

# OMNI

## NONVIOLENCE NEWSLETTER #10, JUNE 12, 2013.

Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace. (#1 Feb. 17, 2011; #2 May 13, 2011; #3 June 7, 2011, #4 September 30, 2011; #5 Sept. 21, 2012; #6 Dec. 28, 2012; #7 Jan. 17, 2013; #8 March 28, 2013; #9 April 18, 2013).

My blog: The War Department and Peace Heroes

<http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/>

**Newsletters** on Peace, Justice, and Ecology:

<http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/>

Index:

<http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/>

Violence USA: Imperialism, Militarism, Pentagon, Recruiting, Suicides, Violence, Whistleblowing, and more.

## JESUS

Gandhi was quoted as saying: "The only people on earth who do not see *Christ* and his teachings as *nonviolent* are *Christians*."

## APATHY

"Nonviolence, of course, does not mean that we shouldn't take action in the world. Nonviolence is not passivity; it is not inaction. Nonviolence denounces apathy. In fact, apathy is one of the greatest threats to peace." Scott Hunt, *The Future of Peace*, p. 336.

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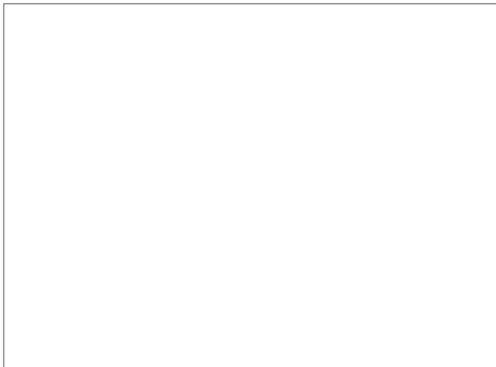
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07/09/2013

## DOCUMENTARY ON GUN VIOLENCE AIRED AT OMNI CENTER, FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS



On July 14, 2013, 7:00 pm, at the [Omni Center](#) in Fayetteville, Arkansas, a documentary film on gun violence will be shown. The film is entitled *Living for 32* and refers to the 32 victims of the Virginia Tech massacre. The film is by Colin Goddard, a survivor of the shooting, who will be available for discussion after the film through a Skype connection.

You can download the flyer [here](#).

Please disseminate this information widely, as this promises to be an enlightening evening, particularly as we approach the 2014 Senatorial elections in Arkansas.

ShareThisFacebookTweetLinkedInPinterestEmail

- See more at: <http://readwrite.typepad.com/gunsense/#sthash.PBzPPG0V.dpuf>

# NONVIOLENCE USA

**A.J. Muste Memorial Institute** [[info@ajmuste.org](mailto:info@ajmuste.org)]

Friday, January 24, 2014 10:50 AM

Grantee Profile:

Keeping Nuclear Bomb Cores Off Our Roads  
by Marylia Kelley

It was during conversations with congressional staff in Washington in March 2012 that we at Tri-Valley CAREs first learned of a proposal to put whole plutonium bomb cores on the road from the Los Alamos Lab in New Mexico to the Livermore Lab in California. There had been no public announcement or environmental review, despite the plan's obvious dangers. Even now, the U.S. Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration's plutonium transportation plan remains shrouded in secrecy.

--> Read more: <https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v1/url?u=http://ajmuste.org/mustenotes.htm%23trivalleycares&k=t8cWouLHMWKnKZhAFQeVA%3D%3D%0A&r=DcDR4vy8HbzmvxjvQKW2wA%3D%3D%0A&m=5hQeA3XadD8gqp7QwcCUnYRXybKCRsgOc3AmoKBADIM%3D%0A&s=32b2c95e3225377a3f140c6b9ab9675a3fd2d73e1bea0a407392cc779cb7bc67>

The new issue of *Muste Notes* (Winter 2014) is up on our website!

--> Read Muste Notes online:

<https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v1/url?u=http://ajmuste.org/mustenotes.htm&k=t8cWouLHMWKnKZhAFQeVA%3D%3D%0A&r=DcDR4vy8HbzmvxjvQKW2wA%3D%3D%0A&m=5hQeA3XadD8gqp7QwcCUnYRXybKCRsgOc3AmoKBADIM%3D%0A&s=a34cff1919b96d4c5b7dc951ab5679dd310076d16a7536f65f0a1b4356ebe877>

--> Printer-friendly PDF version:

<https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v1/url?u=http://ajmuste.org/MusteNotesWinter2014.pdf&k=t8cWouLHMWKnKZhAFQeVA%3D%3D%0A&r=DcDR4vy8HbzmvxjvQKW2wA%3D%3D%0A&m=5hQeA3XadD8gqp7QwcCUnYRXybKCRsgOc3AmoKBADIM%3D%0A&s=0596e5b53d05223d562f1910aefaad4d301f13cfe3d3701aeb29b1b8ce36f98c>

Featured articles:

\* Dear Friends: The Muste Institute is turning 40!

<https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v1/url?u=http://ajmuste.org/mustenotes.htm%23dear&k=t8cWouLHMWKnKZhAFQeVA%3D%3D%0A&r=DcDR4vy8HbzmvxjvQKW2wA%3D%3D%0A&m=5hQeA3XadD8gqp7QwcCUnYRXybKCRsgOc3AmoKBADIM%3D%0A&s=3e5676a9cb9bac81fdabff3aaf13c61c317e8ff95444768474fc070b3c0bf45f>

\* Keeping Nuclear Bomb Cores Off Our Roads

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\* **Social Justice Grants, September - December 2013:** Center for Participatory Change (NC); Connection e.V. (Germany); Georgia Women's Action for New Directions; New Yorkers Against the Cornell-Technion Partnership; Peace & Justice Center (VT); People Organized to Win Employment Rights (CA); Voice of Women Uganda

<https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v1/url?u=http://ajmuste.org/mustenotes.htm%23sjfgrants&k=t8cWouLHMWKnKZhAFQeVA%3D%3D%0A&r=DcDR4vy8HbzmvxjvQKW2wA%3D%3D%0A&m=5hQeA3XadD8gqp7QwcCUnYRXybKCRsgOc3AmoKBADIM%3D%0A&s=243038174becc217eb03ecf1cebfd46571050ecdec09349b297f3a1151015ef>

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--> Learn more about how you can support the Muste Institute:

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--> Stay in touch!

- Join our mailing list: [https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v1/url?u=http://ajmuste.org/mailling\\_list.html&k=t8cWouLHMWKnKZhAFQeVA%3D%3D%0A&r=DcDR4vy8HbzmvxjvQKW2wA%3D%3D%0A&m=5hQeA3XadD8gqp7QwcCUnYRXybKCRsgOc3AmoKBADIM%3D%0A&s=6fd27430cd7c036dbafe93c28a709bf03ed195a9488006a44fc27399ecbc7411](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v1/url?u=http://ajmuste.org/mailling_list.html&k=t8cWouLHMWKnKZhAFQeVA%3D%3D%0A&r=DcDR4vy8HbzmvxjvQKW2wA%3D%3D%0A&m=5hQeA3XadD8gqp7QwcCUnYRXybKCRsgOc3AmoKBADIM%3D%0A&s=6fd27430cd7c036dbafe93c28a709bf03ed195a9488006a44fc27399ecbc7411)

- Would you like to receive Muste Notes by postal mail? Already getting Muste Notes in the mail and prefer to read them online? Let us know.

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# GLOBAL NONVIOLENCE

## **Nonviolence Charter: progress report 4 (Apr 2014), by Robert J. Burrowes & Anita McKone.**

[flametree@riseup.net](mailto:flametree@riseup.net), via [uark.edu](http://uark.edu)

[An annotated list of activities of signatories of the Nonviolence Charter. A germ of a nonviolence directory around the world. –**Dick**]

Dear fellow signatories of the Nonviolence Charter

How are you all? And welcome to our most recent signatories.

Here is the latest six-monthly report on progress in relation to **'The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World'** and a sample of news about, and reports of forthcoming events by, Charter signatories.

Building a worldwide consensus against the use of violence in all contexts is quite a challenge but we are making solid progress!

Since our last report on 3 October 2013, we have gained our first signatories in another seven countries - Egypt, Finland, Hungary, Jordan, Madagascar, Mozambique and Poland - a total of 65 countries now. We also have 88 organisational endorsements in 28 countries with recent endorsements by organisations in Bolivia, France, Mozambique, Thailand and Uganda being the first in their respective countries.

If you wish, you can see the list of organisational endorsements on the Charter website:

<http://thepeoplesnonviolencecharter.wordpress.com/organisations/>

If you wish to see individual signatories, click on the 'View signatures' item in the sidebar. You can use the search facility if you want to look for a specific name.

Tragically, we have been unable to contact several of our Filipino signatories since super typhoon Yolanda (as it is known locally) last October and we do not know if they have survived.

And, sadly, it seems that veteran Steve Hamm, the US signatory who suffered serious ill-health as a result of his exposure to Agent Orange during the war on Vietnam, has died. His email account has closed and the

time is now beyond his expected life-expectancy when we last communicated. We have not been able to trace him since.

The latest progress report 'The Struggle for Humanity' was recently distributed to 65 progressive news websites in 20 countries around the world and 537 contacts at 275 mainstream outlets in 93 countries: it was published by 21 news outlets (on both progressive and mainstream websites) in 13 countries, thanks to supportive editors (four of whom are Charter signatories). If you wish, you can read the article on War Is A Crime: <http://warisacrime.org/content/struggle-humanity>

If any of you would like a copy of the World Media List (which is primarily newspapers but no Murdoch outlets), then you are welcome to email Robert at [flametree@riseup.net](mailto:flametree@riseup.net) and he will send you a copy. Several Charter signatories are using some or all of the list and it is apparent that our articles are being published more or less widely. We are not naive about the corporate media but sending them regular doses of the truth cannot do them any harm!

If you feel inclined to do so, you are welcome to help raise awareness of the Nonviolence Charter using whatever means are easiest for you: email, articles, Facebook, Twitter ...

And if any of you would like to tell us something about yourself and what you are doing, please write back. We are keen to hear!

Here's a (rather inadequate) sample of reports of nonviolent actions, articles, books, events and new initiatives in which fellow Charter signatories have been involved (apart from those mentioned in the published article):

First, one of our Nonviolence Charter signatories, Antonio C.S. Rosa is a survivor of torture in Brazil. The final item in this report is a brief excerpt of his experience. The attached photo depicts the instrument of his torture.

Second, a new initiative 'World Beyond War' is also flagged below for your interest.

But before these items, here's a summary of the efforts of some signatories:

**Kathy Kelly**, of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, continues her work in support of the Afghan Peace Volunteers. Here's an article - 'Women's Liberation at Barefoot College' - about some young women APVs who travelled to India as guests of Barefoot College, 'a renowned initiative that uses village wisdom, local knowledge and practical skills available in the rural areas to improve villagers' lives':

<http://vcnv.org/women-s-liberation-at-barefoot-college>

Many Charter signatories continue to be involved in nonviolent actions against **drone murders**. For example, Elliott Adams, past President of Veterans for Peace in the USA, was arrested and imprisoned for his part in a nonviolent protest against US drone strikes at the Hancock Air Force Base near Syracuse, New York. If you would like to read his brief, eloquent statement in response to that jail sentence, you can do so here: [http://www.veteransforpeace.org/who-we-are/member-highlights/2014/02/25/elliott-adams-past-president-vfp-sentenced-15-days?utm\\_source=Drone+Action&utm\\_campaign=5d3a230348-What\\_You\\_Can\\_Do\\_7\\_24\\_2013&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_beae583d40-5d3a230348-323605697](http://www.veteransforpeace.org/who-we-are/member-highlights/2014/02/25/elliott-adams-past-president-vfp-sentenced-15-days?utm_source=Drone+Action&utm_campaign=5d3a230348-What_You_Can_Do_7_24_2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_beae583d40-5d3a230348-323605697)

On 5 March Nobel Laureate **Mairead Maguire** was deported from Egypt as she attempted to enter the country in order to join an international delegation of 100 women wishing to visit Gaza via the Egyptian Rafah border. You can read her account of this initiative here: <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2014/03/nobel-peace-laureate-mairead-maguire-deported-from-egypt-while-en-route-to-gaza/>

If you would like to read about the great work done by **Sami Awad** and his colleagues at the Holy Land Trust in Palestine, then you can check out their March newsletter here: <http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?ca=3338d3a7-edee-43a3-9354-a069f709b2aa&c=da0cf100-6668-11e3-adc2-d4ae52754dbc&ch=da11fa10-6668-11e3-adc2-d4ae52754dbc>

And here is the link to the phenomenal work of co-Directors **Dan Goldenblatt (Israel) and Rimam Barakat (Palestine)** and their colleagues at Israel-Palestine: Creative Regional Initiatives (IPCRI) <http://www.ipcri.org/> which is 'the only joint Israeli-Palestinian think-tank in the world. We are devoted to developing practical solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of "two states for two peoples."'

**Marthie Momberg** has uploaded the Kairos Southern Africa presentation to the Parliament of South Africa in Cape Town on 6 February 2014 in support of the People of Cuba, Western Sahara and Palestine: <http://marthiemombergblog.wordpress.com/2014/02/08/why-kairos-sa-asked-for-bold-steps-by-the-south-african-parliament/>

Marthie's report back on the presentation is here: <http://marthiemombergblog.wordpress.com/2014/02/07/feedback-on-session-in-parliament-good-news/>

**Tenzin Lobsang** continues to campaign vigorously for the liberation of Tibet through his Tibetan youth organisation in Australia and New Zealand: <http://www.anzty.com/>

**Dr Tess Ramiro** directs Aksyon para sa Kapayapaan at Katarungan-Center for

Active Non-Violence (AKKAPKA-CANV) in the Philippines. AKKAPKA-CANV stands for 'the radical response to violence through the power of truth, the power of love, the power of justice.' AKKAPKA-CANV 'promotes and supports active non-violence as an alternative expression of the Filipino people's resistance to an unjust, repressive, exploitative and dehumanizing system.... Active non-violence, according to AKKAPKA-CANV, is the only authentic avenue if there is to be absolute respect for the human person, without labeling him or her as a soldier, communist, rightist or leftist.... It believes that the active non-violent movement must grow "if the country is to prevent further ideological polarization of our people; avert a bloody fratricide; heal the wounds inflicted on our nation by the deposed repressive regime".'

**Tom Shea, Leonard Eiger** and their fellow nonviolent activists at the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action in the US continue their long-standing and relentless campaign against nuclear weapons, including the '\$100 billion plan for a new fleet of Trident nuclear submarines' for which we will be paying. You can find out about many of their recent events, nonviolent actions, arrests, court statements and forthcoming activities in their April 2014 newsletter:

<http://www.gzcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/April-14-newsletter-for-website.pdf>

While many **indigenous people**, including Hawai'ians, have signed the Charter, many other signatories actively support their struggles. A recent example is **Jon Olsen's** book titled 'Liberate Hawai'i: Renouncing and Defying the Continuing Fraudulent U.S. claim to the Sovereignty of Hawai'i'. It is available from Amazon:

<http://www.amazon.com/Liberate-Hawaii-Jon-D-Olsen/dp/1597131474>

An issue that still remains largely beyond the radar of activists is the ongoing and extensive use of **psychiatric violence as a key means of maintaining elite social control**. This has a very long history with some particularly ugly manifestations - the Nazi eugenics and 'euthanasia' program (that is, the mass murder of 'weak' and 'unwanted' members of society) being the classic one. Psychiatric violence has often been trialled on unknowing military personnel - just as nuclear weapons have been so tested - and this violence has many manifestations including psychiatry's extensive use of legally enforced involuntary treatment as well as its use of psychiatric drugs and electroshocking of activists, people needing help for emotional problems and children who do not submissively obey (supposedly suffering 'disruptive behaviour disorders' including 'Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder'). Efforts to raise awareness and mobilise action against this violence have been slow to make an impact, given the complicity of the medical and pharmaceutical industries, the legal system and the corporate media in promoting this highly profitable violence. One particularly racist version of psychiatric violence was the Federal Violence Initiative started in the US in 1992. According to **John Breeding**, author of 'The Necessity of Madness and Unproductivity: Psychiatric Oppression or Human Transformation': 'This

initiative includes ongoing "research" into the supposed biological basis of inner-city violence and includes proposals for biomedical social control. The US government asks "Are Black People Genetically Violent?" and plans a psychiatric screening program which would lead to mass drugging of innocent inner-city children, the vast majority of whom are young people of color.'

Two Charter signatories are among the many people and organisations who work on the issue of psychiatric violence. Gary G. Kohls MD writes on the subject regularly. Here is one recent article of his - 'Lies That My Medical School Professors Taught Me (And Which Were Reinforced by My Drug Reps)':

<http://evergreenedigest.org/sites/evergreenedigest.org/files/Duty%20to%20Warn%20Lies%20my%20Med%20School%20Professors%20%28and%20Drug%20Reps%29%20Taught%20Me.pdf>

And Ronald Bassman PhD is a courageous survivor of psychiatric violence who is now active in resisting it: 'With other ex-patients and allies, I was a co-founder of the International Network Towards Alternatives for Recovery (INTAR), which held its first meeting of alternative practitioners and psychiatric survivors in 2004.' You can see his website here: <http://ronaldbassman.com/>

In January 2014, nonviolent activist (with some 75 arrests for his nonviolent acts of conscience) and scholar **Father John Dear** announced he was leaving the Jesuit Order. You can read his evocative account of why he did so in his article 'Leaving the Jesuits after 32 years' here:

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/road-peace/leaving-jesuits-after-32-years>

For an excellent selection of news either African or from an African perspective, check out Gifty Ayim-Korankye's great news website 'Daybreak Africa': <http://daybreakafrica.us/>

Several Charter signatories have been active in drawing attention to recent US interference in the Ukraine and Venezuela. You can read the respective insightful analyses of Ray McGovern - a former CIA analyst whose responsibilities included preparing the US President's daily brief - and Professor Chandra Muzaffar - president of the International Movement for a JUST World based in Malaysia - here:

- Ray's article: 'Ukraine: One "Regime Change" Too Many?' 1 March 2014:  
<http://consortiumnews.com/2014/03/01/ukraine-one-regime-change-too-many/>

- Chandra's article: 'Ousting A Democratically Elected Leader In Ukraine And Elsewhere' 4 March 2014:  
<http://www.countercurrents.org/muzaffar040314.htm>

Chandra continues to facilitate the dialogue among civilisations. For more of his thoughtful work on this subject and news of ongoing initiatives in

this regard, see the website of the International Movement for a JUST World:

<http://www.just-international.org/>

Maud Easter and her fellow activists at Women Against War, originally founded in response to the plan of the US government to attack Iraq in 2003 have 'become a vital participant in the larger national and international peace and justice movement through [their] various projects and affiliations'. You can check out their superb efforts here:

<http://www.womenagainstar.org/>

Paul Buchheit's succinct articles continue to throw light on the ugliness of the global economy when managed by corporations. Here are two recent samples:

- 'Four Frightening Ways We're Reverting to the Dark Days of Our Past', 10 March 2014:

<http://www.nationofchange.org/four-frightening-ways-we-re-reverting-dark-days-our-past-1394458724>

- 'Eight Headlines the Mainstream Media Doesn't Have the Courage to Print', 7 April 2014: <http://www.commondreams.org/view/2014/04/07-0>

And to repeat one item from the published article, Earthgardens in Bolivia is a real treat! <http://riverprincess.tripod.com/>

If you would like to read Yves Engler's insightful and searing critiques of Canadian foreign policy, you can do so on his website:

<http://yvesengler.com/>

Rachel Siegel, Carmen Solari and Kyle Silliman-Smith are the key people at the Peace and Justice Center in Vermont. Their ambitious mission - 'to create a just and peaceful world' - is pursued by working on the interconnected issues of economic and racial justice, peace and human rights. You can check out their tremendous work here:

<http://www.pjcv.org/>

Here is a few brief profiles of signatories/organisations:

Dr Ukum U. Edodi 'read economics at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.... My areas of interest include monetary economics and corporate governance. I have worked in both public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy.... I returned back to the public sector as Director in the Presidency with responsibilities as Head of Commercial and Industrial Development; Agriculture, as well as Planning/Research (and head of budget) at the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) between 2002 and 2010, when I went into early retirement.... I'm currently into private consulting on institutional and corporate governance, restructuring and good environmental practices. I'm 54 years and married with three children. Above all, my role model is M.K. Gandhi.'

Canon Joyce Nima B.A.S. is Head of the Department of Peace Building and Conflict Transformation with the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), an ecumenical organization that was established in 1963. Its current membership comprises the Church of Uganda, The Roman Catholic Church and the Uganda Orthodox Church, which together constitute about 78% of Uganda's population. 'The actions and voices of the Church advocating for the "voiceless" have undoubtedly been loud and clear to many leaders and ordinary citizens on issues of corruption, land, poverty, illegal possession of small arms and light weapons, human sacrifice (killing people in the name of offering a "sacrifice to God"), environmental degradation, election malpractices, poor education and health services, violent conflicts, human rights abuses, intolerance and peaceful co-existence among others.'

Among his many achievements in government, as a consultant, UN appointee and scholar, Professor Rameshwar P. Misra in India has authored/edited over 70 volumes on Gandhian Thought, Social Geography, Regional Development, Urbanization, and Rural Development including a five volume series on the Gandhian alternative and a ten volume series on 'Rediscovering Gandhi'. He also edits 'Anasakti Darshan: An International Journal of Gandhian Studies and Peace Research'.

You can read the latest full-color issue of 'Space Alert', newsletter of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, which has extensive reporting about the US 'pivot' into the Asia-Pacific and anti-drone campaigning, online here:

<http://www.space4peace.org/newsletter/Space%20Alert%2029.pdf>

And you can see GN convenor Dave Webb's highly informative video presentation about the work of the Global Network at the recent 22nd annual meeting here: <http://youtu.be/P83-NStmbzc>

Professor John Scales Avery in Denmark - who was part of a group that shared the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize for their work in organizing the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs - has written extensively on peace and you can access his valuable and thoughtful writings here:

<http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/library/collected.pdf>

<http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/library/collected2.pdf>

<http://www.learndev.org/dl/Crisis21-Avery.pdf>

For a succinct summary of 'shifts' in the Pentagon's vision for our future, Brian J. Trautman's article of 3 March 2014 is hard to beat: 'The Pentagon's Vision of Covert and Endless War':

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/03/03/the-pentagons-vision-of-covert-and-endless-war/>

And Jonathan Power's new book 'Conundrums of Humanity: The Big Foreign Policy Questions of Our Day' is available here:

<http://www.amazon.com/Conundrums-Humanity-Foreign-Policy-Questions/dp/1490481788>

If you are willing to review it, he will send you a free copy! Contact:  
"Jonathan Power" <[jonatpower@aol.com](mailto:jonatpower@aol.com)>

We mentioned Vijay Mehta's book last time but, having now read it, wanted to mention it again. The book has some fascinating detail about a variety of topics including the way long-standing US support for terrorism has come back to bite it and how China's interest in US military and industrial technology coupled with the US refusal to supply it helps to generate the huge trade imbalance between the two countries. Vijay Mehta: 'The Economics of Killing'. His recent interview about it can be heard on the 'Uniting for Peace' website: <http://www.unitingforpeace.com/>

And here's some forthcoming initiatives and events of fellow Charter signatories in which you might want to be involved:

The global launch of a new movement to end war 'World Beyond War' - <http://www.worldbeyondwar.org/> - will take place on 21 September 2014 (International Peace Day). David Swanson and David Hartsough are key people behind this initiative which is already being supported by many Charter signatories. If you wish to sign your support for this initiative ahead of the launch, you can do so via the website.

For those of you participating in 'The Flame Tree Project to Save Life on Earth' - <http://tinyurl.com/flametree> - maths professor Tarcisio Praciano-Pereira in Brazil is kindly translating it into Portuguese thus making it available for those of you who prefer to read in that language.

\*\*\*

And finally, as mentioned above, one of our Nonviolence Charter signatories, Antonio C.S. Rosa, who is editor of the TRANSCEND Media Service - <https://www.transcend.org/tms/> - is a survivor of torture in Brazil. At our request, he has courageously and kindly agreed to let us include a few paragraphs of his experience in this report so that we are all reminded of the true horror of the violence that we are working to end in our world: 'As a survivor, it is my duty to denounce to the best of my abilities.' The attached photo is not of Antonio himself but is an accurate representation of his ordeal and that of many others.

The photo has recently been published in Brazil as they remember 50 years since the military ousted elected president João 'Jango' Goulart and installed a dictatorship in a US-sponsored coup. Here is a brief excerpt from Antonio's account:

'In Brazil there is an instrument of torture called "Pau de Arara" (I translate it loosely as The Rack). Arara is a bird, Macaw in English. And "Pau" is the stick where it stands. So the literal translation is Macaw Stand or something like that. It is like this:

'They put me naked, place an iron rod, like a broomstick, behind my knees, tie my hands and feet around it, then lift both ends of the rod to stands on both ends so that I am positioned on a makeshift rack, upside down, by hands and feet tied around it. Like a chicken being roasted in those machines that keep rolling them to be evenly roasted. Is this a clear picture? I wish I could draw the scene but I am not an artist. So, they hang me upside down like that. Then they tie towels around my arms and feet, where the electric cords will be placed. This is because the electric shock directly on the skin would burn and leave marks. And that would be evidence, *corpo de delito*, *corpus delicti* and they could be sued if I showed a judge the marks in my body. So, they leave no marks whatsoever. When they beat people up they send them to the infirmary to be treated to eliminate any marks of torture or beatings. And when they kill the body disappears forever.

'Anyway, they tie the electric cords to my feet, hands and genitals, protected with rags. Sometimes they stick also inside the person's anus, but they didn't do that to me. The cords come from a generator the size of a shoe box, more or less. They hold it in their hand and turn a handle to produce the electric current. Have you seen a Barrel Organ that sells fortune messages with a parakeet? Like that, a crank. This instrument was introduced to Brazil at the time of Pres. Kennedy, through his Alliance for Progress, when Operation Condor started under Henry Kissinger. They wanted to eliminate Communism from Latin America. And I had been arrested as a supposed communist terrorist who had a lot to talk, to sing, as they say. But I didn't [know anything].

'These sessions were always at night, late at night, into the early hours. In a basement where you could scream because nobody would hear. But: they stuck a towel in my mouth, not to bite your tongue, they said. Because the 110-volt current made me lose control of my body and could make me bite my tongue. I remember that when they started the electric shocks, my body became stiff and started getting up in the rod, because it felt like frozen, hardened, and was moving by itself, up, perhaps by contraction of muscles and nerves. And the feeling of the shocks throughout the body is indescribable. I could never find words to describe it. I had some 3 sessions in the +or- 3 weeks that I stayed imprisoned. They keep the current for minutes on end that look like hours. You scream, pass out, want to die....

'You reach a point that fear is replaced with realism. You are at their mercy, hanging upside down, they can squeeze your testicles, stick whatever up your anus, or do anything they want to cause you pain and despair and fear of more to come. Sometimes they put out cigarettes in the body of the prisoner being tortured. Or worse, like removing finger nails with pliers. When the guy is too Mr. Macho, they fucked him in the ass. Or give them water mixed with urine to drink, or spit in their food, or deny toilet paper, or blankets/mattress/clothes at night, or whatever. Use your imagination, as they do; they are very creative. These sorts of

humiliation create terrorists from normal, average persons. It is a logical consequence that stands to reason.

'I am in tears and saying that I have nothing to say; I beg for mercy, I beg with my eyes! The shocks make me faint, at times, and they throw a bucket of water over my body for me to wake up. You can imagine electric current in a wet body. It multiplies manifold. The shock gets to intense, so painful, that you would do anything for them to stop. But I had nothing to say because I was not a terrorist; I was not even a communist, although I was against the military dictatorship implanted in Brazil in the 1964 revolution, which stated the whole thing. Operation Condor. Of course I was against the dictatorship, but I was not a communist. I was a protester, a dissenter, but not a criminal, subversive.'

You have our utmost admiration Antonio both for your courage and your life of dedicated struggle for peace and justice.

\*\*\*

In appreciation of all of your efforts (including all of those not mentioned above)...

For a world without violence.

Con mi solidario abrazo (with our embrace of solidarity); Robert, Anita and Anahata

P.S. This Charter progress report is being emailed, in a sequence of emails, to all signatories of the Nonviolence Charter for whom we have a current email address.

Anita McKone and Robert J. Burrowes

Australia

Email: [flametree@riseup.net](mailto:flametree@riseup.net)

Websites: <http://thepeoplesnonviolencecharter.wordpress.com> (Charter)

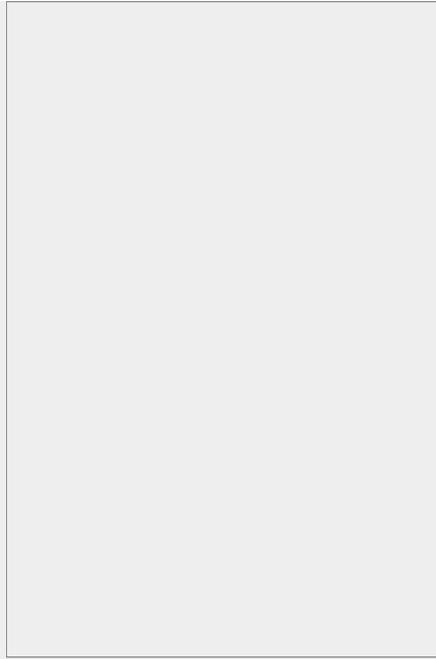
<http://tinyurl.com/flametree> (Flame Tree Project)

<http://tinyurl.com/whyviolence> ('Why Violence?')

<http://anitamckone.wordpress.com> (Songs of Nonviolence)

<http://robertjburrowes.wordpress.com>

CATHOLIC THEORY



## *Catholic Realism and the Abolition of War* by David Cochran

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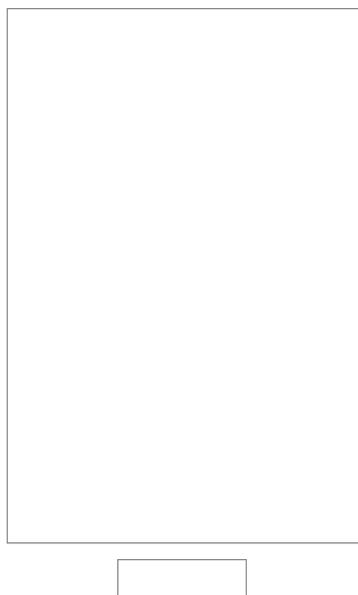
*Argues that the same social forces that have opposed and overturned other modes of violence can also end war.*

Is war an inevitable and inescapable reality of the human condition? While arguments in favor of the judicious use of warfare (such as just war theory) often rely on what seem like "commonsense" or realistic attitudes toward the necessity of violence in an imperfect world, other forms of institutionalized violence, such as vendettas and duels, slavery, and lynching, were also often accepted as commonplace in American society.

Through a gradual and reinforcing process of changing social attitudes as well as public policies, Cochran argues, humanity can move toward the eventual elimination of war as an acceptable form of violence just as it has moved, albeit slowly and unevenly, toward the abolition of these other forms of institutional violence.

*"If the causes of conflict resolution and Christian peacemaking are to gain ground in the coming decades, this progress will depend upon the kind of keen analysis that Cochran offers in this splendid book."--Thomas Massaro, S.J., Dean and Professor of Moral Theology, Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University*

**David Cochran** teaches politics and directs the Archbishop Kucera Center for Catholic Intellectual and Spiritual Life at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. He is co-author of *The Catholic Vote: A Guide for the Perplexed*.



## Just Policing, Not War

### An Alternative Response to World Violence

*Gerald W. Schlabach, Editor; Foreword by Jim Wallis. 2007.*

#### **2008 Catholic Press Association Honorable Mention!**

For decades, the Catholic Church and historical peace churches such as the Mennonites have come together in ecumenical discussions about war and peace. The dividing point has always been between pacifism, the view held by Mennonites and other peace churches, and the just war theory that dominates Catholic thinking on the issue. Given the transformation of global relations over this period—increased interdependency and communication as well as the fall of the Soviet Union, emerging nationalism movements, and the slow development of international courts—the time is right to rethink the Christian response to war.

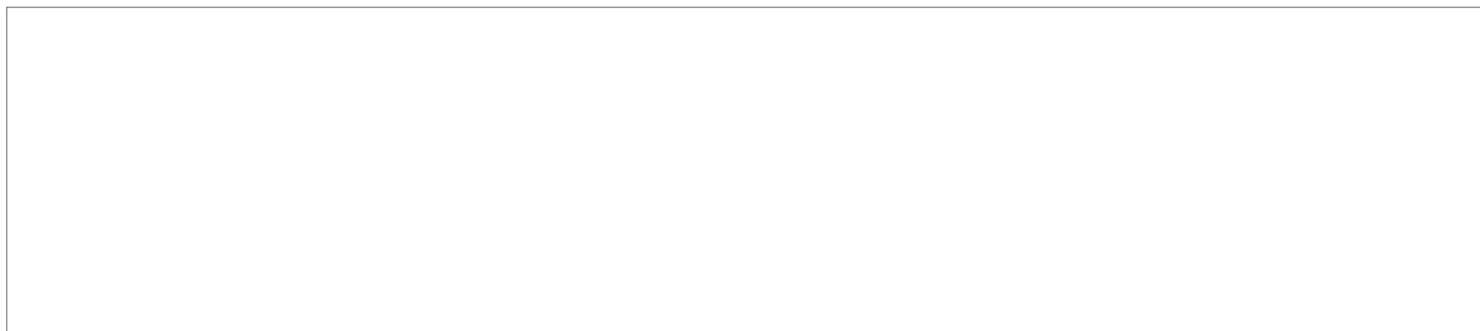
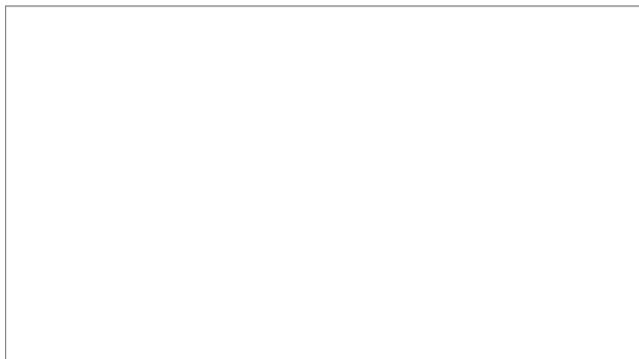
**Gerald Schlabach has proposed just policing theory as a way to narrow the gap between just war and pacifist traditions. If the world can address problems of violence through a police model instead of a conventional military model, there may be a role for Christians from all traditions.** In this volume, Schlabach presents his theory and has invited a number of scholars representing Catholic, Mennonite, and other traditions to respond to the theory and address a number of key questions:

- What do we mean by policing?
- Can policing solve conflicts beyond one's own borders?
- How does just policing theory address terrorism?
- Is international policing possible, and what would it look like?
- Is just policing a Christian solution that meets the criteria of both traditions?

This important volume offers a fresh and meaningful discussion to help Christians of all traditions navigate the difficult questions of how to live in these times of violence and war.

*Gerald W. Schlabach, PhD, is associate professor of theology at the University of St. Thomas*

*in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he teaches courses in social ethics and Christian morality. He has written on topics ranging from peace, social justice, and nonviolence to Augustinian thought, Benedictine spirituality, and the Eucharist.*



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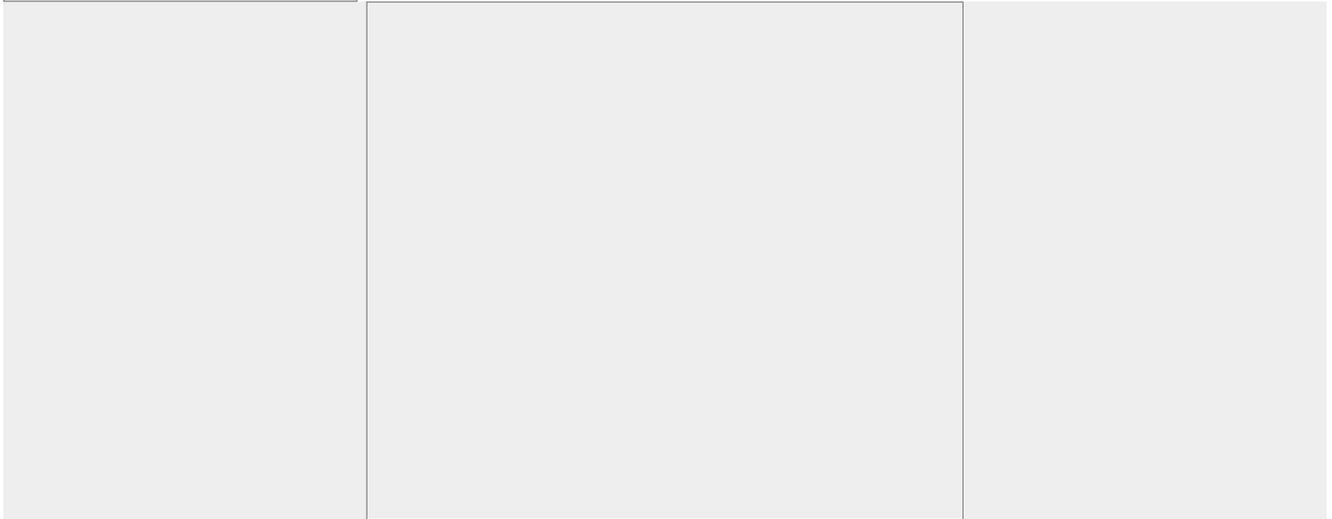
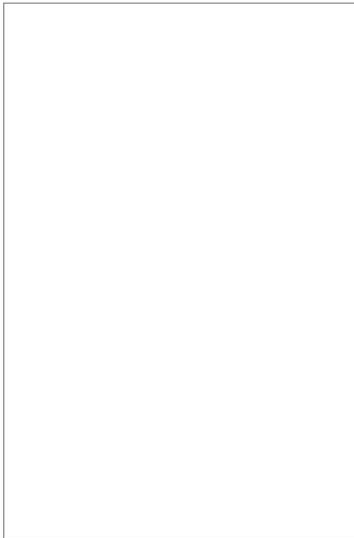
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## BOOK REVIEW: “The Many Sides of Peace” Challenges One to Live Gospel Nonviolence by Brayton Shanley

Posted on [June 11, 2013](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

by **Pat Ferrone,**

**Pax Christi Massachusetts**



Pat Ferrone with Brayton Shanley, author of “The Many Sides of Peace” at Agape

I have a long-standing habit of underlining, or in other ways noting, challenging or profound thoughts expressed in some of the books I read. This initiates a kind of ‘lectio divina’ in which I then reflect on the text and allow it to enhance or alter previously held ideas. Happily, Brayton Shanley’s new book, [The Many Sides of Peace](#) qualified for just such appraisal. Many underlined, notated, starred passages can be found in my copy of his book, elucidating points that hadn’t occurred to me in my years of soul-searching and peacemaking.

Though my bias of friendship with the author should be noted, I insist that this beautifully rendered apologetic for an all-embracing and whole-hearted approach to living Gospel nonviolence, is a 'must-read.' Beginning with the first page, one enters into the company of a veritable Cloud of Witnesses who have resonated with the compelling call of Jesus' radical invitation to "Come follow me..." From the gospels and the prophets arise the words of admonishment and the call to forgiveness and metanoia; from seekers of truth of long-ago history to the present day, we hear voices that ring with authority and insight, reminding us that if we truly desire Peace on Earth, only the means of boundless, nonviolent love will seed this hope and, ultimately, bring about transformation.

In his writing, Brayton never shies away from the observation that these are, indeed, dire times. He in no way avoids the devilry of individual causality, nor the accretions of dominative power built into the very structure of society, which contribute to the bereaved moaning of so many in the global community. He identifies the dead-end approaches we employ to deal with individual enmity and global issues of violence when fear is operative and the means of loving action based on imagination and creativity are abandoned. It is then that we are more likely to acquiesce to the idea that a little violence here, a bit more there, will remedy the evil perpetrated by the treacherous 'other,' the intransigent dictator, the greed of corporate machinations or governmental secrecy and the plague of war.

Brayton's years of immersion in scripture, self-reflection, analysis, and plain hard work, lead him to suggest that this Way blossoms as we align ourselves with the needs of our suffering brothers and sisters, and by fidelity to the holistic means of prayer, study, physical work, protest, and the nurturing of the nonviolent community -always in celebration of the essential goodness of our God-given lives, and of all creation. With clarity, he details the grounded life of nonviolence lived with his wife Suzanne, co-creator with him of the rural, "green," Agape community in western Massachusetts. Guided by the Spirit of the Divine Feminine, and with the energizing company of other truth-seekers and supporters, Brayton presents convincing evidence that a sustained commitment to seeking God's will is possible, and yields much fruit.

There's trust on these pages that slowly by slowly, one will be blessed with the grace and strength to witness to the perfidy and pain of our suffering world, and to participate in its healing. I would suggest that you seek out a copy of the book, published by RESOURCE Publications (Wipf and Stock Publishers), and ponder its thesis. Better yet, read and discuss

it in the company of others committed to peacemaking, as will be done by our Pax Christi MA board, beginning in September.

Originally posted on <http://paxchristiusa.org/2013/06/11/book-review-the-many-sides-of-peace-challenges-one-to-live-gospel-nonviolence/>

## **A History of Nonviolence and Pacifism by MARK KURLANSKY**

REVIEW BY MARK ENGLER. SALON, WEDNESDAY, SEP 13, 2006 06:30 AM CDT

**The author of "Cod" suggests that the world's most dangerous idea could have derailed the American Revolution, the Civil War and possibly even World War II.** [Engler criticizes Kurlansky's commitment to pacifism while finding the book valuable for raising questions seldom heard regarding the necessity of various US wars and the value of pacifism. This is a long review, but I found it very worth reading. –**Dick**]

George Orwell was never much for pacifists. He wrote of his nonviolent political adversaries during World War II: If they “imagine that one can somehow ‘overcome’ the German army by lying on one’s back, let them go on imagining it, but let them also wonder occasionally whether this is not an illusion due to security, too much money and a simple ignorance of the way in which things actually happen.” To Mohandas Gandhi, his Indian contemporary and fellow anti-imperialist, he accorded only a grudging and critical respect. Yet because he viewed many pacifists as specialists in evading unpleasant truths, Orwell did admire Gandhi’s unflinching honesty with regard to the Holocaust: When asked about resistance to the Nazis, Gandhi argued that the Jews should have prepared en masse to sacrifice their lives in nonviolence — something Orwell regarded as “collective suicide” — in order to “[arouse] the world and the people of Germany to Hitler’s violence.”

No doubt Orwell would have been skeptical of the contentions advanced by author **Mark Kurlansky** in his new primer, *“Nonviolence: Twenty-Five Lessons From the History of a Dangerous Idea.”* Compared with the standard histories offered in American public education, these arguments can safely be described as contrarian: “The case can be made that it was not the American Revolution that secured independence from Britain,” Kurlansky writes; “it was not the Civil War that freed the slaves; and World War II did not save the Jews.”

“For every Crusade and Revolution and Civil War,” he explains further, “there have always been those who argued, with great clarity, that violence not only was immoral but that it was even a less effective means of achieving laudable goals.” Joining the chorus of dissidents, Kurlansky attempts to shed light on the epic failures of warfare to secure peace, as well as to

cultivate a new understanding of “the way in which things actually happen” in history.

Author of previous works including “*Salt: A World History*” and “*Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World*,” Kurlansky has established himself as a pioneer in the field of micro-history, producing idiosyncratic investigations into small topics that bloom into tales of broad general interest. In his new book, he shows a command of a sweeping body of **pacifist history**, and he makes centuries of material flow into an overview that is far more combative than its protagonists’ peaceful ways might suggest.

A standard narrative of nonviolence as a modern political instrument — especially in the United States — might start around the time of Henry David Thoreau, who, sitting in jail for war tax resistance, first argued that civil disobedience could undermine the legitimacy of the state and provoke a crisis in governance. The story might mention “peace churches” like those of the Quakers and their creation of a pacifist way of life based on Jesus’ teachings. But it would soon rush forward to figures like Gandhi, who pioneered the strategy of how to apply nonviolent disruption on a mass scale, and to Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi’s most famous American importer.

In Kurlansky’s history, however, Jesus himself is a relative latecomer to the scene. Well before him there appear individuals like **Mozi**, the Chinese rebel-philosopher who lived from about 470 to 390 B.C. Mozi was an opponent of Confucius who championed the concept of “mutual love” and was exasperated by the prevalence of warfare: “To kill one man is to be guilty of a capital crime to kill a hundred men is to increase it a hundred-fold,” he argued. “This the rulers of the earth all recognize and yet when it comes to the greatest crime — waging war on another state — they praise it!”

Kurlansky spends the bulk of his short book progressing **from ancient China to the dawn of the 20th century**, profiling groups that rejected the “ideology of warfare.” The ranks of the war resisters include early Christians, the French Cathars, Protestants like the Anabaptists, Mennonites and Quakers, white Americans in the abolitionist movement (African-Americans tended to be more open to supporting violent slave rebellions), and the international peace organizations of the 19th century.

Statements of **nonviolent doctrine appear in each of the major world religions**, and Kurlansky prepares a succinct and useful survey of them. The Hindu principle of “ahimsa,” or “not doing harm,” is an old tenet that Gandhi would later find significant and that is taken to extremes by the Jainists, who “keep their mouths masked to insure that they do not accidentally inhale a tiny insect.” Kindred sentiments range from Buddhist prohibitions on taking life, to Taoism’s invocations of water wearing away stone, to Mohammed’s complete ban on violence in his model society at Mecca, to Moses’ “Thou shalt not kill” and Jesus’ “Turn the other cheek.”

Early on in the book the distinction between two closely related ideas, **pacifism and nonviolence**, becomes important. “Pacifism is passive,” Kurlansky acknowledges; it is a “state of mind” that rejects war and aggression. “Nonviolence, exactly like violence, is a means of persuasion, a technique for political activism, a recipe for prevailing”; it uses tactics such as marches, boycotts, strikes and sit-ins to provoke social conflict to advance a cause. The author purports to be concerned with the latter. But in fact the groups he traces are generally active only in the sense that they might preach against war and face sometimes severe persecution for their refusal to take up arms. They are not nonviolent in the manner of the lunch-counter sit-ins of the civil rights movement, which forced a confrontation around desegregation.

By the end of the book, it's clear that **Kurlansky himself is a pacifist**, although he never admits it outright. While he may well be supportive of active nonviolence, time and again his attention returns to pacifism. His primary concern is to “end war” in toto, not to use nonviolent persuasion to advance other causes. **Tactical innovators in nonviolence consistently receive short shrift**: Thoreau is among the many theorists he mentions only in passing. Gandhi and Martin Luther King receive just a few pages each, and it would be difficult for a reader to understand their distinctive contributions. The subtitle's promise of a tutorial notwithstanding (Kurlansky's “25 lessons” are scattered throughout the text and only enumerated explicitly in an appendix), there is little in the book of concrete usefulness for a modern-day practitioner of nonviolence seeking to engage in creative social disruption.

The book has rather more to offer a conscientious objector heading for a draft interview. Kurlansky can be heavy-handed at times, especially when he's drawing parallels between his lessons from history and our present state of war. (When he uses historical examples to show that warmongers will inevitably denounce nonviolent critics as immoral traitors and will always claim to have God on their side, the implications for today are plenty clear without him calling out Karl Rove and President Bush by name.) Yet Kurlansky can also be a compelling narrator, willing to dive into age-old debates without intellectual hesitation. **At the core of “Nonviolence”** lies a series of “What if?” scenarios questioning whether the major wars of U.S. history might have been averted. Many of the book's arguments were famously foreshadowed 25 years ago in **Howard Zinn's war-resister-friendly “A People's History of the United States.”** Still, they remain rare and relevant in our current political discussion. Once the guns start firing, Kurlansky observes, debate about the necessity of a war ceases, at least for a time. To that we can add: Once a war is enshrined and justified in the history textbooks, popular reappraisal will be long in coming.

**The American Revolution, from the pacifist's perspective**, “was a brutal civil conflict” where “[c]ivilians would run in terror at the approach of either army. Homes were sacked and women were raped.” Worse yet, it was arguably superfluous. As John Adams wrote to Thomas Jefferson years afterward, “The revolution was in the minds of the people, and in the union of the colonies, both of which were accomplished before the hostilities commenced.” Kurlansky concludes from this that colonists could have expelled the British by continuing a

program of nonviolent protests and acts of economic resistance like the Boston Tea Party.

The same quotes from Adams appeared not long ago in Jonathan Schell's "The Unconquerable World," although Schell used them only to say that, since the revolution had been completed before military engagement commenced, the war was therefore one of self-defense against recolonization. Kurlansky goes much further in suggesting that the war was altogether unnecessary. This is a bold proposition, something that could no doubt keep a conference of historians indoors debating through a sunny weekend. But it is also an important challenge to America's founding myth, opening the door for a wider reinterpretation of who we are, and what we might become, as a nation.

Kurlansky goes on to take issue with the idea that **the Civil War** was an effective means of ending slavery. The Union Army, of course, did not set out to free the slaves. Such a cause would not have been well received in the North as a justification for the conflict. President Lincoln pronounced that his objective was "not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it." When the Emancipation Proclamation finally came, it cynically applied only to rebel territory and not to border states within the Union that permitted slavery, like Maryland. Could the abolitionist movement of Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison have won a more decisive end to slavery without the war? We can't know. It is worth noting, though, that the freedom ultimately afforded to Southern blacks by the war proved limited, and it took a nonviolent movement, a century later, to secure any genuine protection for their basic civil rights.

As a rejoinder to pacifism, no one is cited more frequently than Hitler. But even with regard to **World War II** Kurlansky makes some provocative proposals. The claim that the war was launched to stop the Holocaust only became widespread years after the war ended. "Neither Roosevelt, Churchill, nor most of all Stalin wanted to make the war about saving the Jews," Kurlansky writes, "because, as with freeing the slaves, going to war to save the Jews would not have been popular." Despite urgings from groups like the Jewish Agency for Palestine, Allied leaders refused to bomb the rail lines leading to Auschwitz because, they said, "We have a war to win."

It's not hard to think of objections to Kurlansky's reading of this war. He argues that nonviolent resistance in Denmark proved far more effective at saving Jews than did militaristic uprisings in other countries. True, the Germans succeeded in deporting only about 400 of Denmark's 6,000 Jews, while in the Netherlands, where there was armed resistance, over 100,000 members of a Jewish community of 140,000 were killed. But certainly the Nazis might have made a more concerted effort if the Danish had a larger Jewish population — and if their army was not preoccupied with fighting a war on multiple fronts. Moreover, Kurlansky contends that only in the isolation and brutality of wartime did Hitler launch the "final solution"; he had previously entertained ideas of merely deporting all Jews to Madagascar. Be this as it may, it remains fanciful to think that the fate of Jewish Europeans would have been rosy had fascism progressed unchecked by military force.

What is missing from the book is just the sort of reckoning with the price of nonviolence that Orwell respected in Gandhi. "If you are not prepared to take a life, you must often be prepared for lives to be lost in some other way," Orwell wrote. Yet Kurlansky ultimately dodges the question of how the spread of fascism could have been stopped without the force of arms. He never sketches a strategy of nonviolent resistance that might have sacrificed many thousands of lives to stop the Nazis. Absent this, the alternate history he implies seems unrealistically bloodless in a way that hard-nosed advocacy of nonviolence need not be. After all, the war itself required millions of sacrificed lives and also ushered in the age of nuclear war. However grotesque the demands of nonviolence might be, they might still compare favorably.

**Kurlansky's arguments are valuable** not because they are always airtight, but rather because such contentions are rarely considered at all. It would never cross the minds of most Americans to question the necessity of the patriots taking up arms against the British or U.S. soldiers landing on the beaches of Normandy. Given that our government was all too easily able to obtain support for launching its current war, and that Iraq is unlikely to be our last military adventure of the 21st century, this is surely a costly failure of imagination.

*Mark Engler, a writer based in New York City, is an analyst with Foreign Policy In Focus. He can be reached via the web site <http://www.democracyuprising.com>.*

## TOLSTOY

### **Count Leo Tolstoy, We Need Your Voice Today!**

By John Scales Avery <http://www.countercurrents.org/>

What would Tolstoy say about the 1,700,000,000,000.00 dollars which the world spends each year on armaments while 11 million children die each year from poverty and starvation? What would Tolstoy say about the illegal war that ruined Iraq, smashing its infrastructure, killing a million innocent people, displacing two million Iraqis, and forcing two million more to flee as refugees?

### **Another 'Palestinian Gandhi' Ignored by U.S. Media**

Posted on [07/18/2012](http://www.democracyuprising.com) by [Chad Rosenbloom](http://www.democracyuprising.com)

In recent years, corporate media [pundits](#) like Tom Friedman and Nicholas Kristof have expressed deep concern over what they claim is a lack of peaceful elements within the Palestinian resistance to the 44-year Israeli occupation. Where is the "[Palestinian Gandhi](#)" who could inspire the violent Arab masses to lay down their weapons and pursue a more

virtuous path to freedom (**FAIR Blog**, [2/17/12](#))?

Either the many examples of Palestinians successfully using nonviolent direct action to confront their occupiers have gone unnoticed or are being deliberately ignored in mainstream reports. Another amazing victory for peaceful resistance occurred last Tuesday, when Palestinian professional soccer player **Mahmoud Sarsak** was released from Israeli prison after a three-month hunger strike.

Sarsak had been imprisoned for three years without charge or trial, based on a claim by the Israeli security forces that he was a member of Islamic Jihad. He was subjected to "administrative detention"—imprisonment without trial—when Israeli authorities failed to produce enough evidence to formally prosecute him.

Sarsak's release came several months after 33-year-old baker Khader Adnan also won his freedom after a hunger strike.

Despite the pundits' assurances that a nonviolent Palestinian movement would attract journalists' attention, Sarsak's release—like Adnan's—received little attention in U.S. corporate media. According to a search of the Nexis news database, his release was not mentioned on television. In fact the only U.S. publication that mentioned Sarsak's release was the **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette** (7/10/12), which gave the story a few sentences in a news brief feature in the Sports section.

And here's how that article—based on an **AP** [dispatch](#)—introduced the case:

Dozens of Islamic militants fired rifles in the air today in a rousing homecoming for a member of the Palestinian national soccer team who was released by Israel after being held for three years without formal charges.

Rather than stressing the fact that Sarsak was illegally detained like so many other Palestinians, the **Post-Gazette's** wire dispatch evokes an image of violent militants welcoming home one of their released comrades.

If the **corporate media** have truly been waiting for examples of peaceful Palestinian resistance to embrace, than why have Sarsak's case and the many other instances of individuals nonviolently risking their lives for national liberation been essentially ignored? **From the West Bank village of Budrus to the deep recesses of Israeli jails, literally**

thousands of Palestinians have rejected violence as the most effective means by which to fight the apartheid structure that has divided and oppressed them for decades. But establishment media in the U.S. clearly do not find what Sarsak called the "revolution of empty stomachs" newsworthy.

## SYRIA

[See the many articles by Mohja Kahf in OMNI's Syria Newsletters. –Dick]

By [Contributor](#) on February 10, 2014

### **“Practicing Nonviolence in Syria” by Zack Baddorf**

*This article is from the Dec. 2013/Jan. 2014 double issue of The Progressive. For more great content like this, [subscribe today](#) and get a whole year of the magazine for as little as \$10. -----*

The Syrian revolution started with these simple words: “The people want the regime to fall.” Fifteen schoolchildren painted this anti-regime mantra on a wall in the Syrian city of Dara’a in March 2011. Syrian President Bashar al Assad’s forces arrested them all, prompting Syrians to hold nonviolent protests across the country. The army responded with force, and eventually the revolution turned violent, with rebels taking up arms to defend themselves and try to take down Assad. But not everyone abandoned nonviolence. Some Syrian activists inside and outside of their homeland still remain committed to it. “We believe that speaking loudly is stronger than using any weapons,” says Omar Assil, the awareness program manager for the Syrian Nonviolence Movement, which coordinates peaceful activities and civil resistance throughout Syria. The movement has run campaigns throughout Syria that allow people to stand up against the powerful military elements in their areas, be they radical Islamists or Assad’s troops. The “Dignity Strikes” campaign, for example, allowed Syrians to pick activities that they could do without putting themselves in danger. Some Syrians protested by gathering at a central place and wearing a certain color. Others attempted to block a street. Some people banged on kitchen pots. These nonviolent tactics may not sound like they will have much effect on stopping the war, but activist Alaa Zaza says they are crucial. “We believe the change in Syria that is required is not just toppling the regime or replacing the regime with another dictator or another system that is going to violate human rights,” he tells me at a café in Gaziantep, Turkey, just a short drive from the Syrian border. What they don’t need is “a new regime, with a different name but the same behavior.” As vice president of the nonviolence organization, Zaza lives outside his homeland but returns as often as he can. With his background in child psychology, he leads a child protection program inside Syria. He also works to educate people about how they can use nonviolence to fight the regime. Given the pervading violence and the high risk of being targeted, Syrians find unconventional ways to

participate in this peace movement. Some are working as citizen journalists; others are organizing themselves in youth groups. “Even if it seems like there is no impact, all these [changes] are building up inside the community, inside the society,” Assil says. “What we want in the first place is achieving democracy, human rights, and real rights, and this will not happen immediately.” Getting people to fight without weapons during an ongoing military conflict has been tough. “It is very difficult and challenging to talk about these things in a time of war because people will say, ‘We are being shelled and killed,’ ” says Assil. “But in the long term, it has an impact.” Zaza argues that violence will never allow Syrians to be victorious. “The regime strategy is to push people into violence because that’s where the regime can control things,” Zaza says. “Violence means more space and more room and more power for the regime because it is stronger in terms of weapons and the external support it gets.” As the war continues, the rebels are losing ground militarily, and people continue to be killed and injured every day. Syrians are “desperate for real change,” Assil says. “They haven’t seen the progress that they want to see.” As a result, the activists say more people are starting to shift toward nonviolence. For example, in areas held by Al Qaeda-linked militant groups, activists are using nonviolent methods—like refusing to sell goods to the militants—instead of taking up arms. “There is now a culture, even though it’s not that influential, a culture of nonviolence that did not exist before,” Zaza says. Like the other nonviolent activists, Zaza says he expects the conflict will eventually end with both sides sitting down to negotiate. He said they should do so as soon as possible in order to save lives. “If not now, if after twenty years, if after twenty million people killed, they will eventually sit down and talk,” he says. Taking the nonviolent route, he says, “is not easy and will never be easy,” but he notes that the use of massive violence so far hasn’t worked, either. And Assil points out that the practice of nonviolence will be essential in rebuilding civil society after the war. “Even if the regime is gone today, there is still more work to do,” he says. “It will not be a bright country overnight.”

----- Zack Baddorf is a freelance reporter based in Brooklyn. He’s a military veteran with ten years of video, radio, print, photo, and web reporting in more than thirty countries. Photo: [Dona Bozzi / Shutterstock.com](#).

- See more at: <http://www.progressive.org/news/2014/02/186966/practicing-nonviolence-syria#sthash.T36cynh8.dpuf>

**Syrian Nonviolence Movement** English Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/SyrainNonviolence>

Website: <http://www.alharak.org/>

SNVM Arabic Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/al7rak.assilmi?fref=ts>

**Syrian Nonviolence Movement was established in April, 2011, by a group of Syrians who believe in nonviolent struggle and civil resistance as a principle and method in achieving social, cultural, and political change in Syrian society.**

## UKRAINE

STEPHEN ZUNES

Here is a recent article I co-authored with strategic analyst Erica Chenoweth in which we examine recent nonviolent action against Russian aggrandizement in eastern Ukraine and Crimea and how an escalation of such popular resistance could help avoid additional violence and defuse the crisis: [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/05/28/a\\_nonviolent\\_alternative\\_for\\_ukraine](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/05/28/a_nonviolent_alternative_for_ukraine)

You can also check out two other recent articles of mine from this past March: an earlier article on Ukraine <http://fpif.org/straight-talk-u-s-ukraine/> and another on the broader phenomenon of nonviolent resistance <http://www.ozy.com/c-notes/a-force-more-powerful-than-war-nonviolent-resistance/30051.article>

Links to other articles of mine--covering such topics as the Middle East, U.S. foreign policy, human rights issues, and more--can be found at: <http://stephenzunes.org/publications/>

Please feel free to forward this on to others and invite them to contact me about being on my email list. And please let me know if you no longer wish to be on my email list.

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Dick Bennett

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