

The Peace Memo

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June-July, 2012

Independence, Violence, and Austerity

I was planning an issue on the relationship between violence and “Austerity” programs when my 93 year old father died, putting all plans on hold. He lived in an interesting time, a curse or blessing depending on one's location in space and society. I would like to dedicate our next issue to those times, with a historical view of peace work since the end of the First World War. Then, we shall hope to address violence and “Austerity,” with more data to draw from. We solicit your input. Please send your thoughts, articles you find helpful or provocative, book reviews – the more the merrier.

But this month, we shall give a nod to the Founding White Men, by printing the Declaration of Independence. It's surprising how many of the original complaints are still issues. Perhaps not in the 50 states, but in areas our government influences.

According to [U.S. History](#), a website owned by the Independence Hall Association, 20% of colonists supported the Revolution and 20% were loyal to the Crown, which left 60% - a “supermajority”! - undecided or indifferent. And, again, I suspect the numbers apply only to those whose opinions mattered: free white males.

Then we shall introduce a novel about the

Troubles in Northern Ireland, written by someone who experienced them at first hand. Some of the larger issues are similar: law and justice, equity and fairness. Who decides? How are victims of injustice compensated? How much is too much?

May we think cool thoughts in the weeks ahead.

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.-- That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these

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ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of

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Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny,

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already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to

disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

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NOTEWORTHY

Now, for the novel. [The Price of Peace](#), written by James B. Johnston, tells the story of Gráinne O'Connor, on trial for two murders. Gráinne lost her husband and only child in an IRA bombing. After three years of therapy, she manages to get on with her life. When the Belfast Peace Agreement is signed in 1998, she hopes there will be an end to the Troubles at last. But one of the provisions of the Peace is early release of prisoners serving terms for terrorism, including four of the five people responsible for the deaths of Gráinne's husband and son. Once again, her loss overwhelms her and she seeks justice.

This story is well told and beautifully written. Gráinne's trial is presented without bias. At the conclusion of the evidence, readers are encouraged to go to the web site and submit their own verdicts. There is also possibility of a dialog with the author and the promise of an open discussion of such questions as:

- What is justice?
- Is revenge the same as justice?
- Are there different standards for victims of violence?
- What is fairness?
- What is equity?
- In the aftermath of violence resulting in catastrophic loss, can there be

fairness and equity?

- Who decides?

Perhaps some of our readers will read the book and join the wider discussion. Others might prefer to use the book to catalyze local discussion groups.

THE SPARROW SINGS

May, 2012

If we are Christians we need to act like followers of Christ...in word and deed. Christ told us to love our enemies, pray for them and DO GOOD TO THEM. How in the world can Christians support and glorify the military which has a philosophy totally the opposite of Christ? The Military's philosophy is to kill or destroy the enemy, not love him or her. To allow our young to be persuaded to accept the military as a life style is not following Christ. To condone or praise the military as our savior is not being a follower of Christ. We all have relatives and friends who have gone to the military because they were drafted or needed money. They were led to believe that it is good to harm or kill people in an attempt to "save" others. They are not told that in actuality they would be fighting so that U.S. corporations can make more money. They were told to follow the state rather than Christ. Christ too believed in defending others, but He would never condone

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violence as a means to do this. Christ did not try to set up an army to overtake the Romans who were persecuting and executing His own people. Nor should we who are His followers try to kill or hurt our enemies. Our goal is to follow the will of God, which is to love our enemies, and to get others to do the same. Our goal as Christians is not longevity, the quest to live as long as we can. Longevity has its place, but it is not the command of Christ. His command is to love all, including the enemy, even if we get killed doing so. If we die trying to follow Christ's words and example we will always have life. --Don Timmerman

“The capitalist worldview is the only one most of us have ever known. We see reality, experiences, events, other people and things--in fact, everything --as objects for our personal consumption. Even religion, Scripture, sacraments, worship services and meritorious deeds become ways to advance ourselves--not necessarily ways to love God or neighbor.” --*Radical Grace: Daily Meditations*

“Happiness is not so much in having as sharing. We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give....It is not how many years we have in life as much as how much life we put into those years.” --Abraham Lincoln

“Fighting for peace is like screaming for peace.”

“Wars are not the product of the sudden eruption of hate over a recent offense. That understanding of them is the illusion created by their propagandists in order to garner public support and warm bodies for the latest round of mass human slaughter for the profit of the few and increased access to markets, minerals and cheap labor. Wars are long-planned and highly organized economic, political, media, industrial and military operations, designed and executed by the best and the brightest sociopaths in a society.” ----Emmanuel Charles McCarthy

NOTES FROM 21ST STREET: During the past month there has been a glorious display of color in my garden. The irises were elegantly beautiful on their tall stems. There were reddish maroon ones and a group of lavender blue iris that took my breath away with their beauty. How can a flower have such luxuriant, plus delicate, beauty? The roses also burst forth in a pink display of color. My regret is that I did not take time to sit and ponder on their beauty. There were short snippets of time when I would take in their beauty which did them little justice. Each season of the year provides a short period of time, a rich gift of beauty, to feed our souls. We won't be gifted with the iris for another year. The blessings and beauty of

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each season are too brief and too beautiful not to be savored. Love, Roberta

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Be sure to [join the PIET Monthly Meeting page](#) on Facebook, to be sure you get notified of all meetings and other events!

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We always welcome your news of events. Not for information, but for the tremendous support it provides our friends. So please send stories and calendar items to the [editor](#).

Please consider supporting our work in ways that are appropriate to your location and means. We would love to have more willing hands.

Please consider the M*A*S*H B*A*S*H fundraiser on the next page.

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M * A * S * H
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*Please join us for a fun evening of dinner,
dancing and live and silent auctions
to benefit the*

FREE MEDICAL CLINIC OF OAK RIDGE

saturday, august 11, 2012
6:00 pm - 10:00 pm

oak ridge civic center gym
1403 oak ridge turnpike
oak ridge, tennessee

rsvp by July 15th
to freemedclinic_or@att.net

live music provided by
SECOND OPINION

To order M*A*S*H BASH tickets online, go to
www.fmc.or and click on the MASH Bash Tickets tab.

To purchase tickets by mail, please send your check to: Free
Medical Clinic of Oak Ridge, P.O. Box 5466, Oak Ridge, TN
37831.

You may purchase tickets at the Free Medical Clinic, 320
Robertsville Rd., Oak Ridge, Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-noon and Tues.-
Fri. 1:30-4 p.m. For more information, call 483-3904.

While access to medical care is, perhaps, not directly related to our peacebuilding mission, many of our members have taken “Economic Justice” as a study topic. Contributor Bob Rundle has suggested that lack of access to adequate care is a form of economic violence against our most vulnerable.

Since this notice came to our attention in good time to include it here, we do so, and encourage you to spread the word to your places of work, play, and worship. The [Free Medical Clinic of Oak Ridge](#) is almost three years old and, as our legislators (at all levels) decide we “can't afford” to care for our people, the need for its services has grown. 'Nuf said.