Transformative Pacifism

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Greetings of Peace

• Shalom
• Salaam alaikum
• Pax vobis
• Shanti, shanti, shanti
• Aloha

“Peace unto you”
“Peace be upon you”
“Peace be to this house.”
“May the God of peace be with you”
Sources and Inspirations

Concerned Philosophers for Peace

Gandhi at 150: October 2019

Gandhi's Global Legacy International Conference
Some of my work

Pacifism as Normative Theory

Peace is the highest good.

It is not merely the absence of violence. It also includes respect, love, justice, solidarity, and other affirmative values.

The ideal of social and political peace is a freely embraced, genuine or beloved community.

Peace is one of the primary aspirations of human life. It is central to human flourishing.

Nonviolent means are preferred, including nonviolent virtues.
Pacifism and Nonviolence as a Normative Tradition: A Conversation about The Good

- Jesus, Socrates, Buddha
- Erasmus, Menno Simmons, George Fox, William Penn, Abbé Saint-Pierre, Immanuel Kant
- Adin Ballou, William Lloyd Garrison, Bronson Alcott, Leo Tolstoy, Mohandas K. Gandhi
- Jane Addams, William James, Dorothy Day, Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein, Albert Schweitzer, Martin Luther King, Jr., James Lawson, Daniel Berrigan, Cesar Chavez, Thomas Merton, Thich Nhat Hahn, Desmond Tutu, Pope John Paul II, Pope Francis, the Dalai Lama, John Howard Yoder, Stanley Hauerwas, Arne Naess, Johan Galtung, Robert Holmes, Andrew FitzGibbon, Barry Gan… Etc.

Sources

- *Do no return injury for injury. We must not injure at all.*
- *Blessed are the pacifists, for they will be called children of God.*
Blessed are the pacifists
They shall be called children of God

(Matthew 5:9)

- Greek: eirenopoios
  - eirênê and poiesis

- Latin: pacifici
  - paci- (pax =peace) – ficus (making)

Sources

- Non-violence is therefore, in its active form, goodwill towards all life. It is pure Love. I read it in the Hindu scriptures, in the Bible, and in the Koran.
Sources

• *Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.* Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction.

Socrates-Jesus-Gandhi-King

King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (1963)

• I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. *Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind* so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.
A Source and Inspiration
James Lawson (b. 1928)

James Lawson

• “Nonviolence is a great way to talk about love. That is the love of God, the love of life, the love of one another.”

• Four Evils
  • Racism
  • Militarism
  • Sexism
  • Plantation Capitalism

James Lawson
To live as a citizen of a country that does not yet exist

- I will live with other human options than the status quo.
- In the midst of evil I will walk humbly with compassion and care.
- In the midst of chaos, I will know who I am.
- In the midst of racism, I will be a sister or a brother of all humankind.
- In the midst of sexism, I will be a person who knows the equality and necessity of all human life of all genders.
- In the midst of injustice, I will work for justice.
- When I hear hate, I will respond with care and humanity.
- I will live as a citizen of a country that does not yet exist.

James Lawson
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee 5/14/1960

We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith, and the manner of our action. Nonviolence as it grows from Judaic-Christian traditions seeks a social order of justice permeated by love. Integration of human endeavor represents the crucial first step towards such a society.

Through nonviolence, courage displaces fear; love transforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Peace dominates war; faith reconciles doubt. Mutual regard cancels enmity. Justice for all overthrows injustice. The redemptive community supersedes systems of gross social immorality.
James Lawson
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee 5/14/1960

Love is the central motif of nonviolence. Love is the force by which God binds man to himself and man to man. Such love goes to the extreme; it remains loving and forgiving even in the midst of hostility. It matches the capacity of evil to inflict suffering with an even more enduring capacity to absorb evil, all the while persisting in love.

By appealing to conscience and standing on the moral nature of human existence, nonviolence nurtures the atmosphere in which reconciliation and justice become actual possibilities.

Voices from the Pacifist Tradition

• Our fight must be against war itself.
Voices from the Pacifist Tradition

• Very few wars are worth fighting... the evils of war are almost always greater than they seem to excited populations at the moment when war breaks out.

• The fruit of war is death... Wars produce nothing other than cemeteries and death.
Problem of Militarism, Warism, Warrior Ideology, And the Military-Industrial Complex

• Militarism undertakes to set in order, to suppress and to govern, if necessary to destroy.
  • Jane Addams, *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907)

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Problem of Militarism, Warism, Warrior Ideology, And the Military-Industrial Complex

Warism and militarism are ideologies and mythic constructs that organize our thinking, our economy, and our social and political lives. These constructs are so deeply woven into our way of living that we often simply take them for granted.
Militarism and Warism

The peace-prattlers are in no way blessed. On the contrary, only mischief has sprung from the activities of the professional peace-prattlers, the ultra-pacifists, who, with the shrill clamor of eunuchs, preach the gospel of the milk and water of virtue.

- Theodore Roosevelt, “America and the War” (1915)
Three Moral Approaches to War and Peace

- **Pacifism**: War is Never Justified
- **Just War**: War is justified but there are moral limits
- **Realism**: Moral justification does not apply to war

A new model

Pacifism as Moral Theory

- **Pacifism**
- **Realism**
- **Justified Violence**
Expanded Continuum of Justification: Punishment

- **Pacifism**: War is Never Justified
- **Just War**: War is justified but there are moral limits
- **Realism**: Moral justification does not apply to war
- **Restorative Justice**
- **Retributive Justice**
- **Revenge & Power**
- **Deterrence**

Pacifism as Broad Critical Social Theory

- International Relations
- Militarism and Military-Industrial Complex
- Economic, Social, and Political Violence
- Crime and Systems of Punishment
- Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence
- Cultural Violence
- Psychological and Spiritual Violence
- Violence to animals and nature
Example: Moral Injury and PTSD

• A veteran of the Iraq war recently shared his story with me. He signed up as a young man. He endured horrors and killing. And today he is hurting. We talked of veteran suicides and PTSD. We talked about moral injury and the soul-deep struggle to make sense of the morality of war. I’ve heard similar stories from veterans young and old.
  • Fiala, Fresno Bee, Sunday May 26, 2019

Fiala, Fresno Bee, Sunday May 26, 2019

• Pacifists and critics of war are often accused of being utopian dreamers who ignore the reality of power. But the defenders of war are utopian when they speak of easy victories and suggest that war is a cakewalk. It is impossible to imagine a war without trauma, moral injury, and atrocity. It is impossible to imagine a war that does not leave us with suffering veterans and the white tombstones of Memorial Day.
The Limits of Just War Theory

• Just war theory cannot:
  • Critique the military-industrial complex
  • Provide an account of peaceful political life
  • Explain how we avoid war and build international peace
  • Deal with veterans afflictions: alcoholism, domestic violence, PTSD, and moral injury.

• *Just war theory is limited to the question of when violence can be justified as an exception. It is not focused on violence prevention or peace-building.*

Peace as Philosophical Problem

“What is peace?”

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<th>Wholeness</th>
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<td>Love</td>
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<td>Harmony</td>
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<td>Joy</td>
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Related questions:
• What is violence?
• What is war?

Conceptual Issues
• Positive Peace
• Negative Peace
• Institutional/Structural Violence
• Hot Wars, Cold Wars, etc.
From Negative to Positive Peace

• Peace is no longer merely the absence of war, but the unfolding of life processes.
  • Addams ‘Democracy or Militarism” (1899)

Pacifism:
A coherent and comprehensive moral and social theory

• Critique of violence
• Advocacy for non-violent action
• A way of life oriented around pacific virtues:
  • Tolerance
  • Mercy
  • Forgiveness
  • Kindness
  • Generosity
  • Love
  • Inner peace
Pacifist Social Transformation:
Imagining alternatives to violent structures and institutions

- In domestic life, family and sexual relations
- In our relation to the natural world
- In business and economic life
- In political life within nations
- In international relations.

Conclusion:
Philosophical Peace
Wonder and Contemplation

- Letting Beings Be
  - Gelassenheit
- Inner Peace and Mindfulness
- Aristotle: Contemplation
  - For its own sake
  - A God-like activity
  - Free from strife

Each moment is a chance for us to make peace with the world, to make peace possible for the world.
Thich Nhat Hanh, “Teachings on Love”