

# introduction

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Recently a search for photographs of events and leaders in the history of the American peace movement led me to the pictorial division of the Library of Congress. In its large card catalog photo index I found two items listed under “Disarmament,” and a single card entry for “Pacifism.” It was a cross reference to an entry in the regional files: “7665 (agitation).” The National Archives has a large collection of recently deposited World War I photographs. The index lists several boxes of pictures of “peace parades,” and so I made an anxious search, only to find that they are records of Armistice Day parades—Victory Parades—around the country. This blind alley gave me pause. Who assembled and deposited this fine collection? The War Department General Staff of 1917-1919. How would the War Department have classified the pacifists and peace advocates whose pictures I wanted to find? A moment’s reflection led me to photos of just the people I was after, filed under such designations as “Arrest of Alien Enemies in U.S.” and “Anti-war Agitators.”

To an archivist this story would illustrate the importance of assessing the perspective of whomever organizes collections. To an historian it should illustrate the importance of reassessing the historical perspective on the American peace movement. That is the purpose of this volume.

*Peace Movements in America* is a comprehensive survey of the twentieth-century antiwar movements in the United States. It is not complete; there are gaps in its coverage and it does not develop a uniform or narrative point of view. But it *is* interpretative, and it does develop fresh understanding of three generations of peace advocates. The essays in this special issue are the product of recent research. They demonstrate the variety of wings and factional divisions in the peace movement, and they illustrate the diverse contexts in which men and women have sought to abolish war or mitigate its effects. These articles document the range and variety of social and cultural traditions involved in the peace movement, and they suggest the effects of the interrelation of varying factions on the movement itself and on its relation to the public. What is more, the articles taken together suggest two broad frames of reference from which

to interpret the specific facets of the peace movement recounted here, perspectives from which to explore further aspects of the search for peace.

## I

One broad frame of reference is a contemporary questioning of liberal political processes. It is well illustrated in the revisionist histories of the Cold War about which Norman Wilensky writes in "Was the Cold War Necessary?" These histories reflect a critical interpretation of previous American foreign policy and of domestic liberal institutions, as Wilensky observes. Their challenge to the Cold War consensus—the assumption that the underpinning of American foreign policy should be a determination to oppose the expansion of the communist bloc—fades into an historiographical challenge to consensus itself, with its assumption that the most meaningful narrative thread of American history has been the formation and reformation of a shifting majority viewpoint. From the newly revisionist perspective (as always from Marxist and ethnic ones) the essential narrative thread of American history has been the dissenting challenges that have moved, or indeed failed to move, our society off dead center in the interest of justice and peace. From the same point of view, some historians have stressed the institutional weight of those aspects of our society that proscribe movement from the center.

In some measure these are complementary perspectives, matters of relative emphasis. But the priorities of each have led not only to differences in attention but also to conflicts in value. For many historians the mainstream not only is the center of attention, but also it has a central value; for revisionists dissent not only has been important (either in shaping events or in defining the tragic meaning of events it failed to shape), but also it has carried values unfulfilled. For liberals the process of consensus-formation not only is characteristic of American society, but must be protected; for radicals the institutions of public consensus must be challenged because they threaten movement by crushing dissenting interests and opinions.

These alternative perspectives together constitute a frame of reference which is explicit in relation to Cold War historiography, and implicit in several other of the essays in this issue. Jon Yoder applies it quite consciously in "The United World Federalists: Liberals for Law and Order." This is a revisionist essay; it is concerned not with official decision-making of power-holding groups in the United States, but rather with a frustrated fragment of the peace movement. Yoder argues that liberal world federalists weakened their thrust precisely when they abandoned the essence of their insight out of fear of becoming hounded dissenters. David Patterson develops important parallels in his "Interpretation of the American Peace Movement, 1898-1914," although he does not draw so critical a conclusion as does Yoder. In "Democracy in Wartime" Blanche Wiesen Cook finds a parallel tendency on the part of liberal

internationalists in the United States and England to turn on radical dissenters in time of war.

Charles DeBenedetti portrays the peace movement as confused and divided by differing priorities upon majority consensus in the search for "Alternative Strategies in the American Peace Movement in The 1920's." I find the movement sharply divided by similar priorities in the quest for "Alternative Antiwar Strategies of the Thirties." (This is a theme the subsequent development of which has been traced by Lawrence Wittner in *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1941-1960*, New York, 1969.) A. J. Muste emerges as a radical in Jo Ann Robinson's interpretation, "A. J. Muste and Ways to Peace," largely because of his forthright commitment to dissent, with or without power.

Even the contemporary movement for peace research and education reflects these alternative perspectives. Cynthia Kerman describes how they challenged a leading theorist of conflict resolution as she portrays "Kenneth Boulding and the Peace Research Movement." Indeed, the credibility of peace education itself, as interpreted by Michael Washburn in "Peace Education at the Crossroads," depends upon the resolution of these alternative viewpoints on political action:

The credibility of the peace approaches [to education] does not depend on their ability to develop right now an obviously workable and comprehensive solution to the world's problems. Peace educators must demonstrate, however, that they recognize the full scope of the problem. . . . Peace educators show very few signs of becoming responsive to the setting within which political action is being and will be taken.

It is just this setting that is explored in these essays on the historic peace movement. David Patterson, Charles DeBenedetti and I explore the role of peace advocates in the formulation of attitudes and policy. Jo Ann Robinson describes the function of religious values in the directions taken by a leading antiwar crusader, and Patti Peterson traces the internal dissensus of student antiwar politics. Equally significant for students of American culture, her account illustrates the impact of war and peace issues on sensitive student leadership. Blanche Wiesen Cook recalls with poignant detail the crushing impact of militant nationalism on liberal voluntaristic society in World War I, whereas Jon Yoder suggests the subtle reorientation of a modern liberal peace society in response to Cold War conformism. It is clear that the politics of peace involve the related processes of both the organized antiwar movement and public decision-making. These processes *are* the setting for political action; and understanding their operation will help to clarify the relationship of dissent and consensus in American political institutions.

## II

A second broad frame of reference of interpretation is explicit in the

symposium on "Internationalism as a Current in the Peace Movement." It has become increasingly apparent to students of the peace movement that the word "internationalism" needs a great deal of refinement if it is to be a useful tool of historical analysis. It is a word which, like "nationalism," has been a counterpane for all sorts of idealistic bedfellows. It is a sort of synonym for the "higher good" to which men might aspire, but it does not express the conceptions of reality upon which their values rest.

The notion of isolationism was given extensive analysis between the publication of Robert E. Osgood's *Ideas and Self-Interest in American Foreign Relations* (1953) and Selig Adler's *The Isolationist Impulse* (1957), on one hand, and Manfred Jonas' *Isolationism in America, 1935-1941* (1966). It continues to receive attention, notably in the current researches of Justus Doenecke on the period during and after World War II. Those studies demonstrated the varied use of the word "isolationism," usually as a pejorative term. But they suggested, too, that careful analysis could identify groups of assumptions underlying the rhetoric of those persons considered to be isolationists, as well as events (such as the neutrality controversy) where these premises competed with alternative ones in the realm of public policy. This development has not prevented the hackneyed use of the word for political purposes (as Manfred Jonas points out in the symposium), but it does make such usage irresponsible.

The notion of internationalism also is receiving close scrutiny. Probably the spate of histories of the peace and antiwar movements has called attention to it, if for no other reason than that it causes problems of interpretation. Doubtless, too, the reevaluation of Cold War assumptions has led to reassessment; the internationalism of this period looks increasingly like an extension of collective security, as several contributors to this volume suggest. Whether or not this is the case, contemporary research in conflict resolution and peace studies curricula are based on the systematic assessment of international systems. The symposium on internationalism reflects these various developments. Contributor Robert A. Divine has written in *Second Chance* the story of the "Triumph of Internationalism in America During World War II" as it emerged in the United Nations. The story of the first chance, "The United States and International Organization to 1920," has been written in *Seeking World Order* (Nashville, 1969) by Warren F. Kuehl who now is extending his narrative to the interwar period.

Meanwhile, Sondra Herman has attempted a conceptual analysis of internationalism in the pre-World War I period (a study somewhat analogous to Manfred Jonas' evaluation of later isolationist thought), and her interpretation forms the basis for the exploratory symposium in this volume. Rather than attempt to frame an abstract definition of internationalism, the respondents were invited to discuss the concept functionally, in terms of the roles that its various interpretations have played.

Their comments thus complement the other essays, and together they suggest a useful interpretative distinction.

Following the terminology of the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies, Sondra Herman identifies two conceptual approaches to world order, "political internationalists" and "community internationalists." Another useful way of making the same distinction, and one with increasing currency among political and social scientists, is to identify internationalists and transnationalists. Most simply, then, internationalists are those for whom the basic unit of reality in international relations is still the nation-state with its existing institutions (including those through which it relates to other nations); and they are realistic, in the sense that Walter LaFeber uses the term. Transnationalists are those for whom the basic unit of reality in international relations is the world (whether conceived of as the mystical body of Christ, or as humanity, or the proletariat or ecologically, as a set of interrelated socio-economic systems).

This is but a working definition, one that needs further refinement and testing, and one that may be rejected. But it has the merit of identifying a difference of premises underlying the competing strategies of the peace movement that are described explicitly by David Patterson, Blanche Wiesen Cook, Charles DeBenedetti, Jon Yoder and myself, and implicitly by Patti Peterson and Perry Gianakos. The definition is consistent, too, with Manfred Jonas' rejection of the idea that unilateralism is exclusively an isolationist premise. It also suggests what is distinctive about Kenneth Boulding's world view, as described by Cynthia Kerman: he bases transnationalism upon a systematic assessment of socio-economic institutions.

That appears to be the characteristic distinguishing the contemporary peace education movement from traditional international relations, as discussed by Michael Washburn. Indeed, the confusion in peace education that he describes makes sense in these terms: the contemporary movement derives both from a transnational, largely humanitarian revulsion to the specific war in Vietnam and from a systems analysis approach to conflict resolution (both of which came to fruition in the Sixties); and it tends to build its curriculum upon the older approach to international relations (given the structure of existing college curricula and the training of faculties). Thus, whether or not distinguishing internationalist from transnationalist premises involves a true and comprehensive definition of terms, it seems to have utility in the context of these essays. The application of such a distinction will not prevent conflicting interpretations of internationalism, but it might make the usage less arbitrary.

### III

In any case, the essays in this volume open new vistas in American Studies. Perry Gianakos' essay on Ernest Crosby should be followed by broad studies of war literature both as it has reflected our culture and as

it has interacted with events to affect our history. Social psychology can be used to study leaders and organizations for and against war, in order to systematize the suggestions made by David Patterson and Sondra Herman, among others, about the apolitical bases of some forms of protest activity (much as it has been applied profitably to student protest in the Sixties). Institutional analysis can be utilized to identify more precisely the mechanisms governing the internal politics of protest and the relative effectiveness of various forms of pressure on public policy. Quantitative studies might yield a more reliable index of historic attitudes on war and peace issues than we have now. War as portrayed in visual art and the film—the fictional movie, the news reel, television—offers a virtually untapped approach to American culture.

Perhaps more important than all the specific studies put together, the subject of war and peace offers American Studies that breadth of outlook that it so desperately needs if it is to overcome its parochial bias. In part this means comparative studies, such as that of Blanche Wiesen Cook. Even more to the point, it implies accepting a value judgment and viewing American culture in terms of its origins in and its impact on world civilization, for the United States and the world share a common past and future.

What happens to a culture which for an extended period of time straddles commitments to peace and war? That question is raised on the cover of this volume, with its cartoon depicting a harrassed Uncle Sam trying to ride both a bellicose war horse and a dove of peace. That is the dilemma to which Charles Barker recently has called attention: the conflicts and tensions inherent in valuing both “multilateralism,” a notion through which he combines “our federalism at home and our belief in a rational equilibrium of power around the globe,” and “unilateralism,” by which he refers to the aggressive expansion of our national influence (see his introduction to *Power and Law: American Dilemma in World Affairs*, Baltimore, 1971). Phrased in this way, and interpreted in the light of these essays, dilemma characterizes the American peace movement as well as national policy. What happens to a reform movement which for an extended period of time straddles commitments of both world community and unilateral nationalism, develops strategies of both majority decision-making and minority dissent? The dilemmas of the peace group are those of the society, and the study of each contributes to our understanding of the other. The United States and its antiwar protest movement hold the past and the future in common trust.

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