

PHS NEWS

July 2026

Newsletter of the Peace History Society

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President's Column



Gail Presbey

Dear PHS members,

Hello! I hope you are well and having a chance to pursue your various researches this summer. This spring and summer has been much quieter compared to last fall with our conference, but our work is as relevant as ever, since so many wars are unfolding and so many peace activists are mobilizing. But we started out early in the year with an invitation from Comité International des Sciences Historiques (CISH). We are a member organization of theirs, and in preparation for their 100th Anniversary [conference in Leipzig this August](#), they wanted their affiliated societies to record a short video introducing their organizations to the CISH members. And so, Toshi Higuchi, Mike Clinton, and myself collaborated (with the help of Jimena Perry) to make the short video, which is going to be presented at the conference. I'll be attending the CISH General Assembly (online) as the

PHS delegate. I am hoping that in the future we could link to this video on our website – they have told me they plan to post the videos after their conference is over.

PHS has presented panels at the AHA this past January. Doug Rossinow organized and chaired a panel on “Jewish Nonviolence and Cultural Resistance in Palestine/Israel and the United States.” We also co-sponsored the “Teaching Palestine and the Mideast” two-part panel, with Historians for Palestine. We have plans for several panels at the upcoming AHA in January 2027 in New Orleans. The announcement of those panels is included later in the newsletter.

Please consider availing yourself of some opportunities to be more involved with PHS. The Board will create a nominating committee to help with the upcoming elections for Board members and PHS Executives. Please consider nominating yourself or others for any of these positions. If you have ideas or nominations, please write me about it at gpresbey@yahoo.com. And then be on the lookout for the announcement of the election later this year. We hope all members will participate. Also, the Board will have an Ad-Hoc committee to review proposals for hosting the 2027 PHS conference. If you are interested in hosting the conference in 2027 or anytime in the future, please let me know.

I would like to update you about the Mercy Peace Forum, which is sponsored by PHS and involves a lecture each semester that is available on zoom for all PHS members and the general public. The series is hosted by several Mercy Universities, in rotation. Mercy Peace Forum held its usual semi-annual online event in April 2026. The author was Steven J. Brady (Associate Professor of History at George Washington

University) and his book was *Less Than Victory: American Catholics and the Vietnam War* (Cambridge University Press, 2025). The book focused on Catholic moral critiques of the war. Mike Clinton from Gwynedd Mercy University hosted the event and interviewed Brady about the book.

Some of the highlights I noted from listening to the talk were that both pro and anti-war Catholic organizations used moral language in relation to war. During the two World Wars there were lots of Catholics in the Armed Forces, and that helped Catholics to be accepted by other Americans. But anti-war nuns and priests also helped Catholics to get out of a Catholic “ghetto,” he explained. There were divisions within the Catholic Church, and some clergy were willing to challenge the Pope’s morality. Some priests and nuns challenged their own religious Superiors. The Vietnam War accelerated the role of the laity. When Nixon started pulling out U.S. troops (to “Vietnamize”) but increasing the bombing campaign (with a rise of indiscriminate killing of civilians), Catholics spoke out about the large loss of life there. The book covers the diverse views of Catholics, both supporters and critics, and I encourage you all to get ahold of the book, or at least to [watch the recording](#) of our event.



Steven Brady, author of *Less Than Victory: American Catholics and the Vietnam War*

As we look forward to future Mercy Peace Forum events later this year, we have plans to cover a couple of authors giving book talks. The details are still up in the air, but I think it can't hurt to tell you our general plans for fall. We hope to follow up with Ben Peters (University of St. Joseph) and his book on Gordon Zahn called *Catholic Pacifist* (CUA Press, 2025). Zahn (1918-2007) was a conscientious objector, who researched the Austrian conscientious objector Franz Jägerstätter. Zahn helped co-found Pax Christi USA. I'll be sure to announce (via our listserve) the date, time, and details for joining the event.

PHS also co-sponsors the annual Memory Parlor event in Philadelphia in summer (at the Masonic Temple), and we did so again. These events are organized by Hope May, and this year's event was called "Shadow of Intention." The ideas for these day long reflections on the meaning of historical events for today are quite intriguing and thought provoking. See more [on their website](#). There will be a fuller report of this event in the next newsletter.

Let me add encouragement to any of you who are interested and willing and haven't done so yet to volunteer to be a reviewer for our Society's journal, *Peace & Change*. Co-editors Yi Deng and Renee Bricker are always looking for willing reviewers. Of course, you can also consider the journal as a destination for your research articles and book reviews. Remember that access to the journal is a fringe benefit of your membership to PHS. For any questions about accessing the journal online, please contact our Secretary, Toshi Higuchi.

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**The Frightful Cost of War: A Children's
Bubble Gum Card With A Lasting
Message**

**Chuck Howlett, Molloy University
Emeritus**

This small piece is based on a much larger analysis to appear in *Home Front Studies* (University of Nebraska Press) entitled, "Promoting Peace in the Hands of Children: The Quixotic Nature of the 1938 'Horrors of War' Gum Cards." Special thanks to PHS colleagues Seth Kershner, Mike Clinton, and Deborah Buffton for their input when composing the full article.

In his award-winning book, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, author Paul Fussell began his work with the following words: "Every war is ironic because every war is worse than expected." During four years of bloodshed, 1914-1918, Europe, the United States, and much of the decaying Ottoman Empire witnessed the most catastrophic conflict humankind have ever encountered to that point in history. In terms of social, economic, and human cost after the guns were silenced at least 8.5 million combatants were killed and many more wounded, close to 10 million non-combatants perished, whole empires destroyed, and communities devastated by modern warfare. In terms of economic expenditure the war cost between \$185-200 billion, roughly equivalent to \$6 trillion today.

World War II was even more devastating in terms of civilian and battlefield deaths and costs—the worst in recorded civilization. The economic cost alone was between \$4-5 trillion in 1940 dollars. Today that would be somewhere around \$104 trillion. The Vietnam War was approximately \$168 billion (today \$1

trillion). The Gulf War of 1990-91, though brief, ended up costing approximately \$600 billion, the Iran-Afghanistan Wars estimated to be upwards of around \$8 trillion, while the current conflict in Iran is expected to exceed \$1 trillion. The present war raises a fundamental question antiwar advocates have been asking since the conclusion of World War I: shouldn't money be spent to improve the lives of citizens instead of wasting it on war?

The conflict with Iran is no exception. What if the money allocated for military purposes was instead used to make college more accessible, restore health care cuts, ameliorate world hunger, fund disease prevention programs, and expand education programs for all children? What is so interesting is that this question was actually conveyed in a bubble gum trading card marketed shortly before the advent of World War II. It was intentionally manufactured to educate young children about the true costs of war, how modern warfare is just as dangerous to civilians as it is to those fighting in it, and encouraged them to become ambassadors of peace. That card, "The Frightful Cost of War," resonates just as loudly today as it did eighty-eight years ago. Funny how so few peace historians and the profession at large even know about this aspect of pop culture.

What is the origin behind the card's creation? It came from a Philadelphia gum manufacturer, Jacob Warren Bowman. Born in Ohio but reared in New Mexico, he was married six times, was an unsuccessful used car salesman in Los Angeles and then fired from his job as a police officer in the same city after being caught in his squad car with a number of women doing who knows what. Searching for his own Horatio Alger path to fame and fortune he worked at itinerant jobs in Mexico—using a small motor boat to pull

barges and then attempting to float mahogany logs (they quickly sank) down the rivers near Veracruz to the Gulf of Mexico—before finally establishing his own chewing gum company in Philadelphia where he finally did become wealthy.

In 1927, Bowman established Gum, Inc and by the early 1930s his popular brand, "Blony," successfully cornered the chewing gum business. However, by the mid-thirties Bowman faced stiff competition. Other companies began amassing nice profits by manufacturing baseball cards, along with their own slab of gum, which sold for a penny. Realizing the stiff competition, he decided to go in a different direction to peddle his gum for children: a series of cards with a non-sports theme. By the late thirties with conflicts now raging in Asia, Europe, and Ethiopia and media coverage widely available, Bowman found his answer to keep his prosperous business going; he turned his attention to the problem of war.

Alarmed, particularly, by Japan's incursion into China in the summer of 1937—he had built a plant in Tokyo in 1932 and his gum sales were growing exponentially—he was concerned how it would affect his overseas investment. Still, he made the decision to manufacture trading cards depicting the invasion in a rather unfavorable light, along with cards addressing other conflicts. He thought a card series covering all aspects of war's destructiveness would catch children's attention and prompt them not to fall into the same preparedness trap their parents did in WWI. It was also his attempt to avoid the successful boycott of manufacturers producing toy soldiers, tanks, and war ships conducted by peace organizations in the 1920s such as the Women's Peace Party.

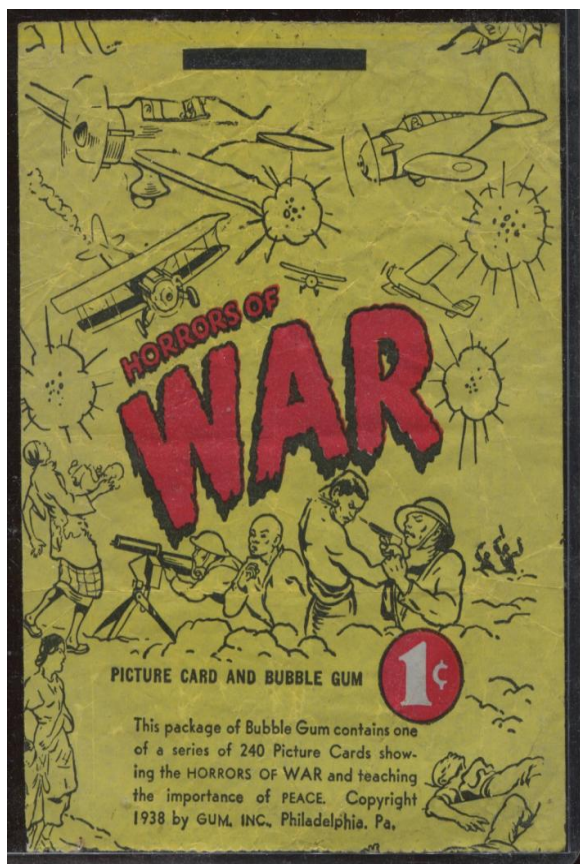


Fig. 1. Bubble Gum Wrapper

In July 1937, while listening to radio broadcasts and reading press accounts about Japan's unprovoked invasion of the Chinese mainland, Bowman commissioned George Moll and his advertising company from nearby Abington, Pennsylvania, to create a series of collector cards depicting the brutality of war. Knowing children would be attracted to cards recreating battles scenes, Bowman instructed Moll—a devout Baptist, Sunday School teacher, and “outspoken opponent of war”—to begin working on the project. Moll and his editors, led by art director, Charles Steinbacher, who had a masterful sense of color with crisp depictions, illustrated and described the various military conflicts and bombings of civilians then taking place with colored artwork—on the front of each 2.5”x 3”

rectangular card with eye-popping drawings and chilling narratives on the back.

All depictions and descriptions created were based on current radio reports and newspaper stories. Each piece of gum contained in a wrapper, which sold for a penny, also included a card. On the back of each card was printed the caption: “To Know the HORRORS OF WAR is to want PEACE.” In early 1938, the first set of 240 cards were produced and an additional 48 cards (Set 2) were added to the collection afterwards. As a form of material peace they were designed to serve as teaching lessons for children based on the antiwar sentiment prevalent at the time (a March 1937 Gallup Poll revealed that 94 percent of respondents supported a policy favoring keeping the United States out of war).

“The Horrors of War” collection became an instant financial success, producing some 100 million cards and netting the company over \$40,000 a week (it remains the most popular non-sports card set ever manufactured). A portion of the cards covered the Spanish Civil War, Italy's incursion in Ethiopia, and a very small number about Hitler's threats to peace in Central Europe. However, these cards did not draw as much attention as those addressing Japan's brutal invasion of China—the majority in the set.

Despite taking considerable literary and artistic licenses creating these cards (cherry-picking information from reported events at the expense of actual facts to compose descriptions specifically tailored to draw attention to the larger emotional impact of war), Moll and his team operated



Fig. 2. Child of the Death Rain, No. 260

under the premise that illustrating and narrating these events in such fashion would convince young purchasers to conclude that war is bad—the “horror” of it. Nearly one-third of the set focused on the impact of war on innocent civilians. Many of these cards depicted young children and babies being killed in order to impact the mind-set of pre-adolescent purchasers. Of course, this novel cultural approach led some critics to charge that the cards exaggerated combat scenes and ruthless killings of noncombatants by using red ink for maximum effect thus appearing to instrumentalize war in the minds of children rather than rejecting it.

Despite the paradoxical nature of the cards there remains one inescapable fact. U.S. children’s opinion about war has largely been shaped in a safe environment. This country has avoided the onslaught of

modern warfare on its own territory throughout the 20th and current centuries. What children have learned about war has been largely shaped by patriotic texts and an educational system that emphasizes conformity and adherence to established norms. Social Studies textbooks have not provided any in-depth analysis of the historical role the peace movement has played in our past. Although disillusionment with the Vietnam War did shape public perceptions regarding America’s exceptionalism on the world stage and the Iraq War witnessed the largest antiwar protests in the nation’s history, children’s view of war has not changed much because they have not experienced the pain and suffering on their own soil as the image below sought to evoke.

Understandably, despite Bowman’s financial windfall and he was quite happy about it, not everyone agreed with the company’s rationale behind selling these cards to children. Mothers and many schoolteachers questioned the effectiveness of the set as an educational lesson due to its graphic nature. In an attempt to assuage their objections one card, “Bombing an American School Building” (No. 48), hypothetically raised the scenario of an attack on the homeland by air—an example of modern warfare. It portrayed “Happy youngsters, at play in the school yard, surprised by cruel enemy bombers” being torn apart and imploring that “A condition of Patriotic Peace [caps for emphasis] is the only substitute for the threat of war.” It may have been the first time, culturally, calling kids’ attention to destruction at home until the advent of the atomic/nuclear bomb and “duck and cover” civil defense drills of the Cold War period (this author experienced that in grammar school). Unfortunately, it did little to move the needle for mothers and teachers as both were convinced that the

cards were too horrible for children to look at—a feeling of psychic numbness. But that was the point exactly!

The cards were also not immune from sparking international controversy. Across the Pacific Ocean when a mistaken shipment of the cards were sent to Japan—in May 1938, 500 boxes were confiscated at the port in Yokohama—the incident became a bone of diplomatic contention. Japanese Embassy officials in Washington, D.C., presented a formal protest to the State Department, demanding that Bowman withdraw his cards sales because of falsely portraying “alleged” cruelties. The State Department refused to bow to Japanese protests, especially after the Japanese had sunk a U.S. gunboat, *Panay*, on the Yangtze River—an event that was depicted in the card series. The Japanese then declared Bowman “an enemy” and banned him from their country.

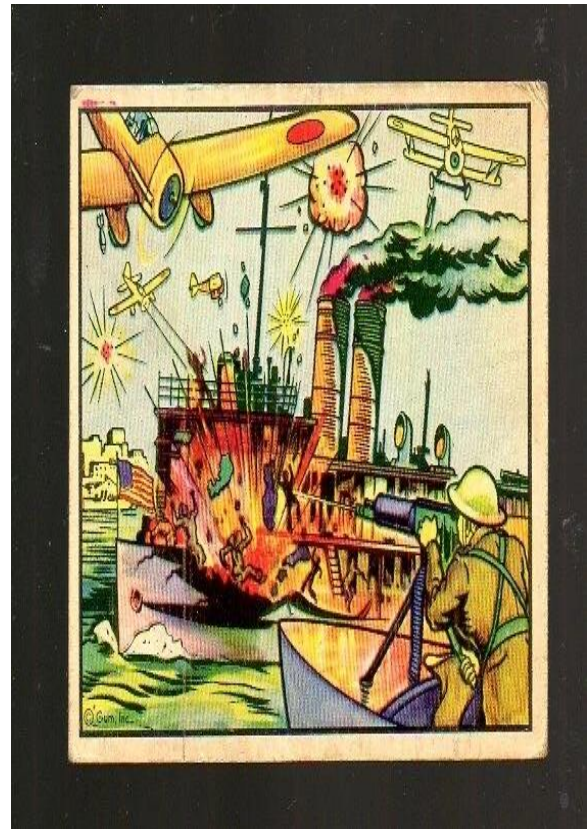


Fig. 3. U.S.S. *Panay* is Attacked by Japanese, No. 9

Yet as much criticism as “Horrors” engendered due to its graphic nature, there was one card which called for better ways to spend war’s billions. By design, when the first two hundred and forty cards hit the market, the very last one encapsulated the set’s true message, “The Frightful Cost of War.” Artistically, the card is cast in a setting where children’s eyes are directed to gaze upon a blood-red setting sun surrounded by an atmosphere of smoke and fire with bird-like figures, possibly scavengers, soaring overhead. Frightening, yes indeed! But it was not meant to scare children. Rather it was created to counter the notion of war being heroic and noble.



Fig. 4. Frightful Cost of War, No. 240

Although the narrative in “Frightful” is inaccurate and laced with fire and brimstone rhetoric evoking Jonathan Edward’s reminder that we are all sinners in the hands of an angry God (Moll’s attempt to sermonize), the intended lesson was clearly based on the post-World War I “modern” peace movement’s ideology: a reinvigorated movement that, in the opinion of the late historian Charles DeBenedetti, viewed international harmony more in terms of social reform than order. The card culturally symbolizes what the “modern” movement has been advocating for well over a century now.

Clearly, Prior to the First World War the peace movement had been long considered a respectable calling and largely dominated by men possessing a degree of

elitism—one that lauded the virtues of arbitration and internationalism. It focused on ways to address the problem of war but not the real reasons causing them. No longer bound by social custom, gender, or rank the “modern” movement pressed for economic and social changes: the disallowance of trade advantages; racial and gender equality; just wages for industrial workers; international regulation of the world’s food supply; international control of the arms industry; and establishment of international health and education programs, among others. What the “modern” movement argued was that war needlessly diverts money away from these advances for destructive purposes under the guise of *winning the peace*.

Actually, it’s not what the card says but what it does that really matters. It was a call to action and engagement. Its message ably captures the “modern” movement’s ongoing argument that peace implies far more than the absence of war. The card, despite the text’s inaccurate figurative estimations, which was done for effect, provided an alternative vision to consider—what could be instead of what happened.

Thus, it’s hard to ignore in the middle of the card, just above the wounded on crutches and an amputee in a wheelchair passing a cemetery marked by white crosses, the Grim Reaper on a white horse wielding his scythe. Nor discount part of the card’s description, which read: “War cost money...billions of dollars! War takes human lives...millions of them! War makes children old, breaks parents’ hearts, kills morale! War destroys cities, art treasure, civilization.... With that much money...we could have built home[s]...libraries... salaries [for] teachers and nurses....” In “doing” the card strongly reinforces antiwar advocacy favoring a social justice agenda:

money spent for war should be used instead to improve society.

Given our most recent military excursion, “Frightful” is as powerful today as it was when it first appeared on the doorstep of World War II.

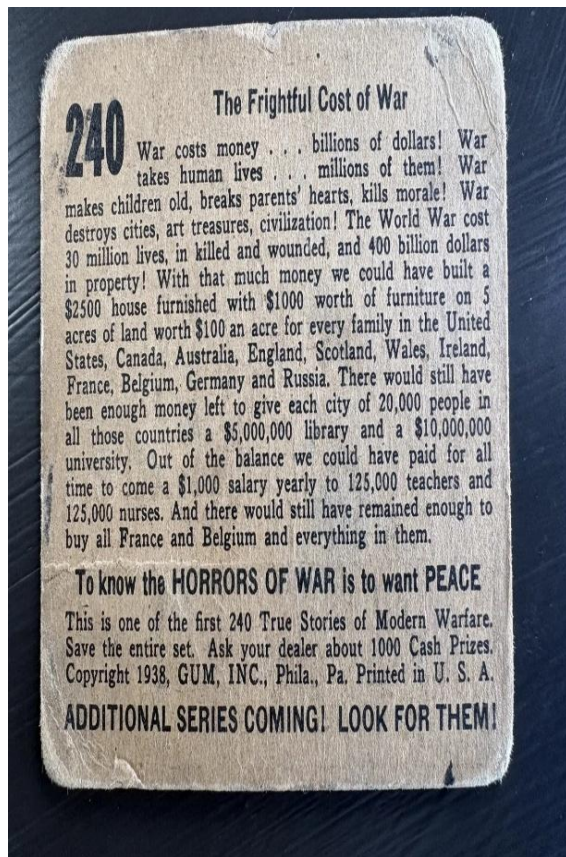


Fig. 5. The Narrative Description

**Professor Marc Stein, OAH President,
interviewed by**

Roger Peace, Ph.D.

**Initiator and coordinator of the [U.S.
Foreign Policy History & Resource Guide](#)**



Marc Stein

Jamie and Phyllis Pasker Professor of U.S.
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B.A. (History), Wesleyan University, 1985
Ph.D. (History), University of Pennsylvania,
1994

History of sexuality; LGBTQ+ history;
constitutional law; social movements; urban
history

Books: *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves:
Lesbian and Gay Philadelphia, 1945-1972*

(University of Chicago Press, 2000; Temple University Press 2004); *Sexual Injustice: Supreme Court Decisions from Griswold to Roe* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010); *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement* (Routledge, 2012; 2023); *The Stonewall Riots: A Documentary History* (New York University Press, 2019); *Queer Public History: Essays on Scholarly Activism* (University of California Press, 2022); *Bicentennial: A Revolutionary History of the 1970s* (University of Chicago Press, 2026).

Questions for Marc:

1. How did your social justice values develop? Who or what inspired you? I was born in 1963, came of age in the 1970s, and was in college from 1981 to 1985. My maternal grandparents were Jewish immigrants who came to the United States from Poland as teenagers in 1929. As my grandmother used to say, Hitler killed two of her older siblings and their families. One of my mother's first cousins, like a sister to her and an aunt to me, was and is a Holocaust survivor. I think I was deeply affected by that family history.

My maternal grandfather was a beltmaker who later worked for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. He and my grandmother were immersed in New York City left politics—they told me they were socialists but I've found some archival traces of communist affiliations; they may have rewritten their past after the Red Scare of the 1950s. They sent my mother to Camp Kinderland, founded by the Workmen's Circle in Dutchess County (north of New York City); I have cousins who still summer near there.

My parents, who moved to the New York suburbs in the early 1960s (initially to

Peekskill, site of the Robeson Riots of 1949, and later to nearby Shrub Oak), weren't leftists by any stretch of the imagination. My father was the manager of the Indian Point nuclear reactor on the Hudson in the 1970s and wasn't particularly happy when I started going to Pete and Toshi Seeger's Clearwater Festival! In my first year of high school, I learned more about the power of unions when I experienced New York state's longest teacher's strike—forty-one days! When I later became active in multiple social justice movements, I had those earlier touchstones.

While family inspirations were important, my undergraduate years at Wesleyan University in Connecticut (1981-1985) really politicized and radicalized me. In my first year, my friends and I founded an abortion rights group, Students for Choice, and campaigned for the Equal Rights Amendment. Later, as a member of the Coalition of Private University Students, I helped organize two marches on Washington to protest Reagan administration cuts to student financial aid. In my junior year, I edited the editorial page of the main student newspaper, which covered struggles against U.S. interventions in Central America, military draft registration, the nuclear arms race, South African apartheid, the anti-abortion movement, and more. In my senior year I served as the co-coordinator of the Wesleyan Student Assembly, which took actions in support of South African divestment, against anti-Black racism, and for LGBTQ rights.

My courses provided intellectual foundations for much of what I did as an activist. I was deeply interested in Marx, Freud, Foucault, and feminism. The only two U.S. history courses I took were on women's history and African American history. I took almost as many courses in

political science, psychology, and sociology as I did in history; I'm a little embarrassed to say this now, but I almost designed an independent major in something I called "oppression studies." At the time, I thought of that primarily in relation to class, race, gender, and sexuality.

2. Your first full-time job after graduating from Wesleyan University in 1985 was with the Institute for Defense & Disarmament Studies (IDDS), founded by Randall Forsberg. How did you arrive at a place where you, as a 24-year-old, were lecturing Eastern Europeans on the status of nuclear arms control?

Hah! For everyone reading this, that's a reference to a story I shared at the Organization of American Historians conference in 2026. After graduating in 1985, my college girlfriend and I worked in London for a few months, saved enough money to travel in Europe for another few months, and then went to Israel for another few, where I lived on a socialist kibbutz for a few months (I later became strongly critical of Zionism). In 1986, I returned to the States; my girlfriend and I broke up; and I moved to Boston, where I initially found part-time work with Citizens for Participation in Political Action, which was focusing at that time on U.S. interventionism in Central America, and then full-time work at IDDS. Forsberg, who was a force of nature, had played a key role in founding the nuclear freeze movement in the late 1970s. After winning a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant in 1983, she had founded IDDS, which imagined itself as a think tank for the U.S. peace movement. I initially worked half-time for an IDDS-affiliated journal, *The Arms Control Reporter*, edited by Chalmers Hardenbergh, and half-time as Randy's assistant, but then Randy offered me a full-

time position and I accepted. She was brilliant and charismatic, but also could be difficult and harsh; many of us who worked there were painfully aware of the gaps between the institute's peaceful mission and the dynamics we experienced at work. To return to your question, Randy sensed that I had aspirations that went beyond my mundane responsibilities at work, so every once in a while, she would offer me an appealing assignment. She was a popular public speaker, regularly addressing the nuclear freeze, the peace movement, and East-West relations; she had more invitations than she could accept.

So, in August 1987, I substituted for her at the first European-American Summer Program on International Security and East-West Relations, sponsored by the Max Planck Institute in Starnberg, West Germany, and then visited the Transnational Peace Foundation in Lund, Sweden, and the Center for Peace and Conflict Research in Copenhagen, Denmark. Two months later, I substituted for her at a symposium on European Security and Non-Offensive Defence, sponsored by the International Scientific Workers of the World in Varna, Bulgaria. According to a report I wrote after my return, "this was the first international conference on alternative defense held in an Eastern European country." Afterwards I met with several alternative defense experts in England. Heady stuff for a 24-year-old! And yes, on my arrival in Varna I found myself listed on the conference program, scheduled to make a presentation without any advance notice! Fortunately, I had listened to so many Randy speeches that I could offer a pretty good summary of her ideas.

My time at IDDS, 1986 and 1987, coincided with the period when I was coming out as

gay, joining the gay liberation movement, volunteering as an organizer for the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, getting arrested for nonviolent civil disobedience at the U.S. Supreme Court, and participating in an early AIDS activist group called MASS ACT OUT.

I left IDDS to become the coordinating editor of Gay Community News, a leftist weekly in Boston, in 1988, and I left GCN for the University of Pennsylvania in 1989. Randy sadly died young, in 2007; I long ago had lost touch with her. I only recently learned that the IDDS archives were donated to Cornell University; I wonder if there are traces of me there.

4. Congratulations on being elected president of the Organization of American Historians! How do peace values and peace history fit within the general social justice orientation of the OAH?

Many OAH historians, including me, study the history of social movements, and I think that's reflected in our annual conferences and our publications. Same for the history of war and peace. We issue and endorse statements on multiple social justice issues and we produce and endorse amicus briefs in important court cases. I'm proud that the OAH has taken a strong position against scholasticide in Gaza. More generally, I think we should always be concerned about the ways in which wars, including recent ones in Europe and the Middle East, are destructive for historians, historical artifacts, historical sites, historical scholarship, and history education. The OAH works against multiple forms of historical ignorance that contribute to war.

Conference Report: "Peace in the Age of Forever Wars" Symposium, April 3–4, 2026, Philadelphia, PA

Michael Clinton



Temple University's Center for the Study of Force and Diplomacy hosted the symposium "Peace in the Age of Forever Wars" on April 3 and 4, 2026. Organized by Temple scholars Lee-Ann Chae (Associate Professor of Philosophy) and Petra Goedde (Professor of History) as part of the university's ["Challenging War" conference and lecture series](#), the symposium brought together fourteen participants "to reexamine old frameworks and to bring to light new ones, to understand more deeply the core questions of peace and conflict in historical and transnational context." Four panels and three keynote presentations explored an interdisciplinary and interconnected set of topics from historical, philosophical, legal, gender, and other perspectives. PHS

colleagues Scott Bennett and Sahr Conway-Lanz also attended the symposium.

After opening remarks from the organizers that acknowledged that the symposium was taking place during “a time of war,” the first keynote speaker Mary Dudziak (Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Law, Emory University) challenged temporal and spatial concepts of war and peace as posing difficulties in reconciling peace as a “felt reality” for most Americans even as wars such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq—and now Iran—are “ever-present.” Instead, as those who attended her keynote presentation at the Peace History Society conference at Mount Berry College in October 2025 will recall, Dudziak characterized peace as not a time or a place but a “condition of privilege” that comes with the responsibility of restraint. The symposium’s first panel, “Gender, War, and Peace,” featured three presentations. Christin Hansen (Research Assistant, Department of Modern History, University of Trier) examined how the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) challenged male dominance in international relations after the First World War. She focused on WILPF’s efforts to secure women’s full participation in the League of Nations, particularly through the Women’s Charter, which connected women’s rights to the creation of a durable and peaceful global order. Jennifer Kling (Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Colorado) presented a feminist critique of the gap between just war theory and the realities of contemporary warfare and imperialism. Through practical hypothetical scenarios, she highlighted ambiguities and limitations within just war theory. Drawing on Hannah Arendt, as well as Catherine McKinnon and bell hooks, Kling articulated “a feminist conception of peace rooted in sustaining relational webs,”

offering both a critique of modern imperialism and a framework for resisting it. Closing the session, Adam Stone (doctoral candidate in history, Rutgers University) presented “Contested Public Diplomacy: Women Peace Activists’ Conceptions of a World Beyond the Cold War in the 1980s.” He argued that groups such as Women for a Meaningful Summit challenged conventional understandings of the Cold War by rejecting “enemy” characterizations of the “other,” raising broader questions about the fundamental assumptions underlying the U.S. “victory” in the Cold War.

After lunch, a panel titled “Peace, Justice, and Human Rights” featured Christian De Vos (Visiting Assistant Professor, CUNY School of Law), Ryan Liss (Assistant Professor of Law, University of Western Ontario), and Sari Kislevsky (Associate Professor of Philosophy, Queens College CUNY). In “Beyond the Forever War: State Capture, Violent Peace, and Accountability Structures,” De Vos argued that the focus on “forever wars” can obscure other forms of large-scale violence that operate outside conventional legal definitions of war, particularly violence rooted in corruption and criminality. Citing northern Mexico as a case study, he examined how such harms challenge existing frameworks of accountability and highlighted the 2023 Ljubljana–Hague Convention and related mechanisms as examples of emerging “accountability contexts” that recognize the role of international organizations and decentralized structures beyond the traditional state-centered model of international justice. In “Human Rights Between Peace and Dignity,” Liss traced the evolution of human rights thought from the Second World War era, when human rights were largely justified as instruments for securing

interstate peace and global order, to the postcolonial context of the later twentieth century. Decolonization, he argued, shifted emphasis toward the inherent dignity of individuals and the principle of self-determination, creating new tensions between peace, rights, and the use of military force. Kislevsky's presentation, "'Peace Is the Way': Non-Violence and the Right of Self-Defense," critiqued Immanuel Kant's *Toward a Perpetual Peace* (1795). Referencing an alleged 2015 exchange between Henry Kissinger and an Iranian diplomat-scholar, in which both claimed their positions satisfied Kant's conditions for peace, she argued that such ambiguities reveal Kant's conception of peace as "unstable and uncertain." In contrast, Kislevsky contended that Gandhi's principle of nonviolent resistance "better achieves Kant's aims of securing people's freedom globally than do Kant's articles of perpetual peace."

The final panel on the symposium's first day considered "Approaches to War and Peace" through presentations from Elad Uzan (Departmental Lecturer, Blavatnik School of Government, and Faculty of Philosophy, Oxford University) on "Ending War Through Compromise" and Jessica Wolfendale (Professor of Philosophy, Case Western Reserve University) on "Civilian Perspectives and the Ethics of War." Uzan drew upon points elaborated in his forthcoming book *The Morality and Law of Ending War* (Oxford, 2026) to argue that compromise is not morally neutral and that there is always a moral cost. Factors such as moral hazard, stability, and uncertainty were addressed to clarify a range of acceptable/unacceptable—or justified/unjustified—compromises plotted on a chart illustrating "an action-guiding framework for war-ending compromise that avoids collapse into appeasement." In her

presentation, Wolfendale proceeded from the observation that just war theory has been largely driven by the interests and perspectives of belligerents above those of civilians, a situation that has sustained excuses for collateral harm, war crimes, and other forms of injustice perpetrated upon civilians. She argued for the inclusion and even prioritization of civilian perspectives in various analyses of war as a radical corrective for scholarly work on the ethics of war, including the concept of a just war.

The symposium's second day began with a keynote presentation by Graham Parsons (Visiting Professor of Philosophy, Vassar College) titled "From Forever Wars to Wars Forever Explaining America's Undying Faith in War." Parsons resigned from his position as a professor of philosophy at West Point last year over the military academy's capitulations to the Trump administration's demands for curriculum changes and academic censorship. Parsons linked the current administration's embrace of a foreign policy that assumes military superiority—with "lethality" as its central principle—to be sufficient to achieve strategic goals to concepts of masculinity. Quoting Carol Gilligan that "[w]hen masculinity is threatened, violence is imminent," Parsons described the worldview and actions of such administration figures as Secretary of "War" Pete Hegseth as expressions of anxiety over social emasculation driven by shame over the failures of the war on terror that followed the 9/11 attacks.

A panel titled "Pacifism and Peace" then addressed issues of asymmetry in interstate relations, experiments in democratic reconstruction, and the tension between practical measures and utopian visions in the nineteenth-century American peace movement. Asking "Is Asymmetric

Peace Possible?”, David Chan (Professor of Philosophy, University of Alabama at Birmingham) focused on the internal political and economic arrangements that often drive powerful states to exploit weaker ones. Rejecting a Hobbesian view, Chan emphasized the role of social institutions in achieving just outcomes and suggested the reduction of domestic wealth inequalities as a path to reducing military conflicts in which powerful states prey upon weaker states. In his presentation “Manufacturing Peace: Innovation and Interconnectivity in Post-WWII Democratic Reconstruction,” Michael Dack (Associate Professor of History, Rowan University) examined the collaboration between military authorities and civilian experts to devise and implement innovative methods of political rehabilitation in the societies of the defeated Axis powers after the Second World War. Dack characterized these efforts as “experiments in peace preservation that sought to balance punitive justice with long-term democratic transformation” that add to our understanding of “how durable peace can be manufactured and sustained.” Margot Minardi (Professor of History and Humanities, Reed College) closed out the panel by reaching back to the mid-nineteenth century to analyze the campaign for a “congress of nations” undertaken by US peace advocates seeking to refute dismissive claims that the realization of permanent peace was a utopian fantasy.

Samuel Moyn (Kent Professor of Law and History, Yale University) delivered the final keynote presentation of the symposium on “Gaza, the Humanization of War, and the Politics of International Law.” Connecting remarks by Joe Biden and Barack Obama about the crisis in Gaza to critiques by Bertha von Suttner against International Committee of the Red Cross founder Henry Dunant receiving the first

Nobel Peace Prize in 1901 to suggest how enduring this debate has been, Moyn examined claims about whether making war less brutal could perpetuate and legitimate it. He did so through critical analysis of law as a polemical struggle, emphasizing its interpretive nature over its condition as an objective reference point for evaluating violations, non-violations, or the need for further legislation. Suggesting that discussions about the humanization of war may be encrypted debates around the use of force, Moyn analyzed the political purpose and the (de)legitimizing function of the debate around the violence in Gaza as genocide, pointing in particular to the paradoxical claim that a more humanized strategy might further extend the conflict. He cited the work of Palestinian-American scholar and activist Noura Erakat as indicating how international law might be used in discussions around the debate.

A roundtable conversation among the three keynote speakers—Dudziak, Parsons, and Moyn—elicited observations and questions among the other symposium attendees over the course of the symposium’s final ninety minutes. Although the symposium lasted only a little longer than a day and a half, its program plunged deeply into a complex set of questions that mingled reflections about history, law, politics, ethics, culture, and more. Petra Goedde noted in her opening remarks that the symposium’s organizers were under no illusion that it would have any effect on the thinking and actions of the architects of the war(s) then underway, but the thoughts—and perhaps actions—of those who attended the conference most certainly were affected.



On April 12, former PHS presidents Scott Bennett and Mike Clinton attended a presentation by David Cortright titled "Halting and Reversing the Arms Race: Challenges and Opportunities," sponsored by the Princeton-based Coalition for Peace Action (CFPA). Cortright's presentation drew upon the experiences of the nuclear freeze campaign during the 1980s and developments in the arms race and arms control since then to consider strategies for guiding and inspiring the movement for peace, disarmament, and justice today. A recording of the presentation is available through [this link](#). Pictured are (from left to right): Rev. Robert Moore, CFPA executive director; Mike Clinton; David Cortright; Scott Bennett.

Mercy Peace Forum and Solidarity with Honduran Women Activists

Gail Presbey, University of Detroit Mercy, PHS President

Last fall (as I mentioned in the January 2026 PHS newsletter), we hosted Honduran speakers Noemi Dubon and Martha Sandoval who are Mercy Associates and founding members and staff of the Foro de Mujeres. Their organization in San Pedro Sula helps women who are victims of

domestic violence and political violence, and in addition to providing counseling and legal support, they organize women to support each other so that current laws protecting women are enforced and other laws in need of reform are changed. Demands for their services grew so large they were in need of a building, and they wanted to go on tour to speak of their work and raise some funds.

I want to thank Mike Clinton and Stephanie Frantantaro of Gwynedd Mercy University and Sue Gallagher RSM of the Philadelphia-area Sisters of Mercy along with many other helpers who hosted the speakers at their university as part of our Mercy Peace Forum. Again, please write me at presbegm@udmercy.edu if you would like to see the recording of their talk. We also hosted Noemi and Martha here at Detroit Mercy, where they spoke to the public and also met with two classes to have discussions with students.

As Martha and Noemi explained at the MPF talk on Oct. 21, 2025 at Gwynedd Mercy, they began their organization around the time the Iraq War began. At the time they were a coalition of 15 women's organizations in Honduras, from difference races (including the Garifuna community of Afro-Hondurans), and different professions (farmers and others), and both the youth and the elderly. The Sisters of Mercy gave them emotional support from the start, but other than that, they had nothing. They came together to help women suffering from domestic violence, from human trafficking, and organized crime. When abused women show up to their group, looking for support, they are often quiet in the beginning, but after a couple of months they grab a microphone and tell you how they feel. It takes courage to break the ice and describe the violence they have experienced. But

with the strength of community they can face their problems together. They support women through the court process, or else the abusers would not be sentenced and the mistreatment would not stop. They also use the media such as the radio to educate women about their rights and their opportunities for redress.



Above: Martha Sandoval and Noemi Dubon of *Foro de Mujeres por la Vida* speaking at University of Detroit Mercy, October 2025.

At their talk at University of Detroit Mercy, the speakers explained that every 15 hours, a woman is killed in Honduras, adding up to about 400 to 500 per year in a country where the population is about nine million people. This makes Honduras #1 in the statistics for femicide. There is 95 percent impunity; only in 5 percent of the killings result in a trial. Their organization works on prevention, legal support, and psychological support. They also provide safe spaces for women who are in danger. They provide healing and care for women, through psychotherapy and a program run by the Sisters of Mercy called “Misericordia Tejedoras de Sueños Misericordia Tejedoras de Sueños” (Mercy Weavers of Dreams). This program helps to empower women and

even learn some skills so they can support themselves.

It was very hard to hear the stories about corruption in the court system that could allow the wealthy and powerful persons to abuse women and escape any consequences. In order to ensure that Yenni Carolina Ferrera Funes (murdered in 2016) received justice (in 2018), they had to [protest in front of the court](#). Her killer was wealthy and well-connected to the police. While the speaking tour happened last fall, my good news is that they were successful in their fundraising (raising over \$230,000) and were able to purchase the building they needed as a new headquarters to help women. While many people helped with the speaking tour effort (especially Margie Rudnik, the Mercy Associate who coordinated it with the help of Jean Stokan of the Mercy Social Justice office and Jose Artiga of SHARE Foundation), I have been told that it couldn’t have gotten off the ground to become the success that it was if it were not for the initial support of our universities and the Mercy Peace Forum for their speaking tour. But of course, we needed everyone’s help to succeed.



Above: With Noemi Dubon (left) in front of the newly purchased building to serve as the Foro headquarters.

I was fortunate to be able to visit the speakers in their new building in San Pedro Sula when I went to Honduras as part of a SHARE delegation in March 2026. I got to see the public witness work the *Foro* does firsthand. We participated in a procession they led on International Women's Day, through the streets of downtown San Pedro Sula. People chanted in Spanish, a rhyming slogan that said, machista men should be very scared, because the women of Honduras were becoming feminists! There were 13 "stations" where the march stopped and each group had a statement or action prepared on their theme. It was great to see the many messages on the signs. The Sisters of Mercy had a station where they dramatized, using street theatre, the need to fight against misinformation, consumerism, and other contemporary evils.

Our delegation performed the last station, at the very end. We had been assigned the topic of promoting world peace. We sang our peace song. We took up the whole street/ four-way intersection. Martha and Noemi were there, making speeches. They closed playing John Lennon's "Imagine."



Above: Martha Sandoval making a speech at the International Women's Day march.

The group left the street and everyone was invited for lunch to the nearby museum of anthropology and history. There,

they had the Women's Symphonic Orchestra play some music. And Mercy Ayala who works for Equipo de Reflexión, Investigación y Comunicación (ERIC-SJ) as part of Radio Progreso in Honduras explained the eight big banners of local women who were heroes of the movement. It was part of an oral history project she coordinated with members of the Foro. As she explains, the women collectively decided what to do, and they decided to focus on eight women who were important in Honduran history, although they were almost completely unknown, since women are rarely written about in history books. They chose women who had played important roles in labor movements, indigenous movements, and were advocates for feminism and human rights.

They began researching the historical women and doing fresh interviews with family members, to write up each one's biography. For example, Emelia Hernandez played a key role in the success of the banana strike of 1954. She was known as "La Rapido" and was a communications strategist for the labor movement. She rode a bicycle and would often use disguises, such as dressing as a man, or pretending to be pregnant. A journalist working with their project, Yolani Perez, located the only son of Emelia who added to the historical account and was present at the launching of the project. They chose to launch on a day that was the 71st anniversary of women gaining the right to vote in Honduras (that would be Jan. 25, 2026). They created banners with portraits of each of the eight women, and carried those banners in the International Women's Day March in March of 2026. Other women highlighted in the banners included Simona Peredes, described as "Pioneer of the Political Rights of Honduran women." Other women spotlighted in the project include Lilian Castillo Hernandez,

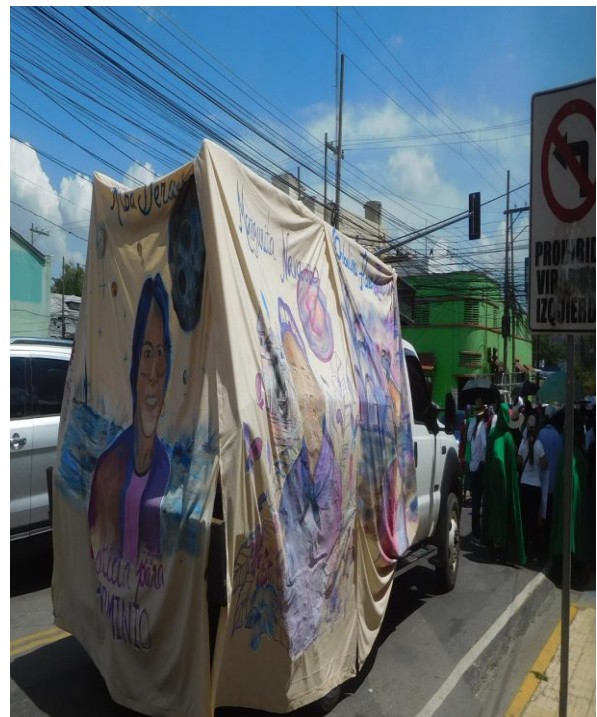
Alba Deras, Aurelia Martina Aruz Roche (of the Garifuna community), Orbelina Flores Hernandez, Angie Milena Orellano and Margarita Navarro. They are working on making short video documentaries on each woman that they hope to bring to schools and women's groups, to promote the women as role models. You can hear Mercy Ayala explaining this project, "Women Making History" in [a video from Radio Progreso](#). (You can turn on auto-captions in English by clicking "CC" and then "Subtitles"). It's great to see an activist movement also engaging in peace history.



Above: Simona Peredes banner being carried in the International Women's Day march.



Above: Lilian Castillo Hernandez banner being carried in the Women's Day march.



Above: Truck carries banners (part of the "Women Making History" series) during the Women's Day march.

After the International Women's Day march and public program, we all went to go see the new building that the Foro had just purchased, due to the success of the

fundraising effort. It was a beautiful, big grand building. Of course it was empty, and would need remodeling before they move in, but it looked like it would be sufficient for their needs, and it was a great accomplishment, that they got the building, after much effort. It is close to the city center which was also good.

Since then, just this month they held a big open house/ launch of the house, that is now fully in use. About 100 people (mostly women) attended, and there were moving speeches, ribbon cutting, prayers, music and dance, and tours of the building. You can see coverage of the event on [Radio Progreso's Facebook page](#). If you are interested to learn more, they have a [website](#), and there is one [last fundraiser](#) in order to fix one part of the roof.

One other “history” aspect of the SHARE delegation to Honduras in March was our attending the commemoration marking the tenth anniversary of the murder of award-winning environmental activist Berta Caceres. The event was held in La Esperanza, her home town. The theme was Ten Years of Hope and the focus was about how we have to keep caring about the issues that Berta fought for – the environment, indigenous rights, feminism. There was a great procession with children, women, elders, carrying signs that were messages and quotes from Berta. They built a circular altar with fruit, flowers, soft branches of evergreens, where people could light and place candles in a long procession.



Above: An altar created with fresh fruits and incense.

There were musicians who sang songs, including a Lenca woman from Berta's community. It was very beautiful! Speakers included Padre Melo (a Honduran Jesuit) and Gustavo Castro, who had been with Berta when she was killed. Berta's two daughters, Bertita and Laura, were there throughout. There was a prayerful service at the gravesite as well, with many offerings of incense, fruit and flowers.



Above: Padre Melo and Gustavo Castro on a panel at the gathering for Berta Caceres.



Above: The altar built at the Berta Caceres memorial, at night.

The next day, a large contingent from the commemoration came to Tegucigalpa, the Capitol of Honduras, and marched first to businesses owned by the same family that they consider to be behind Berta's assassination, and then to the Honduran Supreme Court (Palace of Justice), where Bertita and others demanded justice for Berta.



Above: Bertita and Laura in front of the Palace of Justice.

And the following day there was a gathering including many speakers at the United Nations High Commission in

Honduras. There was a big meeting of folks from COPINH along with folks representing other nonprofit and social justice org's from around the world – Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala. A lot of feminist groups were there, and others criticizing the extractive industries in Honduras. Bertita and others spoke.

The overall discussion was, how can all of these fellow traveler groups help each other, especially how could all of us advance the work of COPINH (Berta's organization)? So, people had such interesting things to say about how they saw the problems of the world today, and what should be done about it. And a young woman musician (Maria José Ramos aka "Maché") played her guitar and sang three beautiful songs. Jose spoke on behalf of all of us in SHARE. And we closed with lighting candles once again, praying for Berta and for her movement to continue.

In all these instances described above, I was impressed with how people have come together to nurture the memories of activists who had come before them, and to recommit themselves to each other to continue the worthy projects of these precursors. They are change makers drawing upon their histories as nourishment, guidance and inspiration.

Note: All photos taken by the author.

PHS Affiliated Panels at the 2027 AHA

How to Disarm Again: The History and Future of Nuclear Disarmament

Proposed Abstract: The global nuclear arms control architecture, constructed during the late Cold War, has largely collapsed. The dissolution of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) and Intermediate-Range Nuclear

Forces (INF) Treaties, capped by the expiration of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), marks a critical pivot point in nuclear history. This roundtable historicizes this transition, moving beyond a single-treaty focus to evaluate the systemic shift from a bilateral, managed superpower equilibrium during the late Cold War to today's unstable, multipolar nuclear landscape. By bridging diplomatic history, the history of technology, and transnational peace activism, this session addresses a central question: Will the late Cold War arms control framework offer a durable model for global governance, or is it a fleeting byproduct of a bygone era? Taking stock of nuclear disarmament initiatives during the late Cold War is vital for charting the way forward in a world without nuclear arms control treaties.

Luke Griffith will analyze the evolution of verification regimes, examining how the pioneering on-site inspections and satellite surveillance from the INF and START eras might apply to contemporary ballistic missile defense systems. He will evaluate whether a framework resembling the ABM Treaty remains viable and historicize the challenges of integrating China into traditionally bilateral US-Russian agreements. Scott White will assess how the erosion of major-power treaties has affected the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) framework, which increasingly relies on support from non-nuclear states. Yekta Noyan will expand the geographic scope by historicizing South Africa's voluntary denuclearization to see if it offers a scalable model for today's nonproliferation efforts. Finally, Henry Maar will evaluate the efficacy of nuclear arms control activism. Collectively, the discussion will explore whether popular forces and non-nuclear states "from below" have historically shaped the global nuclear order

or if diplomacy remains the exclusive domain of great-power elites.

Luke Griffith, New Mexico Junior College
Abstract:

Luke Griffiths will review the trajectory of nuclear arms control since the ABM Treaty, with a focus on the 1987 INF Treaty. He will address whether techniques developed for the INF, such as on site inspection, could be applied to the new "missile defense" systems in Eastern Europe, and whether other measures, such as new ABM Treaty, would help avert a new arms race with Russia or nuclear armed exchanges, including those occurring due to error or accident. He will address whether the US should have bilateral arms treaties with China, and whether multilateral treaties are feasible.

Henry Richard Maar III, California State University, Northridge

Abstract:

Henry Maar will discuss the history of popular peace activism regarding nuclear arms control, why such activism has declined in the last two decades, and what future role it could play in averting a new arms race or preventing nuclear armed exchanges.

Scott White, Springs Charter Schools

Abstract:

Scott White will discuss how the collapse of the major arms control treaties (ABM, INF, START Treaties) between the largest nuclear-armed states, the US and Russia, will impact the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and whether non-nuclear states can steer the nuclear armed states, particularly the largest ones, towards less proliferation and more transparency.

Yekta K. Noyan, University of Pretoria

Abstract:

Yekta Noyan will discuss the significance of South Africa's decision to give up nuclear weapons, and whether this experience can serve as a model for some other states, or whether South Africa's geography and history are sui generis, making it unlikely to serve as a model. He will address what role South Africa plays in non-proliferation movements.

Joseph Edward Johnson is a PhD candidate in the History department at Temple University, working under Alan McPherson. He is currently preparing a dissertation on US foreign and nuclear weapons policy during the Cold War entitled "Moving Mountains: Project Plowshare, Peaceful Nuclear Explosions, and US Foreign Policy, 1952-1977."; Joseph received his BA in History from Oglethorpe University and an MA in Social Science from the University of Chicago. This is his first experience serving as chair for a roundtable at the AHA. His previous research has focused on US-Latin American relations, including papers on the creation of the Latin American Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, issues related to human rights and military basing.

Panel Organizer, Alice Whealey
Independent Scholar
Athens, OH

Session Title: Classrooms As Commons:
Public Education, Peacebuilding, and Civic
Repair In New Orleans

Type: Roundtable

Session Abstract:

This panel examines how New Orleans educators understand the historical transformations that have reshaped public education since Hurricane Katrina. Drawing on their experiences as teachers, community members, and witnesses to institutional change, panelists explore the intersections of educational reform, civic trust, and

community memory. The discussion highlights schools as sites where democratic participation, peacebuilding, and civic repair are enacted in everyday practice. Through the lens of New Orleans' recovery and restructuring, participants consider how educators preserve local histories, sustain relationships across communities, and help students navigate the social and historical legacies of disruption, inequality, and resilience.

Presentation #45289: How Educators Serve
As Stewards of Community Memory In
Post-Katrina New Orleans

Panelist: Marcus Henderson, Sophie B.
Wright Charter School

Abstract: Drawing on his experience teaching students whose families have navigated profound educational and neighborhood change, Marcus Henderson will examine how classroom instruction connects local history to contemporary civic life. His contribution will focus on the long-term historical effects of educational restructuring and how teachers help students understand the relationships between schools, communities, and democratic participation. Henderson will highlight the role of educators in preserving local narratives, fostering critical engagement with history, and cultivating civic responsibility among young people in a rapidly changing city.

Presentation #45290: How Historical
Knowledge and Cultural Understanding
Contribute to Inclusive Educational
Environments

Panelist: Maria Velazquez, International
High School of New Orleans

Abstract: Through her work with diverse student populations, Maria Velazquez will examine how schools function as spaces where multiple histories, identities, and

experiences intersect. Her contribution will address the historical dimensions of migration, demographic change, and educational reform in New Orleans, considering how these forces shape contemporary classrooms. Velazquez will discuss how teachers help students connect personal and community histories to broader social and political developments. She will demonstrate how historical awareness supports empathy, belonging, and civic engagement in communities marked by both diversity and change.

Presentation #45291: Historical Relationship between Public Education, Civic Discourse, and Democratic Participation
Panelist: Byron Arthur, St. Augustine High School

Abstract: Drawing on his longstanding experience in speech and debate education, Byron Arthur will discuss how schools have historically served as institutions where students learn to engage with public issues, develop leadership skills, and participate in civic life. His contribution will connect contemporary educational practice to broader traditions of democratic education while reflecting on the challenges facing schools in an era of political polarization. Arthur will consider how educators foster dialogue, resilience, and informed citizenship, helping students understand both the historical roots and present implications of social and political change.
Chair:

Brooke Moreland

Peace and Justice Studies Association
Baltimore, MD

How to Restrain War: Lessons from 20th-Century U.S. History

Session abstract:

In 1965, the Conference on Peace Research—the predecessor to the Peace History Society (PHS)—convened a

landmark AHA session entitled “How Wars End.” This important conversation occurred as the United States transitioned from the nuclear brink over Berlin and Cuba into the quagmire of Vietnam. Six decades later, the world remains entangled in what the late Marilyn B. Young termed the “Forever War.” This panel returns to the PHS’s foundational mission, exploring the historical conditions and mechanisms for restraining conflict in a world of militarization.

Featuring three case studies centered on the long shadow of wars in Indochina, this session examines diverse attempts to curb U.S. military intervention at the legislative, diplomatic, and grassroots levels. Mary Dudziak revisits Dwight D. Eisenhower’s 1954 decision against intervening in the French Indochina War, examining how Congress’s war declaration power limited the scope of the overt military actions the President ordered, so that Executive power was constrained even when Congress did not act. Emilie Cunningham shifts the focus to the height of the U.S. war in Vietnam, uncovering how transatlantic anti-war movements exerted collective, global pressure on U.S. policy. Finally, Brian Mueller takes our story to the 1980s, highlighting how guerrilla public diplomacy and U.S.-based activists invoked the ghosts of the Vietnam War to restrain U.S. involvement in El Salvador and bring peace to Central America.

Featuring three case studies in the long shadow of wars in Indochina, this session examines legislative, diplomatic, and grassroots efforts to curb U.S. military intervention. Aligning with the Peace History Society’s mission, the panel explores the historical mechanisms and conditions necessary to restrain conflict in the era of the Forever War.

Presenter 1:

Mary L. Dudziak

Affiliation:

Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Law,
Emory University

Brief biographical information:

Mary L. Dudziak, Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Law at Emory University School of Law, is a historian of American legal history and the United States and the World. Her most recent book is *Making the Forever War: Marilyn Young on the Culture and Politics of American Militarism* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2021), coedited with Mark Bradley. She is the author of *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 25th Anniversary edition, 2025); *War Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences* (Oxford University Press, 2012); *Exporting American Dreams: Thurgood Marshall's African Journey* (Oxford University Press, 2008), and other works. She is past-President of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. Dudziak is currently writing *Going to War: An American History* (under contract, Oxford University Press).

Paper Title:

The Fabric of U.S. War Powers Restraint in the 1950s

Paper Abstract:

This paper will explore the topic of avoiding war by focusing on a U.S. military intervention that didn't happen. Congress's role in authorizing or restraining armed conflict was undermined after the undeclared Korean War, but an episode in the Eisenhower Administration, not examined by war powers scholars, suggests that constitutional restraints still endured, at least for non-covert armed conflict. During the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam in

1954, in which Vietminh forces surrounded and ultimately captured a vulnerable French military base, French leaders pressed President Dwight D. Eisenhower to intervene militarily. Eisenhower contemplated U.S. intervention, including the use of nuclear weapons. Although the United States provided significant financial support, Eisenhower told French leaders that he would not intervene because he believed Congress would not authorize it. This episode shows the way Congress's role could still constrain overt large-scale presidential unilateralism in the 1950s, keeping U.S. troops out of a devastating battle, even though, in other contexts, Eisenhower undermined political restraint through secrecy.

Presenter 2:

Emilie Cuning

Affiliation: Emory University

Paper Abstract:

How can collective pressure lead to a change in decision-making in wartime? During the US War in Vietnam, collective pressure mounted around the globe for the US to change course, from individual citizens protesting the war to other nations condemning the US for committing war crimes in Vietnam. During the Nixon administration, this collective global pressure contributed to strategic changes in thinking around how the war should be fought (Vietnamization) and how it should be presented. My paper will investigate how means of collective pressure, specifically the global anti-war and resistance movements, influenced these strategic changes and ultimately may have contributed to the war's cessation. This paper will discuss how anti-war movements outside the United States, particularly in Europe, altered the diplomatic relationship between the US and its European allies through actions including:

Sweden and France holding US draft deserters as a way to protest the war, broad anti-war resistance campaigns in the United Kingdom (who argued that their nation was complicit in the war), and Americans living in exile in Europe as a means of resisting the US war in Vietnam.

Through investigating these non-traditional means of collective pressure in a region that has been less studied in the extant historiography, this presentation will sit in conversation with the other papers in this panel to demonstrate how these citizens outside the US brought about political shifts within their host countries which subsequently influenced those countries' diplomatic relationships with the US over the issue of Vietnam.

Presenter 3:

Brian Mueller

Affiliation: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Brief biographical information: Brian Mueller is a lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. His first book, *Democracy's Think Tank: The Institute for Policy Studies and Progressive Foreign Policy*, was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 2021. He has also published several peer-reviewed journal articles in *Diplomatic History*, *Peace & Change*, and *the Journal for the Study of Radicalism*. Mueller's current project is provisionally titled "God, Guerrillas, and Solidarity: The Central America Peace Movement in Reagan's America."

Paper Title:

Long Live the Vietnam Syndrome: The Transnational Central American Anti-Interventionist Movement, Reagan, & El Salvador

Paper Abstract:

"How close we could look into a bright future," Ernesto Che Guevara declared in 1967, where "two, three or many Vietnams flourish throughout the world with their share of deaths and their immense tragedies, their everyday heroism and their repeated blows against imperialism...." In 1980, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) made Guevara's dream a reality in El Salvador by launching a guerrilla war against the U.S.-backed Revolutionary Government Junta. Like in Vietnam, the contest soon became an international affair, with both state and non-state actors choosing sides. In 1980, Republican presidential candidate Ronald Reagan campaigned on the promise to kick the "Vietnam syndrome, which had discouraged U.S. intervention abroad. Reagan hoped to cure the United States of this pernicious disease in El Salvador by providing its government with massive amounts of economic and military aid.

Meanwhile, the FMLN found an ally in the U.S.-based Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES). This paper will also look at the guerrilla public diplomacy carried out by CISPES and U.S.-based representatives of the FMLN political-diplomatic commission. CISPES helped organize numerous "solidarity tours" of FMLN leaders across the United States. CISPES and the FMLN repeatedly conjured the ghosts of the Vietnam War to warn Americans about the consequences of meddling in El Salvador, raising the political costs for the Reagan administration to intervene. With Reagan restrained, CISPES and the FMLN joined other Central Americans leaders in promoting peaceful solutions to the conflict, ultimately preventing further escalation and another Vietnam.

Chair and commentator: Roger Peac

Member Announcements

Chuck Howlett has just published a piece entitled, "William Jay: A Peacemaker, Arbitrator, and Abolitionist Who Influenced the Modern Peace Movement," appearing in the Summer Issue of *New York Archives*.

Longtime PHS member, **Seth Kershner**, has recently been awarded a PhD in American history from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His dissertation, "GIs in Jail: Military Dissent and Incarceration During the Vietnam War," argues that Vietnam era U.S. military prisons have much to teach us about the breadth and scale of GI resistance, about the connections between the GI and civilian peace movements, and about the previously little-known feedback loops linking civilian and military prison systems.



Seth Kershner poses with his adviser, Chris Appy, on commencement day at UMass Amherst

Roger Peace:

There is a new essay on the U.S. Foreign Policy History & Resource Guide website, "[U.S. continental expansion and Native American dispossession](#)." This book-length essay (about 127 pages with 99 images):

- provides an overview of U.S.-Native American relations from the Colonial era to the present;
- examines the "imperial mindsets" that underpinned U.S. policies toward Native Americans;
- highlights Native American diplomacy and alternative choices and possibilities (roads not taken);
- assesses the tragic continuities of U.S. foreign policy into the 20th century; and
- reflects on the positive shift toward more accurate, honest, and balanced historical accounts.

As with all essays on the website, "U.S. continental expansion and Native American dispossession" is written for both the general public and students. The essay builds on and synthesizes the excellent work of many scholars, cites primary and secondary sources, and includes a resource list for further exploration. Sections can be assigned for student reading.

One thing to note about this topic is that Native American studies has an overall progressive cast, being inclusive of Native American perspectives and recognizing social justice values. This orientation is also evident in the various Native American museums I visited. Refreshing!

In my own field of American Foreign Relations, however, the topic is very minimally addressed. The flagship publication, *Diplomatic History*, has run only six articles on US-Native American

relations over the last ten years. The presumption seems to be that America's "rise to power" began in the 1890s. This essay challenges that view, recognizing continuities between US continental empire-building and latter stages overseas imperialism, Cold War intervention, and post-Cold War hegemony.

Peter van den Dungen:

One of my long-standing fields of interest is the history of the medical peace movement. My article, 'Timothy Holmes, F.R.C.S. (1825-1907): leading surgeon and translator of Bertha von Suttner's *Lay Down Your Arms* (1892)' was published in *Medicine, Conflict and Survival* (41/3, September 2025, 355-370). He was an active member of the London-based International Arbitration and Peace Association (IAPA). The same journal also published an article, co-written with Nick Lewer, 'Women doctors against war – some pioneers' (42/1, March 2026, 100-115). It focused on five women who were active in the pre-World War 2 era, including Alice Hamilton, Aletta Jacobs, and Maria Montessori.

My review of Georg Hamann's profusely illustrated book on Bertha von Suttner's travels, *Bertha von Suttner auf Reisen* (Vienna: Amalthea, 2025) was published in *Peace & Change* (51/3, July 2026, 206-208). For obvious reasons, The Hague became her favourite city. Readers may be interested to learn that a bust of her that was commissioned by the Dutch Carnegie Foundation as part of the centenary celebrations of the Peace Palace in 2013 was finally moved from inside the library to outside the gates. The ceremony took place on 10th December 2025 during a conference 'In the footsteps of Bertha von Suttner' that was held in the Peace Palace. An image is at <https://bkdh.nl/en/nieuws/onthulling-beeld-bertha-von-suttner-door-ingrid-rollema/>

Peace & Change also published my review of a very different work, Wouter De Rycke's *Justifying Utopia: A Legal History of the International Peace Movement (1815-1873)* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2025) (51/4, online 25th May 2026).

My discovery of peace research, and subsequent involvement in peace history and peace museums, is recorded in 'Peace Education Through Peace History and Peace Museums', a chapter in Syed Sikander Mehdi & Matt Meyer, eds., *Building Peace. Reflections of Eminent Educators, From Personal to Political* (PalgraveMacmillan/Springer Nature, 2026), pp. 87-105.

Deborah Buffton and Chuck Howlett have been invited to coauthor a chapter on "The History of Antiwar Movements in Europe and the US Since World War I" for the *Companion to the History of Internationalism*, edited by Ben Dorfman. The volume will include multiple authors looking at a variety of international organizations, movements, and ideas, and will be published by Routledge.

Carole Sargent together with Art Laffin of the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker in Washington, DC, co-edited the book *Arise and Witness: Poems by Anne Montgomery RSCJ About Faith, Prison, War Zones, and Nonviolent Resistance* (New Academia Publishing/Scarith Books, 2024). All of the living members of the original Plowshares 8 contributed to it. It took second place in poetry in the Catholic Media Awards for 2025. This year, 2026, Martin Sheen featured it on his podcast. He knew Sr. Montgomery because he supported the original Plowshares 8 activists, and played the role of the judge at their trial in a film about them, *In the King of Prussia*. [Here is a](#)

[link, set to start at 13:36](#). The piece is 7 minutes long with some gaps, so keep listening! On another episode [he read a second poem of hers](#).

Amy Rutenberg:

1. My co-edited collection (with Paul Huddle, Emma Huddlestone, and Anndal Narayanan), *Military Welfare History since the Eighteenth Century* is coming out in Palgrave-MacMillan's "New Directions in Welfare History" series in September. PHS members may find the approach of the volume interesting, as it stakes a claim to the idea of "military welfare history," and chapters look at how the growth, shrinkage, successes, and failures of public and private welfare programs have been connected to differing conceptions of warfare. Themes of conscientious objection, state exclusion, race, and gender run throughout the volume's chapters. Individuals (and their libraries) can get a 20% discount directly from [springer.com](https://www.springer.com) using the code PALAUT.
2. My edited collection, *Conscription in the Twentieth Century: Coercion and Resistance in Global Perspective* is coming out in the University Press of Kansas's "Modern War Studies" series in November. PHS members will be interested in the recurrent theme of resistance to militarism and conscription that runs through virtually every chapter. In particular, the idea that conscription ALWAYS has unintended consequences and therefore is always a project that must be constructed and reinforced

by the state looking to carry it out and that can be undermined by individuals, regardless of time or place, is an important intervention. Individuals (and their libraries) can receive a 30% discount directly from the University Press of Kansas using the code 24RUTENBERG

(See attached flyers for more details.)

Wendy E. Chmielewski's "Ellen Starr Brinton: Archivist and Activist for Peace in Time of War," is now live in the current (July 2026) issue of *The Political Librarian*. It can be found at this link: <https://journals.library.wustl.edu/pollib/article/id/9285/>

Brinton was the first curator of the Swarthmore College Peace Collection and field secretary for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

In addition, Wendy E. Chmielewski and Jill Norgren's *Her Hat Was in the Ring: How Women Won the Right to Run for Office in the United States* (New York University Press) will be available September 2026.

Friedensbilder: Archiv (Images of Peace – Archive)

The archive records approximately 3,500 representations of peace in European art, mostly 15th to 19th centuries, allegories and images of historical events: paintings and sculpture, prints, drawings and illustrated broadsheets, book illustrations, coins and medals, and some posters and newspaper cartoons. All are documented with image and text, with sources and literature. For overview, there are an introduction and finding aids, and an extensive bibliography. It was assembled by

art historian Hans-Martin Kaulbach and is now accessible to scholars in Munich.

Address:

Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte,
München
Photothek/Sammlungen - Sonderbestände:
Archiv „Friedensbilder“
Katharina von Bora-Str. 10
80333 München, Germany
Mondays – Fridays: 9:00 – 17:00 h
Application: photothek@zikg.eu

For further information:

https://www.zikg.eu/photothek/sonderbestaende_inhalt/archiv-friedensbilder
Kubikat (art history libraries catalogue):
enter „Friedensbilder“
For consultation: martin-kaulbach@t-online.de

Opportunity to Contribute OpEds, via Larry Wittner

Dear PHS members,

In an attempt to reach beyond the confines of academia and address the general public, for the last couple of decades I have been writing Opinion (OpEd) pieces for newspapers and political publications that focus primarily on peace issues. Each of these OpEds runs a little less than a thousand words and usually appears in 20 publications or more. For the last five years or so, while serving as a Board member of Citizens for Global Solutions (CGS), I have brought other scholars into this venture as well, usually for the purpose of enabling them to do the same thing and, hopefully, pointing them toward the CGS goal of promoting enhanced global governance (e.g., a stronger United Nations) as a solution to global problems of war,

environmental destruction, disease pandemics, poverty, and other afflictions of the modern world.

If you would be interested in writing one or more OpEds dealing with peace or with the advantages of replacing toxic nationalism with enhanced global governance, I would be happy to assist you with this project and with placing these OpEds in publications via a free distribution service. Just let me know.

I can be reached at: wittner@albany.edu.

Sincerely,

Larry Wittner
Professor of History Emeritus,
SUNY/Albany

The next issue of the PHS Newsletter is anticipated in January. Please email any contributions or announcements to the newsletter editor, Henry Maar (hrmaar@gmail.com) for inclusion by January 11, 2027.

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