Studying America’s Struggle Against War: 
An Historical Perspective

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American history surveys and monographs have been dominated by discourses on war. The vocabulary itself—the inter-war period, postwar planning, the prewar economy, the revolutionary war generation, the irrepressible conflict—strongly suggests that the United States has been in a virtual state of war throughout its history. Ironically, this emphasis on war is out of proportion to the actual amount of time Americans have spent fighting wars. The basic question educators should ask is why do historians and social studies teachers devote so much of their scholarship and teaching to war and, conversely, so little to peace studies? Why is it that peace has been the reform sought most vocally by Americans, yet remains the most elusive?

A major effort to make peace history a permanent feature of American historiography began in the 1960s. The Vietnam War demanded that peace issues become as much a part of scholarship and the college curriculum as had the civil rights and women’s movements. Peace activists protesting the war were joined by the general public in working to better understand the roots of pacifism and antiwar actions. The result of this dual desire to consider both the philosophical foundations of pacifism and its practical political applications, for instance, produced an outpouring of scholarly work and curriculum development. Peace studies
courses and sometimes entire departments or majors were created by universities overnight. Faculty also demonstrated that they were not immune to external pressures from their students, nor were they oblivious to the need to bring their scholarship closer into line with their own increasing political activism.

The heightened passions surrounding the Vietnam War led some historians to integrate peace research into scholarship as a legitimate alternative perspective on the past. Previously, to the extent that pacifists, peace advocates, and peace movements were even included in historical monographs and textbooks, they were usually treated negatively—denounced as misguided or even traitorous idealists. But the 1960s and decades following witnessed a significant increase in the number of peace history scholars and courses. The field itself—defined as the historical study of nonviolent efforts for peace and social justice—became widely recognized, accepted as a sub-field of the discipline of history, and as part of a larger multidisciplinary approach known as peace studies. In a much broader context, peace historians and peace educators generally see themselves as engaged scholars, involved in the study of peace and war, and in efforts to eliminate or, at least, restrict armaments, conscription, nuclear proliferation, colonialism, racism, sexism, and war. As a social reform movement, the work of peace historians presents alternatives to the policies they oppose. Peace history, as part of peace studies, seeks to inform publics concerning the causes of war while highlighting the efforts of those whose efforts have been directed at peaceful coexistence in an interdependent global setting.

The study of peace history can be classified into three categories. First, conflict management, which involves achieving peace through negotiation, mediation, arbitration, international law, and arms control and disarmament. Second, social reform, which involves changing political and economic structures and traditional ways of thinking. Third, a world order transformation, which incorporates world federation, better economic and environmental relationships, and a common feeling of security. Specifically, the discipline’s basic focus has been historical analysis of peace and antiwar movements and individuals, international relations, and the causes of war and peace.

Scholarly Beginnings

Initially, the earliest forms of peace writing were undertaken by the activists themselves—religious and sectarian pacifists who were organizing the movement from the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century. Among the more representative works of this period...
were: The Journal of John Woolman (ed., Frederick Tolles, 1961); Anthony Benezet, Thoughts on the Nature of War (1776); Noah Worcester, A Solemn Review of the Custom of War (1815); David Low Dodge, War Inconsistent with the Religion of Jesus Christ (1812); William Ladd, The Essays of Philanthropos on Peace and War (1827); and the letters and journals of Elihu Burritt, edited by Merle Curti as The Learned Blacksmith: The Letters and Journals of Elihu Burritt (1937). For the most part, this literature was didactic, personal, and geared for general audiences with Christian proclivities. There were also a few peace leaders from the Civil War to World War I who stressed the virtues of pacifism and nonresistance, notably Alfred Love of the Universal Peace Union and Benjamin Trueblood of the American Peace Society (and author of The Federation of the World [1899]). Additionally, Rufus Jones recounted earlier Quaker efforts for peace in The Quakers in the American Colonies (1911), and Margaret Hirst continued the story up to 1913 in The Quakers in Peace and War.6

It was not until the period between the two world wars that, for the first time, peace history writing came under the purview of scholarly analysis. Reflecting postwar disillusionment were William F. Galpin’s Pioneering for Peace: A Study of American Peace Efforts to 1846 (1933), Devere Allen’s The Fight For Peace (1930), and A.F.C. Beales’s The History of Peace: A Short Account of the Organized Movements for International Peace (1931). Each of these studies produced a critique of war influenced by economic and religious considerations. Their narratives were solid and sympathies clearly defined.7 Yet no one approached the productivity and historical acumen of Merle Curti. Curti was the first historian to capture the rich tradition of peace efforts in the American past and bring to light the contributions of individuals and movements in the struggle against war.

In the 1920s, Curti began examining pacifist ideas and peace movements. Although not a pacifist, he was influenced by the postwar disillusionment characteristic of the writings of progressive historians Charles Beard, Carl Becker, and Vernon Louis Parrington; he also shared the confidence of Columbia University philosopher John Dewey in humanity’s capacity to apply modern intelligence to social problems. Significantly, Curti expanded the scope of peace history through primary sources previously ignored, and he consistently related the struggle for peace to its social context. His studies of the American peace movement took up the better part of two decades. In 1929, his Harvard University doctoral thesis was published as The American Peace Crusade, 1815-1860. In 1931, Bryan and World Peace appeared. Five years later his work culminated in the classic Peace or War: The American Struggle, 1636-1936,
the first serious scholarly study of the American peace movement. Although Curti, by the end of the decade, supported the war against fascism, his postwar views on the development of American patriotism and its effects on the war mentality was published in 1946 as *The Roots of American Loyalty*. From the 1920s to the early Cold War years, Curti “stressed the need for open and active channels of democratic communication during wartime.”

Curti’s historical work reflected three general assumptions about pacifist ideals and peace movements that would eventually shape the parameters of the field: an instrumentalist view that the history of pacifist ideals could help change the world; a subjective belief that the story of peace movements can be just as exciting and rewarding as accounts of battles and wars; and a rational belief in the public value of assessing the true meaning of patriotism and nationalism. “The history of this crusade,” he claimed in his classic study, “is a stirring one. The struggle could be waged only at the cost of great toil and devotion and sacrifice.” The movement for peace was also part and parcel of a larger development in social change: “What Americans did to limit or uproot the war system was at every point affected by the traditions and ideals of American life which were dominant in varying degrees at different times.” Throughout all his writings, Curti emphasized that the study of history must not dwell on the glories of war, which is only temporary and terribly destructive, but on the efforts of “rational,” “intelligent,” and “concerned” human beings who recognize the true value of human relationships and their enduring importance to society.

Unfortunately, the conservative temper of the 1950s and early 1960s produced meager results, despite Curti’s groundbreaking efforts. There were, however, some works carrying on the tradition. Prompted by the threat of atomic war and McCarthyism, Curti’s former Columbia University student, Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr., examined the origins of anti-militarist thought in *The Civilian and the Military* (1956). H.C. Peterson and Gilbert Fite’s *Opponents of War, 1917-1918* (1957) narrated the effects of antiwar protest and government suppression during the Great War, while Mulford Q. Sibley and Philip Jacob’s *Conscription of Conscience* (1952) provided a comprehensive study of conscientious objection during World War II. These works relied heavily on primary sources and were scholarly in tone and substance.

**Professionalization and Proliferation**

The study of modern peace history resulted from two developments in professional scholarship. One was “the tremendous expansion in size and
the associated drive toward increased specialization that overtook the American historical profession after 1960, at the same time as a host of change-making forces—from the civil rights to the women’s movement—worked their transforming effect upon American life and the nation’s historical consciousness.” The other cause was the “peace research movement that emerged in the United States in the mid-1950s with the aim of applying social scientific techniques toward the resolution of the global war problem.” The second development, in particular, originating at places like the University of Michigan and “boasting such figures as the economist Kenneth Boulding and the psychologist Charles Osgood,” managed to bring together “a constellation of scholars who anticipated important contributions from historians in what was envisioned as a necessarily inter-disciplinary undertaking.” The creation of the Journal of Conflict Resolution promoted the collaboration between historians and social scientific peace researchers.¹²

Immediate results were not forthcoming, however, because Cold War consensus mitigated the professional historians’ reception of the proposal. Yet, by the early 1960s things started to change. The call for a community of scholars from history and the social sciences prompted some members of the historical profession to promote peace history as a distinctive realm of inquiry. At the December 1963 American Historical Association meeting, radical intellectual and former Curti student at the University of Wisconsin, Arthur Waskow, along with respected scholars like Curti and Quaker historian, Edwin Bronner, formed an affiliated society, the Conference on Peace Research in History—today, the Peace History Society—to “communicate its findings to the public at large in the hope of broadening the understanding and possibilities of world peace.” In 1972, the organization inaugurated its official journal, Peace and Change.¹³

Most significantly, growing dissatisfaction with the war in Vietnam provided an enormous boost to peace history research and peace education programs throughout the United States. From the mid-to-late 1960s and during the decades thereafter, peace education programs flourished at American colleges and universities. The efforts of the World Policy Institute’s Consortium on Peace Research, Education, and Development, along with much earlier efforts by the well-established Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, encouraged the creation of social justice and peace studies programs. Colleges and universities such as CCNY, Penn State, Colgate, Syracuse, Kent State, Boston College, Wayne State, Manhattan College, Wittenberg, Earlham College, Akron, Missouri, Notre Dame, Columbia, and Georgetown, among numerous others, established majors, minors, concentrations or cluster arrangements “engaging stu-
dents in the search for universal normative goals of preventing and eventually eliminating war, establishing a healthy global ecology, achieving economic justice and advancing human rights." A plethora of curricula were created for classroom use covering the areas of global problems, peacemaking and nonviolence, women and world order, teacher training in nonviolence and global education, hunger and the politics of food distribution, ecological balance, militarism and the arms race, international law and organizations, human rights and social justice, culture and community, and religious perspectives on justice and peace. The wide variety and approaches to conflict resolution helped to enhance the curriculum while offering viable choices for a stable and healthy world order. Unfortunately, because of patriotic constraints, little was done at the secondary school level.

Prior to the rapid growth of peace history and peace studies programs, certain historians had already been hard at work developing rather unique interpretations of the "Garrison State." Though not considered peace historians, William Appleman Williams and the more controversial Howard Zinn, for instance, began to shape the landscape of New Left history. Their antimilitarist interpretations of the American past helped set the tone for younger historians interested in the roots of opposition to war and racial injustice. Williams is an interesting case study. An Annapolis graduate and naval officer in World War II, Williams' views regarding corporate liberalism and its accompanying ideology began taking shape during his graduate days at the University of Wisconsin in the late 1940s. His views gained widespread popularity with the publication of his book, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959); it remains one of the most important books to appear on the history of American foreign relations. *Tragedy* later "helped frame the public discussion of the United States' role in Southeast Asia." Williams incorporated his account of "United States foreign relations into his analysis of the (curiously static) worldview or *Weltanschauung*, as he called it of empire." In helping to establish the parameters of public discussion on the course of the American empire—vis-à-vis Vietnam—Williams cunningly "explained this moral catastrophe as neither misguided idealism nor elite conspiracy but instead as the inevitable consequence of deeply rooted, bipartisan assumptions." *Tragedy*’s immediate popularity and subsequent influence on peace historians, was followed by *Contours of American History* (1961). In this work, following his earlier lead of the "strict economic rationality of Americans’ expansionism," *Contours* “traced the roots of American expansionism to the nation’s origins and attributed the rise of the security state with its planned deception of the public to the impossibility of managing a world empire.”
Williams’ interpretation eventually found a cadre of “domestic applicators” in Paul Buhle, Gabriel Kolko, Barton Bernstein, James Weinstein, Martin Sklar, and a host of younger New Left historians. In *Tragedy* and *Contours* his “unique insights could be traced to his penetrating economic perspectives and to his long view of modern history.” When the Vietnam War framed the debate over the 20th century American Empire, peace historians gladly embraced Williams’ economic interpretation of American diplomacy. The new crop of 1960s and 1970s peace historians accepted Williams’ plea “for a democratic-renewal, a revived citizenship based upon the activities or decisions of local communities rather than upon the demands of a distant welfare-and-warfare state.”

Zinn’s anti-militarist views and opposition to the Vietnam War had been based on his own desire “to affirm resistance to illegitimate authority.” His scholarship was tied to his own political beliefs which challenged the earlier notion that the rise of American democracy and the growth of national power were the true embodiments of democratic progress. In *Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal* (1967) and *Disobedience and Democracy* (1968), Zinn maintained that the crisis in Vietnam was the crisis of the intellectual. A political scientist by training with a journalistic penchant for history, Zinn argued that “resistance was the moral duty of intellectuals.” In his writings on militarism and war, especially Vietnam, Zinn insisted that “Americans were conditioned by the very organization of their society to deny responsibility for the moral consequences of their institutions.” In *The Politics of History* (1970), moreover, Zinn continued his argument against the militarizing tendencies of American society by arguing for the “historian as actor.” In Zinn’s case, his social protest analyses stemmed from his pre-Vietnam War commitment to the civil rights struggles in the south. In *SNCC: The New Abolitionists* (1964), Zinn saw enormous value in civil disobedience as a weapon against state oppression. His later writings were suffused with the belief that scholars must “become engaged through at least symbolic action in order to preserve the very meaning of morality, of intentional choice.” Such “intentional choice” led to his 1967 trip to Hanoi, where, along with peace activists Dave Dellinger and the Reverend Daniel Berrigan, he escorted three released Air Force prisoners of war home. The opposition to the war in Southeast Asia, coupled with Cold War rearmament, stoked the fires of his antimilitarism. His criticisms of the contention that “war production could bring stability and high profits” contributed to peace history scholarship. Younger peace historians began following Zinn’s lead in condemning the fact that as “the United States budget kept mounting, the hysteria kept growing, the profits of corporations getting defense contracts multiplied, and employ-
ment and wages moved ahead just enough to keep a substantial number of Americans dependent on war industries for their living." 

After 1965, inspired by peace consciousness on campuses, the antimilitarist views espoused by Williams and Zinn, and a growing number of mature historians disillusioned with the war, newer scholars receiving their doctorates in history began legitimizing the field of peace history as a professional endeavor. Opposition to an ever expanding American military presence in Southeast Asia provided a windfall for scholars anxious to examine the role of peace and antiwar activism in America's past. Peace history proliferated rapidly from the Vietnam War era to the 1980s. A considerable portion of the literature written during this period of rapid social and political change focused on issues of peace and justice and the emergence of activist-oriented peace organizations and leaders after World War I. More specialized studies began supplementing the earlier broad surveys provided by Curti, Allen, and Ekirch.

In particular, these specialized studies were most effective in their examinations of the composition of each antiwar coalition that developed. The new research showed that membership in each group was bonded by a distinct viewpoint (e.g., pacifism, world court, international government), together with social characteristics (e.g., Christianity, socialism, feminism, environmentalism) or functional programs (e.g., dramatizing issues, lobbying, educating). An antiwar constituency, therefore, attracted groups with inconsistent interests, much as opposition to World War I had aligned socialists with some moderate liberals, as the position of strict neutrality in the 1930s captured both isolationists and pacifists, and as condemnation of the Vietnam War joined New Left radicals, conservative business leaders, and even some cold war political warriors. Complementing these new studies, moreover, was a growing interest in historic feminist peace activism.

**Peace Studies From the Vietnam War to the 1980s**

Basically, the peace history literature of this period can be classified into six primary categories: 1) specialized works on the story of the United States peace movement; 2) peace biographies; 3) works on the Vietnam War; 4) insider accounts; 5) women and peace; and 6) anti-nuclear activism. Nicely complementing the specialized studies are surveys such as Peter Brock's massive work, *Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Period to the First World War* (1968), and Charles DeBenedetti's *The Peace Reform in America* (1980). DeBenedetti's contribution was designed as a classroom survey text updating both Curti's *Peace or War* and Charles Chatfield's useful anthology, *Peace Move-
ments in America (1972). Some of the more important works in each category will be discussed below.

Specialized Studies. The achievement of these specialized works is their thorough use of primary sources. Adding both texture and context to the narrative, these studies have given new understanding and meaning to the peace crusade as well as important criticisms regarding its successes and failures. Although the cadre of younger scholars writing about the historic aspects of the peace movement began making names for themselves, there were four studies which stood out: Lawrence Wittner’s Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1933-1983 (1969, rev. 1983), Charles Chatfield’s, For Peace and Justice: Pacifism in America, 1914-1941 (1971), C. Roland Marchand’s, The American Peace Movement and Social Reform, 1898-1918 (1972), and David S. Patterson’s, Towards a Warless World: The Travail of the American Peace Movement, 1887-1914 (1976).

Rebels Against War’s contribution is its extensive examination of the principles and methods, successes and failures of the active peace organizations, as well as its delving into the personal papers of the various leaders of nonviolent movements. Wittner’s interest in peace history was a result of his own distrust of United States foreign policy. As a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, he was encouraged by Curti to update the historic role of the peace crusade. He did so, completing his studies under the direction of William Leuchtenberg at Columbia. His efforts to embue the peace movement’s moral influence with political relevance provided new leads in peace history research, particularly the role of organized labor and human rights movements and the international ramifications of American race relations.

Chatfield’s For Peace and Justice shows the transformation of pacifism from mere opposition to war to a greater concern for social reform. Chatfield’s own religious pacifism was channeled into historical research by Henry Lee Swint at Vanderbilt University. While dispelling many of the myths surrounding the pacifist’s lack of political realism he argues that peace must be built on social justice—a point Wittner also emphasizes. Chatfield also found that, contrary to prevailing thought, “the pacifist leaders were essentially internationalist, politically active, and influential.”

Marchand’s The American Peace Movement and Social Reform studies various reform groups that joined and then dominated the movement for peace. As a graduate student at Stanford University, Marchand was encouraged to research “possibilities in the history of the peace movement” by George Harmon Knoles and Otis A. Pease. Of interest to
teachers and students is Marchand’s discussion of lawyers favoring a world court, business leaders supportive of international economic stability, and labor unions arguing that the victim of war was the working class. According to Marchand, organizational patterns and “profound ideological changes” were the “hallmarks of the peace movement between 1898-1918.” Peace became a “truly protean reform” because the movement against war represented “an extension of...domestic attitudes or programs that brought diversity and change into the movement.” As with Chatfield’s work, a superb bibliographic essay is appended to the text.24

Lastly, in Toward a Warless World, Patterson looks at the keepers of judicial arbitration within the pre-World War I peace movement. He received his direction from Lawrence W. Levine at Berkeley. The strength of Patterson’s work is the way in which he dissects the four types of peace advocates under examination: pacifists, federalists, legalists, and generalists; and he criticizes them for not standing behind any one program for international reform. In analyzing the shift from non-institutional pacifism to institutional pacifism, Patterson shows how the political culture in prewar America created elite peacemaking tendencies and how the First World War transformed and radicalized the movement. These groups, which he links to his own period of interest, “attracted not only peace seekers disenchanted with the tidiness of the peace societies and endowed organizations but impelled many more pacifistic liberals and socialists into the cause for the first time. Many of these antiwar newcomers became absolute pacifists and boldly linked peace advocacy with social justice causes.”25

The peace historian Charles DeBendetti, in The Origins of the Modern Peace Movement, 1915-1919 (1978) sees the particular contributions of these four works, published between 1969 and 1976, in this light. He saw the peace movement as one which sought to “advance peace as a process in human social relations.” Leaders of the movement understood justice as the amelioration of social wrongs and not simply the adjudication of courts; they viewed nationalism in terms of cultural diversity rather than some form of Anglo-Saxon exclusivity; they saw war as a byproduct of militarism, nationalism, and imperialism and not merely as an irrational outburst of mass ignorance; and they sought a reformed and democratized international system by which responsible policymakers would manage peace through applied social justice and world agencies. These studies were most direct in their argument: “for peace to advance in the world, reform must advance at home through the nonviolent extension of justice under order.”26

Although the weight of evidence in these works, as well as the many other studies published during this period, praises the efforts of peace
leaders and their organizations there is also evidence of the movement’s shortcomings—particularly its middle class composition and non-radical ideology. For example, Patterson, in *Toward a Warless World*, found that the elitism of pre-World War I leaders and the idealism embodied in their efforts both blunted attempts for meaningful peace and placed a conservative veneer over the entire movement: “The rich and powerful increasingly penetrated the hierarchies of the established peace groups and foundations. In consequence, despite its growth the peace movement never developed meaningful contacts with movements for social and political change.” Moreover, he adds, that because peace workers were “too optimistically deterministic…. in emphasizing inevitable progress” they “tolerated the status quo in international life.”

Michael Lutzker also presents a similar argument in “The Pacifist as Militarist: A Critique of the American Peace Movement, 1898-1914.” In his examination of leaders like Nicholas M. Butler, Elihu Root, and William H. Taft, Lutzker points out “the consensus that existed between an important segment of the leaders of the peace movement and those generally perceived as having a more military orientation.”

Biographies of noted peace activists, the second category, also added a new dimension to peace historiography. Previously, most accounts were written by the activists themselves. During the charged atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s, however, younger historians began pouring through rich archival depositories like the Swarthmore College Peace Collection and the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace. They produced works on peace activists such as Charles F. Howlett’s *Troubled Philosopher: John Dewey and the Struggle for Peace* (1977), Harold Josephson’s *James T. Shotwell and the Rise of Internationalism in America* (1975), Michael Wrezin’s *Oswald Garrison Villard: Pacifist at War* (1965), and Nick Salvatore’s *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist* (1982). One particular work remains a model for peace biographies: Jo Ann O. Robinson’s *Abraham Went Out: A Biography of A.J. Muste* (1981). This carefully researched work details the public activities of America’s most famous pacifist leader in the 20th century. It remains unique in the way in which the author shows “the history of the journey of the soul of A.J. Muste from a deeply religious Dutch Reformed background to a leading place among pacifists, antiwar spokesmen, and fighters for the civil rights of workers and American minorities.” Unlike many biographies praising their subjects, Robinson shows the complex personality of a man “who was given to brooding, mystical experiences and an apparent sense of indignant self-righteousness.” Her analysis of Muste’s abandonment and then return to pacifism in the 1930s is a must read for those seeking to
understand the dilemmas conscientious objectors face when encouraged to employ force against the state. *Abraham Went Out* presents a thorough account of a “hard-nosed, dedicated believer in peace and in the dignity of all humanity,” and is a complete discussion of the “development of radical pacifism in the United States during the twentieth century.”

**Vietnam War Studies.** Having received its impetus during the Vietnam War, the field of peace history soon encompassed that war, at first with popular accounts like Thomas Powers, *The War at Home: Vietnam and the American People, 1964-1968* (1973), and Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up? American Protest against the War in Vietnam* (1984). These were followed by a growing number of carefully researched scholarly works. Of the many works analyzing antiwar protest, Charles DeBenedetti and Charles Chatfield’s, *An American Ordeal: The Anti-war Movement of the Vietnam Era* (1990), remains the most comprehensive and inclusive study available. De Benedetti had an established reputation in the field and studied American foreign policy under the direction of Norman Grabner at the University of Illinois. The book was completed by Chatfield after DeBenedetti’s death in 1987. As a comprehensive and interpretative history of the antiwar movement, *An American Ordeal* begins with “the rise of a liberal peace movement against atmospheric nuclear testing from 1955 to 1963.” It moves through “the emergence of radical pacifists and politically motivated groups who eventually created a diverse coalition” against the war, and culminates in a discussion of “how extremist elements came to dominate the movement in the late 1960s” only “to be supplanted by a larger consensus of liberal and pacifist groups in the early 1970s.” The work’s greatest contribution to Vietnam peace scholarship is the authors’ appreciation of the difficulties encountered in trying to analyze the subject. The authors see three motifs which characterized the antiwar movement: (1) the belief that modern life was “devolving into institutional insanity”; (2) the perception of “a growing moral deafness in American life” because of the Cold War arms race “discouraged democratic participation in the political process and eroded moral judgments” among policymakers; and (3) the belief that antiwar opposition “was grounded in an ethic of personal moral commitment.” Finally, the authors show that the forces “arrayed against the war were amorphous and ‘overwhelmingly local.’”

On the flip side, the conservative temper of the Reagan years and collapse of the Soviet Union eventually led to a closer look at the radicalization of the anti-Vietnam War movement. The new findings were rather somber. In 1988, Guenter Lewy’s *Peace and Revolution: The Moral Crisis of American Pacifism* challenged the “generally undisputed
reputation of moral rectitude" of peace advocates. His examination of four major pacifist organizations active during the Vietnam conflict—the American Friends Service Committee, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the War Resister’s League, and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom—led him to contend that “such organizations now have become apologists for violence and repression and have developed ties to movements and regimes that are anything but humanitarian.” Many will question his contention. A few years later Adam Garfinckle’s Telltale Hearts: The Origins and Impact of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement (1995) went even further in its condemnation. In Garfinckle’s estimation, a young participant himself in the antiwar movement, the protests had a marginal impact on limiting and ending the war and, in fact, helped prolong it. In stark contrast to DeBenedetti’s An American Ordeal, Garfinckle boldly contends that “contrary to the great weight of common knowledge, the Vietnam antiwar movement at its radical height was counterproductive in limiting U.S. military operations in Southeast Asia.” Ironically, “at the very time when the war’s unpopularity was growing in the country at large, the image of irresponsibility and willful anti-patriotism conveyed by the antiwar movement had the general effect of muting the expression of disaffection.”

Insider Accounts. One of the unique aspects of the Vietnam era is the number of insider accounts available. A book edited by Michael Ferber and Staughton Lynd, The Resistance (1971), is an interesting account of opposition to the draft, but Fred Halstead’s Out Now! A Participant’s Account of the American Movement Against the Vietnam War (1978) is indispensable. Unlike many personalized accounts which discuss numerous side bars to the author’s life, Out Now! sticks entirely to the war itself. Halstead pulls no punches. A dedicated socialist, he closely examines the struggles to end the Vietnam War. He disagrees totally with those who insist that radical opposition tactics helped prolong the war. In his opinion, antiwar agitation and mass mobilizations achieved five primary objectives. First, “It changed the political face of the United States” and brought about “a healthy distrust of the rulers in Washington.” Second, “It broke the fever of the anticommunist hysteria and weakened the efficacy of the ‘red scares.’” Third, “It challenged and changed the stereotyped image of GIs as obedient pawns of the brass.” Fourth, “The abhorrence of any further military ventures abroad restricted the options available to Washington.” But fifth, “The American movement against the Vietnam War broke the pattern of large and successful movements for social reform.” It is a radical critique with a personal perspective and readers can either agree or disagree with
Halstead’s conclusion that “The American movement against the Vietnam War knocked a gaping hole in the theory that because of its control over the military, the police, the economy, and the tremendously effective modern media, the ruling class could get away with anything so long as there was some degree of prosperity.”

Women’s Peace History. One of the most important byproducts of the 1960s social protest movements was the growing radicalization of female activism. Emboldened by Betty Friedan’s monumental work, The Feminine Mystique (1962), a wave of young female scholars began connecting international peace with domestic justice as issues important to women. A male dominated historical profession had rarely given proper credit to the contributions of female peace activists, save for Jane Addams, Emily Greene Balch, and Dorothy Detzer. But by the late 1970s and after, as more and more females entered the ranks of the history profession, a large body of literature started to appear detailing the contributions of women’s peace organizations and activists. An essential survey to consult is Harriet Hyman Alonso’s Peace as a Women’s Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women’s Rights (1993). Alonso quickly established herself as a leader in women’s peace history after completing her doctorate at SUNY-Stony Brook. Starting in the mid-1980s, Alonso went beyond standard studies on women’s peace activism by maintaining that “only a world without war can provide a climate in which women’s equality can flourish.” In exploring the dynamics of political feminism in the peace crusade she developed four major themes: 1) women who saw the relationship between women’s rights and peace issues made the connection “between institutional violence and violence against women”; 2) feminist pacifists defined this connection by “condemning militarism and government oppression as well as the social and economic exploitation of women”; 3) the cause of sexual, physical and psychological abuse of women was placed at the doorstep of the male power structure; and 4) there were “linkages between white women’s work for the abolition of slavery, their identification with the sexual degradation of female slaves and their consciousness of their own oppression.” Nonviolent resistance must be “a means and a measure of determining relationships.”

Most notably, the new female peace scholarship of the post-Vietnam period challenged the long-held concept that women’s roles as mothers made them peace activists. The old Victorian notion that women were the guardians of moral standards in society and sought nothing more also came under attack as female peace historians began identifying “the motherhood theme as a conscious political tool.” Numerous works
reflected the view that "women's political agendas" for full equality were directly linked to a warless world. Among the works promoting this theme is Amy Swerdlow's, *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s* (1993).

Swerdlow's careful study of Women Strike for Peace, the organization she helped found, is most rewarding. It is a mature work which developed while she was completing her graduate studies at Rutgers University. The strength of her book is the view that "WSP's militant struggle against militarism in the 1960s helped to give dignity to the denigrated term housewife and to change the image of the good mother from passive to militant, from silent to eloquent, from private to public." The book exposes "one of the most powerful myths of male militarists—that wars are waged by men to protect women and children" and contends that "By making a recognized contribution to the achievement of a test ban, the demise of MLF, the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, and the end of the draft for Vietnam, WSP also raised its participants' sense of political efficacy and self-esteem as women." Perhaps the book's most telling contribution is describing how her organization made nuclear arms a women's issue. In doing so, "the women who build on traditional female consciousness to enter the political arena do not have to be trapped in that culture or bound forever to stereotypical notions of maternal rights and responsibilities."41

Perhaps the strongest association between feminism and social activism can be found in Linda K. Schott's monograph on the intellectual aspects of female peace work. Her research was expertly guided by Barton Bernstein at Stanford. In her book, *Reconstructing Women's Thoughts: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Before World War II* (1997), Schott makes the case that "The eradication of violence was not enough; equally important was getting rid of racism, sexism, class inequality, and the exploitation of human and natural resources. As the WLF leaders would eventually phrase it, violence was inherent in inequality. For them, feminism and pacifism were inseparable." This, too, is a serious work of scholarship based on conviction and insight.42

*Resisting the Bomb.* The last major category during this period of proliferating peace histories dealt with the spiraling arms race. Peace advocates had never lost focus on the larger issues of the Cold War despite dramatic efforts to halt the war in Vietnam. Antinuclear activism mushroomed across the country in the 1970s, but its primary objective was to curb construction of power plants. By 1979 concern over nuclear war expanded, and a Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign emerged which
grew spectacularly for three years. Led by such diverse groups as the pacifist Atlantic Life Community, traditional peace organizations like the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the War Resisters League, and the civil resisters of the Honeywell Project, the peace movement after Vietnam gradually “understood that all issues were interrelated—peace and justice at home, order and revolution abroad, militarism and environment everywhere—but also that political effectiveness required attainable priorities around which to mobilize public support.” As activists prepared to address the threat of nuclear annihilation, concerned scholars attempted to catch the spirit of protest in their own writings on the subject.43

Before the 1970s, the sobering experience of McCarthyism and Cold War hostilities had quieted the historical profession’s interest in peace scholarship. Reflecting the current mood at that time, one lasting until Vietnam, Harvard historian Samuel Eliot Morison lashed out at those critical of war. In his 1950 presidential address to the American Historical Association, Morison argued that “war has been an inescapable aspect of the human story.” According to him, America’s pacifist flirtation prior to 1939 was a huge mistake: “America’s pacifist mood...converted a substantial part of public opinion to the naïve view that America had been stampeded into a war in order to make money for ‘merchants of death,’ and that our intervention in any further European war would be a crime.” Beyond warnings such as Morison’s, one of the ironies of the post World War II period was that anti-revisionist liberals, fearful of a return to a post World War I pattern of isolationist pacifism, resorted to a militant, interventionist nationalism. These war liberals, who previously championed a leftist cause, were now competing with conservatives for leadership in the battle against Communism. The entire theory of containment and of peace through strength strengthened the position of the military in American postwar diplomacy. Although not considered subversive, the peace work of the period was meager at best.44

Peace scholarship was minimal, but the activities of pacifists and their organizations continued in spite of the suspension of civil liberties. It was left to post-Vietnam scholars to uncover and record the various strains of peace activism related to arms control and anti-nuclear protests. Tracing the earliest forms of protest is James Tracy, Direct Action: Radical Pacifism From the Union Eight to the Chicago Seven (1996). This work shows that nonviolent resisters championed the cause of civil disobedience. Leaders like A.J. Muste, Dave Dellinger, Staughton Lynd, and Bayard Rustin managed to develop an experimental style which revitalized American radicalism and social protest in the 1950s and 1960s shaping later civil rights, antiwar, and antinuclear movements. According to Tracy, who recently completed his doctorate under Estelle Freedman
at Stanford, “the radical pacifist program of direction action, decentral-
ism, and participatory democracy within organizations has continued to
depth inform American protest since the Vietnam era, as is evident in
the history of the antinuclear and environmental movements of recent
decades.” In particular, Direct Action demonstrates that the goal of these
activists was not simply one of avoiding nuclear annihilation, but also the
renewal of society by using their lives as the agents of social change. Like
some of the specialized studies of the era, Tracy looks more closely at
individuals’ actions rather than the movements they helped perpetuate.
The activists own notion of “personalism” ultimately demanded indi-

What about the role of intellectuals with respect to nuclear activism? Michael Bess’ Realism, Utopia, and the Mushroom Cloud: Four Activist
“the reassessment of Realpolitik by a new generation of intellectuals, in
the aftermath of Hiroshima.” Seen through the eyes of Leo Szilard, E.P.
Thompson, Danilo Dolci, and Louise Weiss he asks, “how long can the
world’s peoples afford to rely on force, now that weapons have become
powerful enough to threaten the entire biosphere?” and how can peace be
achieved “without risking collective suicide?” The views of these intel-
lectuals are shown “in ‘three essential debates’ that focus on the future of
government, the human capacity for change, and rival conceptions of
power.” Bess’ most convincing insight is his view that the “meaning of
realism and utopianism have shifted substantially.”

While certain works probed how the issue of nuclear disarmament
became tied to morality and how this, in turn, heightened protestors
commitment to activism, more conventional studies surveyed the histori-
cal origins of the fight against weapons of mass destruction. A close look
at the efforts of Norman Cousins and his politically-correct committee is
to be found in Milton S. Katz’s Ban the Bomb: A History of SANE, the
Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy (1986). Noted diplomatic histo-
rian Robert A. Divine adds his perspective in Blowing on the Wind: The
published during the post Vietnam era, however, is Paul Boyer’s By the
Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the
Atomic Age (1985). Harvard trained and Merle Curti Professor of History
at the University of Wisconsin, Boyer questions the American public’s
switch from activism to apathy about nuclear armaments. In an earlier
article, which became the basis for this book, he presented a chilling
forecast dampening pacifist enthusiasm for the prospects of total disarm-
ament. He asks how, after 1963, a feeling of arms control assurance
developed while nuclear weapons research, construction, and deploy-
ment proceeded at a rapid pace. His analysis of the causes for the void in
the campaign to eliminate nuclear weapons apparent from 1963 to the
1980s lists the following by way of explanation: "the perception of
diminished risk," fading "memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki" along
with the downplaying of civil defense, the "neutralizing effect of the
'peaceful atom'" marked by power plant construction in the 1970s,
"defense intellectuals" transforming "nuclear strategy into a rarified
quasi-scientific discipline," and the "effects of the Vietnam War and rise
of the New Left." Boyer concludes that in the period from the 1963
Nuclear Test Ban Treaty to the signing of the Camp David Accords most
Americans "seemed at least superficially oblivious to a mortal danger
that many in earlier years had considered the most urgent ever to confront
the nation and, indeed, the entire human family."

Collectively, the peace scholarship of the Vietnam period and subse-
quent years attempted to explain the influence of the peace movement as
a whole upon the rest of American society. It looked at the way that
national and international events impacted the thoughts and attitudes of
peace seekers and their organizations. Some of the writers explored ties
between the efforts of voluntary peace groups and policymakers in
national government, others showed how new peace organizations proved
useful in keeping the issue of peace in the public consciousness. Still
others developed searching criticisms of American foreign policy with
regards to its capitalistic and imperialistic dimensions, and, most impor-
tantly, explained the various factors in the culture that worked against the
tireless efforts of dedicated antiwar advocates such as the relation of
consumerism, leisure, profit, and patriotism to the value of peace. New
connections were also being made with respect to American social thought
and domestic political policies in time of war as well as in peace.

The 1980s and 1990s: Citizen Activism, Interdisciplinary
and Transnational Trends

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed continuing scholarly analysis which
took account not only of the end of the Cold War but also of peace efforts
in Latin America. In the years of Reagan’s presidency a number of
studies were published regarding human rights abuses in El Salvador and
Guatemala and how religious and peace groups provided relief and a safe
haven for fleeing refugees. Specifically, the Sanctuary Movement came
under scholarly review and is the subject of Ann Crittenden’s Sanctuary:
A Story of American Conscience and the Law in Collision (1988), and
Renny Golden and Michael McConnell’s Sanctuary: The New Under-
Studying America’s Struggle Against War

ground Railroad (1986). Closely related were P. Parkman’s Nonviolent Insurrection in El Salvador (1988) and Patrick McManus and G. Schlabach’s Nonviolent Action in Latin America (1991). All four works discuss the efforts in North America to provide refuge and asylum for people fleeing the violence of civil wars and military dictatorships in El Salvador and Guatemala, and show how this movement, drawing upon “the Judeo-Christian tradition of providing a safe haven for refugees” grew into a network of several hundred churches, synagogues, and communities with the support of tens of thousands of individuals. In the late 1970s civil strife, violence, and governmental repression ran rampant in El Salvador and Guatemala. The authors offer readable and critical introductions to the regimes in those two Central American countries and show how they operated with “the political and material support of the U.S. government, which viewed Central America as a cold war battle-ground.” The Sanctuary Movement, as these works demonstrate, did become the new underground railroad despite stringent measures by the INS to halt illegal immigrants. Numerous communities of faith, as well as peace and justice organizations, banded together to promote legislative and judicial projects, including educational programs. These four works analyze the humanitarian efforts of American peace and human rights groups while also calling attention to acts of political protest against President Reagan’s policies in Latin America.

Since the late 1980s peace history research and peace education programs also continue to benefit from studies on citizen activism. Sam Marullo’s Ending the Cold War at Home: From Militarism to a More Peaceful World Order (1994), Paul Wehr, Heidi Burgess, and Guy Burgess, eds., Justice Without Violence (1994), and Robert Elias and Jennifer Turpin, eds., Re-thinking Peace (1994) offer interesting case studies and theoretical analyses premised on establishing a politics of pacifism. They argue that the enhancement of democracy, environmentalism, human rights, and economic security rests upon concerned citizens and their sense of collective responsibility and commitment to social change. More recently, the journal Peace and Change has expanded the dimensions of citizen-peace activism in two special issues: Wendy E. Chmielewski and Michael S. Foley, eds., “The Politics of Peace Movements,” Vol. 26 (July 2001); and “Non-Governmental Organizations and the Vietnam War” with a special introduction by historian George C. Herring, Vol. 27 (April 2002). The role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) is especially interesting and adaptable for classroom discussion. While the Cold War divided the globe, NGOs “have attempted to pull it together by breaking down national boundaries through such things as good works, development projects, and efforts to improve communications, understanding, and cooperation among different peoples.” As a new field of
inquiry in diplomatic and peace history, their role raises many interesting
issues for consideration. The interest in shifting the direction of their own
societies has also encouraged some peace activists to work on many levels,
"including traditional paths to political power, through parties, legislative
politics, bureaucracies, and other governmental hierarchies." However, oth-
ers have "deemed it essential to remain separate from those traditional lines
of access to political power and the state" due to their own personal belief
that state action is equated with the continuance of violence.51 Interesting
issues for classroom discussion in this regard are how NGOs work without
government support, how they manage to assist people from oppressive
regimes, such as the Sanctuary Movement, and how groups as diverse as
Amnesty International and Atlantic Life Community have evolved beyond
traditional religious peace groups and non-sectarian antiwar organizations.

Voluntary sector grassroots development organizations, while seeking
to avoid state sponsorship, are rapidly multiplying throughout the world.
Yet, little research has been conducted to determine their successes and
failures. As a topic worthy of additional research, scholars would do well
to examine the role of NGOs as part of peace history. Perhaps the most
important issue to discuss is that "Advocates of decentralized, people-
centered development, in governmental and international funding agen-
cies, are turning to them, hoping they can do what forty years of central-
ized, top-down, capital-centered development has failed to: produce—
nonviolent, just, and sustainable development." Will NGOs become the
new peace groups of the 21st century? Will their focus encompass more
than just opposition to war as they strive to continue to work once conflict
breaks out?52

Peace history education and research has also benefited from interdis-
ciplinary studies. A fine example is David S. Meyer’s political analysis,
A Winter of Discontent: The Nuclear Freeze and American Politics
(1990). Sociologists have brought resource mobilization analysis from
social movement theory to peace history, notably in Robert Kleidman’s
comparative study, Organizing for Peace: Neutrality, the Test Ban and
the Freeze (1993); John Lofland’s more theoretical, Polite Protestors:
The Peace Movement of the 1980s (1993); Sam Marullo and John
Lofland’s, eds., Peace Action in the Eighties: Social Science Perspec-
tives (1990); Steve Breyman’s “Were the 1980s Anti-Nuclear Weapons
Movements New Social Movements?,” Peace and Change (July 1997);
and Charles Chatfield’s The American Peace Movement: Ideals and
Activism (1992).53

Of the above-mentioned works, students and teachers should refer to
Kleidman’s Organizing for Peace. Kleidman uses the sociological train-
ing he acquired as a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin to

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compare and analyze three major campaigns for peace since the Great War, the Emergency Peace Campaign (1936-1937), the Atomic Test Ban Campaign (1957-1963), and the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign (1979-1986). The value of his work, emphasizing peace research and social movement theory, is the analysis of how these campaigns' organizational dynamics shaped their rise, course, and fall, and their impact both on public policy and on the peace movement itself. Kleidman offers his insights into why social movements either succeed in achieving stated objectives or fail. Leaders and activists, faced with organizational and strategic tensions, made decisions about strategy and structure that ultimately determined “the course and impact of the campaigns.” Kleidman’s lesson: “By recognizing the nature of these tensions, anticipating the kinds of decisions made by earlier campaigns, activists in the future may be able to match the successes of past efforts as they avoid some of the problems” resulting in their demise.54

Since the Vietnam period one of the more innovative developments in the field has been a focus on international dimensions. It is not that peace movements abroad had been ignored over the years. Rather, given the realization that we live in an increasingly closer world marked by significant developments in communications and transportation, peace historians are now calling for more attention to the transnational perspective of peace activism; they are relating the United States movements to peace advocacy abroad and to global markets. In a geopolitical context, researchers are now going beyond traditional diplomatic history. Initially, in his Twentieth Century Pacifism (1970), Peter Brock set the precedent by investigating the application of various kinds of pacifism in a transnational framework, and W.H. Van der Linder compiled The International Peace Movement, 1815-1874 (1988). Vincent C. Kavaloski’s “Transnational Citizen: Peacemaking as Nonviolent Action,” Peace and Change (April 1990) examines citizen diplomacy involving Nicaragua and the former Soviet Union. “Much international citizen activity,” Kavoloski insists, “constitutes nonviolent resistance, specifically nonviolent social intervention.” Like other studies focusing on grass-roots activity, the primary aim “is to undermine ‘enemy images’” and thus to help build a global peace culture beyond the often adversarial nation-state system.”

Additional studies have explored the interaction of peace movements and diplomacy, among those especially noteworthy are Solomon Wank, ed., Doves and Diplomats: Foreign Offices and Peace Movements in Europe and America in the Twentieth Century (1978); Jackie Smith, Charles Chatfield, and Ron Pagnucco, eds., Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics: Solidarity beyond the State (1997); and Charles Chatfield and Peter van den Dungen, eds., Peace Movements and
These particular studies seek to overcome nationalistic biases and inherent cultural differences in the name of world peace. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, as Cold War hostilities ceased to exist, scholars from various parts of the world have shared information regarding the roles of their own native peace movements. The scholarly research that has developed looks at how each nation defines its own security and how loyalty to the nation state can be transcended by respect for the world community. These studies represent the first step in analyzing the historical roots of global consciousness. Thus, as more and more historians find transnational links in the struggle against war, cultural and political differences will hopefully gradually dissipate in favor of humankind. Teachers and students should examine the efforts of the American Peace History Society, the Nobel institute, and the International Peace Research Association. In conjunction, these groups have jointly organized annual conferences under the leadership of the Peace History Commission thereby offering fresh scholarship on international aspects of peacemaking.

Even before the tragic events of September 11th, peace historians were looking at the Middle East crisis. Transnational awareness and global peacemaking highlighted the geopolitical nature of diplomatic efforts in the Arab world. The swift execution of Operation Desert Storm did not do much for the organized peace movement, but peace scholars remained hard at work. Metta Spencer’s article, “Antiwar Hawks and Pro-war Doves in the Gulf War,” *Peace and Change* (April 1992) shows that, ironically, for the first time in recent memory, the Gulf War posed an enormous dilemma: some lifelong peace activists (doves) supported the war while some lifelong military personnel (hawks) opposed it. Most importantly, the war divided and weakened the peace movement by forcing a choice, asking “whether to adhere to the principle of common security or that of collective security.” The emerging debate between the competing ideologies of idealism versus realism and that of common security, palpable to peace activists in the idealist camp, versus collective security, long a popular doctrine among militarists in the realist camp, has now created an entirely new set of issues for the future. As Spencer observes, this dilemma and debate are “no momentary perplexities but may be faced time and time again in post-cold war situations.”

There are some interesting approaches on the horizon. For example, I have recently undertaken an extensive study of case law in American courts as it relates to anti-draft protests, free speech, and conscientious objection. In “Case Law Historiography in American Peace History,” *Peace and Change* (January 1997), I discuss the utility of employing case law in the classroom as a way of more effectively teaching the legal and
moral aspects of antiwar activism in 20th century America. I focus on the complexities of reconciling conscience with statutory enforcement, finding that "no unified and universal theory of antiwar rights and responsibilities exist. The interests of conscientious objectors as well as antiwar activists have received only limited judicial protection." I suggest how cases can be written into plays as part of a lesson plan.57 (For additional material useful for teachers, see the Appendix.)

Taking quite another track, teams of American and Russian historians have surveyed concepts of peace in western civilization from antiquity to 1945 in Peace/Mir: An Anthology of Historic Alternatives to War, edited by Charles Chatfield and Ruzanna Ilukhina (published in 1994 in English and Russian). Attention has also been to the worldwide popular struggle against nuclear weapons in the first two volumes of a planned trilogy by Lawrence Wittner, The Struggle Against the Bomb, One World or None: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement Through 1953 (1993), and Resisting the Bomb: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954-1970 (1997).58 This first comprehensive account of international nuclear disarmament activism has taken the study of the peace movement to a new transnational level. Wittner's research has been conducted in fifteen countries and has examined over a hundred peace groups and government agencies. He has looked at recently declassified files from the United States State Department, the Atomic Energy Authority of Great Britain, and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Combining this with personal interviews and the examination of peace movement periodicals has enabled him to create "a vivid panorama of the global antinuclear campaign" and to provide "startling revelations about the efforts of government officials to repress, contain, and, finally, accommodate to popular protest." In compelling terms, Wittner challenges the conventional explanation "that the Bomb itself has deterred nuclear war." The expressed purpose of his research is "to grapple with the question of why despite the clear necessity of freeing humanity from the threat of nuclear destruction, that movement has not been more effective." As one reviewer noted, "Lawrence S. Wittner's trilogy is innovative because it is a transnational story—[of] the vast social movement beyond national boundaries that was roused by the threat of nuclear disaster."59

Conclusion

The evolution of peace history writing has come a long way, especially in the last half of the twentieth century. The ebb and flow of peace history scholarship has generally followed four paths: 1) the writings of pacifists
and peace activists from the War of 1812 to the start of World War I; 2) the early synthesis of peace history occurring between the two world wars, marked by Curti’s scholarly works; 3) the remarkable proliferation of works from the Vietnam War to the late 1980s; and 4) the newly published studies involving international and interdisciplinary trends, capped by non-governmental initiatives. Much of the present scholarship focuses on social movements and citizen activism. The large body of works is testimony to the viability of peace activism and to the current interest in the study of it as a scholarly endeavor. “Peace activists,” as Larry Wittner argues, “have been sentimental and naïve, but no more so, and arguably less so, than supporters of war. Unmoved by fantasies of national glory, martial valor, and other romantic notions of the war makers, they have often been quite realistic about the causes and consequences of international conflict.” Certainly, “as war has grown more total, even genocidal, the basis for assessing what is, in fact, realistic has shifted substantially.”

The argument among scholars regarding the effectiveness of peace activism and its place in history will not abate anytime soon. Recent events in the Middle East have served to call into question the degree of influence peace historians have had on foreign policy and whether peace history should seek greater acceptance and influence within mainstream American history or emphasize a separate, activist ethos. Regardless, peace historians are hard at work cataloguing and interpreting “the complex strata of assumptions about values and ideals, individual and social nature, conflict and its resolution, from diverse periods and cultural contexts—from antiquity to the cold war” and after. The result has been “a very large body of literature.” That body of literature has also enabled peace education programs throughout the country to sustain their many course offerings. The expansion of peace studies is thus directly proportional to the historical research undertaken.

A number of years ago, prior to his untimely death, Charles DeBenedetti made a plea to teachers to take note of the field. He insisted that the study of peace is about human life, and that the victories and defeats associated with the struggle to abolish war is “the very stuff of human history.” But how are peace historians and the field they have developed capable of dealing with “the perpetual dilemma of what to do when the values of peace are in apparent conflict with decency, humanity, and justice?” Such was the challenge posed by America’s preeminent historian of the peace crusade, Merle Curti. For DeBenedetti, and those teaching and writing about the subject of peace, there was only one imperative: establishing “a cohering, compelling vision of a realizable global order in which different peoples would preserve their various traditional values.
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without relying upon a war system that requires well-armed preparedness, threats, and ultimately mass violence." The many publications in the field indicates the readiness of members in the historical profession to live up to the challenge.

Notes


10. These observations were also included in Paul Lewis Todd and Merle Curti’s popular textbook, *America’s History*. N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1950. The high school social studies textbook, later renamed, *The Rise of the American Nation*, became one of the most widely-used books in secondary schools throughout the nation from the 1950s to early 1980s. It was also the first high school text to devote sections to the study of peace movements in America. It bucked the traditional pattern of promoting the martial spirit as part of patriotic indoctrination.


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24. Marchand, The American Peace Movement and Social Reform, 4-9, 381-90.


27. Patterson, Toward a Warless World, passim, 258-59.


Americans,” *Peace and Change* 26 (April 2001): 135-52. However, much more work
needs to be done in this area.

A useful narrative account of Muste’s life is Nate Hentoff, *Peace Agitator: The Story of

Protest Against the War in Vietnam*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1984; Charles
DeBenedetti and Charles Chatfield, *An American Ordeal*; Mel Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and
Richard Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent during the Vietnam
Movement and the Sixties: Protest in American from Greensboro to Wounded Knee*. NY:
Oxford University Press, 1995; Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *Peace Now! American Society and
Heineman, *Campus War: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the
Vietnam Era*. NY: New York University Press, 1993; Mel Small and William D. Hoover,
cuse University Press, 1992; Marc Jason Gilbert, *The Vietnam War on Campus, More
Distant Drums*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001; “Vietnam War Forum,” special issue,
*Peace and Change* 20 (April 1995)—of interest to teachers is an article by Sandra C.


Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Erdmans Publishing Co., 1988, vii-x; Adam Garfinckle,
Martins Press, 1995, ix-x, 2. Interestingly, sociologists had already questioned the effec-
tiveness of the antiwar protests. As early as 1972, Howard Schuman’s “Two Sources of
Antiwar Sentiment in America,” *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (November 1972),
observed that the antiwar movement based its opposition on moral grounds while the
public was interested in pragmatic results. The peace protests failed to communicate
effectively the ethical and moral implications of the war (515-520). Another commentator
noted that although the protests helped mobilize public opinion against the war, growing
dissatisfaction with the military conduct of the war was a more decisive factor. See, E. M.
Schrieber, “Antiwar Demonstrations and American Public Opinion on the War in Viet-

David Dellinger, *From Yale to Jail: Life of a Moral Dissenter*. NY: Pantheon, 1993; Fred
Halstead, *Out Now!: A Participant’s Account of the American Movement Against the
House, 1998; Sidney Lens, *Unrepresentant Radical: An American Activist’s Account of
Bibliography of Published Writings by Daniel, Philip, and Elizabeth McAlister Berrigan*.

36. Halstead, *Out Now!* 1, 1-2, 728-29

Publishers, 1982, i-ii; Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace as a Women’s Issue: A History of the
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39. Harriet Hyman Alonso, “One Woman’s Journey into the World of Women’s Peace History,” Women's Studies Quarterly XXIII (Fall/Winter 1995): 170-71; This special issue is properly titled, “Rethinking Women’s Peace Studies” and contains sections such as “New Directions for Feminist Peace Studies,” “Gender and the Culture of Militarism,” and “Teaching: Reflections, Resources, and References.”

40. Alonso, Peace as a Women's Issue, 6.


By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age. NY: Pantheon Books, 1985; Paul Boyer, “From Activism to Apathy: The American People and Nuclear Weapons, 1963-1980,” Journal of American History 70 (March 1984): 821-844. At the failure of the Nuclear Freeze Referendum, one peace scholar attributed five reasons why peace movements are largely ineffectual: (1) peace movements are reactive and change as situations do; (2) they are “drawn from too narrow a social base to succeed”; (3) they suffer from individual co-optation or group incorporation; (4) they are hurt by harassment by those in power; and (5) they are overcome by “feelings of weakness and a sense of despair in the face of the enormity of the problem of war.” Consult, Nigel Young, “Why Peace Movements Fail: An Historical and Social Overview,” Social Alternatives 4 (March 1984): 9-16.


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54. Kleidman, Organizing for Peace, 202-203.


56. “Papers of the Peace Commission IPRA/Malta (October 31-November 4, 1994),” in author’s possession.


63. Chatfield, “Frameworks for the History of Peacemaking,” 40. Today, the Peace History Society boasts well over 300 practicing historians, sponsors numerous conferences, and its journal, Peace and Change, is widely consulted.

64. DeBenedetti, “Peace History in the American Manner,” pp. 102-103.


Appendix

The following teaching sources may be consulted for classroom use.

Multimedia Materials


Film and PBS Television Series:
"A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict"
PBS Television Series: www.films.com
Book: St. Martin's Press
The Film: http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org

Documentary:
"War and Peace"/ Jang Aur Aman: www.snafu.de/~mkgandhi

Websites

Swarthmore College Peace Collection: www.swarthmore.edu/Library/peace/Peace
Canadian Peace Institute: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CPREAdiscussion
The Fourth Freedom Forum: www.fourthfreedom.org
Peace History Society: http://www.theaha.org/affiliates/peace-his-soc.htm
World Policy Institute: http://www.worldpolicy.org
United States Institute of Peace: http://www.usip.org
Foreign Policy Institute: http://www.sais-jhu.edu/centers/fpi/
The Peace and Conflict Archives: http://csf.colorado.edu/peace
Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies: http://www.nd.edu/~krocinst/
Peace Studies Program: http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/Peace
Institute of War and Peace Studies: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/iwps/
Peace Studies Association: http://www.earlham.edu/~psa/
Peace Studies Resource Institute: http://www.wmu.edu/Dept/Peace/
The Center for War/Peace: http://www.cwps.org/
Peace Studies Program, Colgate University: http://departments.colgate.edu/peacestudies/
The Richardson Institute for Peace Studies and Conflict
http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/richinst/riweb1.htm
Georgetown University Program on Justice and Peace:
http://www.georgetown.edu/departments/pjp/
Institute for Peace Studies: http://www.rocky.edu/academic/international/IPS
International Peace Studies: http://www.tcd.ie/Senior.Lecturer/Courses/schecum/isempeace.html
Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Wayne State University: http://www.pcs.wayne.edu
Columbia University Institute of War and Peace Studies:
http://www.ciao.net/org/conf/sites/iwps.html
Peace Studies Institute, Antioch College: www.antioch-college.edu/summer 00/peace_inst.html
Syllabi

http://www.academicinfo.net/peace.html
http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/peacestudies/peacenet.html
http://csf.colorado.edu/peace/Syllabi/syllabi/.html
http://www.csbsju.edu/peacestudies/schedule.htm
http://www.mau.edu/~wst/access/peace/syl.html
http://pawss.hampshire.edu/faculty/curriculum
http://www.iona.edu/stu-life/ministry/syllabi.html
http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/Internet/war-peace.html
http://www.acresolution.org/research.nsf/articles
http://www.gustavus.edu/oncampus/academics/library/subjectguides/peace.html
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