Eradicating Warism: Our Most Dangerous Disease[1]

by Duane L. Cady

Preface

"Ki mai koe a au, he ahate mea nui o te, He tangata! He tangata! He tangata!"

("If you ask what is the most important thing in the world, it is the people! The

People! The People!")

--Maori saying

Given the many problems in the world, given the violent track record of the

United States of America since World War II, and given the current reckless

leadership in the U.S., you may be wondering 'why have an American speak at a

conference on pacifism and public policy, much less give a keynote address?' After

all, the U.S. has more military personnel on foreign soil than any other nation, the

U.S. leads all nations in international arms sales (making dangerous people ever

more dangerous), and the U.S spends more of its resources for weapons and war

than any other nation...by a factor of four. [2]

Mine is a violent country domestically as well. Americans love chanting

"we're number one," "we're number one," "we're number one." Well...we are

number one in domestic gun deaths year after year, and this by powers of ten. The

[1] Presented at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, November 23, 2017, a keynote address for "Rethinking Pacifism for Revolution, Security, and Politics," an international conference sponsored by the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, New Zealand.
[2] Wikipedia, "List of Countries by Military Expenditures."

rate of gun deaths in the US is five times that of Canada, ten times that of New

Zealand, and more than forty times that of the United Kingdom. Our national motto

was "E pluribus unum" – out of many, one – for more than 150 years; it was changed

to "In God we trust" in the 1950s when the Cold War was on the rise. (This was

traumatizing for me personally since, as a seven year old, I had barely learned to

recite the Pledge of Allegiance when the government changed it. So, I had to relearn

the Pledge.) Were our national motto to be descriptively accurate, we might say an

appropriate motto for the United States would be "in violence we trust."   As Martin

Luther King Jr. put it in 1967, "America is the most violent country on earth." There

is little doubt but that he would reiterate this observation were he still with us

today. How, then, can an American, of all people, have anything helpful to say about

pacifism?

Perhaps there is something to be said for observing our violent world from

"within the belly of the beast."[3] After all, it was this context of American violence

that produced Martin Luther King, Jr., arguably the most significant contributor to

pacifist theory and practice since Gandhi's death in 1948. Dr. King began his

experiments with truth --appropriating Gandhian ahimsa (nonviolence) to the case

of lawful racial separation in the United States in the 1950s in Montgomery,

Alabama-- and extending his use of nonviolent direct action both to oppose the U.S.

war in Vietnam and to challenge national policy on poverty, the causes King was

consumed with at the time of his murder April 4,1968. In "Ending the Silence," a

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[3] A favorite expression of James Lawson, a colleague of Martin Luther King, Jr. and a leading non-violence trainer for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the primary organization of clergy active in dismantling American racial segregation in the '50s and '60s.

major address one year to the day before his death, King identified the "giant triplets" which he regarded as the dominant values in America: racism, materialism, and militarism.[4] He saw these three to be inextricably bound together. Addressing any of the three effectively requires addressing all of them. In his last and most radical book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*, King extends his critique beyond the United States to make it global with his metaphor of the "world house." Our world has shrunk to the point that all human beings are neighbors, better, housemates. If we fail to get along, we will fail to survive. As Benjamin Franklin had put the issue more than two hundred years before King, "Either we all hang together or we all hang separately." In what follows, I see myself as working in the tradition of Gandhi and King, attempting to work out the implications of pacifism as it is applied to domestic and international relations.

Introduction

Our value judgments are influenced by many "givens" --that is, by beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions so much a part of our outlook that we don't even notice them; we simply take them for granted. A thoughtful consideration of any value position makes explicit these otherwise implicit factors so that we are fully aware of initial conditions, the conceptual frameworks shaping our reflections. Beyond making "givens" explicit, a thoughtful examination of our value judgments should clarify concepts involved in them. Pacifism is in need of just such clarification.

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[4] Martin Luther King, Jr., "Ending the Silence," in Washington, ed., *The Essential M. L. King*, (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1986) p. 240.

Warism is the view that war is both morally justified in principle and often morally justified in fact. Warism takes many forms. Typically it is uncritically adopted, a "given" background assumption that functions much like racism and sexism. This means that warism is a prejudice. It is our primary obstacle in dismantling the war system. This brings good news along with bad. While the vast majority of human beings are warists (the bad news), because warism is learned, like racism and sexism, it can be unlearned (the good news).

Overwhelmingly dominant perspectives and values can and do change. Two hundred years ago slavery was a common, well established, and broadly accepted social institution in the U.S. Slavery was taken for granted as a natural condition for beings thought to be inferior to the dominant group. After several millennia with slavery being accepted across the globe, predominant attitudes have been reversed over the last two centuries to the point that today slavery is universally condemned (though still practiced covertly in a few places). Analogous things can be said about taking a racial hierarchy as natural to justify racism and about accepting a gender hierarchy as part of nature and thus a basis of sexism or taking a wealth hierarchy to justify poverty, or a nature hierarchy –that is, humans on top with all else in creation beneath us—to justify spoiling our natural environment. Predominant values and perspectives can and do change.

Pacifism is the view that war, by its very nature, is morally wrong and that humans should resolve conflicts peacefully. Just as there are various forms of warism, so there are different types of pacifism. I see them along a spectrum -- degrees of pacifism -- between "just-warism" and pacifism of the most absolute sort,

where violence is wrong always and everywhere for everyone. Characterizing –
better, caricaturing – all pacifists as if they hold the absolute form makes pacifism an
instance of naïve idealism and thus more difficult to embrace and much easier to
dismiss. Understanding pacifism along a spectrum including weaker and stronger
forms, better reflects the actual views of pacifists and makes pacifism resilient to
criticism.

The twentieth century had more war deaths than any other century, roughly
thirty four million people died between 1901 and 2000.[5] At the beginning of the
century military deaths far outnumbered civilian. By the end of the twentieth
century the reverse was the case. War has become obsolete primarily because, as a
solution for national and international conflict, the fix is worse than the problem
that needs fixing. Even superpowers cannot defeat and control insurgents. A future
where humans thrive requires nonviolence. For pacifism to be taken seriously by
policymakers three issues must be addressed: 1) the stereotype of all pacifists as
holders of its most extreme form, absolute pacifism; 2) the presumption that
pacifism is equivalent to moral rejection of war, that is, that pacifism is only a
negative theory; and 3) most important, the widespread presumption of warism.
Increasing numbers of academics, policymakers, and activists are challenging the
old warist world order and look to nonviolent alternatives. Our job is to prepare the
way for the inevitable: a global transformation from warism to pacifism. Human
survival – moral as well as physical – requires as much.

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[5] This number is approximate and in the middle of a range of estimates calculated by
historians of war; it is not possible to get a precise number for war deaths in the
Twentieth Century. Some estimates put the number over one hundred million.

Conventional Wisdom

According to conventional wisdom –locally as well as globally—there are three –and only three—attitudes or value positions one may hold regarding war: 1) war realism; 2) just warism; and 3) pacifism. They form a triangle, with any two of the three opposed to the other. War realism is the view that morality is irrelevant to war. When war happens, there are no rules. All that matters is that one's group, military force, or country prevails. This view uses a domestic analogy to claim that personal survival, or threats to it, is not meaningfully protected by morality. As for the infividual, so for the group or nation. If one feels immanent danger, one may do whatever is necessary to prevail. This view reminds me of a brief scene in "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," an American film from a generation ago. The scene I have in mind is one in which Butch Cassidy is threatened with a knife fight by a much bigger, stronger, and better-armed enemy. As the fight is about to begin Butch interrupts with a question: "what are the rules?" His opponent says "Rules? There are no rules in a knife fight!" at which point Butch kicks the threatening man between his legs –and kicks hard, doubling up his opponent while Butch runs for safety. All's fair in love and war…and knife fights. The war realist extrapolates from the individual case to the case of mass violence.

Just warism is more difficult to explain because it is quite complicated. Often referred to as "the just war theory," in fact there is not a single theory; there are many. The just war tradition dates back to the 5th century BCE in the West, perhaps even further back in Eastern traditions. Traditional just war thinking recognizes the

relevance of morality to war and establishes two broad conditions for a just war: 1) the war in question must be justly entered; and 2) the war must be justly fought. The first is often called (in Latin) *jus ad bellum*, the justice of going to war. The second is referred to as *jus in bello*, fighting the war justly. The *jus ad bellum*, the moral justification for resorting to war, consists of six principles: 1) the proposed war must be fought for a *just cause*; 2) the decision to go to war must be made by *right authority*; 3) nations entering war must do so with *right intension*; 4) the war in question must be an act of *last resort*; 5) the prospect for an *emergent peace* must be, more likely than not, the result of the war; and 6) the total evil of the acts of war undertaken must be *proportionate* to the good achieved (that is, the total evil of a just war may not exceed the good resulting from the war). Each of these conditions must be met before one can go off to war justly. Meeting just one condition will not do.

Once going to war has been established to be just, the conditions for justice in fighting the war must be met. Since the just war tradition rejects war realism, there *are* rules, moral restraints, as to how a war is fought. Three conditions must be met. First, for a war to be justly fought, innocents must be protected. It is always wrong to kill or harm innocents. Who is innocent in war? Obviously, children, the elderly, and other noncombatants. This is the principle of *discrimination*. It requires understanding differences and making distinctions between legitimate targets of war and illegitimate ones. This question of innocents is difficult. It is not a simple matter of combatants and noncombatants. After all, some noncombatants make it possible for combatants to do combat, like weapons producers, military supply

personnel, clerks and typists working for military commanders, and so on. At the same time, others make clothing and prepare food. They are not legitimate targets because they are producing what is needed to *live,* needs shared by all the rest of us.[6] Writers and postal workers may be contributing to the war effort to some degree, but because there are difficult cases does not mean there are no clear ones. Certainly young children, the elderly, and those hospitalized are innocent and may not be targeted.

Even if the question of innocence is clearly resolved, what is to be said about collateral damage, that is, where attacks on legitimate targets "spill" onto innocents? An army might bomb a weapons factory –a legitimate target—but accidentally kill the manager's wife and young child who happened to be visiting the manager over his lunch break. It is at this point that the second condition, the principle of *double effect* comes into play. According to this guideline for justly fighting a war, injury or death of innocents in war is always wrong, *but* such can be excused if certain conditions are met, namely, the deaths and injuries to innocents may not be the result of *intention*. The weapons factory was intentionally targeted for destruction, whereas the mother and child were accidentally killed; their deaths were not intended. The point is that acts within war may have double effects, those intended and those accidental or unintended.

The third condition for justly fighting a war is the principle of *proportionality*. This is used to resolve the problem of discrimination. In the *jus ad bellum* proportionality had to do with the war overall. Here proportionality has a more

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[6] This is Michael Walzer's distinction in *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York, New York: Basic Books, 1977).

limited scope: is the evil of a particular act within war outweighed by the good that act will likely achieve? If not, the fighting fails to meet the standard of *jus in bello*. As with *jus ad bellum*, all conditions for fighting a war must be met for the war to be just.

The war realist believes that war is outside of morality, that war is amoral; there is no moral restraint to war. The just warist believes that war is morally acceptable only if it meets a host of conditions, guidelines for moral restraint in war. It must be obvious that there are degrees of just warism, given the complexity of the tradition and the room for interpretation at every step. One of the most disturbing aspects of the just war tradition has been the drift away from moral restraint in war during the twentieth century and the slide toward war realism. Sadly, this drift continues today.

As to conventional wisdom, the majority seems to hold a version of the just war tradition, although most holding this view do not understand its complexity. If they did, my guess is that even more people would move from just warism to war realism. At least that's my impression. As the ranks of war realists grow and the ranks of just warists shrink, what can be said of pacifism? It seems to play a very small role in conventional wisdom, except for being dismissed or ridiculed. Pacifists observing the predominance of war realism and just warism might wish that, at the very least, just warists would not only understand but actually apply the just war principles *in toto*. The result would be a great deal more moral restraint in war. As it stands, many just warists are satisfied if only one or a few of the just war principles are met. While politicians manipulate citizens, the media, and public

policy with their rhetoric –"Operation Just Cause," the "Peacekeeper Missile," "rogue

nations," "Department of Defense," "terrorist states," and the like—the just war

tradition is abused and sloppily applied to the point that it is something of a joke.

And the most egregious of rhetorical manipulations is the persistent inclination of

national leaders to dismiss pacifism on the grounds that it is moral idealism in the

extreme, well-meaning, but naïve and certainly impractical. The criticism familiar to

every pacifist is "be realistic! Pacifism just won't work." This brings us to thinking

through different forms of pacifism.

Varieties of Pacifism

The word "pacifism" is derived from two Latin words, *pax, pacis*, "peace" plus

facere, "to make." So etymologically, "pacifism" means peace making; pacifists are

peacemakers. Pacifism is moral opposition to war and moral disposition to

collaborative, personal, social, national, and global (formerly called "international")

conduct based on agreement.[7] Peace is not merely the absence of war; that would be

negative peace (at best), resulting from criticisms of versions of just warism.

Pacifism goes beyond opposition to war and requires commitment to order arising

from within groups (be they inter-personal, social, national, or global) by the

uncoerced cooperation of its members. Contrast this with order imposed by

domination from outside a group –like the orderliness of behavior among satellite

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[7] My description of the range of pacifist positions here generally follows my earlier
account in *From Warism to Pacifism: a Moral Continuum* (Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania, USA: Temple University Press, 1989; 2nd edition 2010), pp. 63-78,
with the exception that here I reverse the order of degrees of pacifism better to
show their relationship to just warism and war realism.

nations of the Soviet Union during the 1950s and '60s – in order to grasp the salient point.

Pacifism is not the monolithic value position of popular opinion. That is a caricature that makes all pacifists holders of its most extreme form, absolute pacifism. This caricature makes pacifism easy to dismiss -- too easy -- since very few (if any) actual pacifists are holders of this view. In fact, pacifism is a complex and subtle range of value positions on morality, peace, and war, not the stereotyped extreme version offered by conventional wisdom. Varieties of pacifism have emerged within the context of a just-warist value tradition, to some degree building upon and extending that moral restraint tradition. Before a pacifist position on revolution, security, and public policy can be entertained, pacifism and its relationship to just-warism must be considered. Keep in mind a continuum model with war realism at one end and absolute pacifism at the other, and with varieties of just warism as well as varieties of pacifism arranged along a gradual scale of moral restraint between the extremes, variations based on different relative strength as well as differing reasons for opposing war. The weakest pacifist position is alongside the strongest just warism; the strongest pacifist view is at the brink of absolute pacifism. The idea is that there are degrees of just warism, degrees of critical pacifism, and that varieties of just warism and of pacifism can meaningfully be arranged along a single moral restraint spectrum. Rather than having the three points of a triangle to choose from, as conventional wisdom would have it, we find a range of views along a continuum between war realism and absolute pacifism.

While war realists claim that war is amoral – that war happens outside of morality – just warists and pacifists actually *agree* that moral considerations *are* relevant to war. They differ due to the extent of moral restraint each requires. One backs away from a strong just war position, i.e., one that conscientiously applies to and honors every last principle of the tradition, as one backs into pacifism in its weakest form, what I call *pragmatic pacifism*. This is because strong believers in just war come to recognize that conscientiously maintaining the moral restraints of their own tradition precludes just war itself. Perhaps war could have been justified morally very long ago, in medieval times for instance, when armies of combatants met in remote battlefields, far from risking injury and death of innocents. But those days are long gone. Modern war is simply too big, too complicated, too uncontrollable to meet the moral restraint conditions of the just war tradition. War spills from legitimate targets of war to injure and kill innocents. This is inevitable for wars as they are fought today and violates the central moral value of just warism, namely, the distinction between deserving targets –combatants as well as those making their war efforts possible and effective – and undeserving or protected targets also known as innocent bystanders. How can one claim that the injuries and deaths of innocents are unintended when they are fully expected in many – perhaps in most – acts of modern war? For example, those ordering as well as those dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki[8] certainly expected hundreds, even thousands of civilian, i.e., innocents', deaths and injuries. They knew the decision to use atomic weapons meant violating the principle of proportionality at

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[8]Allegedly to force an early end to WW II and preclude a US infantry landing that would cost even more lives – at least more *American* lives.

the very least, so they knowingly violated the moral restraint rules of the just war tradition. So much for claiming those atomic bombings were morally justified. The point is that modern just war has become obsolete because the warriors cannot control the spillage of their weapons onto innocents.

At this point –when a just warist realizes the impossibility of satisfying the moral rules of their tradition – they move from the strongest just war position into the weakest pacifist position: pragmatic pacifism. Here people become reluctant pacifists when they understand that modern war cannot meet the just war moral standards. This is called "pragmatic" pacifism because it is held not in principle but on factual pragmatic grounds: war simply doesn't work under the circumstances of this particular application of just war moral restraint conditions. Of course a pragmatic pacifist considering, say, the US war in Afghanistan, might allow small-scale violence taken up by peasants defending their families and homes from unprovoked attack. They might allow small-scale defensive war undertaken with conventional personal weapons, but they would not condone AK-47s being used in this case because the spillage of such weapons is uncontrollable; inevitably injuries and/or deaths of innocent bystanders result, whereas small-scale, personal arms would be allowed because they satisfy the moral restraint rules of Just war in this case. So a pragmatic pacifist may consistently oppose some wars (certainly those involving weapons of mass destruction) yet accept others (small-scale defensive use of personal arms). The smaller the scale of conflict, the easier it is to accept within the values of just warism; the larger the scale of conflict, the more difficult it is to establish compliance with the rules for just war. This is why just warists often use

scale-reducing analogies to defend their application of the just warist tradition. An example would be reference to artillery action as "surgical strikes," creating the impression of control and precision usually descriptive of medical surgery. Fortunately, the control and precision medical surgery (we might say "surgical surgery") far exceeds that of surgical *bombing*, where precision and control, while improving with technological progress, is considerably more elusive.

An aspect of pragmatic pacifism often ignored is moral injury, where the focus is on what war does to those making it rather than on their enemies. Unlike Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which in the past was labeled being "shell-shocked" or otherwise traumatized by the experience of war, moral injury results not from what is done to the soldier in question but upon what the soldier her- or himself has done. Moral injury refers to the effect on a soldier when she or he does – or witnesses – something contrary to that soldier's personal morality. For example, killing or witnessing the killing of a non-combatant, i.e., a child, elderly person, or anyone considered innocent, can result in moral injury. The result may lead one to pragmatic pacifism as a way to avoid risking behaviors that have lasting negative effects on those engaged in war. Dating back as far as Plato, moral theorists have thought about how our behaviors effect us for having done them, another pragmatic consideration when entertaining the prospect of participating in war. Climbing suicide rates among soldiers and veterans may well be explained, in part, by reference to moral injury.

We move up the scale of pacifism, and completely off the overlap with just warism, when we adopt a slightly stronger form of pacifism, namely, *environmental*

pacifism. On this view war is wrong not due to its effects on human beings but because war inevitably destroys our natural environment. Elsewhere I have argued that environmentalists *must* be pacifists[9] because the single largest consumer of fossil fuels (which lead to greenhouse gasses that result in global warming) is the US military. The US military is also the single largest creator of toxic waste sites in need of clean up. And the US military completes the trifecta as the single greatest contributor to environmental racism, since most toxic military waste is dumped either in poor urban areas, or dumped on Native American reservations. In America, the poor are disproportionately people of color and *vice versa*.

Environmental -- sometimes called "ecological" pacifism – is one form of *technological pacifism*, the view that rejects war morally because the technology of war makes it impossible to discriminate between combatants and civilians, a distinction at the heart of the just war. Drone "pilots," sit at computers (in Denver or Chicago or a suburb anywhere in continental US) directing weaponized drones half a world away. Their work is much like playing video games but with far more serious consequences. Such "pilots" operate thousands of miles away from the venue of the war in question, far from those they kill; "far" not only geographically but psychologically as well. This is resented by locals in Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria and wherever else the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has used these high-tech weapons. They are resented because the American killers do not look their enemies in the eye and fight them. Rather, they send sophisticated machines to fight for then, using technology not available to

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[9] "Warism and Environmentalism," 26th Annual Conference of Concerned Philosophers for Peace, Yosemite National Park, California, Oct. 27, 2013.

insurgents in the Middle East and elsewhere. Imagine if North Korea, Iran,

Afghanistan, and China or Syria had drone warfare technology. The US would get a

taste of its own medicine so to speak. Drone attacks typically kill and injure friends

and family members of the allegedly legitimate target; so much for just war. I say

"allegedly" because the US has no judicial review process for drone attacks. The CIA

is on its own, with occasional briefings for the President (if the president accepts

briefings; apparently the current occupant of the White House rarely attends

briefings because, he says, they are "boring"). While the government of the US

prides itself on following the rule of law involving an elaborate system of checks and

balances, the CIA has virtually unlimited control over drone use.[10] Technological

pacifists understand how war has been changed by technology and oppose war on

such grounds. The technological issues are not only about weapons but involve

communication, surveillance, and transportation, coupled with a complex network

of international alliances and a general interdependency among nations. Even a

small, local skirmish among villagers in a developing nation may quickly and easily

spiral into an international incident, drawing major powers into conflict.

Of course some technological pacifists limit their opposition to nuclear

weapons, apparently accepting conventional weapons of any magnitude. The

consequences of thermonuclear war led Jonathan Schell to coin the phrase "second

death," the death of humanity, the species, and not just the deaths of individuals.

This comes to include the death of the planet, the elimination of most of its plant and

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[10] There have been instances of drone "pilots" resigning their positions due to the effects of killing innocents along with alleged combatants, that is, due to moral injury as described above.

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animal species, leaving only cockroaches and the like.[11] The difference in degree

between large-scale conventional war and thermonuclear war is so great in the

minds of *nuclear pacifists* that some settle at this point along the continuum. Of

course during the "good war" (WW II) prior to the use of nuclear weapons,

obliteration bombing was used to break the will of enemy citizens. By design,

leaders of bombing campaigns abandon the moral restraint of the just war tradition.

In *Human Smoke: The Beginnings of World War II, the End of Civilization,* Historian

Nicholson Baker documents that Winston Churchill began British bombing of

innocent civilians in Germany months before Hitler directed the Luftwaffe to bomb

innocent civilians in the UK with his Blitzkrieg.[12] Churchill had directed underlings

to create the impression that his bombing of civilians in Germany was in retaliation

for German bombings of civilians in England even when Germany had made no such

bombing runs; that Britain's bombing of German civilians was "retaliation" cannot

be supported by facts.[13]

    A still stronger form of pacifism is *fallibility (or epistemological) pacifism.* On

this view, even if war could be morally justified in principle, it could not be morally

justified in fact because we do not have sufficient knowledge of the various factors

and conditions involved in war. Humans are, after all, fallible beings. Our

knowledge is limited. Given our limitations, how could we morally justify war, since

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[11] Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth* (New York, New Your: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), pp. 129-130.
[12] Baker, Nicholson, *Human Smoke: The Beginning of World War II, The End of Civilization* (New York, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008) pp. 182, 185.
[13] Perhaps the "post-truth" era of Western politics began even before the current version in Washington, D.C.; perhaps "post-truth" politics goes back as far as does history itself.

war consists of acts that are irretrievable, acts that, once done, cannot be undone. Even the best-informed citizens lack knowledge of the complexity, subtlety, and the sheer bulk of factors to confidently decide a war to be morally just. As Gandhi puts it, "Satyagraha is literally holding on to Truth and means, therefore, Truth-force. Truth is soul or spirit. It is therefore known as soul-force. It excludes the use of violence because man [sic.] is not capable of knowing the absolute Truth and thus not competent to punish."[14]

Even further toward –but not into – absolute pacifism is *collectivist pacifism.* This position regards mass killing – war – to be morally wrong, but accepts limited even lethal violence, for example the execution of a criminal convicted of a capital offense, or allowing parents to use violence as they protect their children from unwarranted attack. "Violence" comes from a Latin word meaning "vehemence," itself derived from other Latin words that mean "to carry intense force." This same etymology is shared with "violate" which means "to injure." So, "violence" can refer to extreme force, like an earthquake or cyclone, or it can refer to a violation, like rape, terrorism, or war.[15] Violence is a physical act that injures, damages, or destroys a person or object. The point is that for a collectivist pacifist, one may be able morally to justify small-scale violent conflict yet consistently reject war on moral grounds. The collectivist pacifist may oppose violence (violation, intense force) yet allow the force of physical strength. So the police *force* may restrain alleged criminals and at the same time avoid using violence. Pacifism does not

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[14] Mohandas Ghandi, *The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, Part IV, Chapter 29 in *Nonviolent Resistence,* ed. Bharatan Kumarappa (New York, New York: Schocken Books, 1951) p. 3.
[15] Cady, *op. cit.,* p. 66.

entail rejecting the use of physical force (to restrain a child from running into traffic, for example) as is sometimes suggested by its critics. Regarding all pacifists to be holding its most extreme form, that is, considering every pacifist to be an absolute pacifist, is a ploy that makes pacifism easier to dismiss.

Finally, at the opposite end of the spectrum from war realism, we arrive at *absolute pacifism,* the position that it is morally wrong always, everywhere, for everyone to do violence against living things. Few – if any – pacifists have actually held this view, yet it is the stereotype imposed on pacifists of all sorts. Gandhi himself takes the position that if the only choice is between cowardice and violence, he would choose violence, making clear that he does not consider himself an absolute pacifist.[16] Pacifists at any point along the continuum may in fact *aspire* to absolute pacifism without achieving it. Grounds for such aspirations may vary widely. One might be inspired by deeply held religious ideals, like the later Tolstoy's version of Christian ethics when he wrote his "Address to the Swedish Peace Conference in 1909."

> However much you pervert Christian teaching, however much you hide
> its main principles, its fundamental teaching is the love of God and one's
> neighbor; of God – that is, of the highest perfection of virtue, and of one's
> neighbor – that is of all men [sic] without distinction. And therefore it
> would seem inevitable that we must repudiate one of the two, either
> Christianity with its love of God and one's neighbor, or the State with

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[16] Mohandas K. Gandhi, "The Doctrine of the Sword," in *Nonviolent Resistance* ed. Bharatan Kumarappa (New York, New York: Schocken Books, 1951), pp. 132-134.

its armies and wars.[17]

Here absolute pacifism is implied of necessity from accepting God's law according to Tolstoy's reading of the Bible. But the same aspiration to absolute pacifism can be derived from secular moral principles as well. It is not difficult to interpret Immanuel Kant's practical formulation of his categorical imperative on which humans are duty bound always to treat one another as having intrinsic worth, and never treat one another as mere means to some other end.[18] There may be other religious or secular bases for an aspiration to absolute pacifism. My point is that there are many different possible groundings for absolute pacifism. Whatever may be the grounds for one aspiring to absolute pacifism, the fact is that the position itself is very difficult to defend. Persuading anyone to hold absolute pacifism seems to require getting them to accept and internalize belief in particular religious or metaphysical doctrines. Perhaps this accounts for the "conversion experience" typically attributed to all pacifists despite the fact that few actual pacifists claim to have gone through a conversion moment. Given the difficulty in persuading anyone to hold absolute pacifism *and* the rarity of finding a pacifist who holds this view, we're not surprised that "such principled versions of pacifism can be patronizingly tolerated by those who think them silly and/or dangerous."[19] Absolute pacifism as

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[17] Leo Tolstoy, "Address to the Swedish Peace Conference in 1909," in *The Kingdom of God is Within You,* Aylmer Maude, transl. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1951, originally published in 1936) p. 586.

[18] Kant did not describe himself as an absolute pacifist, but one may nonetheless understand the categorical imperative to entail absolute pacifism, a derivation that Kant himself may have missed.

[19] Martin Benjamin, "Pacifism for Pragmatists," *Ethics* Vol. 83, Issue no. 3 (April, 1973), p. 196.

described here is widely regarded to be "bizarre and vaguely ludicrous."[20]

Objections to absolute pacifism tend to be moral ones, like the old saw describing a

rapist and understanding absolute pacifism to prohibit a potential victim from using

violent force to forestall the attack.[21] As we have seen, only the most extreme of

pacifists would condemn self-defensive personal use of small-scale violence under

all conditions.

Despite its unpopularity among both the general public and academics,

absolute pacifism does have its proponents and defenders. For example, the

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. tells his readers

> When, for decades, you have been able to make a man compromise
>
> his manhood by threatening him with cruel and unjust punishments,
>
> and when, suddenly, he turns on you and says, "Punish me. I do not
>
> deserve it, but because I do not deserve it, I will accept it so that the
>
> world will know that I am right and you are wrong," you hardly know
>
> what to do. You feel defeated and secretly ashamed. You know that
>
> this man is as good a man as you are; that from some mysterious
>
> source he has found the courage and the conviction to meet physical
>
> force with soul force.[22]

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[20] Jan Narveson, "Is Pacifism Consistent?" *Ethics* Vol. 78 Issue no. 2 (January, 1968), p. 148.

[21] Tom Regan, "A Defense of Pacifism," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 2, Issue no. 1 (1972), p. 86. The title of Regan's paper is misleading. He does defend pacifism against Narveson's allegation of inconsistency, but he goes on to reject pacifism on moral grounds.

[22] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (New York, New York: Mentor Books, 1964), p. 30.

As King and many of his followers have shown, moral strength can defeat violence. Yet whether absolute pacifism is true or false, it is a serious mistake to believe that it is the only version of pacifism. Absolute pacifism is one endpoint on the proposed moral continuum on moral restraint to violence, not the sum total of all forms of pacifism, as has been shown through describing varieties of pacifism above. In the same vein, war realism is the other end point of the continuum, yet it would be reckless and sloppy thinking to collapse all moral constraint on violence in war into war realism. These reflections not only describe variations by degree of moral restraint concerning violence; they also establish that both pacifism and warism are subtle and complex notions that ought not be oversimplified and then dismissed because they are too simple. As john Dewey warns us, many "give a dog a bad name and then hang him for it."[23] We must be wary of simple caricatures and search out deeper considerations regarding morality and violence because it is not a simple matter.

Having established a credible range of pacifist positions, we are on our way to upending conventional wisdom concerning morality and war. We've examined what might be called "anti-war pacifism" or "critical pacifism." The next step is to look at the constructive side of pacifism, what might be called positive peace.

Positive Peace

Peace is not just the absence of war, as conventional wisdom would have it; peace includes the conditions needed to have personal, social, national, and global

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[23] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York, New York: Henry Holt, 1922), p. 109.

order that emerges from within groups by way of cooperation, agreement, compromise, and negotiation rather than order imposed by force from outside. Understanding the positive nature of genuine peace is essential in getting beyond the violence model embraced by conventional wisdom.

A central feature of positive peace is that the means undertaken are compatible with the end in view. For pacifists, means and ends cannot be separated. Gandhi tells us that the means are like a seed and the ends the tree. One cannot plant an acorn expecting to grow a maple. Similarly, we cannot bomb our way to peace any more than we can lie our way to honesty. Warists, on the other hand, must separate means and ends since they readily admit that war is not good in itself but is accepted as the means to a good end. If pacifists are right in understanding means and ends as inextricably connected, then violent means result in violent ends. War cannot create the conditions of genuine peace, namely, cooperation, agreement, and order arising from within; war, at best, yields forced, negative peace.

There are examples of positive peace all around us, but rarely are they seen for what they are. Whenever societies function under the rule of law, where courts adjudicate under accepted rules, where citizens play a role in the development of policy, where governments encourage open deliberation, where police use of physical force is atypical and injury minimized, where social justice is central to political discussion, whenever conditions like these exist, positive peace is present. Principles of nonviolence are also present as the means to such constructive

behavior. Practices like these cannot be imposed onto groups; rather, they happen

through internalized cooperation.[24]   Every case is an instance of positive peace.

Positive peace is getting along in orderly ways without order being imposed

from the outside. Often it rests on mutual agreements taken for granted,

agreements to abide by the decisions of the courts, to accept the outcome of

elections, to consider others as people of good will intent on working out differences

without violence. The test of peace is how conflicts are resolved when they arise.

While a thorough delineation of nonviolent techniques for conflict resolution cannot

be included here, a broad description of various types should be helpful.

The initial nonviolent effort to resolve conflict involves gathering opponents

to discuss their differences with an aim to achieve consensus leading to mutual

advantage, rather than narrow self-interest. This requires conflicting parties to

enter the process openly, as an act of good will, where listening carefully to an

opponent's perspective and trying to understand the conflict from their point of

view are central. When consensus cannot be achieved, negotiation and even

arbitration may be used. Again, mutual respect and recognition of the other's

perspective are needed, along with willingness to accept the adjudicator's decision.

Negotiation and arbitration can be informal as well as formal. They may involve

explicit procedures of legal systems, policies of businesses, schools, or other

organizations, or rest on implicit understandings of conflicting individuals who have

failed to reach consensus but are nonetheless committed to peaceful resolution of

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[24] Mulford Q. Sibley, "Concluding Reflections: the Relevance of Nonviolence in Our Day," in *The Quiet Battle*, ed. Mulford Q. Sibley (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1963), p.p.363-4.

conflict. On the international level this requires commitments to abide by decisions of global institutions like the World Court.

Failing resolution by negotiation or arbitration, aggrieved groups or individuals committed to nonviolence may try protest to achieve their goals. This includes petitioning, demonstrating, picketing, marches, teach-ins, letter-writing campaigns and the like. Beyond such efforts of protest are forms of noncooperation including boycotts, slow-downs, walkouts, strikes, embargoes, and so on. All of these techniques apply to international conflicts as well.

Nonviolent intervention goes beyond noncooperation. Here sit-ins, fasting, and various acts of civil disobedience may be attempted, always short of violent intervention. Pacifists may identify with varying nonviolent direct action techniques along this spectrum, and may adopt different techniques under varying circumstances. The goal always is to secure peace through recognizing and building upon the internal nature of genuinely peaceful order and avoiding temptations to impose order by force.

Nonviolent direct actions differ by the degree of coercion involved. With genuine consensus there is no coercion. Negotiation and arbitration involve more constraint on options. Protest, noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention each involve greater degrees of coerciveness yet all fall short of physical force, where coercion is the rule. War is coercion in the extreme. All Pacifists oppose war, yet pacifists may differ on the degree of coercion they use or condone concerning nonviolent direct action.

Violence is extreme force. Any violence less coercive than war is so only by difference in scale. While all pacifists oppose war some condone small-scale violence under certain constraints. Still, all pacifists attempt minimizing coercion on inter-personal, social, and international scales. Violence is tempting because, when angered, we feel a need to do something and many imagine the extreme force of violence will resolve conflicts quickly. History tends to show us otherwise; violence tends to make matters worse.

There is increasing interest in understanding violence more widely, in considering covert as well as overt forms of violence. An extended concept of violence that includes psychological and institutional forms in addition to overt physical violence leads to various kinds of forceful violation including racism, sexism, economic exploitation, and other types of domination involving coercive constraints. Those committed to positive peace often work toward the elimination of covert as well as overt violence, further complicating the lives of peace-makers.

The status quo may be the greatest obstacle to expanding the ranks of pacifists. For many, disrupting things as they are constitutes breaking the peace. This is especially true of those enjoying relative advantage with things as they are. Rarely is relative advantage seen as related to the relative disadvantage of others, those near and especially those afar. Why mess with the current arrangement if you're in an advantaged position? Surely any threat to the status quo must be put down, violently if necessary. This is especially true on the international scale. Advantaged states tend to fight for their 'national interests,' code for relative advantages. Pacifism is a hard sell because pacifists are often critical of status quo

arrangements. Where does all of this lead us in terms of a pacifist position on revolution, security, and politics? Can pacifism be taken seriously in our current context? Perhaps the most central feature of the status quo among nations and the greatest obstacle to pacifism is warism.

Warism

Warism is the view that war is morally justifiable in principle and often morally justified in fact. War is considered to be a natural and normal activity of nations. War is simply what nations do. It seems so obvious to most people that war is morally acceptable that they don't realize they are assuming it. Warism is like racism or sexism: a prejudicial bias built into conceptions and judgments without awareness that it is presupposed. Given the prevalence of warism, national focus tends to be on making war effectively or allying with nations who do.

Warism is like an international epidemic. It threatens our very survival because it supports the prevailing means of organizing our world, namely, the war system. Warism is especially insidious because it is nearly invisible behind our building, maintaining, and ever expanding the means of war. Some of us condemn the practices of weapons production, conducting foreign policy by way of military threats –and actions-- and devoting growing percentages of national resources to war making. But condemning warism is like condemning cancer; we have yet to discover ways of exposing and eradicating the sickness that is warism.

Racism and sexism have been drastically reduced because they were exposed, dragged out of hiding, made to be seen for what they are: prejudicial biases that distort our judgments, pervert our values, and mislead us into thinking we

know when we do not. Warism is similarly invisible, behind our thoughts and actions, shaping and distorting our perspectives and thus our behavior. Central to exposing warism is shining a light on it, pointing it out, revealing the role it plays behind decisions public and private. Exposing warism is especially difficult because it is so widely held.

Exposing warism by pointing it out, by bringing it to light, is made especially difficult by the increasing control governments place on the media when it comes to war. Ownership of the bulk of large media outlets by relatively few multinational corporations contributes to the difficulty as well. Nonetheless good work is done. I'm thinking of rare reporting of US torture in Iraq and the relationship between torture and converting citizens into terrorists, of civilian casualties of the US drone warfare program, and of work like that of Nicky Hager here in New Zealand, exposing a US/NZ atrocity in Afghanistan along with government cover up. Such reporting of the truth of war and how it is fought today, reporting without misinformation or cover up, should help shift the wider culture away from the prevalent warist paradigm. But we need such work to be common rather than rare.

Sadly, there is no easy or quick fix to the broad cultural addiction to war and the war system that organizes our world. But resisting stereotypes of pacifism by showing the range of pacifist views, demonstrating the positive aspects of pacifism, and exposing the warism behind our values and political decisions all are conditions for taking pacifism seriously. Until we do, our global future promises more violence, more killing, more war. The choice is not merely between war and peace; it is between war and survival. Only a transformation from warism to pacifism can

help us to build a sustainable future. If we are to have a long-term future we have

no choice but to embrace pacifism.