

There was a time when I snubbed Switzerland's remarkable achievements by attributing them largely to size and the extraordinary good fortune of geographic isolation caused by mountainous terrain instead of the resourcefulness and shrewdness of a stable but highly imaginative and introspectively and instinctively aware people who possess a rare and profound comprehension of their relationship with their environment, natural and political alike.

It seems likely that the Swiss have kept their priorities in order. First and foremost, the citizenry has long avowed national peace as a way of life. The road of peace requires political neutrality as well as a lack of military armament. It requires a vulnerability to military conquest. But most of all, it requires a mindset, a mentality so stubborn that war cannot be an option. Such a mindset, by definition, requires will power, or in other words, the creative visualization to achieve goals. If one is truly devoted to peace one always uses the tools of peace, never the tools of war. Obviously mindset is not magic. Rather, in my opinion, mindset locks the mind in place so that it enables one to find the solution needed to succeed. Also, since the mind is set (for peace, for example) it clearly avoids as much as possible circumstances which might doom the desired goal to failure. If there is no strong military guarding one's peaceful borders, one becomes adroit in not offending or becoming a threat to one's neighbors, and if one does this long enough it becomes a way of life.

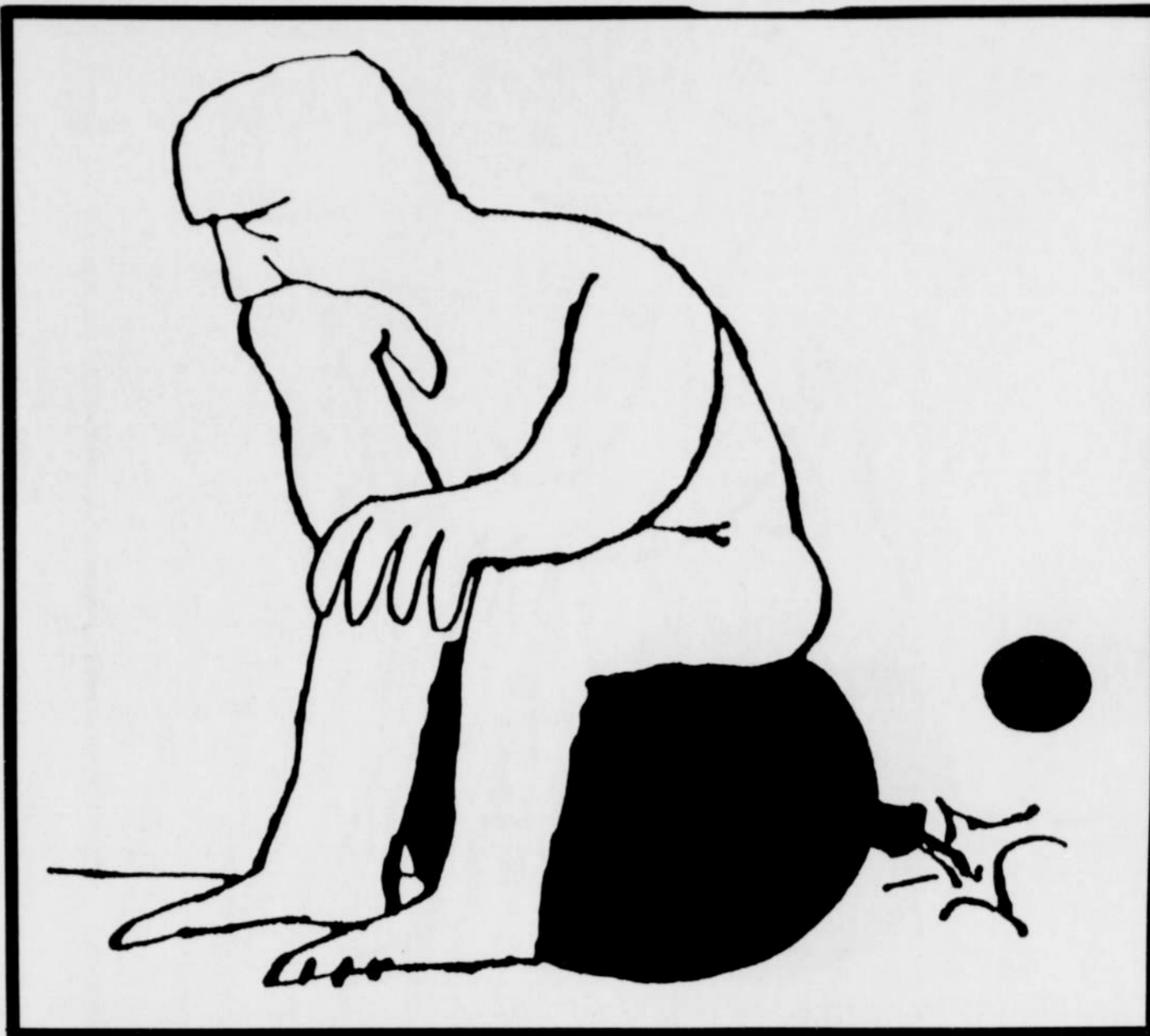
Peace has in a sense become the economic mainstay for Switzerland. Because the Swiss have steadfastly insisted on neutrality for hundreds of years, not only have they sustained a stable and solid economy while the fortunes of warring empires have risen and fallen, but investors from around the globe have long deposited funds in their banks as a safeguard against confiscation by their enemies. It's true that Switzerland's thriving economy might be largely dependent on somebody's else's war and might temporarily collapse if war were permanently ended, but the Swiss could make money producing and selling clocks if it came to that.

When world leaders such as George Bush of the United States persuade the United Nations to administer world peace by: a) threatening to replace economic boycotting measures with firepower as a means to enforce nonaggression tactics in the interest of global cooperation and peace, b) setting a deadline for the accursed aggressor to reply, c) declaring war upon the accused, and d) mercilessly invade and bomb the newly declared enemy for not meeting the deadline is not an act of peace and should not be construed as one. I am not qualified to make this next judgment, but I believe the country of Switzerland comes close to establishing the precedent for peace so demanded by skeptical historians and other rationalists who need proof before they can give support to any proposed policy. Further, I believe the Swiss exemplify the potential flexibility in the human species and its ability to adapt by locating alternative and better ways to survive. And in a sense, world peace is increasingly becoming more a matter of long range survival than an issue of what is morally right, which war has never been.

"Envision that peace, not war is inevitable! Imagine the possibilities!" reads a sign I produced after a peace demonstration in an effort to express my epiphany that a world without war or armed conflict is inevitable. I am aware this is by no means an original concept, yet it is an idea whose merit is largely ignored and not taken seriously. If we were to regard war as an impossibility, we would not only not waste our energies, our taxes, our resources and our time preparing for an act which irretrievably destroys and kills, but the lack of such preparation would also enable us to devote all of the above to improving the lot of life on earth.

But, of course, there are those (probably most of the world's population) who will tell me to *get real* and stop living in a fantasy world. Many will express the viewpoint that war has always been and always will be. A rightwinger will philosophize (as I used to) that war is nature's method of population control of the human species. And liberals who acknowledge that war is intrinsically evil and naturally unwarranted will wonder how else to deal with the Adolf Hitlers of the world without implementing the deadly force of war as a tool. The first two of these viewpoints are rather easy to deal with and dismiss. There is no way to ascertain that war has always been, but even if it is true our existence would not be if such a factor were a valid criterion, everything has to begin somewhere in the dynamics of the ever changing universe; that is, whether or not war has always been, peace could be around the corner. As for population control, birth control is much to be preferred to war.

However, I have to admit it is not easy for to condemn World War 2 or to urge peaceful coexistence with the likes of Adolf Hitler. The truth is, were it not for my peace epiphany, I would not have included World War 2 in my belief there is no such thing as justifiable warfare. It is only through intense brain-racking that I am led to the unorthodox opinion that today's world would be in much better shape had the Allied forces opposed the earlier 'Axis of Evil' (Germany, Italy and Japan) Gandhi-style — although such an approach would probably have meant military defeat (but not necessarily) and my death (as a defective "cripple") at an early age. I am beginning to understand that one cannot expect to use fire to fight fire without getting burned. One cannot militarily vanquish blind tyranny without becoming a blind tyrant. One cannot drop a bomb or bombs as we did on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (and hundreds of other cities, towns and villages as well) without bringing the whole planet closer to a disaster more horrible than Auschwitz,



and certainly no more humane. Neither approach is justifiable; but it can be argued, I suspect, that a Nazi crematorium is not operated at a distance by an individual who is deluded that dropping bombs from on high is a more admirable achievement and less brutal than humans torturing others face to face simply because the looks and screams of agony and the smells of burning flesh enmasse cannot be sensed from afar.

It is both a scientific and religious principle that action begets reaction. Preparation for war on the part of one political entity begets preparation for war elsewhere. But what if we were to take a different stance, an approach with another attitude? What if the United States and its allies had stormed the beach at Normandy with a hundred thousand unarmed soldiers? What if we had responded to the attack at Pearl Harbor with attempts to negotiate or even with outright surrender? Would more Americans have died? Possibly, but I doubt it. What about globally? Personally, I strongly suspect if our nation had adhered to the principles of isolationism (at least militarily) as advocated by those who never forgot that World War 1 was "the war to end all wars" — a concept which my generation was taught to regard as nice but unrealistic; had we negotiated for peace instead of instantly reacting in such a way that catapulted the USA to armed victory and the pinnacle of power where we remain today as the mightiest political/military entity the world has ever seen, fewer of the planet's inhabitants would have been needlessly slaughtered simply because it is not likely the atomic bomb would have been used at the time. If my suspicions are correct, today's world would be less endangered and therefore less frenzied if the U.S. had refrained from participating in World War 2, which transformed what had been largely a European civil war into a global war: the harangue of historians aside, there is no point to studying history if we do not consider and speculate upon the options.*

The point I am trying to make is that since both science and religion are part of the evolutionary process and examples of the channeled, if misguided, genius of the human species, and since the evolutionary process depends on the adaptability to change of each species in order to survive its environment, both religion and science will eventually join forces and combine methodologies in order to return to an instinctive awareness that all things in existence are equal and related. I speak with the conviction of an optimistic atheist. It is this atheistic optimism which spurs me to promulgate the use of will power or persistent creative visualization as the initial step toward the goal of world peace as the only viable means of global survival.

The idea is to speed up the evolutionary process through attitudinal and other social changes (as I believe has been the case throughout human development) in order to influence human behavior to regard peace instead of war as the natural condition of life. As such, we must learn to respond to whatever differences arise in a conciliatory manner. We must learn to respond to hostility, tyranny and the like with nonviolent resistance instead of armed conflict. This will mean the possibility of being defenselessly killed, but such action (in the spirit of Gandhi) will not only enable us to die for the greatest cause of all, world peace, but it will provide us with the opportunity of knowing we have lived and died with the honorable distinction of not having taken a life.

Perhaps I am not being very realistic, but I honestly question the use of weapons as a means of defense even in warfare when weaponry simply increases the odds of not

surviving. It seems to me that the only purpose of firearms is to kill and killing is an affront to peace and should never occur, even to retaliate, except to prevent hunger.

It would be perfectly valid to ask if I would voluntarily risk my life for such a venture. The answer is I am not sure but I think I would be more inclined to volunteer for such an action than for war, which I would resist. I can imagine myself marching peacefully in the face of danger carrying no weapon, for I would not want the opportunity to call upon the savage lurking inside me which might kill everything that gets in my way and would probably result in my being gunned down more instantly than the peaceable approach.

In short, the only hope for global peace is to think peace, to imagine that war is *passé*, that it cannot happen again. The nations and the peoples of the world must disarm. They must exchange the illusory security of self-protection for the little known security of openness and mutual trust. There must be no option to peace. We must enforce peace with peace. Unlike war, peace is no halfway proposition. This means that in order to sustain peace we must be ever vigilant for the slightest hints of war. We must negotiate for peace. We must fill ourselves with peace. We must build for peace, conduct ourselves in a peaceful manner. The list goes on and on.

But let us glance at the opportunities offered in a peaceful environment, for I have heard it claimed that war generates technological progress and spurs the human species to creativity. However, if a momentary spurt of creativity actually occurs as a residual result of warfare and military arms buildup, it is soon followed by an extreme drain on the economics of the warring factions, depleted material resources and the abject squandering of human life, all of which adds up to disaster that far outweighs its so-called bandaid healing effects.

Global peace, on the other hand, would support an attitude as well as sustain an environment complimentary to the notion of cultivating an "earth agenda" which considers the well being and improvement of all existence. The world would still be less than perfect and in all probability the conditions of peace itself would present problems of its own. But at least there would be considerably less bloodshed as well as more time and resources to devote to constructive purposes. With the passing of time (perhaps eons) the uniquely human compulsion for acquisitiveness might possibly dissipate through evolution and be replaced with a natural sense of cooperation and peaceful coexistence as the tried and proven technique for the survival of the species.

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**Although World War 2 was vastly different than war in the Persian Gulf, there are startling similarities. The most obvious is the fervor against Saddam Hussein by the American public which is very much like the hatred of Adolf Hitler. Another is that wars have consequences either not considered beforehand or ignored and regarded as a natural price for warfare; such as the advent of nuclear weaponry and the buildup of the military/industrial complex following World War 2. A few negative consequences of the first Persian Gulf War a dozen years ago are that the already impoverished and persecuted Kurds would not have starved to death had by the thousands if negotiations had prevailed, nor would more than 100,000 soldiers and civilians (few of whom had any control over the events and forces that caused the war) would not have been needlessly killed while billions of global dollars evaporated and oil wells burned for months.*

**NORTH COAST
TIMES EAGLE**
A JOURNAL OF ART & OPINION
PUBLISHED IN ASTORIA, OREGON
757 27TH STREET 97103
MICHAEL PAUL McCUSKER
EDITOR & PUBLISHER