

# ENVISION THAT PEACE, NOT WAR IS INEVITABLE



## FROM PAGE 11

suggestion. Whether we acknowledge it, we will war to happen. Yet, if the human species can gear itself for war, it can do likewise for peace. Contrary to the assumed inevitability of war, a world without war is inevitable by substituting the inevitability of peace. This notion may seem oversimplified, but its logic compels me to make a committed effort to go beyond merely protesting a war here and there into the realm of total pacifism.

In a sense my life as a handicapped individual (I have cerebral palsy) and its physical limitations have shown me two truths which are somewhat analogous to the dynamics of peace and war. The first is that no matter how things appear, there are always different options available. The second truth is that if one is not prepared or ready for a course of action, one is likely to back down from pursuit of it in favor of another option. For example, I do not speak very clearly so if I wish to communicate my ideas with any degree of cogency I turn to writing. Of course there is the possibility I might be a writer anyway, but I strongly suspect that whatever artistic skills and inclinations I possess would be expressed in woodworking and the like if I had manual dexterity. In possession of a computer I am nearly mute in favor of expressing myself writing. Not only do I have options, I am forced to utilize whatever creativity I have to be anything other than unsuccessful. This is of course no less and no more than the argument conservatives use when they advocate slashing the various budgets to lifegiving humanitarian programs.

To establish the relevancy of this line of thought to the topic of world peace, perhaps the most valuable step we could take to put a halt in our involvement in warfare would be to dismantle all military arms. Naturally, we would be more vulnerable to armed assault and military conquest, but not only would our national position as a power threat be drastically reduced, if not eliminated, we would also be forced to negotiate peace just to survive — because of being prepared for peace, not war. Our way of thinking and acting would be the attitude and mien of getting along and avoiding trouble with each other. The occurrence of violent conflict would probably be minimal and warfare would be a detestable obscurity, if not nonexistent, instead of the glorious necessity we presently believe it to be.

Were we not prepared for war our heroes and idols would be peacemakers. Deserters would be rewarded for pursuit of life instead of death. Under such conditions the label *coward* might apply to those who do have the fortitude to keep peace rather than those who have the common sense to avoid the position of having to kill or be killed. The value of valor would be affixed the premium of courage in the face of life and its enrichment, not in the way one dies or how many people one kills.

Military weakness or unpreparedness would provide us with opportunities to attain the status of a peaceful coexistence in a world society, a global setting, by means of utilizing our always available natural tools of peace instead of depleting the planet's material resources to force peace by means of demonstrating our powers of destruction, powers so developed they possess the potential to annihilate life as we know it.

If the relatively new optimistic viewpoint in me is correct in its assumption that evolved humanity has only to combine its original and not entirely forgotten or ignored instinctive awareness of its relationship to the awesome core of existence and everything that emerges therein with its ability to wrought a more rapid change in the ongoing and endless dynamics of evolutionary process toward an ever improving state, then my former bleak view of human endeavor as an inevitably dead-ended route of destruction and ultimate obliteration has been replaced with the still barely flickering ray of hope that the present brink of annihilation toward which the human species is rushing dragging terrestrial vitality will be avoided for the duration of time. The inevitability of peace is inextricably linked to the ray of hope, for without the condition of hope the will power for peace will perish and so will peace itself. This is because peace is not peace unless it is lasting, unless it is forever.

One of the reasons why the scourge of war is easier than the road of peace (as a result more socially acceptable) is that, however bloody it is, it is only temporary and does not challenge our minuscule imaginations or expand our limits of will power. It is often said that nobody wants war but that it is sometimes necessary. And by the same token the people who make that claim also intimate that peace is *blessed* but not for the *real world*. But what seems absolutely absurd to me is the supreme sacrifices most people make for war or in behalf of war or because of war, but not in behalf of the peace they claim to long for. I believe that the hope for peace lies in persuading the populace that peace is available and that its price is much less than that of war. Even if one dies as a result of nonviolent struggle, its price is less than that of dying in armed conflict. For example (to clarify my position here), I may or may not possess the courage to follow through with this line of thinking but since I know I must die sometime, I cannot imagine a nobler way of doing so than by peacefully protesting an atrocity of some kind (like war), and such a death would be infinitely more preferable than dying while engaged in snuffing out life.

In my view, war is legalized mass murder and as such, should and can be peacefully banished from the face of the earth forever. Words are more easily said than the act can be done, but the task is possible and its problems are surmountable. No doubt historians and other experientialists will disavow the possibility of such a banishment based on the fact that all previous attempts have failed. They will probably declare that military force is the only means of guaranteeing peace on earth and even that is open to extreme doubt. But force is not the road to peace; it has always failed. Love and the value of love is the only road to peace. Only love of all existence and the act of existing will enable us to make the commitment necessary to take the abuse that one must peacefully accept and confront in working for global peace.

Far from being a new idea, the struggle for peace has been advocated and tried for thousands of years with a certain amount of temporary success by strongwilled leaders and dedi-

cated, responsible and highly sensitive disciples who recognize the inherent weakness in a status quo ruled and protected by military order and strength, tyranny and other manifestations of oppression and violence, all of which constitute war.

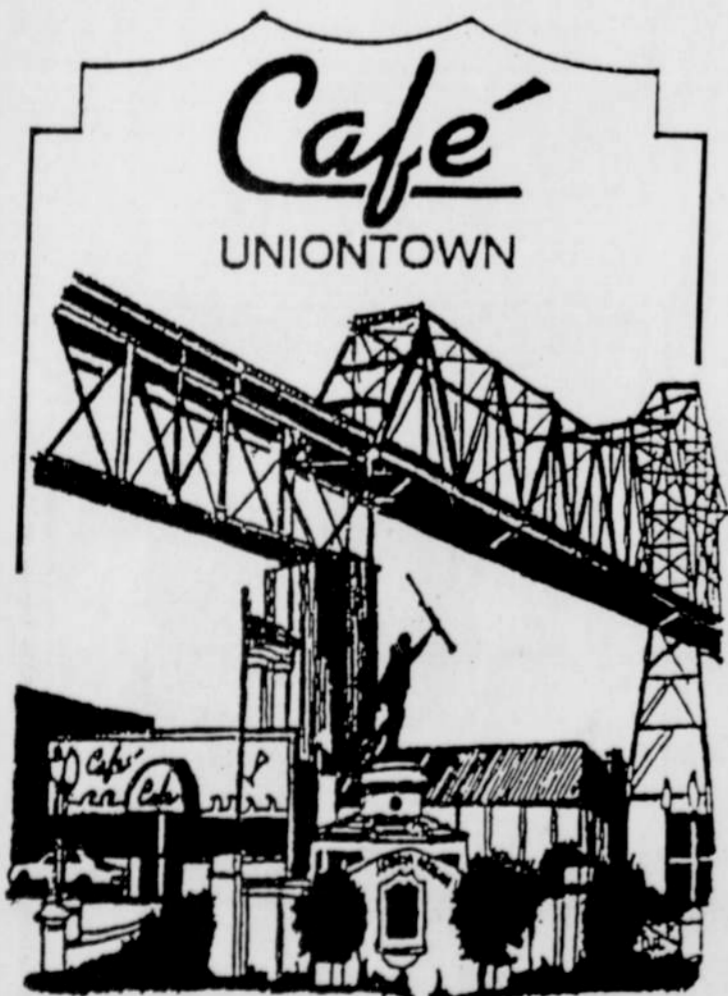
I am reluctant but willing to risk ridicule by historians and the like to espouse the doctrine of global peace which is crucial to the whole issue of arriving at an eventual and viable state of nonwarfare on earth and has been advocated throughout the ages by truly enlightened and inspiring individuals. I reiterate I am not a Christian and do not pretend to accept or understand the notion of a 'savior,' yet even though his followers have committed nearly every conceivable act of violence and atrocity in his name, I have to acknowledge the peace message of Jesus to be extremely effective in promulgating *brotherly* (and surely *sisterly*) love and *peace on earth* as an ideal. The problem is that once the executed rabble-rouser attained the status of son of God peace took a silent and holy trip to Heaven where it has since remained apparently indifferent to devout armed crusaders faithfully awaiting the final resurrection so they could cease their eternally senseless killing.

My lack of scholarliness prevents me from knowing of the existence of any records of a promoter of world peace in either East or West prior to Jesus. However, in India where some biblical scholars conjecture Jesus garnered much of his spiritual learning, Buddha and his disciples had long taught the notion that one finds peace within oneself with the result one pursues a peaceful life. Because Eastern religion, mythology and thought developed and remains steeped in organic myth and symbol and also polytheism (and never developed the Hebraic monotheistic view of existence which elevates humanity to a superior plain in its self-image and thereby achieves defacto segregation from the rest of existence), the Orient, notwithstanding its own set of problems, did not lose its umbilical connection to the extent that the Occident has. The result is a more accepting and placid view, a less aggressive and zealous approach, and a not so compelling desire for immediate conquest or rash decisions or results of any kind: all things happen in their own time.

During my youth the greatest peaceful resister of them all dazzled the world with his nonviolent liberation of India from British colonial rule. Mahatma Gandhi's actions should have taught our leaders something about nonviolent behavior, especially if their motives are as moral as they claim. Although most of the world's leaders appear to not have learned a thing, many global citizens have successfully implemented those tactics in a variety of protests. The slow but ultimately successful halt of the Vietnam War as well as the civil rights impact on American consciousness are only two examples. As if to speed up the passage of time between acts of civil disobedience on a massive level, Gandhi's tactics were emulated by Martin Luther King Jr., and contrary to what I and thousands of street radicals believed at the time, ultimately proved more effective achieving racial desegregation than the violent acts of retaliation against whites by the militant factions of the American black community. Whether or not King's movement would have achieved such far reaching success had the violence not terrorized whites (as most historians, including me until recently, might claim), the point is that when push came to pull it was not the burning of Watts or the looting of Detroit that produced the impact on the powers that be (who would have allowed the insurgents to suffer the miserable consequences) to initiate the necessary legislation so essential to social change; rather it was the highly publicized drama of a proud people peacefully marching toward an army of brutal clubs and the image of that people being beaten by those clubs and falling passively to the ground and being chained or handcuffed then hauled to jail — it was that image that captured the hearts, minds and souls of the American status quo and planted the seeds of racial equality a century after the Emancipation Proclamation.\* The success of King's passive desegregation tactics and the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam, largely in response to pressure exerted by "peaceniks" and/or antiwar protesters, is conclusive of nothing but does provide us with a ray of hope, albeit only a flickering one, for it reveals what humanity can do to achieve a state of global nonwarfare through power of the will.

I believe that Switzerland has maintained its status of national independence and neutrality since the 16th or 17th century — no mean feat for a political and economic entity smack-dab in the middle of a regularly warring Europe. If indeed my memory is correct about the dynamics of a nation I have regrettably found of little interest, it seems the Swiss have cannily maintained a militia just large enough to police inside their nation's borders but small enough to avoid the glories of war. Switzerland is the largest country in Europe not a member of the United Nations, and maintains one of the world's healthiest and most stable economies.

\* January 1, 2003 is the 140th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863.



218 WEST MARINE DRIVE  
ASTORIA, OREGON 97103  
(503) 325-8708

