

NONVIOLENCE AS A WAY OF LIFE

History, Theory and Practice

Edited by

PREDRAG CICOVACKI

KENDY HESS

Volume - II



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Exhibitions on Nonviolent Resistance: A New Medium for Peace Education

CHRISTIAN BARTOLF and DOMINIQUE MIETHING

In collaboration with the Berlin Anti-War Museum, the Gandhi Information Center has created and presented thirteen exhibitions on the concept of nonviolent resistance for peace education between 2008 and 2016. These exhibitions presented significant quotations from activists and thinkers of nonviolence, accompanying images against injustice, militarism and poverty: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Count Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Henry David Thoreau, John Ruskin, Carl von Ossietzky, "Leo Tolstoy and the Doukhobors," Rabindranath Tagore, Étienne de La Boétie, Kurt Tucholsky, Karl Kraus, Wolfgang Borchert, and "Paintings and Poems against War." This essay summarizes this ongoing project of "Exhibitions on Nonviolent Resistance – A New Medium for Peace Education."

The Berlin Anti-War Museum is a permanent private exhibition of artifacts of the two world wars commemorating the victims of war (following the peace education efforts of the pacifist Ernst Friedrich between the wars). It is also a member of the International Network of Peace Museums. Between 2008 and 2016, the Gandhi Information Center has collaborated with the Berlin Anti-War Museum to create and present thirteen exhibitions on the concept of nonviolent resistance for peace education. Each exhibition presented significant quotations from activists and thinkers of nonviolence, portraying their spiritual resistance against injustice, militarism and poverty, along with facsimiles, paintings, photographs and portraits. These historical personages come from Austria, Canada, England, France, Germany, India, Russia, the United States of America: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Count Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Henry David Thoreau, John Ruskin, Carl von Ossietzky, the Doukhobors, Rabindranath Tagore, Étienne de La Boétie and Kurt Tucholsky, Karl Kraus, and Wolfgang Borchert. The Center is also planning exhibitions on the ancient Chinese sage Laozi's *Tao Te Ching*, the social reformer Henry Stephens Salt's vegetarian philosophy, Gustav Landauer's ethical anarchism, the Alsatian moral philosopher Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the Dutch educator Bart de Ligt's "Plan of Campaign against All War and All Preparation for War," the history of the Quakers' peace activities, and others who have inspired the concept of nonviolent resistance and anti-war pacifism.

We now summarize the main aspects of our exhibitions, including sample quotations which resonate with today's global political reality.

From 1994 to 2008 we published our two-page quarterly members information "*Satyagraha*" in three languages (English, French, German), copies of which are kept in the Swarthmore College Peace Collection, and in the Commonweal Collection at the J.B. Priestley Library,

University of Bradford. Then we decided to find another medium to spread the message of nonviolence and peace and developed a museum-based volunteer program of peace education for the public's benefit. This coincided with our meeting of Tommy Spree, director of the Anti-War Museum, who asked us to organize an exhibition for the 60th death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, calling it "Gandhi's Path to Nonviolence." He knew that we were deeply familiar with Mahatma Gandhi's writings and was confident enough to give us free rein to bring about the first exhibition for the museum's Peace Gallery. It opened on 30th January 2008 after only one month of preparation.

During the first exhibitions, we worked with architect and designer Thomas Oertzen who designed the 21x29.7cm sized panels on 40x60cm black frames. (We later used larger formats for 29.7x42cm and 42x59.4cm sized panels.) In addition, three original English language audio documents were translated into German (Gandhi's spiritual message, "God Is," broadcast by Columbia Records in London, Kingsley Hall, 30 October 1931; his address to pacifists at Victoria Hall, Geneva, Switzerland, 10 December 1931; and his address to the Inter-Asian Relations Conference on 2 April 1947 in Delhi, India; as well as original audio documents about the significance of Gandhi by Professor Albert Einstein and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.). These talks could thus be studied by many visitors during Berlin's "Long Night of Museums" and for some months on – for the first time ever, in Berlin. The Gandhi quotations were taken from his two autobiographies: *Satyagraha in South Africa* and *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Ten final quotes portray the concept's elements: vegetarianism, bread labor, equality, tolerance, empathy, world federation, civilian peace service, civil disobedience, spinning wheel, and humility. All of the exhibitions have been inaugurated by the Mayor of Berlin's central district, Dr. Christian Hanke, who has always found words of deep appreciation, gratitude and constant inspiration

for his own political work in the cultural and social aspects of his multi-cultural neighborhood.

This *ahimsa* (nonviolence) is the basis of the search for truth. I am realizing every day that the search is vain unless it is founded on *ahimsa* as the basis. It is quite proper to resist and attack a system, but to resist and attack its author is tantamount to resisting and attacking oneself.

For we are all tarred with the same brush, and are children of one and the same Creator, and as such the divine powers within us are infinite. To slight a single human being is to slight those divine powers, and thus to harm not only that being but with him the whole world.

—Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

The second exhibition highlighted Leo Tolstoy's social ethics. We showed rare photographs and quoted his essays and pamphlets in order to build a bridge of understanding to the timeless relevance of the Russian Count's philosophy and wisdom. As background music for the exhibition space, we chose Tolstoy's only composition, a Waltz in F Major in a new piano version – a sentimental and thoughtful piece of music to create the atmosphere for absorbing the gems of wisdom of the Russian sage. Tolstoy focused on nonviolent resistance (called "non-resistance," meaning absolutely no violent retaliation, no revenge, no punishment, no violence), bread labor, vegetarianism, trusteeship, co-operative farming with farmers harvesting the profits of gardening, fruit-tree planting, ploughing and tilling the soil. Several Russian portrait paintings and photographs of the Yasnaya Polyana Estate Museum near Tula in Russia illustrated this first-time presentation on the occasion of Leo Tolstoy's 180th birth anniversary.

People must feel that their participation in the criminal activity of governments, whether by giving part of their work in the form of money, or by direct participation in military service, is not, as is generally supposed, an indifferent action, but, besides being harmful to one's self and to one's brothers, is a participation in the crimes unceasingly committed by all

governments and a preparation for new crimes, which governments are always preparing by maintaining disciplined armies.

The age of veneration for governments, notwithstanding all the hypnotic influence they employ to maintain their position, is more and more passing away. And it is time for people to understand that governments not only are not necessary, but are harmful and most highly immoral institutions, in which a self-respecting, honest man cannot and must not take part, and the advantages of which he cannot and should not enjoy.

—Leo Tolstoy

The third exhibition (premiered on 29.7x42cm sized panels) was an homage to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights and freedom movement, from Montgomery to Memphis. The Nobel Peace Laureate and Honorary Citizen of the United States of America was killed in 1968 during a sanitation worker's strike in Memphis, Tennessee. He is portrayed at the height of his leadership during the epic March on Washington (August 28, 1963) when he gave his legendary "I Have A Dream" speech. All the photographs show scenes of this joyful and sunny manifestation for equality, human rights, inclusive integration and social justice. The words chosen for this presentation are taken from the chapter "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence" of Dr. King's first autobiography "Freedom." Here he illustrated his own long way to his pledge of nonviolence, as the creed of his existence and the soul of the movement.

True pacifism is not unrealistic submission to evil power. It is rather a courageous confrontation of evil by the power of love, in the faith that it is better to be the recipient of violence than the inflictor of it, since the latter only multiplies the existence of violence and bitterness in the universe, while the former may develop a sense of shame in the opponent, and thereby bring about a transformation and change of heart.

To retaliate in kind would do nothing but intensify the existence of hate in the universe. Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chains of

hate. This can only be done by projecting the ethic of love to the center of our lives.

In speaking of love at this point, we are not referring to some sentiment of affectionate emotion. It would be nonsense to urge men to love their oppressors in an affectionate sense. Love in this connection means understanding, redemptive goodwill.

—Martin Luther King

The fourth exhibition paid homage to the creator of the concept of civil disobedience, Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau, a transcendentalist at heart, lived in Concord, Massachusetts, along with Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne and many other pioneers of nonviolent revolution in the nineteenth century, all of them ardent abolitionists. The wise young Henry of Walden Pond refused to pay poll taxes as his "aesthetic gesture" to protest the U.S.-led war against Mexico and the evil, exploitative system of human slavery. The background music of Henry David Thoreau's favorite hymn, "Tom Bowling" by Charles Dibdin, made this presentation one of the most beautiful. It included quotes from Thoreau's essays on Captain John Brown, and the duty of each individual citizen to follow her or his voice of conscience to resist the government by civil disobedience.

Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison... A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight. If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. If a thousand men were not to pay their tax-bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution, if any such is possible.

—Henry David Thoreau

The fifth (German language only) exhibition (first time 42x59.4cm sized panels) was the first public display of Carl von Ossietzky's pacifist views, commemorating the 120th

anniversary of his birth. The German journalist and Nobel Peace Laureate of 1936 (posthumously for 1935) set a living example for his democratic, pacifist and republican principles when he decided not to escape from the Hitler dictatorship. An international campaign chose to award him, a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp, the Nobel Peace Prize. Not only was Carl von Ossietzky an avid reader of Leo Tolstoy and inspired by the courage of Mahatma Gandhi; he was also married to the Manchurian nurse and civil rights activist Maud Hester Lichfield-Woods, born in Hyderabad, India, as the daughter of an Anglo-Indian marriage. We chose Karl Amadeus Hartmann's "*Concerto Funebre*" (Funereal Concerto) for orchestra and violin, cast in four movements, to accompany the exhibition. The final chorale is based on a popular German song "*Unsterbliche Opfer*" (Immortal Victims). In Russia, it seems to have originated as a song of mourning for the victims of the 1905 Revolution.

After much consideration, I have made the decision to accept the Nobel Peace Prize that has fallen to me. I cannot share the view put forward to me by the representatives of the Secret State Police that in doing so I exclude myself from German society. The Nobel Peace Prize is not a sign of an internal political struggle, but of understanding between peoples. As a recipient of the prize, I will do my best to encourage this understanding and as a German I will always bear in mind Germany's justifiable interests in Europe.

—Carl von Ossietzky

The sixth exhibition highlighted the leading English art critic of the Victorian era, art patron, draughtsman, watercolorist, prominent social thinker and philanthropist John Ruskin. Ruskin's historic house and gardens at Coniston Water, in Cumbria's Lake District, is a permanent monument for the social critic who inspired Mahatma Gandhi through his four essays on the principles of political economy, "Unto This Last." Additional quotations from "Fors Clavigera," "Munera Pulveris" and "The Stones of Venice" illustrate how John Ruskin intended to uplift the downtrodden and weak to

create welfare for all, not only for a privileged and rich minority according to utilitarianism. His plea for the good labor of the craftsmen, farmers and gardeners convinced the young lawyer Gandhi in South Africa and inspired him to build up his first communal farm, the Phoenix Settlement near Durban. John Ruskin also inspired the Jewish educator, orphanage director and writer Janusz Korczak from Poland to draft the first charter of children's rights, because Ruskin's "The Ethics of the Dust" emphasized the human dignity of children and juveniles.

The first reason for all wars, and for the necessity of national defenses, is that the majority of persons, high and low, in all European nations, are Thieves, and, in their hearts, greedy of their neighbors' goods, land, and fame.

But besides being Thieves, they are also fools, and have never yet been able to understand – that the prosperity of their neighbors is, in the end, their own also; and the poverty of their neighbors, by the communism of God, becomes also in the end their own. 'Invidia', jealousy of your neighbor's good, has been, since dust was first made flesh, the curse of man; and 'Caritas', the desire to do your neighbor grace, the one source of all human glory, power, and material Blessing.

But occult theft – theft which hides itself even from itself, and is legal, respectable, and cowardly – corrupts the body and soul of man, to the last fibre of them. And the guilty Thieves of Europe, the real sources of all deadly war in it, are the Capitalists – that is to say, people who live by percentages on the labor of others; instead of by fair wages for their own.

Capitalists, when they do not know what to do with their money, persuade the peasants, in various countries, that the said peasants want guns to shoot each other with. The peasants accordingly borrow guns, out of the manufacture of which the capitalists get a percentage, and men of science much amusement and credit. Then the peasants shoot a certain number of each other, until they get tired; and burn each other's homes down in various places. Then they put the guns back into towers, arsenals, etc., in ornamental patterns (and the victorious party put also some ragged flags in churches). And

then the capitalists tax both, annually, ever afterwards, to pay interest on the loan of the guns and the gunpowder. This is what capitalists call "knowing what to do with their money"; and what commercial men in general call "practical" as opposed to "sentimental" Political Economy.

—John Ruskin

The seventh exhibition was the first one in Germany about Leo Tolstoy and the Doukhobors (Spirit Wrestlers) from Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Canada. We took the opportunity of the 100th anniversary of Leo Tolstoy's death to focus on his core message during the last two decades of his life: to resist and be in active solidarity with resisters worldwide. The leader-in-exile of this pacifist and vegetarian community, Peter Verigin, was deeply inspired by Leo Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*. On the night of June 28/29 (July 10/11, Gregorian Calendar), 1895, Verigin encouraged a part of his community to demonstratively burn their weapons and resist the military draft in the Caucasus and the Kars province of today's Turkey. Their persecution by the Tsarist Cossacks led Leo Tolstoy in the year 1897 to nominate the Doukhobors to be recipients of the first Nobel Peace Prize ever, because they served the cause of peace best. The Doukhobors escaped genocide by going into exile in and after 1899, first to Cyprus, then to Saskatchewan in Canada, resettling to British Columbia between 1908 and 1912. They were supported in this by Tolstoy (through the royalties of his last novel *Resurrection*) and his son Sergey, Peter Alexeyevich Kropotkin and Alexei Ilyich Bakunin (the nephew of the Russian anarchist thinker Michael Bakunin), James Mavor (professor of political economy at the University of Toronto), as well as British members of the Quaker Doukhobor Relief Committee. The exhibition featured an interactive multimedia presentation, which included authentic footage of the Doukhobors as well as original voice recordings by Leo Tolstoy, reciting from his wisdom book, *For Every Day*, in English, French and German. These recordings have never been publicly presented before. For the purpose of giving all

visitors of the exhibition a chance to listen to them, we employed digital audio cleaning methods for improved sound quality and provided transcriptions. We owe gratitude to the Canadian Doukhobor historians Andrei Conovaloff, Larry A. Ewashen and Koozma Tarasoff.

The armies can be reduced and abolished only against the will, and not with the will, of the governments. The armies will be reduced and abolished only when the people who, from fear or advantage, sell their liberty and take up a position in the ranks of the army are branded as murderers by public opinion. The armies will be reduced and abolished only when the people who, now unknown and condemned, refuse to give their liberty into the hands of other men to become instruments of murder, in spite of all persecutions and sufferings they bear, are recognized to be what they are: champions and benefactors of humanity. Only then will the armies at first be reduced and then be entirely abolished, and a new era will begin in the life of humanity.

—Leo Tolstoy

The eighth exhibition celebrated the Bengali poet, social thinker and Nobel Laureate in Literature (1913), Rabindranath Tagore, together with the Bangladeshi and Indian communities in Berlin. We presented the polymath Tagore in his poetry, in his essays against nationalism and in his active critical solidarity with Mahatma Gandhi. Along with other celebrities like Einstein, Freud, and Gandhi, "Gurudev" Tagore signed (after the 1919 Declaration of the Independence of the Spirit) the 1926 and 1930 anti-conscription manifestoes that provided the basis for the new "Manifesto against conscription and the military system" launched by the Gandhi Information Center in 1993 (www.themanifesto.info). The exhibition again featured an interactive multimedia presentation, which included authentic footage of Rabindranath Tagore singing his composition "*Jana Gana Mana*" (the Indian National Anthem since 1950) and modern choir interpretations of this anthem and Bangladesh's national anthem, "*Amar Shonar Bangla*," of which he wrote the lyrics. We owe gratitude to the Bulgarian anthropologist

and teacher Elena Stateva and the social pedagogue Marion Gericke, who has generously assisted us with this and the following exhibitions, and the translator Wolfgang Grätz.

We enter a darkened world possessed by nightmares. Civilized conduct, even as we watch, is being tortured beyond recognition. Such repulsive caricature and world-wide brutalizing of civilization would have been unthinkable a short while ago. Values in civilizations have undergone secret transformation: they are mainly identifiable with skill in material manufacture. Sitting in warehouses stocked with machines breeding goods, greed has become ever more lustful. Nations, vulture-like, hover shamelessly. Sanguinary greed hides behind pulpits and classrooms; streams of religious sermon and science pour from specialized intellects without washing it clean. Civilization's base is being sapped; in the dark underhalls of empires live acquisitive passions; pillars of triumph slowly rot, threatening in their downfall the fabric of same humanity. Where is redress? I wished I knew. Toward abyss slide hoarded empires once formed by feeding, in undisturbed security, on the two weak continents – Asia and Africa. The devourers could not think that their own have-not cousins would one day rise up and threaten their spoils. Whirlwind of killing goes on, weapons follow weapons in unending mathematics, where can this stop? Mutual manslaughter proceeds on premises strewn with leavings of ill-gotten food; yesterday's carousers talk peace today in the hour of disaster, but even then they will not clean their courtyard.

Violent worship, propitiating the gods by sacrificial blood, has continued from man's barbarous past up to this day. Through love alone is worship, great teachers have sometimes proclaimed, but the world has taken this to be true on the spiritual, not on the practical plane. In spheres of life where results can be ignored such teaching signifies, but where results are needed – so runs popular conscience – the gods have to be won over by sanguinary offerings. Behind this lies a patient's faith in bitter, pungent medicines; medicines, indeed, he is convinced, tasting the lacerating drops. So in worldwide political pharmacies virulent remedies are being piled up. Virile tonics, blood-red force advertised in their color. Physicians with high records of death to their credit are venerated; countless deaths may,

conceivably, slowly change a doctor's belief in a particular system of treatment. Death's institutes have been opened everywhere; millions of students are being killed to supply lessons – perhaps man may learn something final from this, but when or where I cannot prophesy. What we find is that lessons go on endlessly, more and more loudly repeated in the classroom they seem never to terminate. Such being the case, I would prefer silence, not knowing what answers to give to path-seekers.

—Rabindranath Tagore

The ninth exhibition was on display in Berlin and Paris, because it was a trilingual exhibition in French, English and German; the exhibition emphasized the relevance of Étienne de La Boétie's "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude" (*Discours de la servitude volontaire*) for the concept of nonviolent non-cooperation that became the premise of Leo Tolstoy as well as of his followers Gandhi and King. La Boétie was a legal scholar who was appointed to the "Bordeaux Parlement" (assembly of lawyers) where he met his friend Michel Eyquem de Montaigne. It was La Boétie, not Montaigne, who wrote the first political essay, thereby inventing this literary genre. Montaigne called La Boétie his greatest friend and hero, because he patiently mediated in the growing conflicts between Catholics and Huguenots in the age preceding the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre. La Boétie's "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude" as facsimile text of the first handwriting was put on display along with photographs of the historic sites of La Boétie at Sarlat and Montaigne's tower at the Château de Montaigne, both in Dordogne, France. We owe gratitude to our collaborator Jean-Louis Jankowski and Dr. Ulrich Klemm (professor of education in Augsburg and Leipzig) for his opening address.

Everyone knows that the fire from a little spark will increase and blaze ever higher as long as it finds wood to burn; yet without being quenched by water, but merely by finding no more fuel to feed on, it consumes itself, dies down, and is no longer a flame. Similarly, the more tyrants pillage, the more they crave, the more they ruin and destroy; the more one yields to them,

and obeys them, by that much do they become mightier and more formidable, the readier to annihilate and destroy. But, if not one thing is yielded to them, if, without any violence they are simply not obeyed, they become naked and undone and as nothing, just as, when the root receives no nourishment, the branch withers and dies.

You sow your crops in order that he may ravage them, you install and furnish your homes to give him goods to pillage; you rear your daughters that he may gratify his lust; you bring up your children in order that he may confer upon them the greatest privilege he knows – to be led into his battles, to be delivered to butchery, to be made the servants of his greed and the instruments of his vengeance; you yield your bodies unto hard labor in order that he may indulge in his delights and wallow in his filthy pleasures; you weaken yourselves in order to make him the stronger and the mightier to hold you in check. From all these indignities, such as the very beasts of the field would not endure, you can deliver yourselves if you try, not by taking action, but merely by willing to be free.

—Étienne de La Boétie

The tenth exhibition (German language only) highlights the German-Jewish journalist, satirist and writer Kurt Tucholsky. Tucholsky was active in the “Never-Again-War” movement (“*Nie wieder Krieg*”-*Bewegung*) between 1919 and 1924 in post-war German Weimar Republic and wrote pacifist articles and poems, e.g., “The Trench” (*Der Graben*, 1924), “Three Minutes To Listen” (*Drei Minuten Gehör*, 1922), “War Against War” (*Krieg dem Kriege*, 1919). Tucholsky collaborated with Carl von Ossietzky as editor of the weekly “*Die Weltbühne*” and authored numerous satirical poems and polemics against the German system of militarism. Already during the early stages of Germany’s fragile first democracy, Tucholsky warned against the danger of a second world war. Hitler would never have succeeded, had Tucholsky’s prophetic visions been heard.

The Trench

Mother, why have you brought up your fellow,
Taught and tended him for twenty years,
waited anxiously to hear his “hello,”
whispered little stories in his ears?

Till they hauled him from his bed and bench
To the trench, good woman, to the trench.

Sonny, do you still remember Daddy?
How he used to take you on his arm,
how he gave a penny to his Addie
and he chased with you around the farm?

Till they sent him out to fight the French
in the trench, young fellow, in the trench.

France’s comrades over there were lying
side by side with England’s workingmen.
Old and young ones, even boys, fell dying
where the bullets hit them, there and then.

As their lifeblood ebbed, the soil to drench,
they were buried in that common trench.

Don’t be proud of chevrons and citations!
Don’t be proud of medals and awards!
You stood guard for greedy corporations,
pseudo-statesmen and the feudal lords.

Yours was just the squalor and the stench
of the tomb, companions, and the trench!

Dump those flags! A dance of death they’re casting
to the music of an army band.

When you’re gone – a wreath of everlasting,
that’s the thank-you from your fatherland.

Think what agony you cause to others:
Over there stand fathers, sons and mothers,
struggling hard, like you, for meager living –
won't you turn to them without misgiving?

Stretch your hand out, let your fist unclench,
Across the trench, my friends, across the trench!

—Kurt Tucholsky

The eleventh exhibition shows the anti-war propaganda of the Austrian journalist, performing artist and writer Karl Kraus, whose aphorisms written after the First World War demonstrate his pacifism: "War: first, one hopes to win; then one expects the enemy to lose; then, one is satisfied that the enemy too is suffering; in the end, one is surprised that everyone has lost." In his unique tragedy "The Last Days of Mankind" (1915-1922), consisting of 200 scenes, Karl Kraus unfolds the dynamics of war propaganda affecting different strata of society. Kraus, in his post-war lectures in Berlin, highly influenced Kurt Tucholsky and so many other contemporaries such as Walter Benjamin and Elias Canetti. Most significant is the poem "The Dying Soldier" which the eminent actor Oskar Werner publicly recited as part of his anti-war poetry readings:

The Dying Soldier

Captain, go and fetch the court martial!
I do not want to die for an emperor!
Captain, you are the emperor's jerk!
Once I'm dead I will no more salute!

When I've gone home to my Lord,
I will see the emperor's throne far below
and I will laugh at his orders!
Where is my village? My son is playing there.

After my Lord has taken me away
my last field post letter arrives.

Oh, how they called and called and called!
Oh, how deep is my love!

Captain, you are out of your mind
for sending me out to this place.
My heart has been burnt in the fire,
I do not die for a fatherland!

You cannot force me, no you can't!
Watch how death breaks those chains!
Try to court-martial death!
I surely will not die for the emperor!

—Karl Kraus

The twelfth exhibition combined anti-war poetry (from the Thirty Years' War until the Second World War) and anti-war paintings (from Pieter Bruegel the Elder until Pablo Picasso, between 1562 and 1937). Among the exhibition's highlights were three facsimiles: Arthur Rimbaud's poem "The Sleeper in the Valley" (*Le dormeur du val*), Wilfred Owen's poem "*Dulce et decorum est*," and Matthias Claudius' most famous anti-war poem ("*Kriegslied*"):

't is War! 't is War! O God's Angel, keep it away
and intervene to stop it!
Sadly, it is War—and I do not want it to be my fault!

What could I do if the ghosts of the slaughtered
came to me sorrowing in my sleep, bloody, white and pale,
and wept before me—what?

If hearty men who went looking for honor,
Maimed and half dead, waltzed before me in the dust
and cursed me in their dying need?

If a thousand thousand fathers, mothers, brides,
So happy before the war, now all miserable, all poor people,

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Cried out in grief over me?

If hunger, illness and dire need gathered friend,
friend and enemy into the grave
and crowed to me in my honor sitting on a corpse?

What help would crown and land and gold and honor be?

They could not be delight to me!

Sadly, 't is War—and I do not want it to be my fault!

—Matthias Claudius

The thirteenth exhibition commemorated the anti-war lyrics and prose of the German writer Wolfgang Borchert, who died from the consequences of the Second World War at age 26 in the year 1947. Facing death, Borchert wrote his last will and testament in a Swiss hospital – his prose poem “Then There’s Only One Thing To Do” (“*Dann gibt es nur eins*”):

You. Man at the machine and man in the workshop. If they order you tomorrow to stop making water pipes and cook pots – and start making helmets and machine guns, then there’s only one thing to do:

Say NO!

You. Girl behind the counter and girl at the office. If they order you tomorrow to fill hand grenades and mount scopes on sniper rifles, then there’s only one thing to do:

Say NO!

You. Factory owner. If they order you tomorrow, to sell gun powder instead of talcum powder and cocoa, then there’s only one thing to do:

Say NO!

You. Researcher in the laboratory. If they order you tomorrow, to invent a new death to do away with old life, then there’s only one thing to do:

Say NO!

You. Poet in your room. If they order you tomorrow not to sing love songs, but songs of hate, then there’s only one thing to do:

Say NO!

You. Doctor at the sick bed. If they order you tomorrow to certify men as fit for war, then there’s only one thing to do:

Say NO!

You. Minister in the pulpit. If they order you tomorrow to bless murder and praise war as holy, then there’s only one thing to do:

Say NO!

You. Captain on the steamer. If they order you tomorrow not to transport wheat – but cannons and tanks, then there’s only one thing to do:

Say NO!

You. Pilot at the airfield. If they order you tomorrow to carry bombs and incendiaries over cities, then there’s only one thing to do:

Say NO!

You. Tailor at your table. If they order you tomorrow to start sewing uniforms, then there’s only one thing to do:

Say NO!

You. Judge in your robe. If they order you tomorrow to report to the military court, then there’s only one thing to do:

Say NO!

You. Man at the train station. If tomorrow they order you to give the signal for the ammunition and the troop trains to depart, then there’s only one thing to do:

Say NO!

You. Man in the village and man in the city. If they come for you tomorrow and with your induction papers, then there’s only one thing to do:

Say NO!

You. Mother in Normandy and mother in the Ukraine, you, mother in Frisco and London, you, on the banks of the Huang Ho and the Mississippi, you, mother in Nepal and Hamburg

and Cairo and Oslo – mothers in all regions on earth, mothers all over the world, if they order you tomorrow to bear children – nurses for military hospitals and new soldiers for new battles, mothers all over the world, then there's only one thing to do: Say NO! Mothers, say NO!

—Wolfgang Borchert⁴⁴

Comprehensive Guide to Ahimsa, the Philosophy of Dynamic Harmlessness (Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1988).

- ⁴⁴ These exhibitions can be fully accessed at the webpage: <http://www.nonviolent-resistance.info/eng/exhibitions.htm>.
- ⁴⁵ During Occupy, I was a student in the Master of Divinity program at Harvard Divinity School, studying comparative theology, training in chaplaincy, and preparing for ordination in the Episcopal Church. Some close friends of mine heard that something called Occupy Wall Street was going to happen on September 17, so we decided to go and join the protest against systematized corporate greed. We called ourselves Protest Chaplains: wearing albs and carrying a cross, singing hymns, praying, listening to people's stories, reminding the world that Jesus had much to say about greed. When our march ended in Zuccotti Park, we knew something special was happening. Over the next months, the Protest Chaplains developed into a multi-religious coalition that served Occupy camps throughout the USA and Canada.
- ⁴⁶ In fairness, many Occupiers did share hopes for a unified, post-encampment political front, and many more looked at Occupy simply as a large-scale political protest. Indeed, many Occupiers held the very views I am painting as mischaracterizations of the movement. The views I am offering are my own, from the vantage point of a few years of reflection, and they do not necessarily represent those of many Occupiers past or present.
- ⁴⁷ Not every Occupy community was the same. As they were autonomous, radically democratic communities, variations were great in both size and context. For instance, in Boston we were permitted to erect tents, but at Wall Street erecting tents prompted the police to raid numerous times. Correspondingly, different