

## How to End War

by Skip Schiel

*Right: Interfaith pilgrimage from Auschwitz to Hiroshima. Walking through winter in Poland, December 1994. Photo by Skip Schiel.*



Mahatma Gandhi spoke of the *peace army*, a collection of people dedicated to bringing justice and ending conflict by nonviolent means. My proposal for ending war—a modest proposal that needs to be joined with other proposals, the best of them to be enacted—is to improve the imagery of peace and peacemaking, to encourage people to join the *army of peace*.

Consider war, armies and fleets, soldiers and sailors and aviators, and the images attached to them. Beautifully crafted weapons, some of them works of art. Attractive uniforms. A system of training that is rigorous and thoughtful. The opportunity to be courageous, giving one's life for an overarching principle. Honors that many respect. Research into new ways of combat, making use of innovative technologies and strategies.

Consider peace and peacemaking, its images. The universal peace sign, derived from the semaphore signals for *N* and *D*, nuclear disarmament. The peace crane folded from origami paper. The story of the young Hiroshima girl that gave rise to the peace crane story, Sadako. The stellar peacemakers, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Dan Berrigan, Dorothy Day, Jane Adams among them. June 12, 1982, the one-million-strong peace march in New York City. The peace pagodas of the Japanese Buddhist order, Nipponzan Myohoji. And the history of the peace movement, beginning in the 1840's, cresting in the late 1980's, current condition unclear.

Many of these images of peace are known only to a relatively small number of people. Whereas the camouflage uniform is known universally, as is the automatic rifle. And both probably inspire awe and a form of respect around the world.

My proposal is simply to design and propagate images of peace. Songs, stories, visuals that easily cross national and ethnic and age borders, that permeate consciousness, that inspire and lead. John Lennon wrote "Imagine," the song lives on. Bread and Puppet Theater end their pageants with the huge white flying birds. Eugene Smith, a preeminent American photographer, made a picture of his two children emerging into the light, holding hands. Another photographer, Edward Steichen, composed the photo exhibit and book that includes Smith's photo, *The Family of Man*.

# Types & Shadows

JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF QUAKERS IN THE ARTS

Issue #2, Summer 1996

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Recently, many made pilgrimages to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War Two, reflecting on its violence by being at war-related sites and by meeting people affected by the war. Auschwitz, Southeast Asia, Japan, as well as regions of contemporary violence—the Balkans, Cambodia, Iraq, India, the United States of America. Several hundred made the pilgrimages. Many thousands met the pilgrims, greeting and hosting them. And thousands of others were in support communities for the individual participants. The endeavor serves as a powerful image for peace. One by one, walking, praying, risking comforts and lives in this deep action for peace.

Swords into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks, the tools of war into the tools of life. New images, new ways of being.

*Skip Schiel is a photographer and a member of Cambridge (MA) MM. In 1995 he participated in an interfaith pilgrimage from Auschwitz to Hiroshima sponsored by the Japanese Buddhist order Nipponzan Myohoji as well as the Dhammayietra, an annual walk for peace and reconciliation in Cambodia, and has created slide shows about both.*

A selection of Skip Schiel's photographs on this and other subjects may be found on his web site, [Photography of Skip Schiel](#)

**Ashes & Light**, a compilation of journal extracts, poems and reflections by the pilgrims, including some of Skip's photographs, may be ordered from:

Nipponzan Myohoji, Peace Pagoda,  
100 Cave Hill Rd., Leverett MA 01054.  
phone 413-367-2202, fax 413-367-9369.

*Cost is \$5.00 plus shipping (\$2.00 domestic, \$3.00 foreign for up to 5 copies). Make checks to Nipponzan Myohoji, earmarked "Ashes and Light".*

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*Types & Shadows* is published quarterly by the Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts. Subscriptions are available through membership in the FQA.

This page revised July 2001