on” became the convenient standard answer to questions about the Shoah.

Following the change of political climate in the late 1960s and 1970s, new generations of Germans began increasingly to question their parents’ or grandparents’ generation’s role in and involvement with Nazi Germany. This was one of the factors that led in the 1970s to significant terrorist activities by a small group of leftist urban guerrillas. Previously repressed questions thus festered into painful open debates and political violence. Some of the catalysts in this change of collective attitude were the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem (1961), the Auschwitz trials in Frankfurt (1963-65), and a speech by President Heinrich Lübke in which he criticized the tendency to be silent in the face of the German crimes during the Third Reich. However, it was not until the late 1970s and into the 1980s that Germany and Germans came finally to accept that they were not, certainly not in the first place, the victims of Hitler, but that in many instances they were Hitler’s willing executioners – as the historian Daniel Jonah Goldhagen has poignantly formulated it. In December 1970, Chancellor Willy Brandt visited the former Jewish ghetto in Warsaw and famously – and controversially – went on his knees in a spontaneous symbolic gesture of asking for forgiveness. In 1975 – the United States had just withdrawn from Vietnam – German President Scheel introduced the term “liberation” in connection with the Allied victory. But it really took ten more years – until 1985 – for the German public, with President von Weizsäcker’s stellar speech, to acknowledge fully, in a well-nuanced commemoration, all victims of the dictatorship and the War. In the two decades since then, Germans have tried to symbolically meet their responsibility. The German government, Social Democratic and Christian Democratic administrations alike, has played a central role in rebuilding the societies of the former Soviet bloc. German industry and the state have paid hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation to former slave laborers. In Berlin, prime commercial real estate has been plotted out for an impressive memorial to the Shoah. The official acknowledgment and historical research of the extent of German society’s entanglement with the Nazis have reached the highest levels of forthrightness.

To this neat schema, however, one needs to add a phenomenon we have been seeing in the past ten or so years taking shape increasingly in the German public’s attitude towards Hitler, the Shoah, and World War II – growing levels of “guilt fatigue.” There is often a palpable discomfort about being reminded of the collective historical responsibility growing out of Germany’s crimes against humanity accumulated in the Nazi years. Reading some of the newspaper headlines or articles on this topic one sometimes has the impression that Germany is a society waiting to exhale – but unable to do so. Increasingly, again, right-wing nationalists and fringe parties are trying to push the envelope with regard to what is commonly considered the consensus about the Nazi crimes, and increasingly they are finding resonance – particularly in parts of Germany with high unemployment and infrastructural weaknesses.

Still, the public debate about the Nazi years lingers on to this very day. Thus, Nuremberg, Auschwitz, and Stalingrad are permanent points of reference in political debates in Germany, particularly in debates that involve moral and ethical questions – e.g., discrimination against foreigners, abortion rights, the right to die for the terminally ill or incapacitated, political asylum, questions of war and peace, and the list goes on. In early 2005 one observer even spoke of a “shrill circus of commemoration.”
The continuing attention is understandable, even welcome. As the last surviving eyewitnesses are dying and new generations are themselves confronted with this painful history, the need arises to somehow describe – in an attempt to explain – the horrors of these years. It is also understandable because those who we often call eyewitnesses have testified that Auschwitz is an unspeakable crime – a crime for which there are no words. Indeed, surviving witnesses also sometimes confessed that as survivors they often feel complicit to the crimes perpetrated in Auschwitz, complicit in order to survive and report, and that the real witnesses never had a chance to testify.\textsuperscript{13} Still, the lessons of Nazi Germany, World War II, and the Shoah, have to be learned again and again, because as nuanced and refined as any historian’s interpretation may be, there will always be political forces influenced by leftist or rightist ideologies, who will feel compelled to use these interpretations in one way or another in order to boost their particular views. Jürgen Habermas has called this the “public use of history.”\textsuperscript{14}

The lessons of the Shoah do not only, should not only, lead to an automatic condemnation of any neo-Nazi activities, they can also sharpen our eye for current forms of anti-Semitism prevalent among some parts of Muslim immigrant youth in Germany, in the rest of Europe, and elsewhere in the world. They also focus our view on those in the media and the intelligentsia who are using the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to not just criticize Israel’s policies – this would be tolerable – but also to question Israel’s right to exist as an independent state, which is simply not an acceptable proposition and reveals an “implicitly genocidal attitude.”\textsuperscript{15} This also makes the recent repeated anti-Semitic utterances of the current president of Iran so unbearable. Finally, the lessons of the Shoah should heighten our concerns with currently ongoing genocides, such as the one committed in Darfur, Sudan, by Arab Janjaweed militia against the black African ethnic population.

**Transatlantic Relations following the End of World War II**

The consensus in today’s Germany is that one is grateful for the role of the United States in liberating Europe from Nazism. Germans are also grateful to Britain and France, as well as extremely mindful of the huge blood sacrifice the Soviet Union paid as a consequence of being attacked by Hitler. In a very real sense, World War II would have lasted much longer and perhaps not ended in a complete defeat of Hitler had the Soviet Union never become involved. Finally, there is an acute awareness in Germany and Europe that the Cold War was to a large extent the consequence of World War II and a determination to avoid the downward spiral that led into two world wars fought in Western Europe.

In the United States, this basic disposition in Europe is often misread in a simplistic and somewhat self-gratifying way as anti-Americanism. The most recent instance this hyperbolic claim was publicly made was prior to the second Iraq War, which was allegedly aimed at weapons of mass destruction, but really in pursuit of the fall of Saddam Hussein. Rather than to be seen as anti-Americanism, French and German public reaction and foreign policy are, however, much better explained as opposition to this particular war and as a pervasive mistrust of the general directions of the George W. Bush administration.\textsuperscript{16} The active military and diplomatic support of Germany and France for the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan should speak loudly to this. As one observer puts it: “The Federal Republic has ended its post-war stance dominated by a civilian logic and has become a ‘normal’ state prepared to intervene.”\textsuperscript{17} Few, if any, governments in Europe and the rest of the world seem to have any serious problem with this, and this too speaks volumes about
the role of the end of World War II in public memory and discourse in Germany and elsewhere. In the words of British historian Norman Stone: “Today we have the Germany which we want to have.”

The current state of transatlantic affairs is best considered under different aspects – political, economic, and military. Politically, Europe is reluctant to accept its status as an international player of major proportions. On the other hand, the United States has not demonstrated that it accepts Europe in this role. Economically, Europe is – despite continuing hiccups – on its way to pose serious competition to U.S. capital. The steadily growing value and importance of the Euro as a global currency speaks loudly to this. Militarily, the balance of power, as well as the military threat potential has dramatically changed in Europe, as it has elsewhere in the world. In the case of Germany, the military doctrine has changed from a focus on national defense to what Germans now call the “realization of interests.” The maintenance of a strong U.S. presence in Europe is not considered vital anymore on either side of the Atlantic. The Pentagon is currently considering withdrawal of 35,000-48,000 GIs from Germany. With this decision it is neither reacting to German requests, nor faced with widespread German protests against this withdrawal. Sporadic protest against the presence of U.S. military still exists at the local level, but for the most part communities are concerned about the expected economic consequences of the withdrawal. On the other hand, the recent closure of a military base in Frankfurt will facilitate the expansion of the Frankfurt airport.

**Lessons to be Learned**

The catastrophe in Germany did not begin in 1945; it started in 1933, and probably even earlier than that. Perhaps the most important lesson to be learned from the end of World War II is, therefore, that a malfunctioning democracy in a powerful and influential country can lead to far-reaching, devastating consequences. To the extent that the end of World War II was a triumph of freedom in Europe, and because of this historical experience, we need to always allow the posing of difficult and painful questions. These questions are not the usual fare we are fed by the media and by representatives of the state for the purpose of feel-good speeches. Legitimacy should not flow from constant repetition of the same ideas. And so, for example, the question needs to be asked, if we freed Europe and helped democracy take root there, don’t we have to accept it if our transatlantic partners come to dramatically different conclusions about important issues such as the Iraq War? I am not sure that our reaction to this opposition reflected the level of diplomatic maturity one would have expected. Although this is not a comparison to the final days of the Weimar Republic, concerned citizens should not allow themselves to be outfoxed by Yellow Journalism and the anti-democratic posture which is evident in the denunciation of those who question the reach for increased executive power. In particular, attempts to curtail the power of the judiciary and elements of the U.S. Patriot Act, which by its very name already appears to be inoculated against such interrogation, need to be more critically evaluated.

The lessons of post-war Germany also demonstrate that the historical dust under our carpets may give us political asthma today. In the face of the incomprehensible it is not enough to be morally outraged; one also has to guard actively against violations of human rights and basic tolerance wherever they occur and accumulate. Thus, other painful historical questions need to be revisited simply because they have been considered for too long a historical taboo, have therefore not sufficiently become part of public knowledge, and because they put, for example, the
recent Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal into a yet different light. I want to highlight three critical issues:

- Certainly, it was the Nazis who started attacks on civilians with their bombing raids on London, and there is no excuse for this or any other deliberate violence against civilians. Since it is established by international law that deliberately targeting civilians is an odious practice, we also need to ask if it is not necessary to revisit the questionable and documented involvement of our military in Korea, where in 1948 (i.e., before the Korea War started) on the island of Cheju within a year as many as 60,000 of its 300,000 residents were accused of being communists and killed or executed with the full knowledge and sometimes assistance of U.S. military. U.S. military officers also oversaw executions of civilians “suspected of collaborating” with the “communists” in South Korea itself.20

- Usually, and perhaps understandably, the decision to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki is depicted in the United States as the attempt to quickly cause surrender of the Japanese and thereby minimize further losses of American lives.21 It can probably not be disputed that this was indeed an important motive. However, leaving it at that is a moral fig leaf that does not generate a sufficiently comprehensive explanation. One would have to revisit the critical voices of individuals who opposed the drop of the nuclear bomb, in order to get a fuller picture. Thus, for example, Ralph A. Bard, Undersecretary of the Navy, wrote in a top-secret memorandum to Secretary of War Stimson five weeks before the drop that the use of the atomic bomb without any warning runs against “the position of the United States as a great humanitarian nation,” particularly as he acknowledged attempts by the Japanese to negotiate a surrender – a view supported by President Eisenhower in 1963.22 There is also the muted voice of nuclear scientists such as Dr. Leo Szilard, who helped develop the bomb, but opposed its use on both moral and political grounds and in a revealing interview in 1960 spoke of the “fake alternatives of either having to invade Japan or of having to use the bomb against her cities.”23 Let us remember that President Roosevelt himself had warned in 1939 against using bombs against inhabited cities. A factor usually not mentioned is that apparently Stalin himself had intentions to extend the Soviet grip in Asia following Japan’s defeat. His official entry into the war on August 8, 1945, and the attack against the Japanese army in Chinese Manchuria are a case in point. Truman and his Secretary of State, James Byrnes, were immensely concerned about the role of the Soviet Union, and certainly the use of the atomic bomb served two purposes in this regard: 1) it would end the war in Asia without Stalin’s help and 2) it would send a powerful message to the Soviet Union that the United States had these weapons and would use them. It could be argued that these two factors may have been of even greater importance than the now usually cited concern about minimizing U.S. casualties in Asia. These are central questions still to be answered in public, because Hiroshima and Nagasaki gave us the nuclear arms race during the Cold War, and have contributed to the nuclear proliferation we are seeing today. And because nuclear weapons have been used in the past, they may unfortunately yet again be used in the future.24 In announcing the atomic attack to the American public, Truman misrepresented Hiroshima as a “military base” chosen “to avoid, insofar as possible, the killing of
Thus, World War II, which had begun with the lie of Poland’s aggression against Germany, also ended with deception. Following our experience with the horrible events of 9/11, the 60-year anniversary of the end of World War II should also make it possible to consider the following question: How, in what ways, were the unsuspecting citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki different from those people working in the Twin Towers?

• Finally, difficult questions are to be asked with regard to the ways in which during war we have treated enemy combatants as well as civilians. It is disturbing to consider that at the beginning of the 21st century we are still having prisoner camps such as Guantanamo Bay and – allegedly – secret CIA prisons abroad, to which the public has very limited access and which are operating below the radar of normal civil and international law. The Abu Ghraib experience frankly does not augur well for the current practices possibly in place in such camps and with regard to what we consider terrorists. There is probably a consensus that we want people of the ilk of Osama bin Laden to face justice, but one would also like to know that we achieve this not by means that put us morally into their league. This is simply a call for a transparency that is now lacking and that allows the specter of the notorious Lubyanka Prison to hover over our interrogations of suspected terrorists. Recently, the question of Guantanamo Bay has come under greater public scrutiny and criticism. It is gratifying to see that we are living in a system that eventually may be able to correct such aberrations, but in these camps it becomes obvious how vulnerable the democratic and humanitarian impulse is even in our country, once we are faced with a politically and militarily stressful situation.

Coda

The political scientist Herfried Münkler recently argued that the existence in Europe and the United States of fundamentally different political perspectives accounts for some of past and current transatlantic misunderstandings regarding contemporary international challenges. Thus, while the United States follows an imperial logic which attaches significance to influence over and/or domination of peripheral spaces, the Europeans think in terms of state and inter-state relations. Clearly, this is evident in the assessment of a number of issue areas ranging from the Iraq War, to the nuclear stand-offs with Iran and North Korea, to the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, to secret CIA prisons, and other international problems. One of the important lessons of World War II is that where human rights and the freedom of expression are threatened, voices of reason need to take a stand and object. This has to be done on a case by case basis and ought not to be done in a facile or self-congratulatory manner.

Furthermore, the commemoration of the end of World War II cannot exhaust itself in a celebration of what some call the “greatest generation,” the defeat of Nazi Germany, or of Japan following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. As much as these have earned their place in any attempt to understand this turbulent period in world history, more difficult entanglements and questions should be discussed, if we are to learn valuable lessons from this time. Many important questions are still being debated and have by no means been settled yet – questions such as the levels of involvement of the regular German army in atrocities perpetrated during the war, the extent to which post-war rearmament in Germany relied on Nazi personnel and traditions, the economic gains for German society and
the Nazi Party through the expropriation and pogroms against Jews, or the extent to which ordinary Germans participated as willing executioners in genocidal atrocities and war crimes. In current and future debates about such questions, the levels of moral corruption, guilt, and resistance against seemingly overriding forces will be revisited and offer an opportunity to gauge our own involvement in, silences towards, or resistance against contemporary issues with great moral and ethical implications. Thus, what postures as moral certitude today may in future debates reveal itself to have many more layers.

Many of our contemporary problems, including terrorism, would be more productively addressed, if together with a military strategy, tangible socio-economic care became once again a focus concern of the West. This seems particularly necessary since, increasingly, the negative consequences of globalization are felt and interpreted through ethnic, nationalist, or religious lenses (or some mixture of these), which are not open to debate and rational discourse. The fact that the EU recently doubled its development expenditures is a good start in the right direction. That President Bush recently announced an acceleration of aid for Africa is also a welcome development. But the question is indeed: Why are we not in Darfur? I would like to cite Jeffrey Sachs in his recent book *The End of Poverty*:

Currently, more than 8 million people around the world die each year because they are too poor to stay alive. Every morning our newspapers could report, ‘More than 20,000 people perished yesterday of extreme poverty.’ ... The nearly $500 billion that the U.S. will spend this year on the military will never buy lasting peace if the U.S. continues to spend only one-thirtieth of that, around $16 billion, to address the plight of the poorest of the poor, whose societies are destabilized by extreme poverty. Development is certainly not just a question of economic resources, and justice (or even just respect) and peaceful coexistence are not achieved by markets, warfare, or peace-keeping missions alone. However, new priorities in the industrialized world could help us a lot in leaving a better world for our children and our neighbor’s children. This is not simply a moral argument, but also a conclusion pragmatic thought can lead us to.

**Notes**

1 This text is a revised version of a public lecture given on November 18, 2005 at the Institute for International and Cross-Cultural Psychology, St. Francis College, New York City. It is dedicated to the memory of Simon Wiesenthal.

2 “Was und wie wir erinnern, und was wir darin als Anspruch gelten lassen, das wird mit entscheiden über das, was aus uns wird” (“What and how we remember, and what in the process we pass off as a truthful claim, will contribute to what we will become” – my translation) – quoted in Ullrich, S. (2005, April). Wir sind, was wir erinnern, *Die Zeit Geschichte*, 27.


4 Indeed, the fascination has long transcended the popular media and is now expressing itself on the internet, where an increasingly active online trade with World War II memorabilia and reproductions (such as SS uniforms) is taking place.

5 The etymology of the term “holocaust” is historically tied to an often polemic interpretation and anti-Semitic usage, which suggested that pogroms and other acts of violence against Jews were of a sacrificial nature and involved divine will. Thus, the implication is that one may find in Auschwitz a certain “sense.” Elie Wiesel, who introduced the term, later regretted his choice and would have liked to take it back. The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben concluded that whoever continues to use the term “shows ignorance or lack of sensitivity or both” – Agamben, G. (2003). *Was von Auschwitz übrig bleibt. Das Archiv und der*


8 See Agamben, op.cit., 54-67.

9 Ibid., 67.

10 Interestingly, many of these terrorists came – not unlike Osama bin Laden and other al Qaeda leaders – from upper- or middle-class families.

11 Note, for example, the remarks by the well-known German novelist Martin Walser, who in 1998 provocatively complained about the moral weight (Moralkeule) of Auschwitz, which is regularly invoked in discussions about nationalism.


13 Agamben, op.cit., 14-19.


15 Bauer, Y. (2005, March 23). Die Schande bleibt. Die Zeit, 46; Bauer’s phrase echoes Goldhagen’s questions regarding the tacit agreement of many elites in Nazi Germany (see Habermas, op.cit., 59).


21 See, for example, Kennedy, D.M. (2005, August 1). Crossing the Moral Threshold. Time, 50; Kennedy appears quite uninformed or at least disingenuous when he suggests that “dropping the Bomb ... was among history’s most notorious foregone conclusions.”


Let me say only this much to the moral issue involved:
Suppose Germany had developed two bombs before we had any bombs. And suppose Germany had dropped one bomb, say, on Rochester and the other on Buffalo, and then having run out of bombs she would have lost the war. Can anyone doubt that we would then have defined the dropping of atomic bombs on cities as a war crime, and that we would have sentenced the Germans who were guilty of this crime to death at Nuremberg and hanged them?

24 In this regard we have to be aware that the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review of the George W. Bush administration does not only regard nuclear weapons as a deterrent, but also considers their pre-
emptive and tactical use (e.g., mini-nukes to bust bunkers). Without a doubt, this application of nuclear devices would seriously blur the distinction between conventional and nuclear warfare.

It is true that Hiroshima would have played a defensive role in the case of an Allied invasion of Japan. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that it had been chosen as a target precisely because until then the U.S. military had not yet bombarded it. On the day of the explosion, Hiroshima was in fact full with refugees from other cities that had been firebombed previously.


During the year, the authorities initiated various criminal investigations and prosecutions against individual soldiers as well as investigations and reviews into interrogation and detention policies and practices. The investigations found that there had been ‘approximately 300 recorded cases of alleged abuse in Afghanistan, Guantánamo and Iraq.’ On 9 September, Major Paul Kern, who oversaw one of the military investigations, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that there may have been as many as 100 cases of ‘ghost detainees’ in U.S. custody in Iraq.

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld admitted to having authorized the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to keep at least one detainee off any prison register.


Thomas Merton and the Theology of Peace
By Kent D. Shifferd

...Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths where neither sin nor desire can reach, the person that each one is in God’s eyes.

If only they could see themselves as they really are.
If only we could see each other that way there would be no reason for war, for hatred, for cruelty...
we would fall down and worship each other.

Thomas Merton

Quoted in Spirit Walk Teachers
http://www.spiritwalk.org/merton

Introduction

Thomas Merton was born in 1915 and died in 1968. His biographer, Monica Furlong, writes: “I am among those who regard Thomas Merton’s life as a victorious one, although it was cut short by accidental death when Merton was fifty-three, was lived to a rare degree of joy and fulfillment; a life that understood and revealed much about the twentieth century and, in particular, the role of religion in it.” (Furlong, Merton: A Biography, p. xiii) And I am among those who believe that what Merton had to say will be important long after the twenty-first century has closed. He was, in my mind, one of the great Christian thinkers of all time.

Furlong adds, “Merton seems to be one of the very few in the twentieth century who dared to follow in the footsteps of the saints, who revealed some of their love and self-forgetfulness (as if they had found a center outside the ego and were focused on that).” (Furlong, pp. xix-xx) Of course, that center was God. But Merton did not come easily to this place, and if he was recognized by a holy man in India as a “natural Buddha,” he had struggled for years.

His youth was dissolute. When finally he wanted to change his life, he tried to join the Franciscans as a monk. They rejected him. Fortunately, the Cistercians did not, and he became the most famous Christian monk of the twentieth century. Merton was both brilliant and prolific as a writer, and even though living as a cloistered monastic, he produced numerous works and letters, a vast correspondence with many of the great thinkers of his time. He crossed the boundaries of traditional Christianity and was a friend of another very famous monk, the Buddhist Thich Nhat Hanh, and died in Bangkok on his way to an ecumenical conference.

Merton was a profound scholar, and quotes Thucydides, Aquinas, Origen, Pope John’s Pacem in Terris, Machiavelli, St. Paul, St. Augustine, Plato, John Donne, as well as many contemporary authors. He turned his mind to all the aspects of peace from peace in the soul to contemporary horrors like the Vietnam War and nuclear holocaust and wrote voluminously to illuminate what he considered the true Christian stance on war and violence.

Why did he write at all? Why did a cloistered monk need to speak out? Merton saw that we live in extraordinary times. “The present world crisis is not merely a political and economic conflict. It goes deeper than ideologies. It is a crisis of man’s spirit. It is a great religious and moral upheaval of the human race.

(“Christian Action in World Crisis” in Merton, The Nonviolent Alternative, [hereafter, TNA], p. 221)

Elsewhere, he wrote: “This problem is going to be solved in our minds, in our spirit, or not at all. It is because the minds of men have become what they have become that we are poised on the brink of total disaster.” (“The Machine Gun in the Fallout Shelter,” in TNA, p.
To avoid it, we must change our minds, see that in fact we are made in the image of God.

Merton’s Argument

For Thomas Merton, to be at peace and to actively do peace and promote peace in the world, to oppose the war-making institutions and the idea of war itself, was a religious obligation that stemmed directly from the teachings of Christ in the Gospels, indeed, from the example of His life and from the very nature of God in Whose image we are created. Thus it is rooted in the structure of the cosmos that God had created. It is enfolded in the Logos, in the divine Word as it was made man in the Incarnation of Jesus, the Christ. For him, to be a peacemaker or peace activist was not a mere choice, except insofar as being faithful to Christ is a choice. These are truths that most of the world did not and does not observe, including, sadly and all too frequently, the Church itself. He saw that social institutions, sometimes including the Church, exist in a post-Christian age, and are often guided by, and even may be said to worship, temporal power, security, greed, speed and other values of modern life. To live in this way was to be false to the Truth and to be false to the Truth was to be an idolater.

The ultimate nature of humans is derived directly from the nature of God and results in a clear and demanding moral obligation. In his book, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, he wrote: “The only true joy on earth is to escape from the prison of our own false self, and enter by love into union with the Life Who dwells in and sings within the essence of every creature and in the core of our own souls.” (Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, p. 25) God comes to us in what Merton called His “missions.” He “bridges the infinite distances between Himself and the spirits created to love Him, by supernatural missions of His own life.” (*New Seeds*, p. 40) This is how we discover our true self. “My discovery of my identity begins and is perfected in these missions, because it is in them that God Himself, bearing in Himself the secret of who I am, begins to live in me not only as my Creator but as my other and true self. *Vivo sum, iam no ego, vivit vero in me Christus.*” (*New Seeds*, pp. 40-41)

In other words, if we choose to let Him, God dwells in us. Merton believed that “. . . whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (*New Seeds*, p. 4) His understanding of the Gospel was summed up in this thought, “The Holy Ghost, Who is Love living in me.” (Merton, *Entering the Silence*, p. 48) In *New Seeds*, he explained further, “To say that I am made in the image of God is to say that love is the reason for my existence, for God is love. Love is my true identity. Selflessness is my true self. Love is my true character. Love is my name.” (*New Seeds*, p. 60) And further, summarizing a teaching from the Gospel of Matthew, he wrote: “This vocation to be sons of God means that we must learn to love as God himself loves. For God is love, and it is by loving as He loves that we become perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. (Matt. 5:48) Hence, while being called to govern and cultivate the world that God has given us, we are called at the same time to love everything and everyone in it.” (Merton, *Disputed Questions*, pp. 98-99)

But because God created us with free will, we have a conscious choice. We can mold our lives in the *Imago Dei* or not. That is, we can be true or false to the self God has designed us to be. He says: “. . . God leaves us free to be whatever we like. We can be ourselves or not. . . . We are at liberty to be real, or to be unreal. . . . The choice is ours. . . . But we cannot make these choices with impunity. Causes have effects, and if we lie to ourselves and to others, then we cannot expect to find truth and reality whenever we happen to want them.” (*New Seeds*, pp. 31-32) Of course, this is not easy to do, since, as he pointed out: “Every one of us is
shadowed by an illusory person, a false self. . . . A life devoted to the cult of this shadow is what is called a life of sin.” (New Seeds, p. 34) “But if I am true to the concept that God utters in me, if I am true to the thought of Him I was meant to embody, I shall be full of His actuality and find Him everywhere in myself, and find myself nowhere. I shall be lost in Him: that is, I shall find myself.” (New Seeds, p. 37)

Even the fall of humanity from grace in the Garden of Eden cannot change our essential goodness, and in his work, “The Christian in World Crisis,” he quotes Pieper who said: “Sin, whether on the part of the angels or on the part of men, cannot essentially have changed the structure of the world.” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in TNA, p. 59) What is more, the baptized Christian is redeemed from an inevitably sinful nature by Christ’s atonement on the cross.

**Obligation to Work for Peace**

Our obligation to do peace is rooted in the doctrine of the Logos and of the Incarnation. Being made in the image of God, Who is Love, we have an obligation to actively work at all times for peace. Merton wrote: “The Christian is and must be by his very adoption as a son of God, in Christ, a peacemaker (Matthew 5:9). He is bound to imitate the Savior, . . . .” (“Peace: Christian Duties and Perspectives,” in TNA, p. 13) Taking this thought further, he explains why: “This means a recognition that human nature, identical in all men, was assumed by the Logos in the Incarnation, and that Christ died out of love for all men, in order to live in all men. Consequently we have the obligation to treat every other man as Christ Himself, respecting his life as if it were the life of Christ. Even if the other shows himself to be unjust, wicked and odious to us, we cannot take upon ourselves a final and definitive judgment in his case. We still have an obligation to be patient, and to seek his highest spiritual interests. In other words, we are formally commanded to love our enemies.” (“Peace: A Religious Responsibility,” in TNA, p. 112) Merton made this point very clear. “The truth I must love in my brother is God himself, living in him. I must seek the life of the Spirit of God breathing in him.”

In a chapter titled “We Are One Man,” he explains this mystical truth. “One of the paradoxes of the mystical life is this: that a man cannot enter into the deepest center of himself and pass through that center into God, unless he is able to pass entirely out of himself and empty himself and give himself to other people in the purity of selfless love.” (New Seeds, p. 64) And further, “The more I become identified with God, the more will I be identified with all others who are identified with Him. His love will live in all of us. His Spirit will be our One Life, the Life of all of us and the Life of God. . . . This love is God Himself.” (New Seeds, p. 65)

This is true in spite of the evil that other men clearly do because, as he wrote: “The eyes of the saint make all beauty holy . . . . and the saint is never offended by anything and judges no man’s sin because he does not know sin. He knows the mercy of God. He knows that his own mission on earth is to bring that mercy to all men.” (New Seeds, pp. 24-25) In fact, for Merton, that mercy is the defining mark of God. The lack of mercy is “the chief mark of the theology of hell, for in hell there is everything but mercy. That is why God
Himself is absent from hell. Mercy is the manifestation of His presence.” (New Seeds, p. 91) Another dimension of the “devil’s moral theology” is the exaggeration of distinctions between those who are right and those who are wrong, indulging in a kind of moral self-righteousness. “No longer is there any sense that we might perhaps all be more or less at fault, and that we might be expected to take upon our own shoulders the wrongs of others by forgiveness, acceptance, patient understanding and love, and thus help one another to find the truth. On the contrary, in the devil’s theology, the important thing is to be absolutely right and to prove that everybody else is absolutely wrong. This does not exactly make for peace and unity among men, because it means that everyone wants to be absolutely right himself. . . . And, in order to prove their rightness, they have to punish and eliminate those who are wrong.” (New Seeds, p. 96)

Merton repeatedly emphasized, often in the same words, that the theological reason for his views of human nature and ethics are found in the Incarnation, when Christ became the Logos. “Human nature, identical in all men, was assumed by the Logos in the Incarnation, and that Christ died out of love for all men, in order to live in all men. All were henceforth ‘one in Christ’ (Galatians 3:28) and Christ Himself was their peace since His Spirit kept them united in supernatural love (Ephesians 4:3). The Christian therefore has the obligation to treat every other man as Christ Himself, respecting his neighbor’s life as if it were the life of Christ, his rights as if they were the rights of Christ. Even if that neighbor shows himself to be unjust, wicked and odious to us, the Christian cannot take upon himself a final and definite judgment in his case. The Christian still has an obligation to be patient and to seek his enemy’s highest spiritual interests and indeed his temporal good in so far as that may be compatible with the universal common good of man.” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in TNA, p. 35)

Merton was greatly impressed, even filled with joy, by the papacy of John XXIII, and often quoted him, for example: “The truth rings out clearly in the first line of Pacem in Terris where Pope John declares that all men desire peace and that ‘it can be established only if the order laid down by God be dutifully observed.’ That order is the law implanted in man’s free nature as an intelligent being who is capable of desiring peace and justice and of being a peace-maker in the fullness of love. These very capacities implanted in his nature by God are the signs of man’s radical goodness. . . . man was made by God to seek peace and to achieve it, and because God has given man the abundant help of supernatural grace, then no matter how great man’s confusion and servitude to evil may have become, he can still be liberated and fulfill his vocation in peace as a free, spiritual being redeemed in the blood of Christ.” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in TNA, p. 60) We can be true to ourselves as God made us, that is, as loving peacemakers, or we can be false to ourselves and create a world of hatred and violence.

In other words, God has created each of us for a ministry of peace. Merton preached about “… the deepest roots of peace, roots which are placed in man by God himself and which man himself has the mission to cultivate.” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in TNA, p. 60)

Merton was clear that this kind of faith did not mean Christian quietism. “It is all too easy to retire into the ivory tower of private spirituality and let the world blow itself to pieces. Such a decision would be immoral, an admission of defeat. It would imply a secret complicity with the overt destructive fury of fanatics.” (“Breakthrough to Peace,” in TNA, p. 79) “Our Lord did not come to bring peace to the world as a kind of spiritual tranquilizer. He
brought to his disciples a vocation and a task, to struggle in the world of violence to establish His peace not only in their own hearts but also in society itself. This was to be done not by wishing and fair words but by a total interior revolution in which we abandoned the human prudence that is subordinated to the quest for power, and followed the higher wisdom of love and of the Cross.” (“Peace: A Religious Responsibility,” in TNA, p. 112)

In other words, “A purely ‘spiritual’ witness is not enough. . . . We must engage with the rest of mankind in a collaborative work of social renewal, reconciliation, in a serious effort to bring about a peaceful world situation.” (“Christianity and Defense in the Nuclear Age,” in TNA, p. 90) “Christian social action is first of all action that discovers religion in politics, religion in work, religion in social programs for better wages, Social Security, etc., not at all to ‘win the worker for the church’ but because God became man, because every man is potentially a Christ, because Christ is our brother, and because we have no right to let our brother live in want, or in degradation, or in any form of squallor whether physical or spiritual.” (Merton, Conjectures of A Guilty Bystander, p. 82)

Easy to say, of course, harder to do as we contemplate what seems to be our own helplessness, but Merton was acutely aware of this self-defeating mood of hopelessness that seizes individuals in this vast world of powerful men. “The awful problem of our time,” he wrote, “is not so much the dreams, the monsters, which may take shape and consume us, but the moral paralysis in our own souls which leaves us immobile, inert, passive, tongue-tied, ready and even willing to succumb. The great tragedy is in the cold, silent waters of moral death which climb imperceptibly within us, blinding conscience, drowning compassion, suffocating faith and extinguishing the Spirit” (“Christian Action in World Crisis,” in TNA, p. 219) In this self-defeating spirit, we allow ourselves to be manipulated into doing evil even when we think we are acting with the highest motives. Merton saw that “The tragedy of our time is then not so much the malice of the wicked as the helpless futility of . . . ‘the good.’ We have war-makers, war-criminals, indeed. But we ourselves, in our very best efforts for peace, find ourselves maneuvered unconsciously into positions where we too can act as criminals. (“Peace: Christian Duties and Perspectives,” in TNA, p. 15)

The Challenge for Peace in the Modern World

However, while we are individual sons of God, we are not individualists. The purpose and the benefit of our unique individual personalities is not found in promoting divisions that result in an atomized society, but rather “My true personality will be fulfilled in the mystical Christ in this one way above all, that through me, Christ and His spirit will be able to love you and all men and God the Father in a way that would be possible in no one else.” (New Seeds, p. 67) And, “As long as we do not permit His love to consume us entirely and to unite us in Himself, the gold that is in us will be hidden by the rock and dirt which keep us separate from one another.” (New Seeds, p. 70) “For Christianity is not merely a doctrine or a system of beliefs, it is Christ living in us and uniting men to one another [and, quoting the Gospels] . . . ‘I in them, and Thou, Father, in Me, that they may be made perfect in one. . . . that they may be One as we also are One.’” (New Seeds, p. 77) And further, “People who know nothing of God . . . do not know that reality is to be sought not in division but in unity, for we are ‘members one of another.’ The man who lives in division is not a person but only an individual.” (New Seeds, p. 53)

If we choose to be true, then we have an obligation to do peace, but as Christians we live in a post-Christian world which Merton examined and on which he
focused a radical critique rising out of the Gospels. He was deeply troubled by the materialism and frenetic activity of modern society in all its forms because he saw that these kept us focused on ourselves and not on the community, not on our brothers and sisters. He wrote that our “...lives are devoured by activities and strangled with attachments.” (*New Seeds*, p. 83) He was a critic not only of his own capitalist form of society, but of all forms of modern society insofar as they crushed the true value of the individual and led him into mass violence. “The void underlying the symbols and the myths of nationalism, of capitalism, Communism, Fascism, racism, totalism, is in fact filled entirely by the presence of the Beast [and] becomes an insatiable demand for power which sucks all life and all being into itself. (The Answer of Minerva,” in *TNA*, p. 148) The demand for power on the part of individuals is rooted in selfishness and fear. “A selfish life cannot be fruitful. It cannot be true. It contradicts the very nature of man. The dire effort of this contradiction cannot be avoided: where men live selfishly, in quest of brute power and lust and money, they destroy one another. The only way to change the world is to change the thoughts and desires of the men who live in it.” (“Preface to the Vietnamese Translation of ‘No Man Is an Island,’” in *TNA*, p. 65) In his work, “A Tribute to Gandhi,” he wrote: “Therefore Gandhi recognized . . . the necessity to be free from the pressures, the exorbitant and tyrannical demands, of a society that is violent because it is essentially greedy, lustful and cruel. . . . He recognized the impossibility of being a peaceful and nonviolent man if one submits passively to the insatiable requirements of a society maddened by over stimulation and obsessed with the demons of noise, voyeurism and speed.” (“A Tribute to Gandhi,” in *TNA*, p. 183)

What was more, he saw that our Christian obligation to our fellow humans is vitiated by the arms race. “To allow governments to pour more and more billions into weapons that almost immediately become obsolete, thereby necessitating more billions for newer and bigger weapons, is one of the most colossal injustices in the long history of man. While we are doing this, two thirds of the world are starving or living in conditions of subhuman destitution.” (“Peace: A Religious Responsibility,” in *TNA*, p. 118) “To reject a ‘worldwide’ outlook, to refuse to consider the good of mankind, and to remain satisfied with the affluence that flows from our war economy, is hardly a Christian attitude.” (“Peace: A Religious Responsibility,” in *TNA*, p. 119)

**Obligations to God versus Obligations to the State**

In Merton’s critique of modern society, the state and our obligations to it, versus our obligations to God and our fellow humans, came in for special notice. “For man is made free in the image and likeness of God and social authority exists only to help him use his freedom in truth, love and justice as a child of God. This is all new and strange, no doubt, to those who have become accustomed to exhortations to obedience . . . where authority seems to be rooted only in the power to compel obedience by external force or by fear. But that concept of authority . . . is not the Christian concept. It is, in fact, closer to Machiavelli than it is to the Gospel because it fits into the framework of a power structure dominated by arbitrary will, rather than an intelligent order tending toward the full development of freedom in justice and love.” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in *TNA*, p. 56) It is not true Christian obedience. “True Christian obedience should liberate man from servitude to the ‘elements of this world’ (cf. Galatians 4:1-11) so that we may be able freely to obey civic authority when it is legal and just, and that in the presence of injustice and falsity we may ‘obey God rather than men.’” (cf Acts 5:17-32). But a pseudo-Christian obedience is nothing more than the mechanical and irrational submission of
beings who have renounced freedom and responsibility in order to become cogs in an official machine. It is not the obedience of sons of God but the compliance of functionaries in a military bureaucracy.” (“Passivity and Abuse of Authority,” in TNA, p. 130)

Machiavelli, whom Merton correctly identifies as the primary exemplar of the self-styled “realists” who lead most nation states, leads us in the wrong direction. Merton says that “His advice is certainly ‘rational,’ ‘intelligent,’ and even in a certain sense ‘scientific’ and yet when it is considered on a deeper level it is seen to be utterly without rationality. It leads to ruinous consequences.” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in TNA, p. 52) And since he wrote The Prince, the forms of tyranny have only become more subtle.

“Machiavelli wrote his advice for the individual monarch, in a day when men believed in the divine right of kings. But after Machiavelli, political thought underwent a considerable evolution. The ‘Prince’ was replaced by the ‘Sovereign State,’ and the revolutions which sought to liberate man from the tyranny of absolute monarchs brought them under the more subtle and more absolute tyranny of an abstraction.” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in TNA, p. 37)

In other words, Merton was leery and critical of any institution which did not recognize the basic goodness of humanity as God created us and which limited freedom and taught division and the hatred that leads to war. Modern man has made an idol out of the state and follows its dictates even when they are contrary to the laws of God. “That is to say, the Christian is bound, like the martyrs, to obey God rather than the state whenever the state tries to usurp powers that do not and cannot belong to it.” (“Peace: A Religious Responsibility,” in TNA, p. 112)

**Merton and the Just War Doctrine**

Given this theological base, it was inevitable that Merton should have run up against the Church’s received doctrine of just war, as formulated primarily by St. Augustine who argued that war is evil and forbidden to Christians, except under certain circumstances. However, they may legitimately engage in deadly battle when: 1) they have been attacked and the war is defensive; 2) their goal is to reestablish peace and justice; 3) the defensive war is declared by a legitimate authority; 4) the war is undertaken out of love for the enemy; 5) it is fought with proportional means, that is, just enough violence to defeat the enemy and no more; and 6) noncombatants are not harmed (i.e., soldiers fight and kill only other soldiers). This doctrine became the unquestioned position of the Catholic Church and has been routinely appealed to ever since by every secular state in order to justify its wars. It passes for reasonableness, common sense, and even for sanity itself. But Christians] will take no direct part in the struggles of earthly kingdoms. Their life is one of faith, gentleness, meekness, patience, purity. . . . It is God they obey rather than the state, which tends to usurp the powers of God and to blaspheme Him, setting itself up in His stead as an idol. . . .” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in TNA, p. 37)
what appears sane, sensible and reasonable, on closer examination, may be the height of insanity.

Merton illustrated this in his meditation on Adolf Eichmann, the overseer of the Nazi death camps. Eichmann was by all accounts a rational and kind man who loved his family and went to church on Sundays, and yet oversaw one of the greatest genocides in human history. “We can no longer assume that because a man is ‘sane’ he is therefore in this ‘right mind.’ The whole concept of sanity in a society where spiritual values have lost their meaning is itself meaningless. . . . And so I ask myself, what is the meaning of a concept of sanity that excludes love, considers it irrelevant, and destroys our capacity to love other human beings, to respond to their needs and their sufferings, to recognize them also as persons, to apprehend their pain as one’s own? . . . The worst error is to imagine that a Christian must try to be ‘sane’ like everybody else, that we belong in our kind of society.” (“A Devout Meditation In Memory of Adolf Eichmann,” in TNA, p. 161)

How was it, he wondered, that good Christians, brought up in the church, could slaughter others en masse as they did in the American Civil War, World War I, World War II and in Vietnam? “In the modern, godless world, where a heroic choice may be demanded, where peace and even the survival of mankind may conceivably depend on such a choice being made by Christians, we can blind our own conscience with a false conception of duty and of sacrifice which enables us quietly to participate in colossal injustices and barbarities, in order to preserve our institutional freedom of action.” (“A Martyr for Peace and Unity,” in TNA, p.140)

The world’s answer, of course, was the Just War Doctrine, presented as reasonableness and sanity by the church, a doctrine they used to justify even the mass death of nuclear war. But Merton asked, “Can we not say that if there are to be significant new developments in Christian thought on nuclear war, it may well be that these developments will depend on our ability to get free from the overpowering influence of Augustinian assumptions and take a new view of man, of society and of war itself?” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in TNA, p. 44) He pointed out the “ridiculous inner inconsistencies that are inseparable from this [Augustinian] view of war and the constant temptation to evade and rationalize the demands of the just war theory.” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in TNA, p. 46) For just war doctrine argues that killing is forbidden, except when it is not, and further, (and this is the insanity or height of absurdity to which the Doctrine reduces us) that it must be done in a spirit of Christian love. The logical outcome of such a doctrine was made manifest in many Christian justifications for World War I when good American and German Christians slaughtered each other.

Justifying the war in the name of Christianity became commonplace on both sides. The examples could be multiplied for pages. Just as the war was beginning, the British poet Rupert Brooke, wrote: “Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour.” (quoted in Joseph Persico, Eleventh Month, Eleventh Day, Eleventh Hour, p. 28) Brooke could, perhaps, have been forgiven, for the senseless slaughter that took place on such a colossal scale on the Western Front had not yet taken place. Less so a French priest (and later a famous author), Teilhard de Chardin, who was a stretcher bearer and, by 1915, had already seen the full horror of it. Yet he could still write in a letter to his cousin, “It is Christian justice we are fighting for.” (Persico, p. 59) And while the men were dying by the hundreds of thousands, a British bishop preached, “Such a war is a heavy price to pay for our progress towards the realization of the Christianity of Christ,” while a German who was equally confident, wrote, “God must stand on Germany’s side. We
fight for truth, culture and civilization and human progress and true Christianity.” (Persico, p. 189) And the German soldier wore a belt buckle that asserted, *Gott mit uns.*

As the Americans got into it, most clergy moved from a position of Christian pacifism to just war or even worse. Perhaps no one was more explicit than the secretary of the American Young Men’s Christian Association, who comforted a mother with these words. “In the hour of soul crisis, the Secretary can turn and say with quiet certainty to your lad and my lad, I would not enter this work till I could see Jesus himself sighting down a gun barrel and running a bayonet through the enemy’s body.” (YMCA Secretary Henry B. Wright, quoted by Sidney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, p. 885)

In Europe and the U.S., the doctrine of the just war found ample play. Augustine said, If the intention is to make peace, then making war is justified. But Merton countered, “The twofold weakness of the Augustinian theory is its stress on a subjective purity of intention, which can be doctored and manipulated with apparent ‘sincerity’ and the tendency to pessimism about human nature and the world, now used as a justification for recourse to violence.” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in *TNA*, p. 46) While attempting to be realistic, just war doctrine fails on that very account. “The deficiency of Augustinian thought lies therefore not in the good intentions it prescribes but in an excessive naïveté with regard to the good that can be attained by violent means which cannot help but call forth all that is worst in man.” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in *TNA*, p. 45) In modern war, it is impossible to satisfy all the conditions of just war doctrine. At best, this orthodox teaching of the Church was outmoded; at worst, it simply did not reflect the meaning of Christ as the Incarnate Word of God Who is Love itself.

The problem for Merton was not Communism or Fascism or Capitalism, each of which saw the others as the problem. The problem was war. Writing in “Target Equals City,” a work focusing on the nuclear doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction, he said, “There is one winner, only one winner, in war. The winner is war itself. (“Target Equals City,” in *TNA*, p. 94)

Writing of those who have made and condoned war in the 20th century, he observed: “. . . they seemed to be the powerless victims of a social dynamic that they were able neither to control nor to understand. They never seemed to dominate events, only to rush breathlessly after the parade of cataclysms, explaining why these had happened, and not aware of how they themselves had helped precipitate the worst of disasters. . . . In the name of peace, they wrought enormous violence and destruction. In the name of liberty, they exploited and enslaved. In the name of man, they engaged in genocide or tolerated it. In the name of truth, they systematically falsified and perverted truth.” (“A Tribute to Gandhi,” in *TNA*, p. 179) And they see no way out of this iron cage. In “Peace and Protest,” he wrote: “The human race today is like an alcoholic who knows that drink will destroy him and yet always has ‘good reasons’ why he must continue drinking. Such is man in his fatal addiction to war. He is not really capable of seeing a constructive alternative to war.” (“Peace and Protest: A Statement,” in *TNA*, p. 67) “We are so convinced,” he writes, “that past evils must repeat themselves that we make them repeat themselves. . . . Hence we cling to the evil that has already become ours and renew it from day to day, until we become identified with it and change is no longer thinkable.” (*New Seeds*, p. 106)

Even modern democracies carry out war as a totalitarian enterprise, without limit or mercy. “Let us remember this formula: in the madness of modern war, when every crime is justified, the nation is always right, power is always right,
the military is always right. To question those who wield power, to differ from them in any way, is to confess oneself subversive, rebellious, traitors.” (“A Martyr for Peace and Unity: Father Max Josef Metzger,” in TNA, p.141) Merton saw World War II as a turning point when humanity embraced the beast as it never had before. “In the unexampled and criminal frightfulness of World War II, massive attacks on defenseless civilian centers came to be accepted as perfectly normal in spite of protests of the Pope and other spokesmen for traditional ethics. It was believed that systematic terrorism was essential to beat down all resistance of the ‘Fascist war criminals’ and bring them to an unconditional surrender that would definitely end all war. Finally the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki—the climax of this ruthless policy.” (“Breakthrough to Peace,” in TNA, p.77)

“What Should Be the Christian Response?

Our response as Christians, Merton believed, must be to remain true to our self as God has made us and that means to eschew violence on a personal basis because it is both destructive to its victims and also to the soul of the doer of violence. Hatred destroys the hater as well as the so-called “enemy.” Merton wrote, “Hatred in any form is self destructive.” (New Seeds, p. 73) And further, “The desire to kill is like the desire to attack another with an ingot of red-hot iron: I have to pick up the incandescent metal and burn my own hand while burning the other. Hate itself is the seed of death in my own heart, while it seeks the death of the other. Love is the seed of life in my own heart when it seeks the good of the other.” (Preface to the Vietnamese Translation of ‘No Man Is An Island,” in TNA, pp. 63-64) “Violence rests on the assumption that the enemy and I are entirely different: the enemy is evil and I am good. The enemy must be destroyed and I must be saved. But love sees things differently. It sees that even the enemy suffers from the same sorrows and limitations that I do. That we both have the same hopes, the same needs, the same aspiration for a peaceful and harmless human life. And that death is the same for both of us. Then love may perhaps show me that my brother is not really my enemy and war is both his enemy and mine. War is our enemy. Then peace becomes possible.” (Preface to the Vietnamese Translation of ‘No Man Is An Island,” in TNA, pp. 64-65)

But all too frequently, the Church and Christian individuals do not understand the Gospel. The Christian’s obligation is both individual and social. It was a painful matter to Merton that so many
people who seemed to take Christ seriously, especially people in the Church, could so freely hate and support violence against enemies. “Many Christians are so disturbed by the hostility of enemies of Christianity that they have become convinced that hatred of these enemies is a proof of love for Christ and that the will to destroy them is a pledge of their own salvation. At such a time it is necessary to go back to the sources and try to recover the true Christian meaning of the first and all-embracing commandment to love all men including our enemies. Failure to understand and observe this commandment brings down the wrath of God on our civilization and means damnation for those Christians who are willfully blind to the clearly expressed teachings of Christ and the Church from the Apostolic times down to John XXIII and Paul VI. This obligation is not a merely theoretical matter, or something that calls for a rectification of one’s inner intentions, without any effect on one’s outward conduct. It is on the contrary one of the crucial ways in which we give proof in practice that we are truly disciples of Christ.” ("Saint Maximus the Confessor on Nonviolence," in TNA, p. 172) [Maximus was a 7thc Greek Church saint.]

Merton was clear that Christ’s message was unambiguous: “... those who today say that we are not seriously obliged to love our enemies are contending that Christ could not have meant what He said when He told us to do this.” ("Saint Maximus the Confessor on Nonviolence," in TNA, p. 174) And further, “Hence the disciple must learn that the love of enemies is not simply a pious luxury, something that he can indulge in if he wants to feel himself to be exceptionally virtuous. It is of the very essence of the Christian life, a proof of one’s Christian faith, a sign that one is a follower and an obedient disciple of Christ.” ("Saint Maximus the Confessor on Nonviolence," in TNA, p. 176) And yet again, “... the Christian who has recourse to force and hatred in order to protect himself is, in fact, by that very action, denying Christ and showing that he has no real understanding of the Gospel.” ("Saint Maximus the Confessor on Nonviolence," in TNA, p. 177) To resist evil, was, of course, a duty of the Christian. “But,” he wrote, “the resistance which is taught in the Gospel is aimed not at the evildoer but at evil in its source. It combats evil by doing good to the evildoer, and thus overcoming evil with good (Romans 12: 21), which is the way our Lord Himself resisted evil.” ("Saint Maximus the Confessor on Nonviolence," in TNA, p. 177)

“What faces us all, Christians and non-Christians alike, is the titanic labor of trying to change the world from a camp of warring barbarians into a peaceful international community from which war has been perpetually banned. Chance of success in this task seems almost ludicrously impossible. Yet if we fail to face this responsibility we will certainly lose everything. The immediate responsibility of Christians is to contribute whatever they can to an atmosphere of sanity and trust in which negotiation and disarmament may eventually become feasible. But if they continue in ignorance, suspicion, resentment and hatred of Communism, forgetting that the Communist, whatever his failings, is also a human being who might conceivably want peace, they may do more than anyone else to foment the blind, unchristian, murderous rage which makes war inevitable.” ("Christian Ethics and Nuclear War," in TNA, p. 87)

**About Nuclear War**

Given his understanding of the Gospels, it was obvious Merton would reject nuclear war. Still, Merton was completely out of step with his time in his acute realization that nuclear war was a blasphemy against God and a complete rejection of Christian principles. He considered nuclear war to be “... the most crucial moral and religious problem in twenty centuries of
history.” (“Christian Ethics and Nuclear War,” in TNA, p. 83) Nuclear war was simply a crime against humanity and God and defending it, he wrote, “. . . is plainly immoral according to all Christian standards. . . .” (“Christian Ethics and Nuclear War,” in TNA, p. 83)

Our duty to God is to protect and preserve His Creation and to work in every way to save humanity for which Christ died. “To ‘kill Commies for Christ,’” which was a popular slogan at the time, “is to admit that one has lost all sense of the meaning of the Gospel of Christ.” (“Christianity and Defense in the Nuclear Age,” in TNA, p. 88.)

Merton questioned the professional moralists of the Church who, he thought, split hairs in applying just war doctrine to nuclear holocaust and pointed out that their theories were hopelessly outdated and out of touch with reality. “When a missile armed with an H-bomb warhead is fired by the pressing of a button and its target is a whole city, the number of victims is estimated in hundreds of thousands ‘more or less.’ A thousand or ten thousand more here and there are not even matter for comment. Under such conditions can there be serious meaning left in the fine decisions that were elaborated by scholastic theologians in the day of hand-to-hand combat?” (“Peace: Christian Duties and Perspectives,” in TNA, p. 16)

To try to justify nuclear war as a matter consistent with Christian faith was to commit an absurdity. “And today, while ‘experts’ calmly discuss the possibility of the United States being able to survive a war if ‘only fifty millions’ (!) of the population are killed; when the Chinese speak of being able to spare ‘three hundred million’ and ‘still get along,’ it is obvious that we are no longer in the realm where moral truth is conceivable.” (“Peace: Christian Duties and Perspectives,” in TNA, p. 17) And he went on to say, in “Christian Ethics and Nuclear War,” that “In plain language this is an essentially new kind of war and one in which the old concept of the ‘just war’ is irrelevant because the necessary conditions for such a war no longer exist. A war of total annihilation simply cannot be considered a ‘just war,’ no matter how good the cause for which it is undertaken.” (“Christian Ethics and Nuclear War,” in TNA, pp. 85-86)

Morality, Merton believed, “. . . has lost touch with the realities of our situation. Moralists tend to discuss the problems of atomic war as if men still fought with bows and arrows.” (“Peace: Christian Duties and Perspectives,” in TNA, p. 16) And regardless of what academic moralists say, the military leaders are not listening to finely made distinctions. “Note also: the theoretician who splits hairs about ‘just war’ and makes nice distinctions in journals for experts is actually supporting the military mind and military policies, which imply no such fine distinctions at all. We know the military mind has one objective: to WIN at all costs. To completely subdue the adversary. . . . This is the thinking of the people who have the weapons on both sides. The theologians may have nice thoughts about just war. The military are above all concerned with not being soft, not showing fear, not being intimidated, not losing face. This game of chicken by politicians and strategists is abetted and supported by Christians as a whole. The state of affairs is this: men with nuclear weapons will use them when they think the situation is sufficiently critical. And they will not use them with any regard for restraints demanded by moral theologians. To cooperate with them now is to share in their responsibility then.” (“Christianity and Defense in the Nuclear Age,” in TNA, p. 92)

In “Peace: A Religious Responsibility,” Merton wrote: “. . . our Christian obligation consists in . . . believing in the Word Who emptied Himself and became man for our sakes. We have to look at the problem of nuclear war from the viewpoint of humanity and of God made man, from the viewpoint of the Mystical Body of Christ, and not merely
from the viewpoint of abstract formulas. Here above all we need a reasoning that is informed with compassion and takes some account of flesh and blood, not a legalistic juggling with principles and precedents.” (“Peace: A Religious Responsibility,” in TNA, p. 121) Nuclear war, he wrote, “is immoral, inhuman and absurd.” (“Peace: A Religious Responsibility,” in TNA, p. 109) In fact, it would be the second most evil event in Christian history: “The free choice of global suicide [by nuclear war], made in desperation by the world’s leaders and ratified by the consent and cooperation of their citizens, would be a moral evil second only to the Crucifixion.” (“Peace: A Religious Responsibility,” in TNA, p. 124)

But more than being faithful to Christ in one’s own personal relationships, Merton believed that to be faithful Christians we must work to change the international system so as to put an end to war. Summarizing Pope John’s *Pacem in Terris*: “we had reached a point in history where it was clearly no longer reasonable to make use of war in the settlement of international disputes, and that the important thing was not merely protest against the latest war technology, but the construction of a permanent world peace on a basis of truth, justice, love and liberty. This is not a matter for a few individual consciences; it urgently binds the conscience of every living man. It is not an individual refinement of spirituality, a luxury of the soul, but a collective obligation of the highest urgency, a universal and immediate need which can no longer be ignored.” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in TNA, p. 34) “We know that Christ came into this world as the Prince of Peace. We know that Christ Himself is our peace (Ephesians 2:14). We believe that God has chosen for Himself, in the Mystical Body of Christ, an elect people regenerated by the Blood of the Savior, and committed by their baptismal promise to wage war upon the evil and hatred that are in man and help to establish the Kingdom of God and of peace.” (“Peace: A Religious Responsibility,” in TNA, pp. 111-112)

And now is the time to choose. “We cannot go on playing with nuclear fire and shrugging off the results as ‘history.’ We are the ones concerned. We are the ones responsible. History does not make us, we make it--or end it.” (“Peace: Christian Duties and Perspectives,” in TNA, p. 16)

For Merton, those whom we maim and kill in the violence of war are not just ‘mere men,’ as if that were not horrible enough. But in Merton’s understanding of humanity and its merging with Christ through the Incarnation, it is God himself we murder. His most powerful indictment of war is couched in these terms: “In the whole world, throughout the whole of history . . . Christ suffers dismemberment. His physical body was crucified by Pilate and the Pharisees, His mystical body is drawn and quartered from age to age by the devils in the agony of that disunion which is bred and vegetates in our souls, prone to selfishness and sin.” (New Seeds, p. 71) And, “Murder, massacres, revolution, hatred, the slaughter and torture of the bodies and the souls of men, the destruction of cities by fire, the starvation of millions, the annihilation of populations and finally the cosmic inhumanity of atomic war: Christ is massacred in His members, torn limb from limb; God is murdered in men.” (New Seeds, p. 71)

Quoting one of the major figures of the early church, he reminded us: “Saint Cyprian remarked shrewdly that the killing of one individual is recognized as a crime; when homicide is carried out publicly, on a large scale by the state, it turns into a virtue! Tertullian declared that when Christ took away Peter’s sword, ‘he disarmed every soldier.’” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in TNA, p. 39)

Therefore it is war itself that we must outlaw. “The only sane course that remains is to work frankly and without compromise for a supranational
authority and for the total abolition of war.” (“Peace: A Religious Responsibility,” in TNA, p. 120) And the only effective way to do this is to pursue nonviolence.

**The Imperative of Nonviolence**

Thomas Merton’s views on war and especially on nuclear war were completely out of step with official policy, both of the Church and the United States government (as well as, of course, the policies of the Soviet Union and practically every other sovereign state). Like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., he believed that the first authority to be obeyed was moral law. Merton was a believer in civil disobedience. It stemmed from his understanding of Christ: “Let us not forget that the supreme example of nonviolent resistance to evil is the Crucifixion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in which the Incarnate Son of God destroyed sin by taking the sins of the world upon Himself and dying on the Cross, while forgiving the men who were putting Him to death.” (“The Machine Gun in the Fallout Shelter,” in TNA, p. 104) Christ could have, he reminded us, called down twelve legions of angels to smite Herod and Pilate, had violent revolution been his goal. But the truth is, Christians, as Christians, have a duty to pursue nonviolent defense. “The Christian has a duty, as a Christian, to contribute everything he can to help this great common work: of finding nonmilitary and nonviolent ways of defending our rights, our interests, and our ideals.” (“Christianity and Defense in the Nuclear Age,” in TNA, p. 89)

Merton was clearly not a pacifist in the sense that the word means nonresistance to evil. He made the point in “The Machine Gun in the Fallout Shelter”: “It is not ethically permissible for a man to stand by and let his helpless dependents be killed or overrun. Nonviolent resistance is active and positive. . . . Merely passive acquiescence in evil is in no sense to be dignified by the name of nonviolence. It is a travesty of Christian meekness. It is purely and simply the sin of cowardice.” (p. 104) And again in “Christianity and Defense in the Nuclear Age”: “It is definitely not a matter of renouncing defense, of giving in to Communism. It must be made quite clear that we intend to defend our ideals and our freedom. But that we also as Christians reject a form of defense which has now clearly become immoral and suicidal (we should have known this about war long ago, the First World War told us all we needed to know if earlier wars had not). And as Christians we want to take the lead in helping to discover the efficacy of nonviolent means of defense.” (p. 93)

This is not to say that Merton believed, naively, that nonviolence would always work. It was a conformity to the Truth incarnated in Christ and thus in all people. Of course, violence did not always work, either, even in a political sense, and it never works in the moral sense in that it always corrupts the soul of the doer. In fact, violence works less than half the time. In any war, one side always loses, and generally it is the case that the “winning” side suffers considerable damage and casualties, to say nothing of the moral cost of having masses of young men experience the killing of often-innocent non-combatants. Merton wrote: “Nonviolence is not for power but for truth. . . . It is not aimed at immediate political results but at the manifestation of a fundamental and crucially important truth. Nonviolence is not primarily the language of efficacy, but the language of kairos. It does not say ‘We shall overcome’ so much as ‘This is the day of the Lord, and whatever may happen to us, He shall overcome.’” (“Peace and Revolution,” in TNA, p. 75)

In the light of these statements, how was it, then, that Merton could say clearly that he was not a “pacifist,” as he did on several occasions? “If a pacifist”, he wrote, “is one who believes that all war is always morally wrong
and always has been wrong, then I am not a pacifist. Nevertheless, I see war as an avoidable tragedy and I believe that the problem of solving international conflict without massive violence has become the number one problem of our time.” (“Peace and Protest: A Statement,” in TNA, p. 67) He felt that some people who were calling themselves “pacifists” were in fact just cowards. This he believed was a shallow and thoughtless pacifism: “They prefer love as an idea, but when confronted with force, they have only two ways out: to run away or else to call the police. In the end they fall back on force to defend and affirm love.” (“Peace and Revolution,” in TNA, p. 73) Also, he was shy of the term because of the widespread misunderstanding it produced due to the many myths surrounding it, namely “... that all pacifism is based on religious emotion rather than on reason, and that it has no objective ethical validity, but is allowed to exist because of the possibility of harmless and mystical obsessions with peace on the part of a few enthusiasts,” [and] “that pacifists are people who simply prefer to yield to violence and evil rather than resist it in any way, [who] prefer to sink into their religious apathy and let the enemy overrun the country unresisted,” and “To sum it all up in a word, this caricature of pacifism which reduces it to a purely eccentric individualism of conscience declares that the pacifist is willing to let everyone be destroyed merely because he himself does not have a taste for war.” (“The Christian in World Crisis,” in TNA, pp. 33-34)

That Merton’s clear preference was nonviolence is beyond doubt, and it is hard, given his understanding of the Incarnation, to see how it could have been otherwise.

Conclusion

Thomas Merton’s theology of the Incarnation, as well as his understanding of the moral teachings of Christ, led him to a belief that peace,
### Thomas Merton: A Chronology and List of Writings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Born in Prades, France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Mother dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Grandfather makes him financially independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Father dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Enters Cambridge University in England (leaves under a scandal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Enters Columbia University in New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Grandfather dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>BA degree from Columbia in English literature; Baptized as a Roman Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>MA degree from Colombia; Confirmed as a Roman Catholic; writes The Labyrinth; Begins teaching English at St. Bonaventure College; Applies to join the Franciscans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Rejected by the Franciscans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Enters the Trappist (Cistercian) monastery of Gethsemani in Kentucky</td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Thirty Poems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Exile Ends in Glory; Figures for an Apocalypse; The Seven Storey Mountain; The Spirit of Simplicity; What Is Contemplation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Ordained as a priest; The Tears of the Blind Lions; Seeds of Contemplation; The Waters of Siloe</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Selected Poems; What Are These Wounds?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Made Master of Students at Gethsemane; The Ascent to Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Bread in the Wilderness; The Sign of Jonas</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>The Last of the Fathers</td>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Made Master of Novices at Gethsemane; No Man Is An Island</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>The Living Bread; Praying the Psalms; Silence in Heaven</td>
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<td>1957</td>
<td>The Basic Principles of Monastic Spirituality; The Silent Life; The Strange Islands; The Tower of Babel</td>
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<td>1958</td>
<td>Monastic Peace; Nativity Kerygma; Thoughts in Solitude</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>The Secular Journal of Thomas Merton; Selected Poems of Thomas Merton</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Building a hermitage on Mount Olivet; Disputed Questions; Spiritual Direction and Meditation; The Wisdom of the Desert</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>The Behavior of Titans; The New Man; New Seeds of Contemplation</td>
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<td>1962</td>
<td>Clement of Alexandria; Original Child Bomb; A Thomas Merton Reader</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Awarded the Medal for Excellence by Columbia University; Breakthrough to Peace; Emblems of a Season of Fury; Life and Holiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Honorary Doctorate of Letters, University of Kentucky; Come to the Mountain; Seeds of Destruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Formally enters the hermitage; Gandhi on Nonviolence; Seasons of Celebration; The Way of Chuang Tzu</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander; Hagia Sophia; Raids on the Unspeakable</td>
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<td>1967</td>
<td>Mystics and Zen Masters</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>December 10th, dies in Bangkok while attending an ecumenical conference; Cables to the Ace; Faith and Violence; Zen and the Birds of Appetite</td>
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**Posthumous Works, 1969-1995:**

Bibliography:


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--------. quoted on Spiritwalk Web site. www.geocities/~spiritwalk/merton


Kent Shifferd is Emeritus Professor of History at Northland College and a former executive director of the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies.
In this study, John D. Orme analyzes nine conflicts in nine of the eleven chapters, preceded by a theoretical and introductory chapter (1) and followed by a discussion and concluding chapter (11). Six of the conflicts—Austria and Prussia, Britain and the United States, France and Britain, Malaysia and Indonesia, West Germany and the Soviet Union, and Egypt and Israel—were resolved and the three others—Russia and Austria, Greece and Turkey, and India and Pakistan—were not; in fact, the last two are still lingering.

Orme states that the six conflicts were soluble because they happened to be in circumstances that favored conciliation and they lacked intractable issues as well as intransigent leaders. He argues that rapprochement between long-time rivals, as in the case of Austria and Prussia (chapter 2), Britain and the United States (chapter 3), and Britain and France (chapter 4), is possible when threats arise with other rivals. This argument is buttressed by the commonsensical logic that when threats proliferate and resources are stagnant, fear and hopelessness reign, inevitably leading states to be less rigid and more conciliatory.

The author is correct when he states that conflicts that lack any intractable issues and intransigent leaders are soluble. There is also no denial that the multiplicity of conflicts and threats does push belligerent states to the negotiating table. But what new lessons can be learned out of managing and resolving conflicts that are soluble anyway? Even if these conflicts were the result of intractable issues, how sincere and lasting is a rapprochement which is triggered merely by the existence of multiple threats? Such rapprochement may be as much an ephemeral and time-buying a tactic as was the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939.

Further, Orme does not discuss what makes some issues more “intractable” than others. For instance, he does not say why the issues in Cyprus were more intractable than those of Austria and Prussia. Nor does he reveal why, for instance, Austria conceded to Prussian supremacy but the Turk Cypriots did not succumb to Greek supremacy in Cyprus.

Orme correctly identifies that change in the balance of power was a catalyst for peacemaking that the six conflicts shared. Gravitation to the negotiating table by a belligerent side when the balance of power favors its adversary does not shed new light on our understanding of conflict resolution. However, the author’s subsequent observation becomes more interesting. Conciliation from strength, he argues, requires restraint in the application of force, as Britain did with the United States in 1895, despite the balance strongly favoring Britain (chapter 3). Because Britain realized America’s potential strength, Orme observes, it did not want to transform its former colony to a permanent enemy. Even with victory, therefore, force may arouse rage and the desire for revenge against adversaries. Defeat and humiliating partition in 1971, for instance, did not relegate Pakistan to a distinctly inferior status vis-à-vis India. Pakistan was no longer inferior once it developed nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, the author states that credibility erodes when threat of force fails. For instance, Turkey was restrained by U.S. threats against occupying Cyprus. This gave the Greeks, both in the mainland and the island, the confidence that the U.S. was there to defend them. In 1974, though, the Turks opted to test the U.S. resolve
by occupying northern Cyprus. Belatedly, the Greeks realized that their confidence was misplaced when the Americans did not come to their rescue.

Orme’s other principal argument is that spoils must be divided “reasonably and in proportion to the relative bargaining strength” of the belligerent sides. In the case of the six resolvable conflicts, the spoils were divisible on an equitable basis, while in the three unresolved conflicts of the Balkans (Austria & Russia), Cyprus (Greece & Turkey) and Kashmir (India & Pakistan), the stakes in contention could not be apportioned easily among the actors. The author does not say whether “bargaining strength” is defined by military power or a sense of justice. For instance, what spoils could be shared when one side is the perpetrator (e.g., Iraq) and another is the victim (e.g., Kuwait)? Negotiation is not always about sharing spoils, it is also about a verdict.

The author appears resigned to his notion that certain conflicts such as those of the Balkans, Cyprus, and Kashmir cannot be solved because of their “intractable” issues and “intransigent” leaders. However, these are precisely the type of conflicts that should attract regional and international attention because their “intractable” issues and “intransigent” leaders may more easily push the contending sides to war. These are the very conflicts that cry for some mechanisms and formulas of management and resolution.

Finally, John Orme discusses the crucial role that a third party, such as the United States in the Egyptian-Israeli conflict (chapter 7), plays. Perhaps in the two lingering “intractable” conflicts of Kashmir and Cyprus, the United States can also play a more meaningful mediation role using a few of its numerous carrots and sticks.

In this tightly reasoned monograph, political scientist Scott A. Silverstone contributes to the field of “democratic peace research,” the study of the circumstances under which democratic governments resort to or refrain from the use of military force. In particular, he challenges the “realist” school, which finds the key determinant in national leaders’ assessment of the external balance of power. Instead, Silverstone stresses internal factors within democratic regimes, especially the federal system in the case of the United States. By federalism, he means the institutional separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches and between the federal government and the states—and equally importantly America’s regional diversity and decentralized, state-based political system that make it difficult for leaders to mobilize support for military action.

Silverstone begins with a lengthy and provocative analysis of the American decision-making process, drawing heavily from the arguments of James Madison and John Jay in the Federalist Papers. He maintains that eighteenth and nineteenth-century America was composed of “asymmetrical” territorial communities, regional interests that differed widely on social, economic, and political issues, including matters of war, peace, and national expansion. By denying congressional support, and by threatening future electoral retribution, these territorial interests were frequently in a position to constrain presidents and other national leaders from resorting to military force or pursuing extensive agendas of territorial acquisition. Moreover, the localized nature of the electoral system undercut the potentially centralizing influence of political parties, causing congressmen to side with their constituents on controversial issues of foreign policy even if it meant breaking national party discipline. The result was an inclination toward peace in national security decision-making.

In the later chapters of Divided Union, Silverstone tests his theory by examining a series of historical cases involving decisions on the use of military force or national expansion during the early national and antebellum eras, in his opinion a neglected period of American foreign relations. These include crises with Great Britain in 1807, 1809, and 1812; the controversy with Spain over acquisition of East Florida in 1813; the Anglo-American war scare over Oregon in 1845-1846; the outbreak of the Mexican War and subsequent debate on territorial gains; and recurring tensions with Mexico and with Spain over Cuba during the 1850s. In the majority of these cases, alignments of territorial interests, sometimes acting for widely differing motives, prevented advocates of military force and extensive expansionism from mobilizing successful political coalitions. The main exceptions were the declaration of war against Great Britain in 1812 and the decision to order American forces into disputed territory and subsequent declaration of war against Mexico in 1846. In the first case, a temporary alliance of war-minded northwestern and southern congressmen barely overcame the strong opposition of the Northeast to armed conflict. The second case resulted from unilateral action by President James K. Polk, who committed troops to a situation where bloodshed was likely without allowing a deeply divided Congress an opportunity to challenge him. Once troops were engaged in combat, antiwar congressmen faced the prospect of appearing unpatriotic if they withheld support, and large majorities in both
houses voted for Polk’s cynically drafted declaration of war.

The empirical chapters of *Divided Union* break little new ground. Historians have long recognized the significance of sectionalism in early American politics, and Silverstone bases his case studies almost entirely on standard secondary works. To dismiss this study would be a mistake, however. Silverstone addresses big questions about matters of war and peace in America’s federal system, and he develops a carefully reasoned, nuanced, and persuasive theory on the central importance of regional politics in restraining the use of military force. *Divided Union* represents traditional political science at its best—clearly argued, accessibly written, and rooted in extensive historical evidence. It deserves a wide readership.

**William B. Skelton**  
*University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point*
This book is designed to provide a way for small groups to explore nonviolence and to incorporate it into their lives. Divided into twelve 2 ½ hour sessions, the book begins with an examination of different aspects of violence and nonviolence, moving to nonviolent responses to structural violence, then ultimately to the development and accomplishment of a nonviolent action. It is a revised and expanded version of the 1996 publication *From Violence to Wholeness*, published by Pace e Bene Nonviolent Service. A significant change in this version is "an inclusive general-audience spirituality," (xvii) making it comfortable for use by people of any faith tradition, or no faith tradition. The authors recognize that, although there is a rich tradition of nonviolence and peacemaking in many religious faiths, "there is power in recognizing how the spirituality of nonviolence is a legacy of all humanity in many settings, and in creating a program where people from all—or no—explicit religious orientations can explore these depths." (xvii)

The title *Engage* was chosen deliberately to alter the general perception of nonviolence from being passive and weak to being a powerful source of positive change in the world. Each of the twelve sections, which correspond to one session in the program, offers very detailed information on how to conduct the sessions from beginning to end, including lists of all necessary materials, planning instructions, and even indicating how much time each part of each session should take. This may seem restricting to an experienced facilitator, but will certainly reassure those who are novices to facilitation and/or to the study of nonviolence. And sessions can easily be modified should facilitators wish to do so. Sessions include review of the previously covered material, introduction of a new topic, time for reflection, journaling, discussion, short readings, and other activities, including a small amount of homework in preparation for the next session. The book contains all readings as well as room to write notes and reflections.

The program uses a variety of active learning methods, including art, physical movement, writings, readings, role-playing, and discussion. For sessions to succeed, those attending need to be willing to participate actively in the process and develop a sense of trusting the other members of the group. This is especially important toward the end, when the group plans and carries out a nonviolent activity. Thus the program both requires participants to be willing to become involved in the process and helps create a sense of community that may very well last long after the twelve sessions are over.

A very useful part of *Engage* is the lists of resources within each session and a fuller one at the end of the book. These resources include books, videos, and contact information for groups involved in education and promotion of peace and nonviolence. There are also suggestions for organizing other study groups to continue the work of nonviolence.

The revision does a good job of promoting a program of studying nonviolence that is accessible to both religious and non-religious alike. This is a welcome addition to the bibliography of nonviolence and will be useful for church groups or civic groups seeking to create a better world.

*Deborah Buffton*  
*University of Wisconsin–La Crosse*
Along with action movies, software, and fighter jets, one of the few items that seem to be on the US export list these days is democracy. Iraq and Afghanistan are two nations that have recently been the beneficiaries of this apparent new export policy. But if the President and his advisors have their way, there may well soon be others, perhaps Syria or Iran.

Of course, such a policy raises numerous legal, moral, and practical questions. How wise is it to attempt what the United States is doing? How likely is it to succeed? What things of value will have to be given up if this is to continue? But the policy raises an even more fundamental question. What is it that the United States thinks that it is exporting in the first place?

If one were to ask the President this question, or one of his advisors, presumably the answer would be elections, representative assemblies, and majority rule. But according to University of Texas-Austin ethics professor Paul Woodruff, this answer would be wrong. In his new book First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea, Woodruff argues that these are not sufficient conditions for the presence of democratic rule. They do not, in other words, guarantee it. Nor, in his view, are they even necessary. A polity could lack every one of these institutions, he maintains, and still be considered democratic.

This is because, as Woodruff sees it, what a nation needs to be a democracy is not a particular set of political institutions, but a particular kind of society: a society that is harmonious, law-abiding, and free from the tyranny of dictators, oligarchs, and mob rule. What it needs, as well, is a certain sort of ethos. The citizens of such a society must agree (1) that everyone has the right to govern; (2) that everyone has the capacity to govern; (3) that everyone deserves a good general education to help them govern; and (4) that government of this type can actually work – that is, that laws and social policies can be properly made through a process of dialogue and debate among individuals who are not “experts” on the subject matters involved.

Woodruff believes that a good model for this type of society can be found in the first democracy that existed in the Western world: ancient Athens. He grants that, in many respects, the government of ancient Athens was radically different from anything that we have today. High officials were chosen by lot. State business was transacted by the entire population of politically enfranchised Athenians. He grants, as well, that ancient Athens was a society with many defects. It was class-ridden and turbulent. It engaged in numerous ill-advised foreign campaigns. Most notoriously, it gave only free male citizens the right to political participation.

But, in chapters named for the seven features of democracy just mentioned – eleutheria (freedom), homonoi (harmony), nomoi (law), physis (natural equality), euboulia (good judgment) antikeimenoi logoi (adversarial reasoning), and paideia (education) – Woodruff argues that fifth- and fourth-century BCE Attica can nonetheless tell us something about democracy today, both positive and negative. It can tell us what a democracy must avoid: class conflict, majoritarianism, foreign adventures. And it can tell us what a democracy needs to be.

Of course, in the United States, politicians have traditionally taken
ancient Rome as their model. Indeed, the authors of the US Constitution specifically rejected the idea that this country should be a democracy. They thought that the best form of government is what they called “mixed” and proceeded to construct one along those lines. Perhaps it is because of this legacy and the institutions that flow from it that US politicians have had and continue to have a shaky grasp on this important concept.

For notice, if Woodruff is right, then the President and his advisors have not brought democracy to Afghanistan and Iraq even though there has been voting in both countries and representative institutions are in place. To export democracy, it turns out, is a much more arduous task. But, even more importantly, notice, if Woodruff is right, it may be the case that we do not yet have democracy in this country either. He devotes an entire chapter to the question of whether a nation with our level of civic discord, our winner-take-all election system, and our obscene disparities between poverty and abundance could properly count as democratic. In the end, therefore, the issue may turn out to be not “How wise is it to try to export democracy?” but “How can we export something that we don’t have in the first place?”

John E. Fields
Edgewood College
Madison, Wisconsin
History of the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies

By Ian Harris, Dick Ringler, Kent Shifferd, and William Skelton

The Wisconsin Institute for the Study of War, Peace, and Global Cooperation, now the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, began in the early 1980s, a period of considerable peace activity in the United States. Most specifically, in response to the breakdown of arms control talks and saber rattling by President Ronald Reagan, a worldwide peace movement had emerged, focusing on the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the heightened tensions of the Cold War. In addition, U.S. involvement in Central America had spawned various “cells” of nonviolent activists across the United States who demonstrated against military oppression in Latin America and sent peace delegations to countries like Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. In a broader historical context, however, the formation of the Wisconsin Institute also reflected trends in the fields of peace studies, peace education, and peace research that had developed during the twentieth century.

The Rise of Peace Education and Research

Peace education has always had a reciprocal relationship with peace movements. In the nineteenth century, most of the impetus to establish courses and programs to teach peace on college and university campuses came from concern about the horrors of modern warfare. After the large-scale slaughter of the American Civil War, peace clubs sprang up on various college and university campuses throughout North America and Europe. These clubs were often aligned with various peace societies that sponsored national speakers who would travel from campus to campus denouncing war and war preparation and promoting the establishment of organizations like the future League of Nations that were designed to outlaw war.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including those in the peace movement, were early advocates for peace education. Peace societies came together at world peace conventions, the first of which took place in The Hague, Netherlands, on May 18, 1899, a day thereafter commemorated as peace day and celebrated on campuses and schools throughout the United States. In Wisconsin, there was considerable resistance to the First World War by the German settlers who did not want the United States to enter into war against their “fatherland.” Much of the opposition also came from socialists opposed to fighting “a rich man’s war.” After World War I, peace activists and educators promoted “education for international understanding,” whose purpose was to humanize different cultures around the world so that they could not be converted to enemies and hence become the focal point for war propaganda. This thrust is currently seen on campuses and in schools as “international education” or “global studies.”

World War II created new interest in a variety of peace education known as “education for world citizenship” that was focused on politics practiced by the dominant world powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, that led to the Cold War with its concomitant buildup of weapons of mass destruction. The creation of the United Nations in 1945 spurred new interest in ways to avoid the scourge of war. In 1948, the first academic program in peace studies began at Manchester
College, a small Brethren college in North Manchester, Indiana.

The field of peace research developed as a “science of peace” in the 1950s to counteract the science of war that had produced so much mass killing. The first Pugwash Conference was held in 1957 in the village of Pugwash, Nova Scotia, Canada, birthplace of the American philanthropist Cyrus Eaton, who hosted the meeting. The stimulus for that gathering was a Manifesto issued in 1955 by Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein and signed by other distinguished academics that called upon scientists of all political persuasions to assemble to discuss the threat posed to civilization by the advent of thermonuclear weapons. Pugwash Conferences bring together from around the world influential scholars and public figures concerned with reducing the danger of armed conflict and seeking cooperative solutions for global problems of war and peace.

In 1959, the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) was founded in Norway under the leadership of Bert Roling. Johan Galtung, who has become a leading figure in the field of peace research, was active in PRIO, an organization that publishes two academic journals, Journal of Peace Research and Bulletin of Peace Proposals, that have helped develop the field of peace research. In Britain, the Lancaster Peace Research Center, later to become the Richardson Institute, was also formed in 1959. These early efforts laid the foundation of a new academic field, peace research, that blossomed during the 1960s, an era when the world was focused on the U.S. war in Vietnam.

In 1962, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, which had its origins during the First World War, set up an International Consultative Committee on peace research that was headed by Elise Boulding, who in 1963 started publishing an International Peace Research Newsletter. Her efforts, with support from her husband Kenneth Boulding, Bert Roling, Johan Galtung, and others, culminated in the first International Peace Research Association (IPRA) meeting held in Groningen, the Netherlands, in 1965. Since that time, IPRA has played a leading role in stimulating the growth of peace research through its biennial conferences and twenty commissions.

The field of peace research began with the study of wars—why they occur and what can be done to stop them. This approach to peace became known as “negative peace,” e.g., stopping some form of violence. Partly under the leadership of Johan Galtung, but also through concern for the problems of underdevelopment that plague countries in the South, peace researchers in the 1960s began to discuss concepts of positive peace that focused on human rights and justice. This impetus came from Gandhian scholars in India who were concerned about peacelessness and the challenges of development. Also in the 1960s, building on the success of Gandhi in overthrowing the yoke of the British empire in India and the nonviolent tactics of the American civil rights movement inspired by the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., scholars began to focus on the use of nonviolence as a creative tool to deal with oppression.

This expansion of the field of peace research points to an important symbiotic relationship between peace movements, peace research, and peace studies. The activists lead, developing strategies to oppose violence, whether it be wars between nations, colonial aggression, cultural, domestic, or structural violence. Academics commenting on these developments further the field of peace research. The activists, seeking a way to broaden their message, seek to educate others through peace education. Teachers observing these activities promote peace
studies courses and programs in schools and colleges to provide awareness of the challenges of war and peace in their classrooms. Peace researchers seek to promulgate their findings about the success or lack of efficacy of different peace strategies through peace studies programs. This creative recycling of insights into the causes of violence and the conditions for peace through the realms of peace action, research, and education provides dynamism for peace studies.

At the end of the decade of the 1960s, in a time of world-wide questioning of state policies promoting violence and patriarchal power relations, peace researchers in the United States came together to form an organization, the Consortium for Peace Research, Education, and Development (COPRED) that brought together scholars and activists to discuss and analyze their practice. COPRED was the North American affiliate of the IPRA. COPRED held annual conferences that brought together grassroots activists, teachers, scholars, and researchers. It provides a forum for academics and educators concerned about wars, ethnic conflicts, and human rights to exchange insights about efforts to promote peace. In 1978, COPRED became an official cosponsor of *Peace and Change*, an academic journal started in 1972 by the Conference on Peace Research in History (CPHR, founded in 1964), now called the Peace History Society. This journal publishes scholarly articles related to the creation of a peaceful and humane society.

Courses about peace, human rights, and global issues began to proliferate on American campuses in the late 1960s. As a response to the Vietnam War, Manhattan College began a peace studies program in 1968 and Colgate University initiated a peace studies program in 1969. At this time, several universities in Sweden established peace research institutes. In 1973, Bradford University in England established its peace studies program focusing on peace and security studies, conflict resolution, and social change. By the end of 1970s, several dozen colleges and universities in the United States had peace studies programs, while many more had courses focusing on the problems of war and underdevelopment. Most of the academic programs were minors or certificate programs created by faculty responding to student demands to create courses of study that had relevance to their lives. During this decade, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point established a concentration in peace studies.

In the 1980s, the decade in which the Wisconsin Institute was born, peace studies saw a huge growth on college campuses as a result of growing alarm about the Cold War and the production and threatened use of nuclear weapons. Concern about the fate of the planet created new courses and programs aimed toward promoting global survival. At this same time, international nongovernmental organizations reaching out across national boundaries fostered citizen-to-citizen exchanges (known as “track two” diplomacy), so the focus of peace studies shifted somewhat from state actors to peace movements and peace organizations that contributed to the dissolution of the Iron Curtain and the end of the Cold War. During this decade, a wide variety of conflict resolution programs appeared. These ranged from neighborhood centers to resolve marital conflicts, to public hearings for environmental disputes, to university-based training and research programs, to peer mediation programs in primary and secondary schools, and to the development of national and international organizations.

This interest in alternative disputes mechanisms expanded the field of peace studies further. From an original concern in political science departments about the international dimensions of conflict, professors from a wide variety of disciplines offered courses that
covered issues of environmental, structural, domestic, and civil violence. Professors began to challenge concepts of national security based upon military might and to investigate concepts of collective security, environmental security, and comprehensive security. In this time period, the growth of peace studies paralleled interest in women’s studies, Black studies, and environmental studies.

Another trend of the 1980s was the emergence of regional peace studies organizations, one of which was the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies. Other statewide organizations included the Ohio Peace Education Network (OPEN) and the University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC). OPEN was created under the leadership of Richard F. Celeste, a Democratic governor of Ohio who was a returned Peace Corps volunteer. It was a loose network of schools and universities in Ohio trying to establish a peace curriculum for elementary schools. In 1989, it became the Commission of Dispute Resolution formed in partnership with the Department of Education. This centralized organization, located in Columbus, the state capital of Ohio, no longer involves universities in its structure. Staff in this organization focus most of their energies on K-12 education and do not directly serve faculty and institutions of higher education. It gets its funding from the Ohio state budget and was recently written out of the budget by a Republican governor, but reinstated after people across the state lobbied against its closing.

IGCC was founded in 1983 by nuclear physicist Herbert F. York, a Manhattan Project participant and the first chancellor of UC-San Diego. It serves as a research center for the universities in the University of California system. The institute uses revenue from the Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos laboratories to provide dissertation and fellowship support on international studies in the United States. IGCC supports individual faculty and graduate student research throughout the UC system as well as international affairs programs on each UC campus. IGCC’s original emphasis on security and nuclear nonproliferation has broadened with time. Researchers there are currently exploring the causes of ethnic and religious conflict and studying conflict resolution initiatives in troubled regions of the world.

The Founding of the Wisconsin Institute

The Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies reflected the broad movement toward peace studies programs discussed above. More immediately, though, it grew out of the widespread public concern in the early 1980s about the nuclear arms race and the possibility of nuclear war. Quiescent throughout most of the 1970s, the antinuclear movement underwent a major revival in the early 1980s, a response to the breakdown of arms control talks between the Soviet Union and the United States, the deployment by the superpowers of new and more accurate missile systems, and talk by the administration of Ronald Reagan of fighting and “prevailing” in a nuclear war. The debate took on new urgency in 1983, when President Reagan announced his support for the Strategic Defense Initiative, meaning the development of antiballistic missile technology to provide a comprehensive defense of the United States and its allies, a proposal that threatened to overturn the ABM Treaty of 1972 and open a whole new arena of arms competition. Spearheaded by groups such as Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and Randall Forsberg’s Nuclear Freeze movement, a grassroots international movement emerged, warning of the critical dangers of nuclear war and calling for the immediate curtailment and even reversal of the arms buildup.
In Wisconsin, peace activists, concerned physicians, academics, and other citizens participated in the general antinuclear movement. An early leader in this activity was Dick Ringler, professor of English and Scandinavian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Prompted into action by increasing international tensions and reckless statements by national leaders, he wondered if there was something he could do—as an individual—to help the situation. With this in mind, he engaged in a series of activities that resulted in the founding of the Wisconsin Institute. He participated in meetings and retreats organized by college and university faculty who designated themselves the Wisconsin Higher Education Peace Studies Network. He organized and coordinated a team-taught multidisciplinary course, “Perspectives on Nuclear War,” at UW-Madison, which attracted hundreds of students over the four years it was taught. And he helped found a statewide chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility. These and similar activities brought him into frequent contact with educators throughout the state who shared his interests and concerns.

In 1983, Ringler published an article in Academe (the bulletin of the American Association of University Professors) calling on colleagues throughout the country to devote more time to teaching these controversial issues. This article came to the attention of James Cracraft of the University of Chicago, editor of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, who asked Ringler to solicit contributions to and edit a special 32-page supplement to the Bulletin. The resulting collection of articles, entitled Nuclear War: A Teaching Guide, appeared in the magazine in 1984 and was published and distributed separately in pamphlet form.

While working on this project, Ringler received an inquiry from the Office of Outreach at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. Motivated by the same anxiety as so many other Americans, the staff of this office was considering organizing a conference on the issue of the nuclear peril and had identified Ringler as someone who could help with the planning. Ringler discussed the matter with Edward T. Linenthal, professor of religious studies at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, whom he had met through their mutual work with Educators for Social Responsibility. Between them, they were familiar with many of the academics in Wisconsin who taught about these issues, so they were confident that they could put together a program covering relevant approaches and disciplines and involving faculty and administrators from most of the state’s public and private colleges and universities. They also hoped that the conference would be the catalyst for creating something more substantial and permanent: an ongoing organization that would encourage statewide collaboration and resource sharing among institutions of higher education. With this in mind, they determined to include high-level administrators, both to legitimize nuclear war and weapons issues as subjects of academic concern and to smooth the way for establishing a statewide association. They also planned the conference so as to allow time at the end for a preliminary discussion among attendees on the feasibility of such an association.

The conference, entitled “Nuclear Age Education,” was held at UW-Green Bay on November 17, 1984, and attracted an unexpectedly large audience of educators from around the state. The program featured special interest sessions on such topics as “Nuclear Weapons and Political Purpose,” “Psychological Resistances to Confronting Nuclear War,” and “Religious and Ethical Dilemmas,” as well as presentations by college presidents and other administrators and the speaker of the Wisconsin Assembly. Of special significance, Ben R. Lawton, M.D., president of the
University of Wisconsin Board of Regents, gave a stimulating address, challenging the audience to do more than just talk about the nuclear threat, and G. Allen Greb, administrative director of the California Institute of Global Conflict and Cooperation, explained how a successful cooperative effort had been organized among the public universities of California. The conference ended with an open forum to discuss cooperative goals, followed by a second forum to discuss cooperative strategies and establish a statewide committee. At the conclusion, the group agreed to pursue the goal of a statewide organization and decided that unofficial representatives of Wisconsin’s colleges and universities should meet again to discuss ways and means.

On February 3, 1985, faculty members from seven private colleges and universities and ten University of Wisconsin campuses and centers, as well as representatives from UW Extension and the UW System, convened at UW-Stevens Point to begin implementation of the proposed organization. There they drafted a declaration informally founding the Wisconsin Institute for the Study of War, Peace, and Global Cooperation, intended to “encourage and legitimize research and teaching on the roots of organized violence, on security issues, and on the factors necessary for a just global peace, to develop and maintain a resource base for peace studies, and thereby to increase the probability of the survival and enhancement of life in the nuclear age.”

The representatives selected a Charter Committee that subsequently drafted a complete charter for the organization. The Institute was defined as an independent nonprofit, nonstock corporation open to membership on an equal basis to both public and private institutions of higher learning in Wisconsin. The governing body was to be an Executive Council composed of campus representatives selected by the presidents and/or chancellors of the member institutions and up to four (later changed to six) at-large members chosen by the council. Officers, elected by the Executive Council, were to include an Executive Director, Associate Director, and Executive Secretary. To establish balance between the private and state institutions, one of the knottiest problems confronting the participants during the organizational meetings, the charter initially specified that the executive and associate directors were not both to serve simultaneously from either of the categories. Meeting in Madison on April 27, 1985, representatives from twenty colleges and universities formally and unanimously adopted the charter and selected Dick Ringler as executive director and Kent Shifferd, professor of history and director of the Peace Studies Program at Northland College, as associate director. The choice of these officers was an extremely fortunate decision, as they would supply the commitment, energy, and organizing skills to sustain the Institute through its early years.

During the spring and summer of 1985, Ringler and Shifferd, with the help of Charles Rumsey of the UW-Stevens Point History Department, negotiated an agreement with the UW-Stevens Point administration to provide space for a central Institute office, located in the University library. The UW-Stevens Point Foundation also agreed to act as the organization’s fiscal agent. The officers initially hired Kathy Smith as executive secretary, a half-time position with responsibility for administering the central office, but she resigned shortly afterwards to take another position. Her replacement, appointed in the fall of 1985, was Sharon Roberts, who would continue in the office until 2001. She administered the Institute’s affairs and budget with great competence and dedication, and become the organizational heart and soul of the Wisconsin Institute.
Initiating Institute Programs and Activities

On September 13, 1985, the first meeting of the Wisconsin Institute Executive Board occurred at UW-Stevens Point. The campus representatives were drawn from a wide variety of disciplines. Historians and political scientists initially predominated, but others represented such fields as physics, chemistry, education, philosophy, religious studies, literature, and psychology. At the original meeting, the board took one of the most important programming steps in its history: approval of the “Campus Visitors” program, a list of expert speakers on peace and conflict issues to be made available without charge for appearances on all member campuses. The original list consisted of only four speakers offering talks on such subjects as “Evolution of U.S. and Soviet Nuclear Strategy,” “Nonviolent National Defense,” “Environmental Dimensions of Gun Violence,” and “Star Wars and Its Cultural Consequences.” Over the years, however, the program grew dramatically and became one of the central Institute services, providing hundreds of presentations to campus audiences, classes, and public gatherings across the state. The speakers list for 2004-2005, for example, included twenty-two speakers and a choice of forty-nine separate talks, ranging from international relations to religious, philosophical, and artistic perspectives on war and peace.

At the September 1985 meeting, the Executive Board also launched another permanent program when it agreed to sponsor the first of a series of conferences on critical issues, geared to faculty and informed members of the general public. The original conference, held on April 19, 1986, and hosted by the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, set a very high standard. Entitled “Tensions and Common Ground between ‘Security’ and ‘Peace’ in the Nuclear Age,” the conference featured addresses by Randall Forsberg, organizer of the national Nuclear Freeze campaign, national security commentator Keith Payne, and Congressman Les Aspin, as well as sessions and workshops on a variety of nuclear weapons and arms control issues.

The following year, the Institute co-sponsored two such academic conferences: “Is Nuclear Disarmament Possible? Or Desirable?” in April at Lawrence University, and “Central America: War or Peace?” in October at the UW-Center at Fond du Lac. Thereafter, the professional conferences became annual affairs, scheduled in the fall and frequently involving collaboration with host campuses or other academic organizations. The subject matter gradually broadened from the core field of nuclear arms and national security to include such topics as “Ecological Resistance Movements: Religion, Politics, Ethics” (UW-Madison, 1995); “Religion, War, and Peace” (Ripon College, 1996); “Women, Peace, and Conflict” (UW-Platteville, 1999); and “Challenges and Paths to Justice” (Marquette University, 2004). Conferences normally included one or two featured speakers and a variety of panels and workshops. As in all Wisconsin Institute activities, organizers were very careful to insure that the programs maintained balance among contrasting points of view, and it became common to pair peace advocates with military figures or other supporters of a strong military posture.

In 1987, the Wisconsin Institute initiated a third permanent program, a series of annual student conferences held in the spring. The first such conference, entitled “Critical Issues in the Global Village” and organized by Leonard Gambrell of the UW-Eau Claire Political Science Department, established the basic pattern. Students from campuses across the state met at Eau Claire to present papers, either written for their classes or specifically for the conference, and to participate on panels relating to important world
topics, with small cash prizes awarded for the best presentations. Although subsequent conferences varied somewhat in size and number of participating institutions, the overall trend was toward growth. The 2002 conference at Edgewood College, for example, involved 88 student attendees, 53 of whom delivered individual papers. Conference themes were generally worded as broadly as possible to encourage participation, and most conferences featured a prominent keynote speaker, including military journalist Gwynne Dyer (UW-Stevens Point, 1988), former president of Notre Dame and peace and justice pioneer Theodore Hesburgh (Lakeland College, 1989), and former Ohio governor and peace education advocate John Gilligan (UW-Milwaukee, 1990). Important additions to the conference format were the inclusion of a separate category of student poster art that provided a circulating exhibit for member campuses and recognition of student academic excellence through a Distinguished Student Scholar Award.

One of the major programming achievements of the Wisconsin Institute was the “Dilemmas of War and Peace” project. This venture began in 1988 as a 15-hour, 3-credit public radio seminar entitled “War or Peace? Confronting the Challenge,” a joint project of the Wisconsin Institute and Wisconsin Public Radio. Afterwards, Ringler, Shifferd, and Leonard Gambrell cooperated with WPR in obtaining a major grant from the Annenberg Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to fund a multi-disciplinary, multi-media, and multi-use learning resource on issues of war and peace, entitled “Dilemmas of War and Peace.” Headed by Ringler, the faculty team that developed the course included Shifferd and Gambrell of the Wisconsin Institute, military journalist and historian Gwynne Dyer, Patricia M. Mische of the Global Education Associates, and Colonel David G. Hansen, a retired professor at the U.S. Army War College. In a series of meetings in Madison, some rather heated because of the effort to balance contrasting viewpoints, the group developed an audio program consisting of thirteen half-hour segments, a 900-page anthology of readings, and a 650-page “Companion to Studies” designed to coordinate and integrate the various project components. Broadcast over WPR in the fall of 1992, the audio program included segments on such topics as “The Bombing of Dresden,” “Propaganda Battlefields,” “Movements of Peace,” “Nuclear Terror,” and “Nonviolent Revolution in Eastern Europe.” It attracted a wide listening audience and in 1993 received an Ohio State Award for Excellence in Broadcasting. The “Dilemmas of War and Peace” program as a whole, completed in 1993, was granted the Distinguished Course Award of the National University Continuing Education Association’s Division of Independent Study.

Beginning in 1988, the Institute published a semiannual newsletter, Bulletin of the Wisconsin Institute, intended to inform administrators and faculty of member schools of the organization’s programs and activities. In 1991, the Institute launched another ongoing program: publication of an annual journal, originally entitled Viewpoints on War, Peace, and Global Cooperation and in 1997 renamed Journal for the Study of Peace and Conflict. Edited by Kent Shifferd (1991-1992, 2001-2004) and by Gary Boelhower of Marian College (1993-2000), the journal was interdisciplinary in approach and published articles on a wide variety of subjects, including international relations, military affairs, social justice, conflict resolution, pacifism and nonviolence, and peace education, as well as book reviews and poetry. Contributors included academics from member campuses but also from colleges and universities across the nation, Canada, and other countries, and the quality of the articles was generally high. Regrettably, the journal long experienced difficulty
selling subscriptions and otherwise achieving a wide circulation of paper copies. Through cooperation with Memorial Library at UW-Madison, however, the journal was made available online and, beginning with the 2004-2005 issue, it appeared online at the Institute’s website as well, a move designed to expand its readership considerably.

One final Wisconsin Institute activity deserves mention: the granting of awards. In 1990, the Institute established the Distinguished Faculty Award, soon afterwards renamed the Dick Ringler Distinguished Peace Educator Award in honor of the Institute’s principal founder. Each year the board selected a scholar whose teaching and scholarship promoted the fields of peace and conflict studies. In 1990, the first to be honored was Ian Harris, an advocate of international peace research and founder and head of the peace studies certificate program at UW-Milwaukee. Among the subsequent awardees were Paul Boyer of UW-Madison, historian of the impact of the atomic bomb on American culture (1991); Edward Linenthal of UW-Oshkosh, Wisconsin Institute leader and historian of the commemoration of American wars (1994); peace and justice theologian Daniel Maguire of Marquette University (1997); and World War II memoirist Agate Nesaule of UW-Whitewater (1999). In 1991, the Institute introduced the Distinguished Student Scholar Award, granted annually to a student or students at member institutions for outstanding scholarship and leadership in peace related activities.

The Challenge of Funding

From the start, the Wisconsin Institute operated on a budgetary shoestring, and an ongoing concern was broadening its financial support. Unlike the statewide organizations in California and Ohio, the Institute lacked a consistent source of external support. Basic funding came from annual campus membership fees, originally set at $1,000. With the number of member institutions fluctuating between twenty and twenty-eight, this fund was barely sufficient to cover the salary and benefits of the executive secretary, contribute toward mailing and office expenses, provide minimal support for the annual conferences, and underwrite expenses for the travel of speakers in the Campus Visitors program.

Soon after the founding of the Institute, Dick Ringler, Kent Shifferd, and others, with the dedicated support of Sharon Roberts, energetically pursued grants from foundations and other agencies to fund programming and administrative expenses. With the major exception of the “Dilemmas of War and Peace” project, however, the results were disappointing. While the Institute managed to garner a few small grants for special projects, including several from the Wisconsin Humanities Council, it failed to obtain significant ongoing funding to supplement the membership fees. An effort to sell individual memberships had only limited results, though personal donations did help somewhat to relieve the financial burden and support the establishment of a small endowment fund, administered by the UW-Stevens Point Foundation.

With so much depending on the campus membership fees, the Wisconsin Institute’s financial situation remained chronically precarious. Recurrently, financial pressures at private colleges and state budget cuts at the public universities led administrators to drop or suspend their memberships. Campus representatives and other faculty were frequently required to launch urgent appeals to their presidents, chancellors, and provosts to retain their institutions’ support. On several occasions, the Executive Board adjusted fee levels to respond to financial concerns and thereby preserve the membership base. Nevertheless, the Institute managed to
weather the fiscal storms and continue to maintain its basic services.

**An Ongoing Tradition**

On the evening of October 8, 2004, a gala dinner was held at the Three Brothers Restaurant in Milwaukee to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Wisconsin Institute’s founding. The gathering, which was funded by an anonymous well-wisher, followed the Institute’s highly successful fall conference at Marquette University. Most of the current members of the Executive Board attended, as well as many of the Institute’s founders and others who had been involved with the Institute over the years. The mood was festive and a bit self-congratulatory, with the participants recognizing their extraordinary achievement in sustaining a statewide interdisciplinary organization for two decades on volunteer efforts and a shoestring budget.

Several factors contributed to the Wisconsin’s Institute’s success. One was the organization’s success in developing cooperative arrangements with member campuses and other academic institutions that helped alleviate the financial constraints. By far the most prominent example of such cooperation was the arrangement, reached in 1985, by which the UW-Stevens Point administration agreed to provide rent-free office space in the University library, have the UW-Stevens Point Foundation serve as the Institute’s fiscal agent, and otherwise supply essential services. Without this institutional support, which amounted to a substantial subsidy in kind continuing over more than two decades, the Wisconsin Institute could not have survived its infancy. In addition, most of the Institute’s conferences were cooperative events, subsidized in large part by the host campuses with the Institute providing organizational skills, publicity, and limited financial contributions. Key to these arrangements were the campus representatives and other interested faculty at the local level who were willing to solicit support from their presidents, chancellors, and other administrators and oversee the vast amount of organizational detail necessary for running a successful conference.

A second ingredient in the Wisconsin Institute’s success was the strong level of staff support provided by the central office. The appointment in 1985 of Sharon Roberts as executive secretary (a title later changed to administrative director) was an extremely fortunate step. For the next sixteen years, until moving to Boston in 2001, Roberts sustained the organization through her energy, administrative skills, and personal commitment to the Wisconsin Institute and its goals. She handled financial matters skillfully, squeezing the absolute most out of a very limited budget and pursuing grants, private contributions, and other alternative sources of funding. Moreover she provided the initiative and administrative continuity to sustain the Institute’s permanent programs through the frequent changes in executive officers, insuring that the conferences would be efficiently held, the Campus Visitors Program staffed and maintained, the journal issues regularly published, and the Executive Board meetings smoothly run. Her successor as administrative director, Sarah Stillwell, proved to be an exceptionally qualified replacement and carried forward the tradition of managerial efficiency, budgetary wizardry, and personal dedication to the Institute. Largely through the efforts of Roberts and Stillwell, the Wisconsin Institute managed to maintain its central programs for two decades without a single interruption.

A third factor accounting for the Institute’s success was perhaps the most important: the willingness of a core group of participants to devote an immense amount of personal time and energy to supporting the organization.
and its programs. Originally, this group included Dick Ringler, Kent Shifferd, Leonard Gambrell, Ian Harris, and others from the founding “generation,” and many of them remained active throughout the course of the Institute’s development. Increasingly, however, the founding group was augmented by a cadre of younger, early- and mid-career academics, among whom were Deborah Buffton (UW-Lacrosse), Marty Farrell and Joe Hatcher (Ripon College), Richard Friman (Marquette), Eric Yonke (UW-Stevens Point), and Geoff Bradshaw (Madison Area Technical College). Although differing widely as to academic specialty and position on the issues, these people shared a strong concern about the dangers of nuclear war and a commitment to promoting peace and conflict education. They were willing to take on Institute offices, organize conferences, serve as campus visitors, and participate in a wide variety of essential and time consuming organizational tasks. In many cases, academic ties to the Institute were reinforced by the development of close personal friendships and the emergence of a social network, centering in the annual Institute retreats, usually held in June on Washington Island or elsewhere in Door County, Wisconsin.

The second generation of leaders includes people who have received academic training in peace studies and have themselves established new programs in that field. In the twenty years of the Wisconsin Institute’s existence, the number of institutions offering academic peace studies programs has grown from two to five. The Wisconsin Institute allows faculty from these and other institutions to share in an interdisciplinary exchange of insights into the study of peace and conflict. While most academics attend conferences solely in their specific disciplines, Wisconsin Institute events permit psychologists to talk with historians, political scientists with sociologists, philosophers with theologians, and education specialists with faculty in criminal justice and social work. Such exchanges contribute a special energy to Institute functions and help maintain the organization’s dynamism and vitality.

The many accomplishments of the Wisconsin Institute presented in this essay indicate how faculty can link together in a regional framework to keep abreast of the latest developments in a burgeoning academic field. The various conferences, public talks, journal articles, and radio shows sponsored by the Institute provide information on peace and conflict issues not only to academics but also to students and members of the broader community. By providing such community education, the Institute has helped raise public awareness on matters of war and peace throughout the state of Wisconsin.

Notes

1 The United States Institute of Peace was founded in 1984.
2 In 1986 university professors in COPRED, feeling the need for a more professional organization to promote the growing field of peace studies on campuses, broke away to form the Peace Studies Association. These organizations have subsequently merged in 2001 into the Peace and Justice Studies Association.
3 Both of these academic programs have similar credit demands, usually between 18 and 24 credits. Minors tend to be within a specific academic discipline, say history, while certificate programs tend to be cross disciplinary, involving departments from many different disciplines.
4 In the 1980s, a regional network in New England started to gather bringing in faculty from colleges in New York, Massachusetts, and Maine, but this network has no staff. Nor does it meet on an annual basis.
5 In 1985, UW-Stevens Point had a concentration in peace studies and Northland College a major in the field. In addition to these, UW-Milwaukee now has a certificate program in peace studies, Alverno College a major emphasis, and Marquette University a minor. Moreover, the UW-Stevens Point program is now a full minor.
6 Although the Wisconsin Institute has, in the past, performed miracles of
programming on a shoestring budget, its
desire to broaden and deepen the range of
its activities has always been hampered by
inadequate funds. Hence the Institute
always welcomes contributions from well-
wishers (tax-deductible of course), especially
contributions to the Endowment Fund
which has been created to insure the
organization’s long-term viability.

This Institute history was written in
2005 by long-time Institute members
and leaders, Ian Harris, Dick Ringler,
Kent Shifferd, and William Skelton.