

Reflections FOR NONVIOLENT COMMUNITY



A BOOK OF READINGS
THE OAK RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL PEACE ALLIANCE
OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2022

front cover:

Seventy-seven years after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, demonstrators tie the flags of sixty-six nations that have signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on the fence at the Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Complex in Oak Ridge.

About this booklet

This booklet, published bi-monthly by the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, embraces many members of our peace community. The booklet is intended to build spiritual community. It is available for no charge to those who request it. Those who are using the book are asked to participate by contributing readings to it.[‡]

The common thread in these reflections is the struggle of human beings to improve the world. In OREPA, our struggle to end bomb production in Oak Ridge is part of that struggle. In these reflections, we join ourselves with the larger community that works to heal the world.

From the outset, the reflection booklet has been provided free of charge. If you are able to make a donation to cover the cost of your booklet, it would be greatly appreciated. A gift of \$20 would cover the cost of paper, printing and mailing for one year. If you are unable to make a donation, please continue to accept the reflection booklet and use it.

Each Thursday, in addition to our reflection, you will find the name of a member of our community who is using this reflection booklet. This is an opportunity to think a little about that person and all those who work for peace on her/his day.

‡ contributions, suggestions, requests can be sent to OREPA, P O Box 5743, Oak Ridge, TN 37831 or by e-mail to orep@earthlink.net

Sources

Readings for the reflection booklet this month were contributed by Linda Ewald, Jay McMahan, Cody Dishner, Alexandra Joyner, Betty Coleman, Ann Myers, and Pam Hindle. Thursday readings are drawn from *Looking for the Good War: American Amnesia and the Violent Pursuit of Happiness* by Elizabeth Samet.

Saturday, October 1

The truth of empirical propositions is whether they correspond to reality; the truth of analytical propositions is whether they follow the rules of logic, but the truth of ethical propositions is determined by the courage with which you act to make them real in the world.

~ Ludwig Wittgenstein

Sunday, October 2

GANDHI'S BIRTHDAY

There is more to life than increasing its speed.

~ Gandhi

Monday, October 3

We have to shame empire. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness—and our ability to tell our own stories.

~ Arundhati Roy

Tuesday, October 4

If I am here, how come I'm here? Who is not here so that I can be here? And if we are here because some form of violence is taking place, how can we address the experiences that are relevant not only to the world we live in, but also to the world that we want to create?

~ Cristina Rivera Garza

Wednesday, October 5

1923 : PHIL BERRIGAN BORN

Martyrdom is not gallantly standing before a firing squad. Usually it is the losing of a job because of not taking a loyalty oath, or buying a war bond, or paying a tax. Martyrdom is small, hidden, misunderstood. Or if it is a bloody martyrdom, it is the cry in the dark, the terror, the shame, the loneliness, nobody to hear, nobody to suffer with, let alone to save. Oh, the loneliness of all of us in these days, in all the great moments of our lives, this dying which we do, by little and little, over a short space of time or over the years.

~ Dorothy Day

Thursday, October 6
Cynthia Banas

1917 : FANNIE LOU HAMER BORN

1987 : OSCAR ARIAS SANCHEZ WINS NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

During World War II, American automobile owners were required to affix gas rationing stickers to their windshields. The backs of many of these stickers posed a pointed question to the person at the wheel: *Is This Trip Really Necessary?* Designed to train civilian attention on an unseen war being fought far away, the sticker became at once a badge of sacrifice and a practical necessity. It would soon become a valuable commodity. In May 1942, to save fuel and tires, a number of states also introduced a thirty-five-mile-per-hour speed limit: Victory Speed. As the literary critic and combat veteran Paul Fussell proposed in his angry, provocative 1989 book *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War*, the resulting “inconvenience” served to remind Americans that there was “a war on.” That the public should need reminding; that there was in fact a robust black market (chiefly in beef and gasoline), operated, as John Steinbeck noted in a 1943 newspaper article, not by “little crooks, but the best people”; that the government felt the need to launch an unprecedented propaganda campaign to motivate civilians and soldiers alike—all these facts suggest the degree to which the goodness, idealism, and unanimity we today reflexively associate with World War II were not as readily apparent to Americans at the time.

~ Elizabeth Samet

Friday, October 7

1879 : JOE HILL BORN

1931 : DESMOND TUTU BORN

2001 : US BEGINS BOMBING AFGHANISTAN

People took some part of us and used it to discriminate against us. It is precisely the same thing for sexual orientation. People are killed because they are gay.

~ Desmond Tutu

Saturday, October 8

We have to rage in love, but we have to stand up for the values of our humanity. Our life matters. More than matters—it is divine.

~ Jon Batiste

Sunday, October 9

1919 : FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION FOUNDED

Do not let the behavior of others destroy your inner peace.

~ Dalai Lama

Monday, October 10

It is not despair, for despair is only for those who see the end beyond all doubt. We do not.

~ J R R Tolkien

Tuesday, October 11

1884 : ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S BIRTHDAY

We could destroy the machines that destroy this planet. If someone has planted a time bomb in your home, you are entitled to dismantle it.

~ Andras Malm

Wednesday, October 12

As human beings, our job in life is to help people to realize how rare and valuable each one of us really is, that each of us has something that no one else has—or ever will have—something inside that is unique to all time. It's our job to encourage each other to discover that uniqueness and to provide ways of developing its expression.

~ Fred Rogers

Thursday, October 13

Ron Rocz

1999 : US SENATE REJECTS COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY

John Abbott was a conscientious objector assigned to a series of stateside public works details until he refused even this duty. Convicted in 1943 for failing to remain in a public service camp, he served two years in a federal prison. Years later, in an interview with Studs Terkel, he recalled a prank he and some of his fellow COs used to play: "These gasoline stickers for rationing had a little note on them—Is this trip really necessary? We'd scratch out trip and write war—Is this war really necessary?"

One can disagree with Abbott—one can, as I do, believe that the US involvement in the war was necessary—yet still question the way that participation in that war has been remembered in the wake of wars considerably less galvanizing and unifying. Has the prevailing memory of the "Good War," shaped as it has been by nostalgia, sentimentality, and jingoism, done more harm than good to Americans' sense of themselves and their country's place in the world? Has the meaning of American force been perverted by a strident, self-congratulatory insistence that a war extraordinary in certain aspects was, in fact, unique in all? Has the desire to divorce that war from history—to interpret victory as proof of America's exceptionalism—blinded us to our own tragic contingency? Finally, has the repeated insistence by so many on the country's absolute unity behind the war effort effectively exacerbated ongoing social and political divisions?

~ Elizabeth Samet

Friday, October 14

We shouldn't be looking for heroes, we should be looking for good ideas.

~ Noam Chomsky

Saturday, October 15

1969 : 2,000,000 PARTICIPATE IN MORATORIUM AGAINST VIETNAM WAR

How very, very tired I am with this hidden battle for my own thoughts, the burden of counting, the work it takes to hide it.

~ Hanna Alkaf

Sunday, October 16

1988 : UNITED STATES INVADES GRENADA

I have learned all kinds of things from my many mistakes. The one thing I never learn is to stop making them.

~ Joe Abercrombie

Monday, October 17

1991 : NATO CUTS NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARSENAL BY 80%

If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace.

~ Thomas Paine

Tuesday, October 18

Woke means being awakened to the needs of others. To be well-informed, thoughtful, compassionate, humble, and kind. Eager to make the world a better place for all people.

~ Anonymous

Wednesday, October 19

1923 : WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE FOUNDED

1720 : JOHN WOOLMAN BORN

Peace is not unity in similarity, but unity in diversity, in the comparison and conciliation of differences..

~ Mikhail Gorbachev

Thursday, October 20
Barbara Swartzel

More than seventy-five years on, World War II remembrance continues to distort the country's past and thus to obstruct the realization of a more expansive future. But that belief hasn't prevented me from asking myself while writing this book, "Is this trip really necessary?" Such is the sacral force of war's mythology, especially that of World War II—the good war that served as prologue to three-quarters of a century of misbegotten ones—that I embarked on my project with some trepidation, even as I perceived the need to explore the ways in which retrospective interpretations of the Second World War, the last American military action about which there is anything like a positive consensus, have shaped our thinking about American identity and, in particular, about American violence abroad and at home.

Myths grant life and take it away, give birth to nations and tear them apart. All the countries that fought World War II developed particular narratives about this cataclysmic event. There has always been a double edge to the American mythology surrounding the war: for a long time now, it has simultaneously fortified and diminished the United States. We can explore the ways in which the meaning and memory of World War II have evolved and periodically intersected with those of the other wars that have punctuated American history: Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War, our more recent wars; and, retrospectively, the Civil War. These conflicts, about which Americans tend to feel far more ambivalence, lie as close as World War II does to the heart of national identity, even if we prefer to think otherwise. Such trips into the past really are necessary if we are to see our way to a viable future.

~ Elizabeth Samet

Friday, October 21

1971 : PABLO NERUDA WINS NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE

Someday, somewhere—anywhere, unfailingly, you'll find yourself, and that, and only that, can be the happiest or bitterest hour of your life.

~ Pablo Neruda

Saturday, October 22

1962 : CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Autumn shows us how beautiful it is to let things go.

~ Anonymous

Sunday, October 23

Nature can be lethal. But it doesn't hold a candle to humans.

~ Samuel L Jackson

Monday, October 24

UNITED NATIONS DAY COMMEMORATES FOUNDING OF UN

We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to humankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small...

~ Charter of the United Nations

Tuesday, October 25

1955 : SADAKO SASAKI DIES

1983 : UNITED STATES INVADES GRENADA

I keep hearing this thing that guns don't kill people, people kill people. If that's the case, why do we give people guns when they go to war? Why not just send the people?

~ Ozzie Osbourne

Wednesday, October 26

2001 : US CONGRESS PASSES PATRIOT ACT

The wise speak only of what they know.

~ J R R Tolkien

Thursday, October 27
Teri Kelly

Miraculously, the deadliest conflict in human history became something inherently virtuous. To interpret World War II in this way required a selective memory. "If the character of Hitler and his paladins gave to the Allied side a moral justification unusual in warfare," argues the philosopher and veteran J. Glenn Gray, "the Western nations have no reason to forget their share of responsibility for Hitler's coming to power or their dubious common cause with the Russian dictator." But forgetting was the order of the postwar day, and every American exercise of military force since World War II, at least in the eyes of its architects, has inherited that war's moral justification and been understood as its offspring: motivated by its memory, prosecuted in its shadows, inevitably measured against it. As the latest expeditions in Iraq and Afghanistan reveal, the United States continues to struggle beneath the burden of its last good war.

~ Elizabeth Samet

Friday, October 28

If you are silent about your pain, they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it.

~ Zora Neale Hurston

Saturday, October 29

1966 : NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN FOUNDED

1962 : CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS ENDS

1988 : SOUTH AFRICAN TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION REPORT RELEASED

It's easy to believe in something when you win all the time.
The losses are what define a person's faith.

~ Brandon Sanderson

Sunday, October 30

1961 : USSR DETONATES 58-MEGATON ATMOSPHERIC TEST, LARGEST EVER

The truth isn't always beauty, but the hunger for it is.

~ Nadine Gordimer

Monday, October 31

1952 : US DETONATES FIRST HYDROGEN BOMB, ENIWETOK ATOLL, MARSHALL ISLANDS

When the mob and the press and the whole world tell you to move, your job is to plant yourself like a tree by the river of truth, and tell the whole world "No, *you* move."

~ J Michael Straczynski

Tuesday, November 1

1989 : DIANNA ORTIZ TORTURED IN GUATEMALA

1995 : SOUTH AFRICA HOLDS FIRST ELECTION FOR ALL RACES

Sometimes you brush against a truth, feeling it before you can say it, and instead of theories or conclusions, tears are the evidence it leaves.

~ Dianna Ortiz

Wednesday, November 2

1920 : EUGENE DEBS, IN PRISON, RECEIVES 1,000,000 VOTES FOR PRESIDENT

Do not ever let anyone tell you that you do not belong here.
We all do. There is space for us all.

~ Hanna Alkaf

Thursday, November 3 Joe Power-Drutis

1883 : US SUPREME COURT DESIGNATES NATIVE AMERICANS AS ALIENS

World War II left behind the dangerous and seemingly indestructible fantasy that our military interventions will naturally produce (an often underappreciated) good. Each succeeding conflict has led to the reprise and reinvention of the Good War's mythology in order to justify or otherwise explain uses of American power. The idea of war's nobility, and the attendant rhetoric of religiosity and chivalry was far more characteristic of Alvin York's war than World War II. But the origins of the high-flown language later associated with the war can be found in General Eisenhower's D-Day radio address to the troops. "You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you," Eisenhower exhorted his audience, "The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave allies... you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the end of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed people of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world." Eisenhower's speech supplied a sense of one grand unifying cause that seems in retrospect always to have been there but was in truth far more elusive.

The country's entrance into the war was not proactive, but reactive: the attack on Pearl Harbor, not a quest to liberate the world's oppressed people. As the journalist Martha Gellhorn wrote, "We are not entirely guiltless, we the Allies, because it took us twelve years to open the gates of Dachau."

~ Elizabeth Samet

Friday, November 4

1992 : RUSSIA RATIFIES START TREATY

If you assume that there is no hope, you guarantee that there will be no hope. If you assume that there are opportunities to change things, then there is a possibility that you can contribute to making a better world.

~ Noam Chomsky

Saturday, November 5

Empathy is not simply a matter of trying to imagine what others are going through, but having the will to muster enough courage to do something about it.

~ Cornel West

Sunday, November 6

There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.

~ Audre Lorde

Monday, November 7

But even when the moon looks like it's waning, it's actually never changing shape. Don't ever forget that.

~ Ai Yazawa

Tuesday, November 8

1897 : DOROTHY DAY'S BIRTHDAY!

1972 : TRAIL OF BROKEN TREATIES MARCH OCCUPIES BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS IN DC

Love in action is harsh and dreadful when compared to love in dreams.

~ Dorothy Day

Wednesday, November 9

1989 : BERLIN WALL FALLS TO NONVIOLENT PROTESTS

As work grows out of play, an attitude toward work grows with it – an attitude that may persist all through our workaday life. That attitude can have a lot to do with how we accept challenges, how we can cope with failures, and whether we can find the inner fulfillment that makes working, in and of itself, worthwhile.

~ Fred Rogers

Thursday, November 10
Tom Boyle

1938 : KRISTALLNACHT

The faith that violence had been unleashed in the name of American liberty and decency disguised the fact that the bare essence of war itself has remained largely unchanged since its mythic Western origins at Troy. Indeed, its violence has grown only more indiscriminate and encompassing. “The true hero, the true subject, the center of the *Iliad* is force, Simone Weil argued after the fall of France in 1940. Weil defined force as “that x that turns anybody who is subjected to it into a *thing*. Exercised to the limit, it turns man [sic] into a thing in the most literal sense; it makes a corpse out of him.” No cause, however noble, could alter the nature of that force—even if technology amplified it to a heretofore inconceivable scale—and Weil discerned a continuity between the world of Homer and that of 1940s Europe:

“Force employed by man, force that enslaves man, force before which man’s flesh shrinks away. In this work, at all times, the human spirit is shown as modified by its relationship with force, as swept away, blinded, by the very force it imagined it could handle, as deformed by the weight of the force it submits to. For those dreamers who considered that force, thanks to progress, a thing of the past, the *Iliad* could appear as a historical document; for others, whose powers of recognition are more acute and who perceive force, today as yesterday, at the very center of human history, the *Iliad* is the purest and loveliest of mirrors.”

~ Elizabeth Samet

Friday, November 11

If more of us valued food and cheer and song above
hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world.

~ J R R Tolkien

Saturday, November 12

1991 : INDONESIAN TROOPS MASSACRE 150 NONVIOLENT ACTIVISTS IN EAST
TIMOR

Adults rarely like being told that they don't have all the
answers, or worse still, that the answers they do have are all the
wrong ones.

~ Hanna Alkaf

Sunday, November 13

Love has made me a different person. It has made the
world beautiful.

~ Nawal El Saadawi

Monday, November 14

You must let suffering speak, if you want to hear the truth.

~ Cornel West

Tuesday, November 15

1887 : GEORGIA O'KEEFFE BORN

When you take a flower in your hand and really look at it,
it's your world for a moment.

~ Georgia O'Keeffe

Wednesday, November 16

1989 : SALVADOREAN DEATH SQUAD (TRAINED IN US AT SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS)
MURDERS SIX JESUIT PRIESTS, HOUSEKEEPER AND DAUGHTER IN SAN SALVADOR

Look at a tree, a flower, a plant. Let your awareness rest
upon it. How still they are, how deeply rooted in being. Allow
nature to teach you stillness.

~ Eckhart Tolle

Thursday, November 17
Bob Cothran

The ambiguities of Korea (the “forgotten” war that, technically, has yet to end), the mendacity and failure of Vietnam, the transitory triumph of the First Gulf War, the ultimate confusion of a seemingly unending war against what has come to be called global extremism, and, in the last few years, the prospective dissolution of the postwar liberal world order under the Trumpian mandate of America First: all of these events have invoked, reflected, and renewed the mythical status of World War II. Each generation has found a new use for the Good War. Nostalgia for the war years remains a bulwark against doubt and disillusion, a great golden age to which we can always retreat to remember who we were and might be again, seeking safety through violent conflict because once we thought we found it there, retaining a faith in the American capacity for exceptional violence. Victory in the twentieth century’s second global conflict transformed the world and at the same time condemned the United States to a futile quest for another just as good, just as definitive, just as transformational. Wars can never do the work of redemption, even when their causes meet generally agreed-upon criteria for justice.

~ Elizabeth Samet

Friday, November 18

1787 : SOJOURNER TRUTH BORN

The poor men seem to be all in confusion, and don't know what to do. Why children, if you have woman's rights, give it to her and you will feel better.

~ Sojourner Truth

Saturday, November 19

1915 : LABOR ORGANIZER/SONGWRITER JOE HILL EXECUTED IN UTAH

Workers of the world awaken. Break your chains, demand your rights. / All the wealth you make is taken by exploiting parasites. / Shall you kneel in deep submission from your cradle to your grave? / Is the height of your ambition to be a good and willing slave?

~ Joe Hill

Sunday, November 20

Certainty is impossible. Once you realize it, you stop seeking it and you become calm.

~ Maxime Lagacé

Monday, November 21

If there is to be any peace it will come through being, not having.

~ Henry Miller

Tuesday, November 22

1998 : 2,300 CROSS LINE IN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AT SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS
FT. BENNING, COLUMBUS, GA

Listening is where love begins: listening to ourselves and then to our neighbors.

~ Fred Rogers

Wednesday, November 23

All that is gold does not glitter,
Not all those who wander are lost;
The old that is strong does not wither,
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.

~ J R R Tolkien

Thursday, November 24
Maren Ortmeier

But after we have done all this, we have not yet reached the whole. There is something else connected with it. We have besides these men [sic]—descended by blood from our ancestors—among us perhaps half our people who are not descendants at all of these men; they are men who...have come from Europe themselves, or whose ancestors have come hither and settled here, finding themselves our equals in all things. If they look back through this history to trace their connections with those days by blood, they find they have none, they cannot carry themselves back into that glorious epoch and make themselves feel they are a part of us, but when they look through that old Declaration of Independence they find that those old men say that “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal,” and then they feel that that moral sentiment taught in that day evidences their relation to those men, that it is the father of all moral principle in them, and that they have a right to claim it as though they were blood of the blood and flesh of the flesh of the men who wrote the Declaration; and so they are. That is the electric cord in that Declaration that links the hearts of patriots and liberty-loving men together, that will link those hearts as long as the love of freedom exists in the minds of men throughout the world.

~ Abraham Lincoln

Friday, November 25

Do not allow yourself to be blinded by fear and anger.
Everything is only as it is.

~ Yuki Urishibara

Saturday, November 26

1792 : SARAH GRIMKE BORN

I am persuaded that the rights of women, like the rights of slaves, need only be examined to be understood and asserted.

~ Sarah Grimke

Sunday, November 27

You're always you, and that don't change, and you're always changing, and there's nothing you can do about it.

~ Neil Gaiman

Monday, November 28

Imagining something may be the first step in making it happen, but it takes the real time and real efforts of real people to learn things, make things, turn thoughts into deeds or visions into inventions.

~ Fred Rogers

Tuesday, November 29

1908 : THURGOOD MARSHALL'S BIRTHDAY!

I wish I could say that racism and prejudice were only distant memories. We must dissent from the indifference. We must dissent from the apathy. We must dissent from the fear, the hatred and the mistrust.

~ Thurgood Marshall

Wednesday, November 30

1835 : MARK TWAIN BORN

Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.

~ Samuel Clemens



Mary Dennis Lentsch
1937 - 2022

When the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance announced the Stop the Bombs campaign in 1998, Mary Dennis was one of the first to step up. She had a history—or maybe we should say, “priors,” having been arrested at demonstrations against nuclear weapons at Honeywell and at the Nevada Test Site.

Mary Dennis was a tireless worker against nuclear weapons; she volunteered at OREPA, lived in our Peace House in Oak Ridge for several years, maintained our database, served on the Action and Events committee, folded tens of thousands of peace cranes and attached red yarn to them—each year on August 6, hundreds of those cranes were hung on the fence in front of the bomb plant in Oak Ridge, each one a plea for peace.

Her memory, and the amazing amount of good she was able to do in her 85 years, will inspire and animate us as we work for justice and peace for years to come.

You can read a full remembrance in OREPA’s newsletter at orepa.org



Judy Ross
1922 - 2022

She was a small woman, quiet and unassuming. Her voice was gentle and lilting, wavering as she talked. She taught and composed music, providing works for commissions that came from around the country. And, from time to time, she went to jail.

Building nuclear weapons that threaten all life on Earth was not acceptable to Judy, and she would not be remembered as someone who saw the threat and walked away from it. Instead, she joined activists again and again in Oak Ridge; she was arrested repeatedly for blocking the entrance to Y-12.

Before we ever met Judy, she had reached a point when most people are easing their way into the sunset. She was just getting her second wind, though, and set her sights on eliminating nuclear weapons.

Beneath her sweet, gentle, appearance was a steely determination to do everything she could, until her last breath, to save the world from itself. And she did just that.