

# PHS NEWS

The Newsletter of the Peace History Society

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## Second-Guessing Hiroshima

*By Leo Maley III and Uday Mohan*

Second-guessing the necessity and morality of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 55 years ago is nothing new. Contrary to widely held opinion, the first critics of America's use of atomic weapons were not 1960s radicals or "revisionist" historians, but figures from the conservative establishment and the highest ranks of the military.

Criticism began within days of the obliteration of the two Japanese cities. On August 8, 1945, two days after the destruction of Hiroshima, former President Herbert Hoover wrote, "The use of the atomic bomb, with its indiscriminate killing of women and children, revolts my soul."

Two days later, John Foster Dulles and Methodist Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam together urged President Truman to forgo additional use of the new weapon, saying they opposed the bomb's indiscriminate obliteration of human beings.

Within days of the Hiroshima bombing, David Lawrence, the editor of what is now *US News & World Report*, wrote that Japanese surrender had appeared inevitable weeks before the bomb's use. The claim of "military necessity," he argued, rang hollow. Official justifications would "never erase from our minds the simple truth that we, of all civilized nations . . . did not hesitate to employ the most destructive weapon of all times indiscriminately against men, women, and children."

Such criticisms were not limited to civilians. The very day after the atomic bomb hit Hiroshima, the personal pilot of General Douglas MacArthur, (*cont. on p.2*)

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*("Second-Guessing . . .," cont.)*

commander of Allied forces in the Pacific, recorded in his diary that MacArthur was "appalled and depressed by this Frankenstein."

In 1963 President Eisenhower, the Allied commander in Europe during World War II, recalled, as he did on several other occasions, that in July 1945 he had opposed using the atomic bomb on Japan during a meeting with Secretary of War Henry Stimson: "...I told him I was against it on two counts. First, the Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing. Second, I hated to see our country be the first to use such a weapon."

No one should easily discount these views. These six men were all widely respected public figures. With the exception of Oxnam, all were conservatives. None was a pacifist. None of the five who survived into the 1960s publicly opposed the war in Vietnam. Their dissenting opinions were not based on hindsight. They voiced their beliefs even before the war ended. These men considered the use of the atomic bomb to have been militarily unnecessary and morally repugnant based on the information available to them in the summer of 1945.

Keep this in mind when, on Hiroshima anniversaries, you hear it said that opposition to the bombing emerged only in the 1960s, or that critics must necessarily be liberals or pacifists. These unsubstantiated claims- repeated frequently in the news media- should not go unchallenged. The passage of time has done nothing to alter these considered judgments.

**SELECTED PANEL SUMMARIES,  
PHS CONFERENCE,  
BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON,  
April 28-30, 2000**

The Peace History Society held a well attended and successful conference April 28-30 at Western Washington University in Bellingham. A listing of all panels, papers, and an overall summary was published in the Spring 2000 issue of PHS news. In this issue and the following one (Fall, 2000) we will endeavor to publish summaries of all panels. For copies of selected papers presented at the conference, please refer to the PHS web site:

[www.swarthmore.edu/Library/peace/Peace](http://www.swarthmore.edu/Library/peace/Peace)  
or contact the editors.

**"Last Christmas For Death Row"**

*by Charles Culhane*

(Charles Culhane, independent researcher, poet, and former death row inmate at Attica, shared in the panel "Attika is All of Us: Institutionalizing Struggle," in the Peace History Society Conference in Bellingham, April, 2000. As part of his presentation, he read one of his poems from the early 70s, composed while he was on death row. He has given his generous permission to share it with PHS readership, as part of the important process of making connections between peace historians and those involved in the struggle against the death penalty, promoting humane alternatives to incarceration).

"Neither in the hearts of men nor in the manners of society will there be a lasting peace until we outlaw death." -- *Albert Camus*

I  
In the Pacific a Polish tanker goes down,  
All hands are lost, are drowned.  
In Nicaragua the city of Managua weeps  
rivers  
And the salt of dreaming children fills  
the Caribbean.  
In Hanoi, presents from the Pentagon  
whistle from the sky  
Piling corpse-ash and despair before the  
door of the world.  
In Missouri, old Harry's giving up the  
ghost--  
So goes the news of Christmas at 6 p.m.  
But, who's to say that the sea is not our  
home?  
That life is not eternal?  
That a determined people are not  
protected?  
That Hiroshima is not endless  
forgiveness?  
Or that the smiles and dreams of  
children  
Cannot redeem this Christmas?  
Not I.  
  
Out there beyond this prison a vision  
goes on  
That we in here and the self within the  
we  
Seem not to be a part of  
Though we are.  
We too  
Walk in the light and shadows of days  
and nights,  
Have smiles and tears, dreams and  
nightmares,  
Are unique equal fragments in a greater  
dream--  
We too need to share in tomorrow.  
  
In here 1400 men dwell in the silence of  
their cells,  
Alone.  
Thinking thoughts of what and when and

why,  
Having feelings about who and where  
and how,  
Just like people everywhere.  
Even closer to it in here sometimes,  
For what are prisons but social  
metaphors  
That say we're all imprisoned in unreal  
ways.  
And what are walls and bars but  
physical symbols  
That those out there impose on those in  
here.  
In here the symbols are visible and real,  
They are steel and concrete.  
It's not difficult to see  
A small cage holding racial antipathy,  
A gun-tower structured along poverty  
lines,  
Or a sexist angle on a thirty-foot wall -  
Not difficult to see at all if you care to  
look.  
Look, prisons are not in tomorrow,  
They're wrong, and the recognition of a  
wrong means nothing  
Until it becomes the need to amend it.  
To ignore or fear what is known to be  
wrong  
Is to give substance to its false existence.  
To face it and transform it is the only  
real choice  
For everyone, everyone  
In structured steel or mental form  
Is imprisoned till everyone is free.

## II

Tonight I hesitate to celebrate.  
The Christmas obscured in department  
stores  
Has little to do with Christ.  
Yet there's always cause for celebration,  
Every moment is worthy of praise--  
Christ said that.  
Tonight I indulge my death row appetite.

*Write as I feel, and say that despite all  
the problems in life  
It's a good journey.  
Tonight I give praise to my cell,  
It's my home in standard Bethlehem,  
good steel.  
My light bulb is at least a star.  
Tonight I give praise to Joseph, my  
brother,  
To Mary, my sister,  
To my mother and father, the Oneness,  
Keepers of the Keys, arbiters of time and  
space  
Wherein I travel.  
I give praise to the passing of death row,  
Last Christmas for the electric chair --  
It was nothing but a mistake, the  
mystique of death is gone.  
600 lives later, I give praise to the  
whitewashed room above,  
Where in sits a wooden lifeless tree of  
civilized insanity --  
And it shall take no more life in New  
York.*

*Give praise to the demise of mindless  
and spiritless power,  
Give praise to the death of legalized  
murder.*

*I give praise  
To the enlightened though belated and  
ambivalent  
U.S. Supreme Court decision in Furman  
versus Georgia,  
To Anthony Amsterdam, Jack  
Himmelstein, Jack Greenberg,  
To Douglas Lyons, to the NAACP legal  
Defense Fund,  
To all persons in the fight against death  
in this country,  
To the day when Nigeria and South  
Africa stop the killing,  
To the day when France stops chopping  
off heads,  
To the day when Greece and Spain, Iraq  
and Iran stop the killing,*

*To the day when Russia and the  
Philippines outlaw firing squads,  
To the day when the death penalty is  
universally abolished,  
To the recognition of this as essential to  
human evolution,  
To the great significance and sanctity of  
all life-forms.  
I give praise to New York for almost  
electrocuting me.  
I give praise to my wonderful family and  
their endless love.  
I give praise to the courage and  
innocence of my friend Gary,  
To Raheem, Bubba, and Fitz, brothers  
on the row.  
I give praise to the wealth we found in  
this poor place.  
I give praise to the knowledge that I am  
not bitter.  
And lastly, I give praise and dedicate  
this poem to my friend Joan  
With love and light at Christmas and  
always.*

- Green Haven, 1972.

### **Roundtable, "Cuba: Scenes from a Postmodern Revolution."**

**Panelists:** Scott L. Bills, E. Timothy  
Smith, and Virginia Williams. All  
participants had traveled to Cuba within  
six months previous to the  
conference.

--Summary by Bills, Williams, and Smith

Opening the discussion, Scott Bills  
suggested that the title of the roundtable  
should be read as an effort to examine  
the current state of Cuban society with  
reference to what many writers have  
termed the "postmodern" elements of  
local and global culture. This would  
include: (cont. on p.5)

*(Cuba panel, cont.)*

- (1) The evolving response to globalization, taking cues from William Greider and other authors regarding the ability of transnational corporations to use the Third World as a site for recruiting cheap labor, as well as looking at the ongoing debate inside Cuba that emerged during the "Special Period" of the early 1990s about the need to re-insert Cuba into the global economy, and yet protect the social gains of the Revolution;
- (2) The failure of Western-initiated "developmentalism," whether spawned by capitalist or Marxist discourse, both of which have privileged the Western economic, political, and cultural model, such that Cuba still faces the enduring legacy of colonial monoculture;
- (3) The substitution of iconography for ideology, referring to the apparent fading of ideological fervor inside Cuba with still-powerful revolutionary icons like Che Guevara, who increasingly serve as stand-ins for the Revolution;
- (4) The re-emerging debate over national identity, as Cubans contemplate a post-Castro regime and society;
- (5) The looming clash when the U.S. embargo is lifted between the relentless, (and ruthless), commodification process of American consumer culture, and the resilient, but in some ways fragile state of contemporary Cuban society.

Ginger Williams discussed her forthcoming project dealing with Cuba's "Special Period," suggesting that the most important legacy of that experience was how the country attempted to deal with its long history of dependency. She also focused upon sugar and tourism as dueling hegemony during the Cold War. In organizing three trips to Cuba over the past few years, Williams has been

able to develop a network of contacts with the university community in Havana, as well as work with lower level school officials and students. In the process, she has studied the overall diversification of the Cuban economy following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and how individuals have coped with difficult times at a personal level. The Special Period posed severe challenges to the communist regime, which has struggled to preserve important achievements in education and health care. Williams asserted that the manner in which Cubans emerge from the shadow of the Special Period will be the most important factor shaping the nation's future- not who replaces Fidel Castro, and not the politics of the exile community in Miami. She noted the vitality of Cuban culture, and felt strongly that the Cuban people remain committed to sustaining their perception of a revolution within a world capitalist system, with or without the support of the United States. Referring to an earlier panel on the career of Barbara Deming, who visited Cuba within two years after the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista, Williams said that her travels in Cuba had moved her much closer to political activism than any other influence in her life. She felt that Cubans were preparing themselves for an end to the embargo in terms of anticipating the threat of U.S. cultural and economic dominance. Cubans have told her, in effect, that the mosquito is already in the house after the window has opened to heavy investment in the tourist infrastructure from Europe and Canada.

Tim Smith spoke about some of his personal impressions on going to Cuba for the first time in October 1999, from the perspective of one coming from a

university in the Miami area. He discussed the divisions that exist between the island Cubans and the Cuban exiles. Despite the collapse of the USSR, the American government has continued the Cold War against the Castro regime in the form of the embargo. The Cuban exile community, while more divided than is often realized, is dominated by a virulently anti-Castro faction. Now a majority in Miami-Dade County, the Cuban Americans dominate the political institutions of the county as well as the city of Miami. The recent controversy surrounding Elian González has resulted in:

- (1) Some new level cooperation between the U.S. and Cuban governments in an effort to resolve the custody dispute, and
- (2) Uniting the Cuban exile community in opposition to INS policy toward Elian.

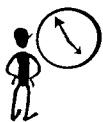
Thus, while the cold war fades, the old-style rhetoric between the Castro regime and the Miami exiles has become more strident. And Cuban families have suffered serious divisions as a result. Smith also discussed the potential dangers to the gains made by the Cuban Revolution posed by the end of the U.S. embargo. He noted that while in Havana, it was clear that local leaders were aware of this danger (with one official referring to the possibility of the "McDonaldization" of Cuba), and were attempting to deal with it. They would attempt protecting their gains through a heightened emphasis on education in Cuban history and nationalist culture.

## **Summary of Session 9 "Working for Peace in the Two Germanys, 1960s-1990"**

**Moderator:** Günter Wernicke, Humboldt University, Berlin (Germany)

At this session the conference addressed what might be termed a model case for peace campaigning within the two Cold War blocs. For several decades the two highly armed German states at the front line between the US- and Soviet-led camps were no doubt *the* neuralgic points of confrontation in Europe. The contributions drew on recent archive research to illustrate major or symptomatic developments, and triggered lively discussion. Wilfried Mausbach of the German Historical Institute (Washington, D.C.), examined the West German anti-war movement as it was radicalized by opposition to the Vietnam War, and transformed over 1967/68 from a protest into a resistance movement. He emphasized the symbolic nature of resistance to the Vietnam War as a challenge to German society to recognize Auschwitz, synonymous with not so distant Nazi crimes, and learn the lessons of a history hitherto ignored. Annie Baker of Wheaton College, obliged to submit her contribution in writing, focused on protests against the US air base at Wiesbaden following NATO's double-track decision in 1983 to show how local resistance to Reagan's arms build-up expressed growing public concern in West Germany about US and NATO policies. Based on research in the region, Baker described resistance until the late 1980s, vividly portraying the breadth and diversity of this single-issue campaign. This project is to be followed by other case studies on US military bases, not only in Germany, permitting more general conclusions. *In the*

*moderator's view, peace historians should undertake similar case studies of Soviet military bases in the sphere of the Warsaw Pact to identify where elements of passive resistance evolved into active resistance.* The former GDR lends itself to an examination of sources from the holdings of the old Ministry of State Security, which is currently accessible to the public. Steven Pfaff of Washington University largely used material on the Civil Rights Movement in the ex-DDR to analyze independent peace groups under the protection of the Protestant Church, essentially in the last decade of the GDR's existence. He explained how they fit within the overall context of opposition phenomena in state socialism, which tended to be of religious inspiration and confined in its impact.



**MINUTES** Business Meeting,  
Peace History Society,  
Western Washington University,  
April 29, 2000

Scott Bills, President of the Peace History Society, called the meeting to order at 4:40 p.m.

Copies of the financial report of PHS were made available to those in attendance. PHS is financially stable with a U.S. account of \$3750 and a Canadian account of \$20,350 (Canadian dollars).

Bills opened the meeting by discussing the resourcefulness and growing visibility of the organization. He noted that Susan Zeiger had done a wonderful

job in chairing the DeBenedetti Prize Committee this past year and that the recent prize-winner, Robert Shaffer, has agreed to chair the next committee, serving with Joyce Blackwell-Johnson and Harriet Alonso. It was hoped that the committee can expand publicity for the DeBenedetti Prize.

Bills introduced David McFadden, the new newsletter editor, who asked for as many panel summaries as possible for the spring issue. The summer issue of the newsletter will feature additional comments on the conference sessions.

Bills introduced Mitch Hall, the new editor of *Peace and Change*, who spoke briefly and thanked Don Birn for his excellent three-year stint as co-editor. Hall noted that he has solicited submissions from people who have presented conference papers or written dissertations in the area of peace research. Hall said he would send the names of the people he has contacted to the executive secretary-treasurer so that they can be sent PHS membership forms.

Bills discussed the efforts to reincorporate PHS and regain our status as a nonprofit organization (all of which lapsed in 1989). PHS has been newly incorporated in Texas. The application to gain the tax-exempt status from the IRS has been completed and is still being processed. Bills also noted that new bylaws have been written that now cover a variety of legal liability issues.

Bills suggested that PHS develop a clear policy on archiving organizational records as well as materials related to *Peace and Change*. Such a policy must be sensitive to issues of confidentiality.

Wendy Chmielewski noted that some PHS records are already on file at the Swarthmore College Peace Collection. She offered to put together a list of options for future additions to the PHS archives. Linda Schott recommended that Wendy's suggestions be put into the newsletter for the membership to consider. This was agreed to by consensus.

Bills noted that PHS Executive-Secretary-Treasurer Geoffrey Smith had assembled a comprehensive membership directory that included fields of specialization as well as data pertaining to institutional affiliation. If acceptable to members, such a directory could be made available electronically through the website. Kathleen Kennedy suggested that the matter be publicized through the newsletter, and the option of inclusion be handled during membership renewals. By consensus, it was agreed that an on-line directory should be established.

Gunter Wernicke spoke about the problem of currency convertibility for European members of the organization. By consensus, it was agreed that the secretary-treasurer would look into the issues involving payment, perhaps establishing a procedure for a three-year membership renewal (with a discount). Frances Early suggested that we encourage those overseas that are actively interested in PHS to become lifetime members, thus avoiding the yearly renewal of fees.

The status of the PHS/COPRED co-sponsorship of *Peace and Change* was discussed. COPRED has experienced organizational and financial problems during the last couple of years. For this

reason, its executive director, Daniel O'Leary, has been negotiating with Blackwell to sell COPRED's half-interest in the journal. If completed, such negotiations will require that our contract with Blackwell be renegotiated. This adjustment will not change the joint editorial responsibility for journal management. Bills pointed out that PHS would require at least 550 members before the organization could consider becoming the sole owner of the journal.

There was a brief discussion regarding PHS's partnership with Adventure Films, the documentary company producing the series "Wounded Dove." Frances Early suggested that, since large amounts of money are involved (including grants), paper documentation should be generated to ensure that PHS has a clear record of inquiry regarding the progress of the company. Bills volunteered to write a letter to the producers and seek an immediate update on the project's status.

Frances Early moved, and it was seconded, that \$500 be made available to Vice President Linda Schott to represent the Peace History Society in Oslo this summer at the conference sponsored by the International Congress of Historical Sciences. The motion was approved.

Those attending discussed the possibility of creating an H-Peace discussion group within the H-Net community. Wendy Chmielewski explained what was involved, including the need for an editorial board and moderators. In particular, she argued, the discussion group would allow for an improved international exchange among peace scholars. It was suggested that those attending the conference in Oslo



measure the response of participants in that gathering. There was a consensus that such a discussion group should be explored, and that an announcement be placed in the newsletter at some future date to recruit interested participants.

There was a discussion of the next PHS conference. Several officers and members suggested that the next conference be held east of the Mississippi, that a "roll over" conference fund be set up within the organization, and that PHS establish a budget line to use as seed money to run PHS conferences. Mike Foley, Mitch Hall, and David McFadden all agreed to explore the possibility of hosting the next conference at their respective universities. Ian Lekus, Duke University, and Robbie Lieberman, Southern Illinois University, volunteered to consider serving as the next program committee. A possible theme for the conference might be "*Teaching Peace History*," with a program connecting conference sessions with local activists. It was also suggested that PHS strive to set the dates and themes for the next two conferences, thus planning four years ahead instead of only two. This was agreed to by the membership.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

*Minutes submitted by E. Timothy Smith, Barry University, and Linda Schott, University of Texas at San Antonio*



### **The Charles DeBenedetti Prize in Peace History**

The Peace History Society invites submissions for the Charles DeBenedetti Prize in Peace History, to be given to the author or authors of an outstanding article published in English in 1999 or 2000. Articles reflecting new, cutting-edge research, appearing either in edited works or journals, may focus on the history of peace movements, the response of individuals to peace and war issues, the relationship between peace and other reform movements, gender issues in warfare and peacemaking, comparative analyses, or quantitative studies. The prize includes a cash award of \$500.

Articles should be submitted in triplicate by February 1, 2001 to:

Prof. Robert Shaffer, Department of History  
Shippensburg University  
Shippensburg, PA. 17257.

For further information, you may also contact Prof. Shaffer via e-mail at [roshaf@ark.ship.edu](mailto:roshaf@ark.ship.edu)

The prize was first awarded in 1989.

Previous prize-holders include:

Lawrence Wittner, "Peace Movements and Foreign Policy: The Challenge to Diplomatic Historians," *Diplomatic History* (Fall 1987);

Frances Early, "Feminism, Peace, and Civil Liberties: Women's Role in the Origins of the World War I Civil Liberties Movement," *Women's Studies* (1990);

Sandi Cooper, "Pacifism in France, 1889-1914: International Peace as a Human Right," *French Historical Studies* (Fall 1991);

Allen Smith, "Mass Society and the Bomb: The Discourse of Pacifism in the 1950s," *Peace & Change*

(October 1993);  
Susan Zeiger, "She Didn't Raise Her Boy to Be a Slacker: Motherhood, Conscription, and the Culture of the First World War," *Feminist Studies* (Spring 1996);  
Robert Shaffer, "Cracks in the Consensus: Defending the Rights of Japanese Americans During World War II," *Radical History Review* (Fall 1998). For more information about the work of the Peace History Society, including membership information, visit our web site at:  
[www.swarthmore.edu/Library/peace/peace](http://www.swarthmore.edu/Library/peace/peace)

—Robert Shaffer

## Personals

- PHS member Irwin Abrams has just published his third edition of *Words Of Peace*, an anthology of excerpts from Nobel Peace addresses by prizewinners, including highlights from the 1999 prize ceremony. In May he spent three weeks in the ongoing research seminar at the Norwegian Nobel Institute. His paper was, "Reflections on the First Century of the Nobel Peace Prize."
- Peter Van Den Dungen, of the University of Bradford attended the Norwegian Nobel Institute for the entire spring 2000 program of the Nobel Institute research seminar. The themes for the seminar were "*The History of the Nobel Peace Prize*," and "*Theories of War and Peace*." His research paper was,

"The Nobel Peace Prize and the Global Proliferation of Peace Prizes in the 20th Century."

- Patrick Coy received the Distinguished Teaching Award of the College of Arts and Sciences at Kent State University in May, 2000. Kent State's Student Advisory Council decided upon the recipient of the award. Coy also served as volume editor and series co-editor for Volume 22 of *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts, and Change*, published by Elsevier/JAI Press in June, 2000.
- Arthur Brenner of Siena College has recently published, together with co-editor Bruce B. Campbell, *Death Squads in Global Perspective: Murder with Deniability* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). It is the first comparative study of death squads around the world, and includes a chapter on the definition and history of death squads, and explores 10 case studies. For more information on the book go to:  
[www.siena.edu/brenner/deathsquads.htm](http://www.siena.edu/brenner/deathsquads.htm)
- David McFadden (Fairfield University and PHS News editor) has recently been elected Chair of Fairfield's Department of History for the 2000-2003 term.
- David Stafford and Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, both of the University of Edinburgh, have edited *ABC: American-British-Canadian Intelligence Relations*, (personals, cont.)

1939-2000. (Frank Cass, 2000.  
Cloth: ISBN 07146 51036, UK  
pounds, 45. Paper: ISBN 07146 8142  
3, UK pounds 18.50)



### **Announcements!**

The Australian Academy of Social Sciences will hold its annual symposium in November of 2000 on the subject "*Intellectual Foundations of a Culture of Peace*." Any PHS members with ideas for "cutting edge" papers should contact the convener of the conference, Norman Etherington  
Professor of History  
University of Western Australia  
Nedlands WA 6907,  
Australia.  
FAX 61-9-380-1069 or email  
[nether@arts.uwa.edu.au](mailto:nether@arts.uwa.edu.au)

"Routledge-Praeger," in a new series, "*Perspectives on the Twentieth Century*," is interested in publishing individually authored or edited essays on topics relating to peace history. For more information and/or guidelines for a prospectus contact the series editor, Edward Beauchamp via email:  
[bedward@hawaii.edu](mailto:bedward@hawaii.edu)

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### **Deadlines for Upcoming Editions:**

Fall 2000, September 15

Winter 2001, January 15

Spring 2001, April 15

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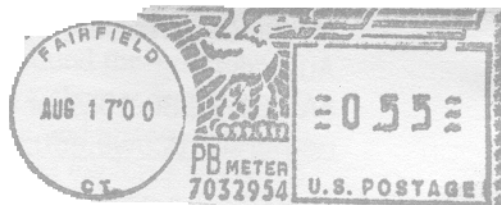
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