

Civilian-Based Defense

Exploring a Nonviolent Strategy
for Deterrence and Defense

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*Dedicated to the Memory of
Phillips P. Moulton
Former Member, CBDA Board of Directors*

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Civilian-Based Defense is published quarterly by the Civilian-Based Defense Association (CBDA) to provide information about civilian-based defense (CBD) as an alternative policy for national defense and to make available international news, opinion and research about CBD. The Association is a nonprofit membership organization founded in 1982 to promote widespread consideration of CBD and to engage in educational activities to bring CBD to public attention. CBD means protecting a nation against invasions or *coups d'etat* by preparing its citizens to resist aggression or usurpation by withholding cooperation and by active noncooperation rather than military force. Tactics include strikes, encouraging invading forces to desert, encouraging other countries to use sanctions against the invader, etc. Citizens would learn how to use CBD before aggression starts, which distinguishes it from spontaneous resistance. Prior preparation and publicity would enhance its effectiveness and also make it a deterrent to attack.

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The Test of Faith

A Chapter in Non-Resistance

Edward C.M. Richards

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the *Atlantic Monthly*, May, 1923

Segments I and II appeared last issue. . .

III

When the news was telephoned out in the middle of the night that the Armenian and Syrian populations were starting to flee to the south, we Americans made what preparations we could for the coming change of control. As soon as it was daylight, I took Dr. Packard and Dr. Ellis into the city in the Ford, and left them there, busying myself by carrying food and people back and forth, until about ten o'clock, when the advance-guard of the Turkish army arrived. I had expected to bring Dr. Ellis and Dr. Packard back again before the Turks came; but their sudden appearance prevented this being done.

The first men to arrive were the Kurdish horsemen, with an occasional Turkish soldier. It was apparent that they must have been ordered to leave us, the Americans, alone, for the great majority of them rode right by the gate, and on toward the city. At this time we were assisted greatly by the Moslem refugees, who had been receiving protection in our yards for so long. Most of these Kurdish and Moslem fugitives stood at the open gate, their faces wreathed in smiles, and welcomed the oncoming horsemen with joy; but they did not do anything to turn their attention toward the Compound, but quietly allowed them to pass on toward the city. It happened, however, that a few of the Kurds gained entry through a small back gate, and it was these irregular stragglers who raided us and put me through the supposititious case number one.

Dr. Dodd and I sat on the long music seat, in front of Mrs. Ellis's piano. In the living-room with us were Miss Lamme, Miss

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Schoebel, Mrs. Ellis and her two little children, and a number of native Syrian servants. Dr. Dodd and I had just come in from the yard outside, where both of us had nearly lost our lives at the hands of some of the raiding Kurds, mine being saved twice -- once by a Moslem hostler and once by a friendly Kurd. I did not know what was going to happen next, as things outside were in great disorder, and we could hear shooting all around us.

The setting for the supposititious case was practically complete. Here I was, a Christian pacifist. In the room with me were a number of helpless women and children. Dr. Dodd had only recently got out of bed, and could scarcely be considered as an able-bodied man. I therefore was the only one present physically fit to defend this group of helpless people. At any minute the door might open and the Kurds might enter. Truly, the setting was complete. But I had been holding in my mind the fixed determination that, under no circumstances, would I use violence, to protect either myself or others; and I trusted that in some way I should be able so to act that the best results for all would be achieved.

As Dr. Dodd and I told the ladies of our experiences of a few moments before, there suddenly came a tremendous pounding on the door leading from the dining-room, which was next to the sitting-room where we were, out into the kitchen and the back yard. The time had arrived. The Kurds were at the door. What should I do?

The thought came into my mind that it would be better to open the door and let the Kurds in, than to stay away from it and allow them to smash their way in. If they broke down the door, they would come in in more of a rage than if we opened the door and let them in. I suggested this to Dr. Dodd, and he and I walked into the dining-room and over toward the door leading to the kitchen. I remember, as I approached it, seeing one of the panels bulge from the blows of the gun-butts from without. A small bolt was all that held the door closed, and I reached over and pulled this and opened the door, saying as I did so, 'Buyurun' -- meaning 'Come in.'

As the door swung open, we found ourselves looking into

the business end of three rifles, backed up by the dusky faces of three Kurds. They had made themselves up, with their fringed turbans, to appear particularly ferocious, and they certainly looked the part. My judgment, however, is that they were surprised at having the door opened, and being invited to come in. In any case, they did not shoot; and, as they entered, in voices of intense excitement they demanded 'Pool! Pool! Pool!' (money! money! money!) This was a decided relief, as we had some money, and possibly, if we gave it to them, they would go away. With this in mind, Dr. Dodd and I led the way out of the dining-room back into the sitting-room, where the ladies were. I remember walking as rapidly as possible, with the thought of getting the Kurds past the ladies without any unnecessary delay. This scheme worked, and we entered Dr. Ellis's study through a little side door, leaving the ladies and the children behind us.

It so happened that Dr. Dodd had the key of the top drawer of Dr. Ellis's desk. He opened it, and I remember standing close by and watching two brown hands grab for the small bag of coin lying the bottom of the drawer. Following this, the three Kurds began rummaging around the room, looking for valuables. I recall about this time noticing Dr. Dodd, as he slipped out of the room back to the sitting-room, to look after the ladies. This I considered as a good thing, and I then realized that it was my task to entertain the three Kurds and keep them away from the ladies.

Dr. Ellis had removed to his study the relief money of which he had charge. There were two Russian safes in the room. One was empty, while the other contained several thousand dollars in money. While the Kurds were rummaging around the room, I walked over to the safe that had the money in it, and tried to open it. Like all Russian safes, it was an iron box with a lid like a trunk, the keyhole being in the top of the lid. Finding the safe was locked, I stood there for a moment, and a horrible sinking feeling began to creep over me as the realization of the situation came to me. There was nothing to do, however, but to play the game; and so I turned back to the Kurds, who were on the other side of the little room. They had pulled the rug off the

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lounge, had looked under it, had emptied some of the stuff out of the drawers of the desk; and, as I turned one of them suddenly threw up his rifle, covering me, and, speaking in Turkish, demanded the key to the safe. Now I honestly did not have the key, and I looked him in the eye over the sights of his rifle and told him so. Recognizing that I was speaking the truth, he put his gun down and began to rummage around again.

About this time one of them found Dr. Ellis's Corona typewriter in its case. It was heavy and looked like a small bag or box, which, of course, led the Kurd to think that it contained coin of some sort. I moved over to open it for him; but before I could reach him, he had thrown it on the floor and broken the box open. The three men gathered around and peered with wonder at the little metal bars and shiny parts; and I stood there, speaking in English, and tried to demonstrate with my fingers what the typewriter was for. But in a moment they had turned away, looking elsewhere.

I now realized that I must hold their attention and keep them occupied. The thought came to me that I must adopt the principle of going the second mile with these men. Here they were, compelling me to go a mile with them, and now I must also go the second mile. They were taking away my coat, and I must now give them my cloak also; and so I entered into the looting myself and sincerely desired to get the safes open. With this in mind, I began aggressively to direct the attention and activities of the three men toward the opening of the safes. The thought came to me that possibly, if we shot into the keyhole of the safe, we might spring the lock. (The use of the word 'we' comes perfectly natural, because I really joined their party in their efforts to smash the safe open and considered myself as one of them for the moment.) I therefore took hold of the arm of one of the men, and shook it enough to attract his attention; then I put my finger on the keyhole of the safe and, talking to him in English, explained to him that I wished him to fire at the place where I had my finger. He got the idea and raised his rifle; I took my finger away, and he fired. All the people in the next room, of course, hearing the shot, thought, 'Well, there goes Richards -- the

Christian pacifist is through.' But the lock did not spring, and the safe did not open; so he fired a second time, at my suggestion, without result. I then tried to open the safe by pulling and overturning it; but this did no good either.

And here an interesting point arose. The Kurds were growing impatient. The safe had not opened; and suddenly one of them, without a moment's notice, lost control of his temper, threw up his rifle, and hit me on the shoulder with the butt of it. Then a curious thing happened. I had been honestly sincere in trying to help them open the safe; I had joined them in their efforts, and considered myself, for the time being, one of them. This sudden blow on the shoulder, therefore, was a real surprise to me, and I remember looking at the man who struck me with an expression which must have said to him, 'What are you hitting me for? I am doing everything I can to help you.' I spoke no word, but he must have read my look; for he put his gun down, and paid no further attention to me.

We continued our efforts with the safe and finally one of them fired again into the other safe, without springing that lock either. Things were getting more intense for me in my efforts to keep these three men out of the other room. With these failures to open the safes, one of the Kurds again threw his rifle up, and threatened to shoot me if I did not give up the key. But once again I looked him in the eye, and told him--what was the truth, -- that I did not have the key, -- and the shot was not fired.

Finally, this same man came forward, reached down, and began to take off one of my shoes. Thinking that he imagined that I had money in them, I helped him, and also took the other one off for him. Much to my surprise, he took both the shoes and walked into the room where the ladies were, following his two companions who had preceded him. In order to continue to exert my influence on the Kurds against violence, it was necessary for me to continue to play the game with them; and so I followed into the room where the ladies were, and found them all standing up and Dr. Dodd in his shirt sleeves and stocking feet.

It seemed that other Kurds had followed the first three into the house, and had come in to where the ladies were, had

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demanded their jewelry, and had looked around for what they could carry off. One of them proceeded to go around and open the cupboards and boxes, and some of the ladies and myself, in order to prevent him from breaking things, helped him. The man who had taken my shoes sat down on the piano-stool, took off his own *charicks* (rawhide sandals), and proceeded to put on my shoes. Finally, after taking a raincoat, an overcoat, Dr. Ellis's small traveling medical case, and other odds and ends, they all went out, -- passing right by the Ellises' sideboard, on which stood some of their silverware, -- and left us alone. It was then that I discovered that Mrs. Richards had entered the sitting-room just as Dr. Dodd and I had passed through it with the first three Kurds, on our way into the study where the safes were. I had not known where she was; but she knew that I was in with the Kurds, and of course, had feared that the firing was directed at me. After a short time, some friendly Kurds came into the room; and before long some of the regular Turkish soldiers appeared to take charge.

I had been through the Kurdish raid, and the first supposititious case. I had been able to act in a general way along the plan outlined theoretically by myself before I left America, and the plan of action had worked. Mrs. Ellis, in her story of the raid, published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for September, 1919, speaks of the situation in these words: 'I shall always be thankful that Wilder (Dr. Ellis) was kept in the city that morning, for I fear he might have resisted the attack, and in that event he would certainly have been killed.' Looking back at it, it seems at least a reasonable supposition that, if I had started in to resist, not only should I have been killed myself, but that, in all probability, Dr. Dodd also would have lost his life, and in the excitement even some of the ladies might have been shot.

There is another point in this connection of which I think it worth while to speak. I am temperamentally more or less hot-headed, and when asked in America whether I thought I could stand the strain of watching some Turk or Kurd abuse my wife, or someone whom I loved, without flying into a rage, I had answered that, being a *Christian pacifist*, I did not believe I

should ever be called upon to endure anything beyond my moral strength. I learned after the raid was over that one of the Kurds, coming into the sitting room while I was occupied with the three men and the safes, had pointed his rifle at Mrs. Richards and threatened her, and that another one had talked about carrying her off to the mountains with him, and had taken her wedding-ring. None of this was I called upon to witness, or even to know about until it was all past. To me this is a striking coincidence, to say the least.

IV

But what about the case of the drunken man, armed and lusting for blood -- this being supposititious case number two?

One day in the spring, it must have been some time in May, I was busy in the rear of the yard in the city, supervising the shoeing of a horse. Dr. Ellis was up in the treasury -room, and we two were the only American men in the yards. Mrs. Shedd and Mrs. Richards were in their respective houses. There was the usual crowd at the big gate opening on the street; and scattered through the yards were various people occupied with many kinds of business. Among them were the Kurdish and Moslem refugees, who here, as in the College Compound, were seeking safety from their enemies, the Syrians and Armenians. One of these refugees, a rich and prominent local Moslem, was a particularly bad character, who had aroused the special hatred of the Armenians and Syrians by his abuse of them three years before, when the Turks were in control.

Suddenly I heard an excited roar go up from out near the gate. Leaving the horse-shoeing, I ran to see what was going on, and found a panic-stricken group of Syrians and Armenians peeping into the large main yard through a narrow little door. From them I learned that a young Armenian, wild-drunk and armed, had rushed into the yards from the street, crying that he had come to kill Agha Sader -- the wealthy refugee rascal. He had entered the main yard through the little door, everybody fleeing before him, and was now alone in the center of it, crying out to Agha Sader to show himself.

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Here was supposititious case number two -- the wild drunken man running amuck. What was the Christian thing to do? I could easily have snatched a rifle from someone in the crowd, -- a very large proportion of the people were armed, -- and shot the drunkard from behind the cover of the wall; but that would not be a loving way of treating him. He was drunk, and I was used to dealing with drunks in the rescue-mission work I had done in New York. Also, he had no grudge against me personally. If therefore, I treated him without showing fear, and very decidedly showing friendliness, there was a good chance that I could persuade him to go home. Of course, there was a serious chance that he might shoot; but if I was a Christian pacifist, I could count on the power of God to control the drunken mind of the young Armenian as long as I held nothing but love for him in my heart.

With this in mind, I entered the little gate and walked quietly but directly toward my man. He was looking for Agha Sader, and holding his gun ready to shoot, crying out as he did so. To reach him I had to walk perhaps one hundred feet in plain view. If I could get up close to him before he saw me, he would perhaps recognize me as not being an enemy. But could I get up close before he turned? I went ahead, passing my house, and saw Mrs. Richards open the door and look out. I motioned to her to keep back as I went on.

I had got about half-way to the Armenian when Mrs. Shedd, who was looking out of a second-story window of her house, spoke to the Armenian, and he swung around to see where the voice came from. This enabled me to come even closer without his seeing me; and when he finally turned toward me, I was only a short distance from him. I smiled and held out my hand, offering to shake hands with him. Here was the test. I strove to appear to this poor drunken mind as a friend who was not afraid. He swung around and caught sight of me, hesitated a moment, and then, drawing himself up to attention, he grounded his rifle and saluted me in unsteady, drunken seriousness. As I came up close to him, I continued to hold out my hand; and much to my surprise, he handed me his gun, saying

as he did so, 'A present.' Taking the rifle in one hand and his arm in the other, I quietly walked with him to the gate, Dr. Ellis joining me.

Next day the Armenian came around to see me, sober and shamefaced, and apologized for his conduct the day before. I had kept his rifle for him over night, and gave it back to him, along with some very straight talk. I had been through the second supposititious case. The wild, drunken 'mad dog' turned out to be a *man*, and not a dog at all; and instead of shooting him down the day before, I shook hands with him and we parted on excellent terms. Incidentally, throughout this entire affair, nobody was killed or even injured.

In telling of these two tests, I make no pretense of claiming that they cover every, possible detail of what might have happened, but they do, at least to a degree, cover some of the ground of the supposititious cases. They both tested out my belief in Christian pacifism; and my theoretical answers to each supposititious case, uttered while I was in America, proved workable in practice nearly nine thousand miles away, among wild, uncivilized, and even drunken people, in Western Asia. I was not tested beyond my ability to hold true to my ideal of action; but so far as I was able to hold fast to the attitude of good-will toward everyone, I found from experience that the results actually obtained amply justified my faith.

Nonviolence versus capitalism *(Continued from page 28)*

workers' struggles, sabotage, environmental campaigns, social defense, global campaigns and economic alternatives.

Dr. Brian Martin is associate professor in Science, Technology & Society at the University of Wollongong, Australia. He has studied nonviolent action since the late 1970s, is the author of many books and articles, and has long been involved in activist groups, including the Civilian-Based Defense Association. For further details and a full list of publications, see the website noted above. Details for barter or purchase of the print edition are to be found on the web site as well.

Phillips Prentice Moulton

1910 - 2002

Phillips Prentice Moulton graduated from Ohio Wesleyan in 1931, Phi Beta Kappa and Valedictorian of his class; he was named University Scholar at Yale University, where he received his BD and in 1949 his Ph.D. He was professor of religion and philosophy at several colleges, and after retirement was a visiting scholar at the University of Michigan. He was editor of *The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman* and author of *Ammunition for Peacemakers* as well as several pamphlets and articles in over 25 journals. His main activities in retirement years were writing and speaking on international peace. He served for six years on the Board of Trustees of the Civilian-Based Defense Association, and left office only due to term limits and ill health. A member of the Detroit United Methodist Conference, he was a long-time associate member of Ann Arbor Friends Meeting and in later years, an associate member of the Sandy Spring Friends Meeting. Phillips was the loving father of Kathy and Larry, and grandfather of Tyler Moulton and Carine Riley. Memorial gifts may be made to the American Friends Service Committee or to the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

His wife, Mary Moulton, herself a CBDA member, recalls: On our first date, Phil and I took the New York subway to see the Cloisters. We became so engrossed in conversation, we got no further than the bench outside the building. We have continued talking for 52 years about what drew us together in the first place, a faith-based imperative to apply Christian ethics to daily living. This concern, inspired by the New Testament and John Woolman, has been the common thread throughout Phil's varied career. . . . Phil had a Christian conversion at age 16 and thought of becoming a minister. This led to estrangement from his father, who had expected him to take over his

insurance business in Cleveland. . . Even before going to seminary, Phil's beliefs had become increasingly radical as he studied the New Testament. He took Jesus' teachings seriously. When he read Woolman's journal at age 26, the Quaker testimonies of pacifism, simple living, and racial equality strengthened his own convictions. A natural next step was joining the Wider Quaker Fellowship. . . He never identified strongly with a denomination. His work with students and in the peace movement, as well as teaching and writing, cut across religious divisions.

Phil put theory into practice as Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Simpson College in Iowa. He inaugurated a pilot program in general education, featuring such works as *Plato's Republic* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. . . During summers Phil taught classes of college professors recruited by the Danforth Foundation to explore the relationships between their academic disciplines and religion. . . For 30 years, he conducted workshops and lectures on Woolman or pacifism at Friends General Conference, monthly and yearly meetings, and Quaker centers in the United States and Britain.

In his presidential address at the American Academy of Religion. . . he had argued that military power was more provocative than deterrent. He was asked to speak on the same subject at the Military Study Group at the University of Michigan. After his presentation, Phil was invited to join the group. . . In his early eighties, Phil traveled with study groups to problem areas in the Middle East and Central America. In each case he stayed longer by himself to explore positive developments. He also joined a Fellowship of Reconciliation team on a mission to the USSR. He served on advisory committees and boards of such organizations as World Peacemakers and the Civilian-Based Defense Association. . . Aside from Quaker publications, most of his articles, book reviews, and reports appeared in the *Christian Century*.

The Moral Law and National Insecurity

Phillips P. Moulton

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Mary Moulton

"The Moral Law and National Insecurity" was presented as an address at the annual meeting of the Midwest Region of the American Academy of Religion in 1961, when Phil Moulton was President of the Region. It was revised and updated in 1980. Although Phil Moulton made a limited distribution to friends and colleagues, and the essay was used in college ethics classes in the 1960's, it has apparently never before been published. This version is taken directly from his own typescript of the 1980 revision. It is published here with the kind permission of Mary Moulton, who observed, "It is sad that something written so long ago could still be relevant 20 and then 40 years later. But it also shows Phil's grasp of essential truths.

Can I honestly congratulate the young couple who wrote to me recently, joyously announcing the arrival of their first child, a baby boy? How long can this child -- or any baby born in the major nations of the world -- be expected to live? Probably a few years. Perhaps a decade. But long before he reaches middle age, this nation will almost certainly be engulfed in a full-scale nuclear war, in which he will likely be killed or horribly deformed.

A major reason for this bleak outlook is a moral one. As a nation, we engaged in the mass extermination of our fellows in World War II -- in Hamburg, Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima. Now the men and women of our armed forces are again ready, upon command, to kill untold millions of civilians in World War III.

Our acquiescence in such slaughter has an effect of which we are scarcely aware: It subtly dulls our capacity for moral discrimination and contributes to the experience "of disintegration, of a world-wide loss of values and meanings," which the philosopher Paul Tillich has declared is the plight of our generation. A reciprocal relationship also exists: the widespread lack of ethical standards makes it easier for us to kill each other.

Little criticism from a moral point of view is being leveled at the current escalation of our military striking power. But if there really is a moral law -- a valid distinction between right and wrong -- this law cannot be broken with impunity. "Though the mills of god grind slowly, they grind exceeding fine.'

I propose now to show that our actions in World War II and our plans for World War III constitute such gross violations of ethical principles that we deserve the doom that will surely befall us-unless we sharply change direction. Then I shall examine the most common rationalizations for our present policy; the defense of freedom and the theory of deterrence. Finally, I suggest an alternative course of action.

The first respect in which we are breaking the moral law is that we are callously disregarding the sanctity of personality and the intrinsic value of human life. In World War II, when the Nazis first dropped a few bombs on London the Western world was aghast at such barbarity. The Allies then massacred hundreds of thousands of civilians in Germany and Japan with few qualms of conscience. In defeating Hitler, we practiced Hitler's ethics. By taking a callous view of human life, we provide immoral support to others -- for-example, the former leaders of China, who once claimed they could tolerate 100 million casualties in nuclear war.

Moral choices, to be sure, are not always simple. We often face conflicting claims of the ethical imperative and have the unpleasant task of choosing the lesser of two evils. Perhaps life is not the highest value. Some would argue that under certain circumstances killing is justifiable, as in the American Revolution or the attempted assassination of Hitler. Yet we must not forget how serious it is to take even a single life, and surely

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there is a radical difference between the discriminate killing of the guilty and the indiscriminate slaughter of the innocent. Moreover, we must recognize the significance of degree in morality, as in other aspects of life. Even if we grant that to kill one hundred people is no worse morally than to kill only one, certainly it makes a difference to the other ninety-nine!

If the killing of a single individual is a tragedy,, what about the large-scale extermination of innocent civilians and the genetic damage we plan to inflict upon future generations? The impending war is frequently referred to as mass suicide. This is not literally correct; we shall be killing not ourselves, but each other. It is more accurately designated mass murder. Could any alleged good possibly justify the type of war for which we are preparing? Is it not contrary to our deepest ethical and spiritual insights?

A second indictment of our "defense" program is that we are polluting the creation of God. What He pronounced good we are, perhaps permanently, causing to become bad. Atomic bombs have already done considerable harm to humans and to our environment, and the diabolical effects of the radiation we are prepared to unloose would be colossal. We recoil in horror at the lack of ethical sensitivity revealed by attempts to minimize this evil by glossing over or misrepresenting the facts. Especially ghastly is the humor of a defense corporation spokesman who refers with detachment and irony to sixty million deaths in nuclear war and adds that, after all, parents may "learn to love two-headed children twice as much."

To the pollution of our world by radiation must be added the effects of chemical and biological warfare, the real nature of which is expressed in this statement of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare:

Biological warfare is the intentional use of living organisms or their toxic products, to cause death, disability, or damage in man, animals, or plants. The target is man, either by causing his sickness or death or through limitation of his food.

. . . BW has been aptly described as public health in reverse.

Can this be reconciled with our stewardship of natural resources?

A closely-related indictment of our military momentum -- from a religious as well as ethical perspective -- is that as we prepare to destroy the planet we are presuming to cast off the role of creature and usurp the prerogatives of God. When we consider the spiritual potential of our fellow human beings, made in God's image, with the capacity for goodness, love, and communion with God; as we contemplate the divine quest for truth as exemplified by the libraries of the world and the creations of beauty preserved in museums and cathedrals; and as we realize that we are forging the means to destroy all of this -- at least here on earth -- can we help but feel a great sadness?

In a revealing passage, Paul Tillich tells of the sun veiling its face at the time of the Crucifixion,

... because its power over the world had ceased once and forever in these hours of its darkness. The great shining and burning god of everything that lives on earth, the sun, who was praised and feared and adored by innumerable human beings during thousands and thousands of years, had been deprived of its divine power when one human being in ultimate agony maintained His unity with that which is greater than the sun. Since those hours of darkness it is manifest that not the sun, but a suffering and struggling soul which cannot be broken by all the powers of the universe is the image of the Highest, and that the sun can only be praised in the way of St. Francis, who called it our brother, but not our god.

Today, we are reversing the clock and worshipping the H-Bomb -- literally a man-made sun. This is blasphemy. But as Jesus "maintained His unity" with God and could not "be broken by all the powers of the universe," so perhaps we may gain the insight and integrity to refuse obeisance to the H-Bomb and all it represents, and so deprive this new god of its power for evil.

Another way in which we contravene the moral law

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constitutes, at the same time, an attempt to justify our actions. This is the practice Isaiah denounced:

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil;
Who count darkness as light and light as darkness.

On the one hand, we honor those who are proficient in the arts of killing. We cannot lay particular blame on the donors or recipients of such honors; they are simply caught in the system that engulfs us all. No one can exist in a military nation like the United States without contributing in some degree to the war effort. We must all share the blame for a society in which medals and social esteem are granted for achievement in the armed forces.

On the other hand, note the treatment accorded such exemplars of moral fiber as Marjorie Swann. When Mrs. Swann trespassed on government property while protesting the Omaha missile base, the judge performed his legal duty by sentencing her to jail. Then, referring to her absence from home and children during the protest and the jail term, he went beyond the call of duty and asserted: "You are a bad mother."

A visitor called at the Swann home the day before her return. Perhaps a little more dust lay on the parlor floor, though he failed to notice it. Possibly the children had lost a few pounds from the substitute cooking, though it was not evident. One thing noted in the home was a sense of comradeship and admiration for the insight, integrity, and courage of the mother. "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil."

.This inversion of values is evident also in the euphemisms we hear. Instead of referring to a submarine frankly as an instrument of war, Rear Admiral William Rayburn Jr., boss of the Polaris project, called it: "This new star of peace." In similar vein is the slogan: "Peace is our profession." The term "defense" refers to the power designed for attack or retaliation. "Deterrence" is used where "provocation" would be more accurate. "Security" refers to the insecurity our weapons produce. Wishful thinking and the natural desire to reassure one's conscience .have obscured the harsh realities. On the other hand, peacemakers are often considered subversives.

We are committing what Jesus called the unforgivable sin. We shall scarcely repent of the evil of waging war if we label it "good." Without repentance we shall not seek forgiveness. Nor shall we dedicate ourselves to the cause of peace if we consider it evil. By inverting the very meaning of "right" and "wrong," we become, as Jesus expressed it, "in the grasp of eternal sin."

Our transgression is enormous: the callous disrespect for human life, the pollution of ourselves and of nature, the attempt to usurp the prerogatives of God, and the inversion of moral distinctions. Where will this lead? Students of Moses, Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah can recall their predictions of divine judgment upon transgressing nations and the certain fulfillment of those predictions.

In 1746 John Woolman, a New Jersey Quaker of rare ethical sensitivity, noted the many evils involved in the slave trade. Assuming the existence of a just God and of the moral law, he reflected:

I saw in these southern provinces so many vices and corruptions increased by this trade and this way of life, that it appeared to me as a dark gloominess hanging over the land; and though now many willingly run into it, yet in future the consequence will be grievous to posterity. I express it as it hath appeared to me, not once, nor twice, but as a matter fixed on my mind.

Ten times in the course of his *Journal* Woolman repeated his foreboding: The transgression of the nation was so great that if it did not repent and cease from oppression, the operation of the moral law would "shake terribly the earth." Woolman thereby put his finger upon one of the multiple and complex causes of the Civil War. Today, as we increasingly devote time, energy, and money to ever more fiendish ways of mass murder, can we help seeing a "dark gloominess hanging over the land?"

Assuming that we are not immoral monsters, how have we gone wrong? What are the psychological explanations and intellectual justifications for our national policy? One explanation

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is-that we have come to our present attitudes and actions by a process so gradual and apparently inevitable that we have failed to realize how evil they are.

Another psychological factor is that we generally require considerable time to adapt to new situations. Modern methods of warfare are so revolutionary that former approaches to international tensions have become anachronistic. Although we often hear that the nuclear age requires new ideas, our foreign policy continues in the same old channels. Having thought and acted in military terms for centuries, we find it hard to conceive of nonviolent methods of seeking national security.

A further reason for acquiescing in the-plans for World War III is that we have not squarely faced current realities. This is due partly to our preoccupation with daily activities, but even more to the mechanism of "denial,* which Jerome Frank, Johns Hopkins University psychiatrist, has defined as "dealing with unpleasantness by ignoring it." Our minds tend to switch off disagreeable channels of thought, causing us to postpone dealing with very real dangers. This process of "selective inattention" is especially seductive in regard to nuclear war because the dangers are not evident. We do not actually see bombers, submarines, and disease germs, and lack the imagination fully to realize their reality. Most of us who live near military installations or defense plants will probably be killed in World War III. Yet when we momentarily perceive our danger it is psychologically attractive to dismiss it with the attitude: "It won't happen to me." To reinforce this attitude the political, military, and business leaders who have immediate interests in continuing the arms race bombard us with propaganda. To accept their reassuring cliches and unexamined assumptions is easier than to think critically and challenge them.

These are some of the psychological reasons we acquiesce in the so-called defense effort. A more rational justification accounts for this paradox: The highest religious bodies leave declared modern war to be a negation of spiritual values; yet many of those who wrote the declarations justify our preparation for mass extermination.

On what grounds? When theological verbiage is cleared away, the answer is similar to that given by the man in the street: "What else can we do? Do we want to become slaves?" This is the question to end all questions. To have our freedom curtailed is unthinkable. We may not wish to commit the most horrible atrocities, it is said, but the readiness for nuclear war is necessary to preserve our liberty. Even total destruction, we are told, would be better than living in slavery; we should be willing to die, if necessary, for death is not the worst evil.

This argument appears reasonable until we examine it more closely. Then we note its false assumptions and serious perversion of ethical values. First, look at the assertion that the loss of life is preferable to the loss of freedom. Whether or not that is true, it obscures the fact that voluntary exposure to death is not the essence of war. One's real aim in war is not to die, but to kill. There is an ethical difference between being willing to sacrifice one's own life and being ready to kill. As the poet writes:

I will die, but that is all I will do for death.
I am not on death's payroll.

Moreover,, a nuclear war will include not just major powers, but non-combatant nations and future generations as well. On the latter we shall inflict not only death but mental and physical abnormalities. Do we have the right to decide that such a fate is best for them? In view of its total effects can we honestly consider nuclear war to be the lesser of two evils?

An equally serious fallacy in the argument we are considering is that it exalts political freedom too highly. Without realizing it we have come to deify freedom. By what diabolical process have people with a Judeo-Christian heritage come to assume that political or physical freedom is so important that one must give up all moral and spiritual principles for its-sake? Jesus lived in a subject country and repeatedly rejected the temptation to be a military leader in a nationalistic revolt. What of the Christians who lived in catacombs and cellars rather than betray their principles? What of the spiritual leaders throughout history who have relinquished physical freedom by going to jail for their

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convictions?

Were they mistaken? Should they have worshiped the emperor, entered the army, or otherwise pleased the authorities, because, after all, "We must have our freedom"? In so acting would they not have lost the deeper freedom based upon the conviction that they were obeying the Inner Light? This freedom no dictatorship can destroy.

Our idolization of freedom is illuminated by Paul Tillich's distinction between preliminary concerns and ultimate concern. The former may be so noble that they rightfully demand our attention, devotion, and passion., But, writes Tillich, they should not be given our "*infinite attention, unconditional devotion and ultimate passion.*" They are important but not ultimately so. Yet, declares Tillich, each of these lesser concerns "tries to become our ultimate concern, our God,* and we often maintain such a concern as if it were ultimate. He then points out that the most demanding of these idols is the nation. Actually, it is the nation we worship in the guise of freedom.

It is extremely doubtful that the only alternatives are mass murder or drastic reduction of freedom. Were that the case. however, surely the great spirits of all time would favor the latter. If we engage in mass murder, we impair what is of ultimate worth -- our own souls. On the other hand, what others can do to us need not destroy our moral and spiritual selves unless we let it.

Plato makes this crystal-clear in the opening section of the *Republic* and repeats the idea in the *Gorgias*. The same conviction is expressed in various ways by Jesus, Paul, and Marcus Aurelius. As Tillich continues, the "one thing needed" is concern about that which is ultimate. Having this passion we can still be concerned about lesser matters, such as freedom and the nation, but in a different way. Our anxiety about these things will be gone, its power broken. If a person should lose these things "he does not lose the one thing he needs and that cannot be taken from him."

Another sincere rationale for maintaining a nuclear arsenal is that it preserves the peace by acting as a deterrent. Leaders of potential enemies are presumed rational and calcu-

lating enough not to initiate a war in which they would be destroyed. The fact that nuclear war has not yet occurred is cited as proof of this.

Here, again, is a theory that seems plausible, but careful scrutiny reveals it to be illusory. It is accepted only because it has not been examined adequately. Under certain conditions military strength may be a deterrent. In view of the fluctuating relationships among nations it is not easy to determine those conditions. Such a situation may exist when a nation or group of nations has a preponderance of strength so overwhelming that no others can rival it. Possible examples are the *Pax Romana* and the *Pax Britannia*.

The deterrence theory may also have some validity when the nation in question imposes no threat to others -- when its military strength is solely defensive -- so that neighboring nations feel no need to attack it for the sake of their own security. Switzerland is an example. By far the most essential condition for the effectiveness of the deterrence theory is that no arms race be in process or in prospect. The existence of an arms race shows that neither side has been deterred.

We find none of these favorable conditions in our present situation: no nation or alliance has a clear preponderance of strength; the military power of the major nations is not purely defensive, and a compulsive arms race is in process. In the present situation, every increase of military strength by one nation is more of a provocation to war, an incitement, than a deterrent. It increases the anxiety of the opponent, which feverishly seeks to match and surpass its rival. As the readiness to strike builds up on both sides the actual security of each becomes less, rather than greater, and the continuance of this process makes eventual war practically certain.

A major weakness in the deterrence theory lies in its fantastic optimism, its wishful thinking. The idea that no one would dare start a nuclear war overlooks the pervasive irrationality of human beings. Reinhold Niebuhr and Freud may not have been entirely correct in their analyses of human nature, but they made it clear that we are often guided by forces other than

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reason.

How rational were Japan and Germany when they went to war against the United States? Many a fanatic has committed assassination despite the certainty he would be killed for it. Within the next several years, additional nations will have the bomb. Can we assume that all of the leaders of those nations will invariably be guided by reflective and thoroughly realistic judgments? We must remember that a single individual could start World War III.

Examine the idea of deterrence from a slightly different perspective. The strongest motivation to kill is to face the danger of being killed, to believe "It's either he or I." With two or more nations each possessing hair-trigger means of nuclear attack, suppose one of them concludes that war is imminent. It is then faced with two possible risks: if it does not strike first, it will risk the unimpaired might of the enemy. On the other hand, if it strikes first, the destructive power of the enemy will be greatly reduced. It has a tremendous incentive to launch a surprise attack.

Note that the incentive is provided by what was supposed to be a deterrent -- the military power of the other side. The power to implement the incentive is provided by what was supposed to be only a deterrent -- the military might of the first side.

The word "deterrence" seems to imply that the United States would not make the first strike. Certain powerful figures in this country, however, insist that we should be prepared to do so. There is no reason to believe it would not be done if military strategy seemed to warrant it. *U.S. News & World Report* states that in the judgment of Lt. General Bernard A. Schriever, former Commander, Air Research and Development Command, "the only adequate deterrent strength would be that which would enable this country, if it chose, to strike the first blow and wipe out Russia." We need to note this use of the word "deterrent."

Proponents of military power often accuse pacifists of being impractical and unrealistic. Is it more realistic to justify weapons of mass destruction on the ground that they will keep

us out of war and never really be used?. In his perceptive volume *Brighter Than a Thousand Sons*, Robert Jungk reports that during World War II, government officials persuaded

American scientists to work on the atom bomb on the ground that there was no intention of using the new bomb in warfare. It was merely to serve as a deterrent in case the Germans developed a similar weapon. . . . (Their) work would be contributing to the preservation of the whole nation from a catastrophe.

In private, a major attached to the War Department shocked Samuel Goudsmit, a Dutch nuclear physicist working on the American bomb project, with the prophecy: "If we have such a weapon we are going to use it."

After the defeat of Germany, we might have expected General Leslie Groves to halt the atom bomb project, of which he had charge. Instead, according to Jungk, he "gave the impression of being obsessed by one intense fear -- that the war with Japan would be finished before his bomb could be." This illustrates the psychological truth that when we work and plan for a certain type of action, even though we are planning only for an emergency, a strong impetus is created toward the action itself. To assume that moral restraints or long range considerations will keep military decision-makers from ever using these weapons is surely fanciful.

We face a problem here: the longer we manage to stay out of war the more it will appear as though deterrence is effective. On the other hand, the only final confirmation of this essay will be the actual outbreak of war. Then it will be too late.

The situation is like that of a reckless driver. The longer he manages to avoid an accident the more confident and reckless he becomes. He may even attribute his safety to his method of driving. He will be convinced that his methods are dangerous only after he has had an accident. The point is that we have managed to avoid nuclear war not because of the deterrence of our military strength but in spite of the provocation caused by it. Credit for this belongs to such factors as diplomatic

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efforts, world opinion, the work of the United Nations, the willingness of the Soviet Union to back down on a couple of occasions, and sheer luck.

When we consider the crises, errors, human frailties, and unpredictable factors that keep facing us, we must recognize that to avoid a major war forever while continuing our present course would be as likely as to toss a coin a hundred times and see it always come up heads. Before the nuclear age a nation could engage in war and still survive. But now a single blunder could bring ruin. Unless we make a radical change of direction we shall experience the truth of the prophecy: "They that take the sword [or atom bomb] shall perish by the sword."

We have considered the deterrence argument because of its close relationship to moral and spiritual issues. The latter, rather than practical considerations, are the chief concerns of this essay. We may be certain that a course of action is wrong and should not be pursued, even though a clear blueprint of the alternative path is lacking.

An alternative to military defense will have its problems. But the problems will be less serious, from both practical and ethical standpoints, than those involved in the war system. Could any alternative be worse than our present acquiescence in mass slaughter? If we have a modicum of belief in a moral or divine order, we have grounds to hope there must be a better way. Even if we lack such a faith, we can give it a try.

In view of the inevitable destruction to which the arms race is taking us, is it not astounding that national policy makers do not even consider alternatives to military defense? The debates that occur concern only the relative merits of different weapons or strategies. Yet organizations and individual scholars, as indicated below, have provided sufficient data to warrant a basic reconsideration of national policy and action.

My purpose at this point is not to offer a new proposal, but simply to call attention to three aspects of a practical alternative to military defense and to show reason for taking them seriously. The first suggestion is that our nation rely on aggressive nonviolent resistance to defend itself against a possible (but

unlikely) aggressor. To dismiss this option without examining such a volume as Gene Sharp's *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* is irresponsible. Over 900 pages in length, this was prepared under the auspices of Harvard University's Center for International Affairs on the basis of fifteen years of study and experience in several countries.

Dr. Sharp demonstrates that ultimately political power depends upon the consent of the people. Using case histories, he describes methods of nonviolent struggle that have proved successful by relying primarily on protest, noncooperation, and intervention. Experts in political science, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines have produced additional studies that deserve consideration. A careful examination of historical and contemporary evidence should convince us that in the nuclear age nonviolent direct action is a viable alternative to military defense.

A second imperative is to devote a great deal more skill, time, and effort to striving for disarmament and developing effective peaceful means to adjudicate international disputes. Significant arms control agreements have been made since the Washington Conference on Limitation of Armaments in 1921, especially since the adoption of the United Nations Charter in 1945, which gave the United Nations the mandate to work for disarmament. But-genuine disarmament has not been achieved, primarily because each nation is afraid of hindering its chances of winning the next war. If a nation decides not to rely on arms for defense, this obstacle is removed.

Several organizations and experts have outlined workable plans for disarmament. For example,, in *The Game of Disarmament* by Alva Myrdal and *Toward A Dependable Peace*, published by the Institute for World Order, gradual steps are outlined that could be taken unilaterally without jeopardizing national security. The usual objections to disarmament are answered effectively in these carefully reasoned proposals, which appear to have been ignored, rather than refuted, by policy makers of the superpowers.

Discarding reliance on means of destruction would free

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us for the third facet of my proposed alternative: that we engage in a wide range of constructive projects -- unilaterally and through the United Nations -- aimed at removing the causes of war. Global military expenditures (some \$400 billion annually) constitute a tremendous burden on the people of the world. With only a small fraction of that sum, we could benefit people everywhere by increasing many-fold our efforts to combat hunger, disease, unemployment, environmental pollution, and other evils that afflict humankind. In the United States, the vast sums now spent for war could be devoted to such uses as attacking poverty, reducing taxes, paying off the national debt, and developing alternative sources of energy.

The time has come to consider seriously relying on nonviolent resistance for national defense, striving for complete disarmament, and mounting a multifaceted peace offensive. If we adopt such a program, it will reverse the practices whereby we are now breaking the moral law; supported by that law, we will set precedents for good rather than evil. This will bring new insights and release energies here and abroad that will enhance the quality of life throughout the world.

Nonviolence versus capitalism

Brian Martin

ISBN 0903517 19 1

War Resisters' International

Available free on the web, or printed version: barter or purchase:
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"Nonviolent action is the most promising method of moving beyond capitalism to a more humane social and economic system. How can this be achieved? *Nonviolence versus capitalism* offers a systematic approach, starting with an analysis of capitalism from the viewpoint of nonviolence, outlining nonviolent economic alternatives and describing what is involved in a nonviolence strategy. A check list for activists is proposed and used to assess diverse campaign, including

(Continued on page 11)

A Message from the Editor

First, a word of explanation regarding this issue and last: there have been no issues between Summer-Autumn 2001 and Spring-Summer 2002. This issue has been expanded in part to make up for this.

Why the irregular schedule? My health has been declining for some time. I was hospitalized for a while last Autumn, and found myself weak and heavily medicated during much of my recuperation at home. Candidly, my cancer was diagnosed about two and one-half years ago. Although treatment options have been offered, none of them holds promise of extending my life expectancy, and I have declined treatment.

The difficulties last Autumn involved my heart. Six months later, the doctors display guarded optimism about my recovery, but I no longer have the energy or endurance I need to keep up with my assorted interests/activities and schedule. Reluctantly, I am cutting back in several areas.

My term on the CBDA Board of Directors expired at the end of 2001. Though the Directors generously offered me an additional term, I have declined. I have thereby stepped down as Chair of the Board of Directors, as well.

This will be my last issue as editor. I count it a privilege that the Board has allowed me to assemble an issue dedicated to Phillips P. Moulton. He was my friend and mentor, a Friend and a former member of the CBDA Board, a gentle man and scholar who believed passionately in our cause.

It has been an honor to work with you these past nine years, and I hope that CBDA will continue its crucial work by spreading knowledge of the amazing idea of Civilian-Based Defense.

On a more upbeat note, Amalie Helms (my daughter) has also stepped down from the Board. She is expecting twin boys in July, and does not anticipate having time and energy for other projects for some time to come.

- Phil Helms

Israel's Conscience

Diaspora Jews are asked to support the state, but some are backing acts of Israeli opposition to the occupation

Anne Karpf

The Guardian, February 11, 2002

This article was forwarded by e-mail, by former CBDA Board member George Crowell. The complete article is at www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,648180,00.html

... On February 03, 300 [Israeli] peace activists defied the ban against travel to Palestinian Authority -controlled areas and went to Ramallah to express solidarity with the Palestinian leadership and people. They pressed on when Israel Defense Force (IDF) soldiers tried to stop them at a checkpoint along the way, met Arafat, and later chanted at the IDF: "Soldiers come home." The soldiers responded with stun grenades.

Such acts of conscience challenge the prevailing view that, once the current intifada began in September 2000, Israeli doves simply flew away. Certainly the Israeli left has been beset by despair and depression, and there's been no centralized political opposition to Sharon, especially since the Labor party joined the national coalition government. But the assumption that all Israelis are either rabid settlers or their uncritical supporters is as caricatured as the idea that all Muslims are terrorists or their abettors.

In reality, throughout the past 17 months a small but symbolic array of Israeli peace groups has intensified its efforts, and has been further galvanized by the combat reservists' recent petition calling on soldiers to refuse to serve beyond the "green line" (the 1967 borders). Their numbers may be tiny, but their moral and political significance is huge. They shift the terms of the debate from one for or against Israel to one for or against the occupation. . .

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