

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*.

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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COUNTERPOINT by Esther Mürer

Art and the Lamb's War

In a 1972 essay in *Quaker Religious Thought*, Candida Palmer asks how a Quaker spirituality of the arts might be grounded in early Quaker thought. A major difficulty, as she sees it, is that "there appears to be no Quaker doctrine that tension is germane, even necessary, to human existence and to life itself." She goes on:

There can be no doubt about the *destructive* forces of tension and conflict, whether leading to serious doctrinal schisms, or to bodily ills in individuals, to warfare, or to hopelessness and negativism....Perhaps the artist more clearly than others explores and utilizes the *creative* possibilities of tension—the necessity and desirability of *conflict*, which are the warp and woof of his work, his matrix.

In my own work the discipline of accepting, and challenging, the limits of an artistic medium means that on a formal plane I am continually called to reconcile the irreconcilable. As a literary translator, for example, I strive to be as faithful as possible both to the letter and to the spirit of the original—aims which often seem mutually exclusive. Whatever medium I'm working in, the struggle to unify seemingly antagonistic elements—to get the lion to lie down with the lamb—is at the heart of the process, inherent in the work itself.

I wonder, though, if it could be argued that early Friends *did* recognize the positive function of conflict. The *Lamb's War* of 17th-century Quakerism is worth pondering in this regard. This war was first a inner battle in which one's whole being was to be brought under the rule of the Inward Teacher. Once this was accomplished, one could not help but carry the battle out into the social order, in an attempt to bring others to abandon hypocritical "forms without power" for a Spirit-led way of living. But the inner battle had to come first.

Friends stressed that the weapons in this war were not "carnal" but spiritual. We sometimes forget that the declaration to Charles II says, "We utterly deny all *outward* wars and strife." We might say, then, that our forebears' radically holistic vision derived its energy from the recognition that conflict *can* be a creative force—so long as the weapons are spiritual ones. What a tragedy that they couldn't see a positive role for the arts!

In recent decades the attempt to banish militaristic imagery from our language and thought has become fashionable. It is dangerous to suppose that by suppressing all mention of the existence

of conflict we can thereby reduce the sum of violence. A more likely outcome is that we will dull our awareness that the weapons of the Spirit are given to us to be used, and used creatively, against the death-worshipping tendencies within our culture and ourselves.

By the end of the 17th century the Lamb's War had run out of steam. This failure has haunted us ever since. Might things have been different if Friends had understood the vital role of the arts in embodying the creative uses of conflict? What can we do to foster this understanding today?

Queries

What roles, positive and negative, do conflict and tension play in your work?

Do you see any parallels between the Lamb's War and your own road as an artist?

What is the relation between the Muse and the Inward Teacher?

What struggle have you experienced in trying to bring your life under its rule?

How are the inward and outward aspects of the struggle related for you? Is the outward dependent on the inward, or not?

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Creating a Space

by Doris Pulone

Many Monthly Meetings claim to support and nourish the arts, but all too rarely make space or time available for the nourishment of those members who derive their own spirituality from it.

Happily there are those who do. Mount Holly Meeting has not only hosted arts events—Musica Antiqua, children's art workshops, art shows—at the Meetinghouse for years, but has minuted its support for artists and art in our midst. The Outreach Committee has used the arts continually to "raise the creative spirit" and in the process attract people to Quakerism.

Mount Holly Meeting's annual "Celebrating Our Diversity" Cultural Festival began in 1993 with four weekends of music, dance, visual arts, and drama, all representing different cultures and all local. The idea of Outreach Committee member Al Thorp, it was carried to fruition by the Committee with some help from the Meeting and a \$1500 grant from the Burlington County Cultural and Heritage Department and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. There were professional and amateur performers, including Friends Theatre Group; an art show by the Fellowship of Quaker Artists; Delaware-Lenape Traditional Dancers; Keiko Chou on the Japanese koto; a Tai Chi demonstration; Dances of Universal Peace; and Italian folk stories, to name just a few events. Many people met and experienced each other's art.

The festival has since been scaled down. This year it was held on Thursday morning, May 23. It featured Sondra Ball of Mickleton MM telling stories from Native American nations; Mlanjeni's Magical Theatre, an African illusions act; and John Woolman as Master of Ceremonies (Steve Gulick of Central Philadelphia MM). Forty children from Mount Holly public elementary school and forty from Rancocas Friends School enjoyed the morning together, and said goodbye in dance as Jeanne Iyasha Lauenborg led them in Dances of Universal Peace.

Another ongoing happening is the "Long Gone Coffeehouse" which was begun in 1994 and pops up for 4 or 5 months at a time before breaks. On the last Friday of each month the surrounding community (and beyond) flooded into the Meetinghouse. Refreshments were given for the price of admission but coffee was sold to cover costs. The community not only came out to socialize



AFTER AN UNSUCCESSFUL TRY AT COUNTRY MUSIC,
JOHN WOOLMAN BECAME A PREACHER.

and hear the poets, but also brought refreshments and helped with the coffee and cleanup. Friends from various Monthly Meetings came to sing, read their poetry, play guitar or just be there. Groups, individuals, young and old from the surrounding community came out to share their talents and love.

The arts truly can bring people together.

Looking around at a crowd of people, many of whom did not know one another, but whose eyes were filling with tears while listening to Sheila Truncellito (Crosswicks MM) tell a story of old love, I felt oneness. It was a crowd of young and old, streetsleepers and doctors, poets and dreamers. It was good.

Doris Pulone is a charter member of FQA and former coordinator of Burlington Quarter, Philadelphia YM.

*Jeff Hinkle, of Albany (NY) MM, is the author of **'Tis a Gift to Be Simple**, a book of Quaker cartoons. Drawings by Jennifer Snow Wolff.*

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