



PEACE ALMANAC

WORLD**BEYOND**WAR.org
a global movement to end all wars

Peace Almanac

Produced and edited by David Swanson

Items written by Robert Anschuetz,
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Thierry Blanc, and Tom Schott.

World BEYOND War

2019

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This Peace Almanac lets you know important steps, progress, and setbacks in the movement for peace that have taken place on each day of the year.

This Peace Almanac should remain good for every year until all war is abolished and sustainable peace established.

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World BEYOND War is a global nonviolent movement to end war and establish a just and sustainable peace.

We aim to create awareness of popular support for ending war and to further develop that support. We work to advance the idea of not just preventing any particular war but abolishing the entire institution.

We strive to replace a culture of war with one of peace in which nonviolent means of conflict resolution take the place of bloodshed.

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January 1

This is New Year's Day and the World Day of Peace. Today begins yet another run through of the Gregorian calendar, introduced by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 and today the most widely used civil calendar on earth. Today begins the month of January, named either for Janus, the two-faced god of gates and transitions, or for Juno, the Queen of the gods, daughter of Saturn, and both wife and sister of Jupiter. Juno is a warlike version of the Greek goddess Hera. In 1967 the Catholic Church declared January 1st to be a World Day of Peace. Many non-Catholics also take the occasion to celebrate, advocate, educate, and agitate for peace. In the wider tradition of New Year's resolutions, popes have often used the World Day of Peace to make speeches and publish statements in support of moving the world toward peace, and advocating for a variety of other just causes. The World Day of Peace on January 1st should not be confused with the International Day of Peace, established by the United Nations in 1982 and marked each year on September 21st. The latter has become better known, perhaps because not initiated by a single religion, although the word "International" in its name constituted a weakness for those who believe nations are an impediment to peace. The World Day of Peace is also not the same as Peace Sunday which comes in England and Wales on the Sunday that falls between January 14th and 20th. Wherever and whoever we are in the world, we can choose to resolve today to work for peace.

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January 2

On this day in 1905, the Conference of Industrial Unionists in Chicago formed the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), known as The Wobblies, an all-inclusive effort to form one big labor union with every worker in the world in it. The Wobblies rallied for workers' rights, civil rights, social justice, and peace. Their vision is memorialized in the songs they produced and sang. One was called Christians at War and included these words: "Onward, Christian soldiers! Duty's way is plain; Slay your Christian neighbors, or by them be slain. Pulpiteers are spouting effervescent swill, God above is calling you to rob, and rape, and kill. All your acts are sanctified by the Lamb on high; If you love the Holy Ghost, go murder, pray, and die. Onward, Christian soldiers! Rip and tear and smite! Let the gentle Jesus bless your dynamite.

Splinter skulls with shrapnel, fertilize the sod; folks who do not speak your tongue deserve the curse of God. Smash the doors of every home, pretty maidens seize; use your might and sacred right to treat them as you please. Onward, Christian soldiers! Blighting all you meet; Trample human freedom under pious feet. Praise the Lord whose dollar sign dupes his favorite race! Make the foreign trash respect your bullion brand of grace. Trust in mock salvation, serve as tyrants' tools; History will say of you: "That pack of god-damned fools!" In more than a century since this song was written, comprehension of satire has faded a bit, and of course no Christians participate in wars anymore either.



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January 3

On this day in 1967, Jack Ruby, the convicted killer of President John F. Kennedy's alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, died in a Texas prison. Ruby was convicted of killing Oswald two days after Kennedy's shooting while Oswald was in police custody. Ruby was sentenced to death; yet his conviction was appealed, and he was granted a new trial even though the shooting had taken place in front of police officers and reporters taking photographs. As the date for Ruby's new trial was being set, he reportedly died from a pulmonary embolism due to undiagnosed lung cancer. According to records never released by the National Archives until November 2017, Jack Ruby had told an FBI informant to "watch the fireworks" on the day President John F. Kennedy was killed, and was in the area where the assassination took place. Ruby denied this during his trial, maintaining that he was acting out of patriotism when he killed Oswald. The official Warren Commission report of 1964 concluded that neither Oswald nor Ruby were part of a larger conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy. Despite its seemingly firm conclusions, the report failed to silence doubts surrounding the event. In 1978, the House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded in a preliminary report that Kennedy was "probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy" that may have involved multiple shooters and organized crime. The committee's findings, as the Warren Commission's, continue to be widely disputed. The youngest U.S. president's ideas made him the most popular and most missed: "Step back from the shadow of war and seek out the way of peace," he said.

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January 4

On this day in 1948, the nation of Burma (also known as Myanmar) freed itself of British colonialism and became an independent republic. The British had fought three wars against Burma in the 19th century, the third of which in 1886 made Burma a province of British India. Rangoon (Yangon) became the capital and a busy port between Calcutta and Singapore. Many Indians and Chinese arrived with the British, and massive cultural changes resulted in struggles, rioting, and protests. British rule, and refusal to remove shoes when entering pagodas, led Buddhist monks to resist. Rangoon University produced radicals, and a young law student, Aung San, started both the “Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League” (AFPFL), and the “People’s Revolutionary Party” (PRP). It was San, among others, who managed to negotiate Burma’s independence from Britain in 1947 and to establish an agreement with ethnic nationalities for a unified Burma. San was assassinated before independence came. San’s youngest daughter Aung San Suu Kyi continued his work toward democracy. In 1962, the Burmese military took over the government. It also killed over 100 students engaged in a peaceful protest at Rangoon University. In 1976, 100 students were arrested after a simple sit-in. Suu Kyi was put under house arrest, yet received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. Although the military remains a strong force in Myanmar, Suu Kyi was elected State Counsellor (or prime minister) in 2016, backed by the Burmese National League for Democracy. Suu Kyi has been criticized around the world for overseeing or allowing the Burmese military to slaughter hundreds of men, women, and children of the Rohingya ethnic group.

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January 5

On this day in 1968, Antonin Novotny, the Stalinist ruler of Czechoslovakia, was succeeded as first secretary by Alexander Dubcek, who believed socialism could be achieved. Dubcek supported communism, yet introduced freedom of speech in reforms backing unions, and civil rights. This period is known as the “Prague Spring.” The Soviet Union then invaded Czechoslovakia; liberal leaders were taken to Moscow, and were replaced with Soviet officials. Dubcek’s reforms were repealed, and Gustav Husak who replaced him re-established an authoritarian Communist regime. This brought massive protests throughout the country. Radio stations, newspapers, and books published during this time, such as *The Garden Party* and *The Memorandum* by Vaclav Havel were banned, and Havel was imprisoned for nearly four years. Thousands of students conducted a peaceful four-day sit-in at high schools and colleges across the country, with factories sending them food in solidarity. Some brutal and horrific events then took place. In January 1969, Jan Palach a college student set himself on fire in Wenceslas Square to protest the occupation and the removal of civil liberties. His death became synonymous with the Prague Spring, and his funeral became another protest demonstration. A second student, Jan Zajíc carried out the same act in the square, while a third, Evžen Plocek, died in Jihlava. As Communist governments were being ousted across Eastern Europe, Prague’s protests continued until December 1989 when Husak’s government finally conceded. Dubcek was again named chairman of the Parliament, and Vaclav Havel became president of Czechoslovakia. Bringing communism to an end in Czechoslovakia, or the Prague “Summer,” took more than twenty years of protest.

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January 6

On this day in 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt made a speech that introduced the term “Four Freedoms,” which he said included freedom of speech and expression; freedom of religion; freedom from fear; and freedom from want. His speech was aimed at freedom for citizens of every country, yet citizens of the United States and of much of the world are still struggling in each of the four areas. Here are some of the words President Roosevelt said that day: “In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression — everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way — everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want — which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants — everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear — which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor— anywhere in the world... . To that high concept there can be no end save victory.” Today the U.S. government frequently restricts First Amendment rights. Polls find majorities abroad view the U.S. as the greatest threat to peace. And the U.S. leads all wealthy nations in poverty. The Four Freedoms remain to be strived for.

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January 7

On this day in 1932, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Stimson delivered the Stimson Doctrine. The United States had been called upon by the League of Nations to take a stand on the recent Japanese attacks on China. Stimson, with the approval of President Herbert Hoover, declared in what was also called the Hoover-Stimson doctrine, U.S. opposition to the current fighting in Manchuria. The Doctrine stated, first, that the United States would not recognize any treaty that compromised the sovereignty or integrity of China; and second, that it would not recognize any territorial changes achieved through force of arms. The statement was based on the outlawing of war through the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact which eventually ended the acceptability and recognition of conquest almost worldwide. The United States suffered during the aftermath of WWI as its citizens struggled with a Wall Street-created depression, numerous bank failures, massive unemployment, and massive resentment of the war. The U.S. was unlikely to enter a new war soon and had refused to support the League of Nations. The Stimson Doctrine has since been described as ineffective, due to the invasion of Shanghai by the Japanese three weeks later, and the subsequent wars across Europe involving other countries that disregarded the rule of law. Some historians believe the doctrine was self-serving, and meant to simply keep trade open during the Great Depression while remaining neutral. On the other hand, there are historians and legal theorists who recognize that the injection of morality into global politics made the Stimson Doctrine instrumental in shaping a new international view of war and its consequences.

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January 8

On this day, A.J. Muste (1885 – 1967), a Dutch-born American, began his life. A.J. Muste was one of the leading nonviolent social activists of his time. Starting out as a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, he became a socialist and labor union activist, and was one of the founders and the first director of Brookwood Labor College of New York. In 1936, he committed himself to pacifism and focused his energy on war resistance, civil rights, civil liberties, and disarmament. He worked with a wide array of organizations, including the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and War Resisters League, and served as editor of Liberation magazine. He continued his work for peace during the U.S. war in Vietnam; shortly before his death, he traveled to North Vietnam with a delegation of clergy and met with Communist leader Ho Chi Minh. A.J. Muste was widely respected and admired in the movement for social justice for his ability to relate to people of all ages and backgrounds, to listen to and reflect on all points of view, and to bridge distances among divergent political sectors. The A.J. Muste Memorial Institute was organized in 1974 to keep A.J.'s legacy alive through ongoing support of the nonviolent movement for social change. The Institute publishes pamphlets and books on nonviolence, provides grants and sponsorships to grassroots groups throughout the U.S. and the world, at its New York City "Peace Pentagon." In Muste's words: "There is no way to peace; peace is the way."

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January 9

On this day in 1918, the U.S. fought its last battle with Native Americans at the Battle of Bear Valley. The Yaqui Indians were driven north by their long war with Mexico, and crossed the border near a military base in Arizona. Yaquis would sometimes work in U.S. citrus groves, buy weapons with their wages, and take them back into Mexico. On that fateful day, the army found a small group. Fighting ensued until one Yaqui started waving his arms in surrender. Ten Yaquis were captured, and told to line up with their hands over their heads. The chief stood tall, but kept his hands at his waist. As his hands were forcibly raised, it was apparent he was simply trying hold his stomach together. He had suffered from an explosion caused by a bullet igniting cartridges wrapped around his waist, and he died the following day. Another of the captured was an eleven-year-old boy whose rifle was as long as he was tall. This brave group had enabled a larger one to escape. Those captured were then taken on horseback to Tucson for a federal trial. They managed to impress the soldiers during the trip with their courage and strength. At the trial, the judge dismissed all charges for the eleven-year-old, and sentenced the other eight to a mere 30 days in prison. Colonel Harold B. Wharfield wrote: “the sentence was preferable to the Yaquis who otherwise would be deported to Mexico and face possible execution as rebels.”

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January 10

On this day in 1920 the League of Nations was founded. It was the first international organization established to maintain world peace. It was not a new idea. Discussions following the Napoleonic wars led eventually to the Geneva and Hague Conventions. In 1906, Nobel Prize laureate Theodore Roosevelt called for a “League of Peace.” Then, at the end of WWI, the British, the French and the U.S. prepared concrete proposals. These led to the negotiation and acceptance of a “Covenant of the League of Nations” at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The Covenant, which focused on collective security, disarmament, and settling international disputes through negotiation and arbitration, was then included in the Treaty of Versailles. The League was governed by a General Assembly and an Executive Council (open only to major powers). With the onset of WWII, it was clear the League had failed. Why? Governance: Resolutions required a unanimous vote of the Executive Council. This gave Council members an effective veto. Membership: Many nations never joined. There were 42 founding members and 58 at its peak. Many viewed it as a “League of Victors.” Germany was not permitted to join. Communist regimes were not welcomed. And ironically, the United States never joined. President Woodrow Wilson, a key proponent, could not get it through the Senate. The inability to enforce decisions: The League depended on the victors of WWI to enforce its resolutions. They were reluctant to do so. Conflicting objectives: The need for armed enforcement conflicted with efforts at disarmament. In 1946, after only 26 years, the League of Nations was replaced by the United Nations.



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January 11

On this day in 2002, Guantanamo Bay Prison Camp began operating in Cuba. Originally intended to be an “island outside the law” where terrorism suspects could be detained without process and interrogated without restraint, the prison and military commissions at Guantánamo Bay are catastrophic failures. Guantánamo has become a symbol of injustice, abuse, and disregard for the law. Since the prison camp opened, almost 800 men have passed through its cells. In addition to unlawful detention, many have been subjected to torture and other brutal treatment. Most have been held without charge or trial. Many prisoners have been held for years after having been cleared for release by the U.S. military, stuck in a quagmire into which no arm of government has been willing to reach to end the violation of their rights. Guantánamo has been a blight on the reputation and security of the United States and a recruiting tool for groups like ISIS that have dressed their own prisoners in GITMO orange. The U.S. president and his agencies for years have had but not used the power to end indefinite detention and close Guantánamo. Closing Guantánamo the right way requires ending indefinite imprisonment without charge or trial; transferring detainees who have been cleared for transfer; and trying detainees for whom there is evidence of wrongdoing in federal criminal courts in the United States. U.S. federal courts routinely handle high-profile terrorism cases. If a prosecutor cannot put together a case against a prisoner, there is no reason that person should continue to be imprisoned, whether in Guantánamo or the United States.

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January 12

On this day in 1970 Biafra, the breakaway region in southeastern Nigeria, surrendered to the Federal Army, thus ending the Nigerian Civil War. Nigeria, a former British colony, gained independence in 1960. This bloody and divisive war was a result of an independence designed primarily for the interests of the colonial power. Nigeria was a disparate collection of independent states. During the colonial period it was administered as two regions, Northern and Southern. In 1914, for administrative convenience and more effective control over resources, North and South were amalgamated. Nigeria has three predominant groups: the Igbo in the southeast; the Hausa-Fulani in the north; and the Yoruba in the southwest. At independence, the Prime Minister was from the north, the most populous region. Regional differences made achieving national unity difficult. Tensions mounted during the 1964 elections. Amid widespread allegations of fraud, the incumbent was re-elected. In 1966, junior officers attempted a coup. Aguiyi-Ironsi, head of the Nigerian Army and an Igbo, suppressed it and became head of state. Six months later, northern officers staged a counter-coup. Yakubu Gowon, a northerner, became head of state. This led to pogroms in the north. Up to 100,000 Igbo were killed and a million fled. On May 30, 1967, the Igbo, declared the Southeast Region the Independent Republic of Biafra. The Military Government went to war to reunify the country. Their first objective was to capture Port Harcourt and control of the oil fields. Blockades followed, which led to severe famine and the starvation of up to 2 million Biafran civilians. Fifty years later, the war and its consequences remain the focus of fierce debate.



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January 13

On this day in 1991, Soviet Special Forces attacked a Lithuanian television and radio tower, killing 14 and wounding over 500 as tanks drove through crowds of unarmed civilians guarding the tower in defense of Lithuanian broadcasting independence. The Supreme Council of Lithuania issued an immediate appeal to the world to recognize that the Soviet Union had attacked their sovereign state, and that Lithuanians intended to maintain their independence under any circumstances. Lithuania had declared its independence in 1990. The Lithuanian Parliament quickly passed a law providing for the organization of a government in exile in the event that the Council should be disabled by Soviet military intervention. Russia's leader, Boris Yeltsin, responded with denial of his hand in the attacks, and appealed to Russian soldiers stating this was an illegal act, and inviting them to think about their own families left at home. Despite his and Mikhail Gorbachev's denial of any involvement, Soviet attacks and killings continued. A crowd of Lithuanians tried to protect the TV and radio tower. Soviet tanks advanced and fired on the crowd. Soviet troops took over and switched off the live TV broadcast. But a smaller TV station began broadcasting in multiple languages to let the world know. A huge crowd gathered to protect the Supreme Council building, and the Soviet troops retreated. International outrage followed. In February, Lithuanians voted overwhelmingly for independence. As Lithuania gained its independence, it became apparent that military invasions were unprepared for a world of increasing freedom of communication.

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January 14

On this day in 1892 Martin Niemöller was born. He died in 1984. This prominent Protestant pastor who emerged as an outspoken foe of Adolf Hitler spent the last seven years of Nazi rule in concentration camps, despite his ardent nationalism. Niemöller is perhaps best remembered for the quotation: “First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me.” Niemöller was discharged from the German Navy after World War I. He decided to follow in his father’s footsteps by entering a seminary. Niemöller became known as a charismatic preacher. Despite warnings from the police, he continued to preach against the state’s attempts to interfere with churches and what he viewed as the neo-paganism encouraged by the Nazis. As a consequence, Niemöller was repeatedly arrested and put in solitary confinement between 1934 and 1937. Niemöller became a popular figure abroad. He delivered the opening address at the 1946 meeting of the Federal Council of Churches in the United States and traveled widely speaking about the German experience under Nazism. By the mid-1950s, Niemöller worked with a number of international groups, including the World Council of Churches, for international peace. Niemöller’s German nationalism never wavered as he railed against the division of Germany, stating that he preferred unification even if it were under Communism.

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January 15

On this day in 1929, Martin Luther King, Jr. was born. His life ended abruptly and tragically on April 4th, 1968, when he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. The only non-president to have a U.S. national holiday dedicated in his honor, and the only non-president memorialized with a major monument in Washington, D.C., Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech, Nobel Peace Prize lecture, and "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" are among the most revered orations and writings in the English language. Drawing inspiration from both his Christian faith and the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. King led a movement in the late 1950s and 1960s to achieve legal equality for African Americans in the United States. During the fewer than 13 years of his leadership of the modern American Civil Rights Movement, from December, 1955 until April 4, 1968, Americans achieved more genuine progress toward racial equality in America than the previous 350 years had produced. Dr. King is widely regarded as one of the greatest nonviolent leaders in world history. While others were advocating for freedom by "any means necessary," Martin Luther King, Jr. used the power of words and acts of nonviolent resistance, such as protests, grassroots organizing, and civil disobedience to achieve seemingly impossible goals. He went on to lead similar campaigns against poverty, and international conflict, always maintaining fidelity to his principles of nonviolence. His opposition to the war on Vietnam, and advocacy for moving beyond racism, militarism, and extreme materialism continues to inspire peace and justice activists seeking a broader coalition for a better world.

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January 16

On this day in 1968, Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin founded the Youth International Party (the Yippies), just one day before President Lyndon Baines Johnson gave his State of the Union Address asserting that the U.S. was winning the war in Vietnam. The Yippies were a part of the widespread anti-war movement of the 1960s-70s which grew out of the civil rights movement. Both Hoffman and Rubin were part of the anti-war March on the Pentagon in October 1967, which Jerry Rubin called the “linchpin for Yippie politics.” Hoffman and Rubin used a “Yippie style” in their anti-war and anti-capitalist work, joined by musicians like Country Joe and the Fish, and poets/writers like Allen Ginsberg who quoted Hoffman’s feelings about the turbulent times: “[Hoffman] said that politics had become theater and magic, basically, that it was the manipulation of imagery through the mass media that was confusing and hypnotizing the people in the United States, making them accept a war which they really didn’t believe in.” The Yippies’ numerous demonstrations and protests included one at the Democratic National Convention in 1968 where they were joined by the Black Panthers, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (the MOBE). Their theatrical Festival of Life in Lincoln Park, including the nomination of a pig named Pigasus as their presidential nominee, led to the arrest and trial of Hoffman, Rubin, and members of the other groups. The Yippies’ supporters continued their political protests, and opened a Yippie Museum in New York City.

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January 17

On this day in 1893, U.S. profiteers, businessmen, and Marines overthrew the kingdom of Hawaii in Oahu, beginning a long string of violent and disastrous government overthrows around the world. The Queen of Hawaii, Lili'uokalani, responded with the following statement to President Benjamin Harrison: "I Lili'uokalani, by the Grace of God, and under the Constitution of the Hawaiian Kingdom, Queen, do hereby solemnly protest against any and all acts done against myself and the constitutional Government of the Hawaiian Kingdom by certain persons claiming to have established a Provisional Government of and for this Kingdom... to avoid any collision of armed forces, and perhaps the loss of life, I do this under protest, and impelled by said force yield my authority until such time as the Government of the United States shall, upon facts being presented to it, undo the action of its representative and reinstate me in the authority which I claim as the constitutional sovereign of the Hawaiian Islands." James H. Blount was named Special Commissioner, sent to investigate, and to report his findings on the takeover. Blount concluded that the United States was directly responsible for the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian government, and that U.S. government actions had violated international laws as well as Hawaiian territorial sovereignty. One hundred years later, on this day in 1993, Hawaii held a major demonstration against U.S. occupation. The U.S. then issued an apology, acknowledging that Hawaiians "never freely relinquished their claims... to their inherent sovereignty." Native Hawaiians continue to advocate for Hawaii's liberation from the United States, and from the U.S. military.

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January 18

On this day, in 2001, two members of the direct action group, Trident Ploughshares, were acquitted after being charged with harming the British HMS Vengeance which carried a quarter of Britain's nuclear arsenal. Sylvia Boyes, 57, of West Yorkshire, and River, formerly Keith Wright, 45, of Manchester, admitted to attacking the HMS Vengeance with hammers and axes at a dock in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, in November of 1999. The two denied any wrongdoing, however, claiming their actions were justified because nuclear weapons were illegal under international law. Further arguments surrounding politicians being trusted with a nuclear arsenal led to the concession by the court that civilians were feeling frustrated and obligated to act. A spokeswoman for Trident Ploughshares added: "At last a precedent has been set for English people to follow their conscience and declare Trident illegal." Earlier actions in Britain leading up to the Trident Ploughshares acquittals included charges filed in 1996 when a jury at Liverpool Crown Court acquitted two women charged with causing significant damage to a Hawk fighter jet at a British Aerospace factory. In 1999, a sheriff in Greenock, Strathclyde, found three women charged with damaging Trident submarine computer equipment at a naval establishment on Loch Goil not guilty. And in 2000, two women accused of spray painting anti-war slogans on a nuclear submarine were acquitted in Manchester, although the prosecution later pushed for a retrial. The lack of commitment by governments on steps toward international peace has left civilians worldwide fearing nuclear war, and with little faith in their own governments to reduce the danger.

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January 19

On this day in 1920, in the face of egregious civil liberties abuses, a small group took a stand, and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) was born. Following World War I, there was fear that the Communist Revolution in Russia would spread to the United States. As is often the case when fear outweighs rational debate, civil liberties paid the price. In November 1919 and January 1920, in what notoriously became known as the “Palmer Raids,” Attorney General Mitchell Palmer began rounding up and deporting so-called “radicals.” Thousands of people were arrested without warrants and without regard to constitutional protections against unlawful search and seizure, were brutally treated, and held in horrible conditions. The ACLU defended them, and has evolved over the years from this small group into the nation’s premier defender of the rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution. They defended teachers in the Scopes case in 1925, fought the internment of Japanese Americans in 1942, joined the NAACP in 1954 in the legal battle for equal education in *Brown v. Board of Education*, and defended students arrested for protesting the draft and the Vietnam war. They continue to fight for reproductive rights, free speech, equality, privacy and net neutrality, and are leading the fight to end torture and to demand full accountability for those who condone it. For almost 100 years, the ACLU has worked to defend and preserve individual rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitutional laws of the United States. The ACLU has participated in more Supreme Court cases than any other organization, and is the largest public interest law firm.

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January 20

On this day in 1987, humanitarian and peace activist Terry Waite, special envoy for the Archbishop of Canterbury, was taken hostage in Lebanon. He was there to negotiate the release of western hostages. Waite had an impressive track record. In 1980 he successfully negotiated the release of hostages in Iran. In 1984 he successfully negotiated the release of hostages in Libya. In 1987 he was less successful. While negotiating, he himself was taken hostage. On November 18, 1991, just under five years later, he and others were released. Waite had suffered greatly and was welcomed home as a hero. However, his actions in Lebanon may not have been what they seemed. It later surfaced that before he went to Lebanon he met with U.S. Lt. Colonel Oliver North. North wanted to fund the Contras in Nicaragua. The U.S. Congress had forbidden it. Iran wanted weapons but was subject to an arms embargo. North arranged for arms to go to Iran in exchange for money sent to the Contras. But North needed cover. And the Iranians needed insurance. Hostages would be held until the arms were delivered. Terry Waite would be presented as the man who negotiated their release. Nobody would see the arms deal hidden in the background. Whether Terry Waite knew he was being played is uncertain. However, North certainly knew. An investigative journalist reported that a National Security Council official admitted that North “ran Terry Waite like an agent.” This cautionary tale underlines the need, even for those with the best credentials and the best of intentions, to guard against witting or unwitting cooption.

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January 21

On this day in 1977, U.S. President Jimmy Carter, on his first day as president, pardoned all Vietnam-era draft dodgers. The U.S. had accused 209,517 men of violating draft laws, while another 360,000 were never formally charged. The five previous presidents had overseen what the Vietnamese call the American War, and the United States calls the Vietnam War. Two of those presidents had been elected on promises to end the war, promises they had not kept. Carter had promised to grant an unconditional pardon to men who had evaded the draft by fleeing the country or by failing to register. He quickly kept that promise. Carter did not extend the pardon to those who had been members of the U.S. military and deserted, nor to anyone alleged to have engaged in violence as a protester. About 90 percent of those who left the United States to avoid the draft went to Canada, as did many deserters. The Canadian government allowed this, as it had earlier allowed people to flee slavery by crossing its border. Approximately 50,000 draft dodgers settled permanently in Canada. While the draft ended in 1973, in 1980 President Carter reinstated the requirement that every 18-year-old male register for any future draft. Today some view the lack of this requirement for females, freeing them from the threat of being forced to go to war, as discrimination . . . against women, while others view the requirement for males as a vestige of barbarism. While there has been no draft to flee, thousands have deserted the U.S. military in the 21st century.

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January 22

On this day in 2006, Evo Morales was inaugurated as President of Bolivia. He was Bolivia's first indigenous president. As a young coca farmer, Morales had been active in protests against the war on drugs and supported indigenous rights to farm and continue the traditional High Andes use of the coca leaf. In 1978 he joined and then rose to prominence in the rural laborers union. In 1989 he spoke at an event commemorating the massacre of 11 coca farmers by agents of the Rural Area Mobile Patrol Unit. The following day agents beat Morales up, leaving him in the mountains to die. But he was rescued and lived. This was a turning point for Morales. He began to consider forming a militia and launching a guerrilla war against the government. In the end, however, he chose non-violence. He began by developing a political wing of the union. By 1995 he was head of the Movement for Socialism party (MAS) and was elected to Congress. By 2006 he was President of Bolivia. His administration focused on implementing policies for the reduction of poverty and illiteracy, for the preservation of the environment, for indigenising the government (Bolivia has a majority indigenous population), and for combating the influence of the United States and multinational corporations. On April 28, 2008, he addressed the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and proposed 10 Commandments to save the Planet. His second commandment stated: "Denounce and PUT AN END to war, which only brings profits for empires, transnationals, and a few families, but not for peoples. . . ."

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January 23

On this date in 1974, Egypt and Israel began a disengagement of forces that effectively ended armed conflict between the two countries in the Yom Kippur War. The war had begun the previous October 6, on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur, when Egyptian and Syrian forces launched a coordinated attack on Israel in hopes of winning back territory they had lost in the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. The disengagement of Israeli and Egyptian forces had been mandated by the Sinai Separation of Forces Agreement signed by the two countries five days before, on January 18, 1974, under the auspices of the U.N.-sponsored Geneva Conference of 1973. It called for Israel to withdraw from areas west of the Suez Canal that it had occupied since a cease-fire in October 1973, and to also pull back several miles on the Sinai front east of the canal so that a UN-controlled buffer zone could be established between the hostile forces. The settlement nevertheless left Israel in control of the rest of the Sinai Peninsula, and a full peace was yet to be achieved. A November 1977 visit to Jerusalem by Egypt's President Anwar el-Sadat led to serious negotiations the following year at Camp David in the U.S. There, with critical help from President Jimmy Carter, Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin reached an agreement under which the entire Sinai would be returned to Egypt and diplomatic relations between the two countries established. The agreement was signed on March 26, 1979, and on April 25, 1982, Israel returned the last occupied portion of the Sinai to Egypt.

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January 24

On this day in 1961, two hydrogen bombs fell on North Carolina when a B-52G jet with a crew of eight exploded midair. The plane was part of the Strategic Air Command fleet established during the cold war against the Soviet Union. One of a dozen, the jet was part of a routine flight over the Atlantic Coast when it suddenly lost fuel pressure. The crew tried to land at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, North Carolina, before the explosion led to five leaving the plane by parachute, four of whom survived, and two others died in the plane. Two MK39 thermonuclear bombs were released by the explosion, each 500 times more powerful than the one dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. Initial reports by the military asserted that the bombs had been recovered, were unarmed, and the area safe. In fact, one bomb descended by parachute and was recovered with a single switch out of four or six required having prevented detonation. The other bomb had fortunately failed to fully arm, but it descended with no parachute and partially broke apart on impact. Most of it remains to this day deep below ground in the swamp where it landed. Just two months later, another B-52G jet crashed near Denton, North Carolina. Two of its eight crew members survived. The fire was visible for 50 miles. Windows were blown out of buildings for 10 miles around. The military said the plane had contained no nuclear bombs, but of course it had also said that about the plane over Goldsboro.

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January 25

On this date in 1995, an aide handed Russian president Boris Yeltsin a briefcase. In it, an electronic data screen indicated that a missile launched just four minutes earlier in the vicinity of the Norwegian Sea seemed to be headed toward Moscow. Additional data suggested that the missile was an intermediate-range weapon deployed by NATO forces across western Europe and that its flight path was consistent with launch from an American submarine. It was Yeltsin's responsibility to decide within less than six minutes whether to trigger an immediate retaliatory launch of Russian nuclear-tipped missiles capable of striking targets around the world. All he would need to do was press a series of buttons below the data screen. Fortunately, however, based on hot-line input from the Russian General Staff, which had its own "nuclear football," it quickly became apparent that the trajectory of the detected missile would not take it into Russian territory. There was no threat. What had actually been launched was a weather rocket from Norway designed to study the aurora borealis. Norway had notified countries in advance of the mission, but, in the case of Russia, the information had not reached the right officials. That failure still serves as one of many reminders in recent history of how easily miscommunication, human error, or mechanical malfunction could lead to an unintended nuclear calamity. The best solution to the problem would of course be the total abolition of nuclear weapons. In the meantime, removing nuclear arsenals from a state of hair-trigger alert, as advocated by many scientists and peace activists, would seem to be a rational intermediate step.

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January 26

On this date in 1992 Russian President Boris Yeltsin announced his country's intention to stop targeting nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles on cities of the U.S. and its allies. The statement preceded Yeltsin's first trip as President to the U.S., where he was to meet at Camp David with President George H. W. Bush. In a press conference held there on February 1, the two leaders proclaimed that their countries had entered a new era of "friendship and partnership." Yet, in answering a reporter's question about Yeltsin's de-targeting announcement, President Bush declined to commit the U.S. to a reciprocal policy. Instead, he said only that Secretary of State James Baker would travel to Moscow within the month to lay the basis for further arms talks. Reflecting the proclaimed new era of U.S./Russia friendship, the resulting talks quickly proved fruitful. On January 3, 1993, Bush and Yeltsin signed a second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II), which banned the use of multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs)—each carrying its own warhead—on intercontinental ballistic missiles. The treaty was ultimately ratified by both the U.S. (in 1996) and Russia (in 2000), but an accelerating backslide in U.S./Russia relations prevented it from ever going into force. U.S.-led NATO bombing of Russia's Serbian allies in Kosovo in 1999 had soured Russia's trust in American goodwill, and when the U.S. pulled out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002, Russia responded by withdrawing from START II. An historic chance to pursue comprehensive nuclear disarmament was thereby wasted, and, today, both countries continue to target nuclear weapons on each other's major population centers.

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January 27

On this day in 1945, the largest German Nazi death camp was liberated by the Soviet Red Army leading to the remembrance of this day as the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. The Greek word, Holocaust, or “sacrifice by fire,” remains as the word most associated with the interment of hundreds of thousands in death camps to be mass murdered in gas chambers. When Nazis took power in Germany in 1933, over nine million Jews lived in countries that would be occupied or invaded by the German Nazis during World War II. By 1945, nearly 6 million Jews and 3 million other people had been killed as part of the “Final Solution” of the Nazi policy. Although Jews were seen as inferior, and the largest threat to Germany, they were not the only victims of Nazi racism. Nearly 200,000 Roma (Gypsies), 200,000 mentally or physically disabled Germans, Soviet prisoners of war, and hundreds of thousands of others were also tortured and killed for twelve years. The Nazi’s plan for years was to expel the Jews, not to kill them. The United States and western allies for years refused to accept more Jewish refugees. The horrendous treatment of Jews by the Nazis was never part of Western propaganda for the war until after the war had ended. The war killed several times as many people as were killed in the camps, and involved no diplomatic or military efforts to stop the Nazis’ horrors. Germany surrendered to the Allies in May of 1945, liberating those still in the camps.

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January 28

On this day in 1970, the Winter Festival for Peace was held at Madison Square Garden in New York City to raise funds for anti-war political candidates. It was the first musical event produced with the sole intention of raising funds for anti-war purposes. The Winter Festival of Peace was produced by Peter Yarrow of Peter Paul and Mary; Phil Friedmann, who had worked on the Presidential nomination campaign for Senator Eugene McCarthy; and Sid Bernstein, the legendary music promoter who first brought the Beatles to the United States. Some of the world's best known rock, jazz, blues and folk artists performed, including Blood Sweat and Tears, Peter Paul and Mary, Jimi Hendrix, Richie Havens, Harry Belafonte, Voices of East Harlem, the Rascals, Dave Brubeck, Paul Desmond, Judy Collins and the cast of Hair. Peter Yarrow and Phil Friedmann were able to convince the performers to donate their time and performances. This was a significant achievement when compared to Woodstock, held only a few months earlier, where many of the same performers insisted on being paid. The success of the Winter Peace Festival led Yarrow, Friedmann, and Bernstein to produce the Summer Peace Festival at Shea Stadium in New York. It was held on August 6, 1970 to mark the 25th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the first use of an atomic weapon. By demonstrating that musical events could be used to raise awareness, engagement and funds, the Festivals for Peace became the model for many of the successful benefit concerts that followed, such as The Concert for Bangladesh, Farm Aid and Live Aid.

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January 29

On this day in 2014, 31 Latin American and Caribbean nations declared a zone of peace. Their declaration made Latin America and the Caribbean a zone of peace based on respect for the principles and rules of international law, including the U.N. Charter and other treaties. They declared their “permanent commitment to solve disputes through peaceful means with the aim of uprooting forever threat or use of force in our region.” They committed their nations “not to intervene, directly or indirectly, in the internal affairs of any other State and observe the principles of national sovereignty, equal rights and self-determination of peoples.” They declared the “commitment of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean to foster cooperation and friendly relations among themselves and with other nations irrespective of differences in their political, economic, and social systems or development levels, to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors.” They committed their nations to “fully respect ... the inalienable right of every State to choose its political, economic, social, and cultural system, as an essential condition to ensure peaceful coexistence among nations.” They dedicated themselves to “the promotion in the region of a culture of peace based, inter alia, on the principles of the United Nations Declaration on a Culture of Peace.” They also affirmed their nations’ “commitment ... to continue promoting nuclear disarmament as a priority objective and to contribute with general and complete disarmament, to foster the strengthening of confidence among nations.”

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January 30

On this day in 1948, Mohandas Gandhi, leader of the Indian Independence Movement against British rule, was killed. His success in using a philosophy of passive resistance led to his being considered the “Father of his Nation,” as well as widely being considered a father of nonviolent activism. Mohandas was also called “Mahatma,” or “the great-souled one.” The “School Day of Non-Violence and Peace” (DENIP) was founded in Spain in his memory on this day in 1964. Also known as the World or International Day of Non-Violence and Peace, it is a pioneering, non-state, non-governmental, non-official, independent, free and voluntary initiative of Non-Violent and Pacifying Education, which is practiced in schools all over the world and in which teachers and students of all levels and from all countries are invited to take part. DENIP advocates a permanent education in and for harmony, tolerance, solidarity, respect for human rights, non-violence and peace. In countries with a Southern Hemisphere calendar, the holiday can be observed on March 30. Its basic message is “Universal Love, Non-Violence and Peace. Universal Love is better than violence, and Peace is better than war.” The message of teaching this education in values should be one of experience and it can be freely applied in each center of education according to its own teaching style. Friends of DENIP are those persons who, by accepting the individual and social supremacy of universal love, non-violence, tolerance, solidarity, respect for human rights and peace above their opposites, advocate for the diffusion of the principles that inspired the day.

PEACE ALMANAC



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January 31

On this day in 2003, U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair met in the White House. President Bush proposed various crackpot schemes for starting a war on Iraq, including painting a plane with United Nations markings and trying to get it shot at. Bush said to Blair: “The US was thinking of flying U2 reconnaissance aircraft with fighter cover over Iraq, painted in UN colours. If Saddam fired on them, he would be in breach.” Bush told Blair that it was “also possible that a defector could be brought out who would give a public presentation about Saddam’s WMD, and there was also a small possibility that Saddam would be assassinated.” Blair had committed the UK to taking part in Bush’s war on Iraq, but he was still pushing Bush to try to get the United Nations to authorize it. “A second Security Council Resolution,” Blair told Bush, “would provide an insurance policy against the unexpected and international cover.” Bush assured Blair that “the US would put its full weight behind efforts to get another resolution and would ‘twist arms’ and ‘even threaten.’” But Bush said that if he failed, “military action would follow anyway.” Blair promised Bush he was “solidly with the President and ready to do whatever it took to disarm Saddam.” In one of his dumber predictions, Blair said he “thought it unlikely that there would be internecine warfare between the different religious and ethnic groups” in Iraq. Then Bush and Blair held a press conference at which they claimed to be doing everything they could to avoid a war.

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February 1

On this day in 1960, four black students from the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University sat down at the lunch counter inside the Woolworth store at 132 South Elm Street in Greensboro, North Carolina. Ezell Blair Jr., David Richmond, Franklin McCain, and Joseph McNeil, students at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College, planned a sit-in at the Woolworth Department Store. These four students later became known as the Greensboro Four for their courage and dedication to ending segregation. The four students attempted to order food at Woolworth's lunch counter but were denied based on race. Despite the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1954, segregation was still ubiquitous in the South. The Greensboro Four stayed at the lunch counter until the restaurant closed, despite being denied service. The young men returned to the Woolworth lunch counter repeatedly and encouraged others to join them. By February 5th, 300 students had joined the sit-in at Woolworth's. The actions of the four black students inspired other African Americans, especially college students, in Greensboro and across the Jim Crow South to participate in sit-ins and other nonviolent protests. By the end of March, the nonviolent sit-in movement had spread to 55 cities in 13 states, and these events led to the integration of many restaurants across the South. The teachings of Mohandas Gandhi inspired these young men to participate in nonviolent demonstrations, showing that even in a world of violence and repression, nonviolent movements can have a significant impact.

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February 2

On this day in 1779, Anthony Benezet refused to pay taxes to support the Revolutionary War. In order to maintain and fund the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress issued a war tax. Anthony Benezet, an influential Quaker, refused to pay the tax because it funded war. Benezet, along with Moses Brown, Samuel Allinson, and other Quakers, was vehemently opposed to war in all of its forms, despite threats of imprisonment and even execution for refusing to pay the tax. Also on this day in 1932, the first world disarmament convention opened in Geneva, Switzerland. After World War I, the League of Nations had been assembled in order to maintain world peace, but the United States decided not to join. In Geneva, the League of Nations and the United States attempted to curb the rapid militarism that had taken place throughout Europe. Most members agreed that Germany should have lower levels of armament compared to European countries such as France and England; however, Hitler's Germany withdrew in 1933 and the talks broke down. And on this day in 1990, South African President Frederik Willem de Klerk lifted a ban on opposition groups. The African National Congress or ANC became legal and has been the majority governing party in South Africa since 1994 professing to work toward a united, non-racial, and democratic society. The ANC and its most influential member Nelson Mandela were integral in the dissolution of apartheid, and allowing the ANC to participate in government created a more democratic South Africa.

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February 3

On this day in 1973, four decades of armed conflict in Vietnam officially ended when a cease-fire agreement signed in Paris the previous month came into effect. Vietnam had endured almost uninterrupted hostility since 1945, when a war for independence from France was launched. A civil war between northern and southern regions of the country began after the country was divided by the Geneva Convention in 1954, with American military “advisors” arriving in 1955. A 2008 study by Harvard Medical School and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington estimated 3.8 million violent war deaths resulted from what the Vietnamese call the American War. About two-thirds of the deaths were civilian. Additional millions died as the United States extended the war into Laos and Cambodia. The wounded were in much higher numbers, and judging by South Vietnamese hospital records, one-third were women and one-quarter children under age 13. U.S. casualties included 58,000 killed and 153,303 wounded, plus 2,489 missing, but higher numbers of veterans would later die through suicide. According to the Pentagon, the United States spent about \$168 billion on the Vietnam War (about \$1 trillion in 2016 money). That money could have been used to improve education or to fund the recently created Medicare and Medicaid programs. Vietnam did not pose a threat to the United States, but — as the Pentagon Papers revealed — the U.S. government continued the war, year after year, primarily “to save face.”

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February 4

On this day in 1913, Rosa Parks was born. Rosa Parks was an African American civil rights activist, who most notably initiated the Montgomery Bus Boycott by refusing to yield her seat to a white man, while riding a bus. Rosa Parks is known as the “First Lady of Civil Rights” and won the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her dedication to equality and ending segregation. Parks was born in Tuskegee, Alabama, and was bullied often as a child by white neighbors; however, she received her high school diploma in 1933, despite the fact that only 7% of African Americans finished high school at the time. When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat, she confronted both the racism of those around her and the unjust Jim Crow laws enacted by governments. By law, Parks was required to give up her seat, and she was willing to go to jail in order to show her commitment to equality. After a long and difficult boycott, the black people of Montgomery ended segregation on the buses. They did so without using violence or increasing animosity. A leader who came out of that boycott movement and went on to lead many other campaigns was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The same principles and techniques used in Montgomery can be modified and applied to unjust laws and unjust institutions today. We can draw inspiration from Rosa Parks and those who advanced her cause to advance the causes of peace and justice here and now.

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February 5

On this day in 1987, Grandmothers for Peace protested at a Nevada nuclear test site. Barbara Wiedner founded Grandmothers for Peace International in 1982 after she learned of 150 nuclear weapons within miles of her house in Sacramento, California. The organization's stated goal is to end the use and ownership of nuclear weapons through demonstrations and protests. Six U.S. senators, including Leon Panetta and Barbara Boxer, participated in this demonstration, along with actors Martin Sheen, Kris Kristofferson, and Robert Blake. The nonviolent protest at the Nevada nuclear test site brought an abundance of media attention and publicity to what was illegal nuclear weapons testing. Testing nuclear weapons in Nevada violated the law and had inflamed the U.S. relationship with the Soviet Union, encouraging further nuclear weapons development and testing. At the demonstration, the rare mix of politicians, actors, elderly women, and many others sent a message to President Ronald Reagan and the U.S. government that nuclear testing was unacceptable, and that citizens should not be kept in the dark about their government's actions. Another message was sent to ordinary people along these lines: if a small group of grandmothers can have an impact on public policy when they get organized and active, then so can you. Imagine the impact we could have if we all worked at it together. Belief in nuclear deterrence has crumbled, but the weapons remain, and the need for a stronger movement to abolish them grows with each passing year.

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February 6

On this day in 1890, Abdul Ghaffar Khan was born. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, or Bacha Khan, was born in British-controlled India to a wealthy landowning family. Bacha Khan forewent a life of luxury in order to create a nonviolent organization, named the “Red Shirt Movement,” which was dedicated to Indian independence. Khan met Mohandas Gandhi, a champion of nonviolent civil disobedience, and Khan became one of his closest advisors, leading to a friendship that would last until Gandhi’s assassination in 1948. Bacha Khan used nonviolent civil disobedience to gain rights for the Pashtuns in Pakistan, and he was arrested numerous times for his courageous actions. As a Muslim, Khan used his religion as an inspiration to promote a free and peaceful society, where the poorest citizens would be given assistance and allowed to rise economically. Khan knew that nonviolence breeds love and compassion while violent revolt only leads to harsh punishment and hatred; therefore, utilizing nonviolent means, while difficult in some situations, is the most effective method of generating change within a country. The British Empire feared the actions of Gandhi and Bacha Khan, as it showed when over 200 peaceful, unarmed protestors were brutally killed by the British police. The Massacre at Kissa Khani Bazaar showcased the brutality of the British colonists and demonstrated why Bacha Khan fought for independence. In an interview in 1985, Bacha Khan stated, “I am a believer in nonviolence and I say that no peace or tranquility will descend upon the world until nonviolence is practiced, because nonviolence is love and it stirs courage in people.”

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February 7

On this day, Thomas More was born. Saint Thomas More, an English Catholic philosopher and author, refused to accept the new Anglican Church of England, and he was beheaded for treason in 1535. Thomas More also wrote *Utopia*, a book depicting a theoretically perfect island that is self-sufficient and operates without problems. More examines ethics throughout the book by discussing the results of virtuous acts. He wrote that each individual receives rewards from God for acting virtuously and punishments for acting maliciously. The people in the Utopian society cooperated and lived peacefully with one another without violence or strife. Although people now view the Utopian society that Thomas More described as an impossible fantasy, it is important to strive for this type of peace. The world is not currently peaceful and without violence; however, it is incredibly important to attempt to create a peaceful, utopian world. The first problem that must be overcome is the act of war in all of its forms. If we can create a world beyond war, a utopian society will not seem outlandish and nations will be able to focus on providing for their citizens as opposed to spending money to build up militaries. Utopian societies should not simply be cast off as an impossibility; instead, they should be used as a collective aim for world governments and individual people. Thomas More wrote *Utopia* to show problems that existed throughout society. Some have been remedied. Others need to be.



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February 8

On this day in 1690, the Schenectady massacre took place. The Schenectady massacre was an attack against an English village of mainly women and children carried out by a collection of French soldiers and Algonquian Indians. The massacre occurred during King William's War, also known as the Nine Years War, after continuous violent raids of Indian lands by the English. The invaders burned down houses throughout the village and murdered or imprisoned virtually everyone in the community. In total, 60 people were murdered in the middle of the night, including 10 women and 12 children. One survivor, while wounded, rode from Schenectady to Albany to inform others what had happened in the village. Every year in commemoration of the massacre, the mayor of Schenectady rides on horseback from Schenectady to Albany, taking the same route the survivor took. The annual commemoration is an important way for citizens to understand the horrors of war and violence. Innocent men, women, and children were massacred for absolutely no reason. The town of Schenectady was not prepared for an attack, nor were they able to protect themselves from the vengeful French and Algonquians. This massacre could have been avoided if the two sides had never been at war; moreover, this demonstrates that war endangers everybody, not just those fighting on the front lines. Until war is abolished it will continue to kill the innocent.

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February 9

On this day in 1904, the Russo-Japanese War began. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, Japan, along with many European nations, attempted to illegally colonize parts of Asia. Like European colonial powers, Japan would take over a region and install a temporary colonial government that would exploit the locals and produce goods for the benefit of the colonizing country. Both Russia and Japan demanded that Korea be placed under their country's respective power, which led to conflict between the two nations on the Korean peninsula. This war was not a struggle for independence by Korea; instead, it was a fight by two outside powers to decide Korea's fate. Oppressive colonial wars like this one destroyed countries like Korea both politically and physically. Korea would continue to host conflict through the Korean War in the 1950's. Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War and maintained colonial control over the Korean peninsula until 1945 when the United States and the Soviet Union defeated the Japanese. In total, there were an estimated 150,000 dead by the end of the Russo-Japanese war, including 20,000 civilian deaths. This colonial war affected the colonized country of Korea more than the aggressors because it was not fought on Japanese or Russian lands. Colonization continues to happen today throughout the Middle East, and the United States tends to fight proxy wars by providing weapons to aid certain groups. Rather than working to end war, the United States continues to supply weapons for wars throughout the world.

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February 10

On this day in 1961, The Voice of Nuclear Disarmament, a pirate radio station, began operating offshore near Great Britain. The station was run by Dr. John Hasted, an atomic scientist at London University, a musician and radio expert during World War II. The announcer, Lynn Wynn Harris, was the wife of Dr. John Hasted. Dr. Hasted partnered with mathematician and philosopher Bertrand Russell in the Committee for Nuclear Disarmament, a group that followed Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent civil disobedience. The Voice of Nuclear Disarmament was broadcast on the audio channel of BBC after 11 p.m. throughout 1961-62. It was promoted in London by the antiwar Committee of 100 while urging people to join their rallies. Bertrand Russell resigned as president of the Committee for Nuclear Disarmament to become president of the Committee of 100. The Committee of 100 staged large sit-down demonstrations, the first of which took place on February 18, 1961 outside of the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall, and later in Trafalgar Square and at the Holy Loch Polaris submarine base. These were preceded by the arrest and trial of 32 members of the Committee of 100, whose offices were raided by Special Branch officers, and six leading members were charged with conspiracy under the Official Secrets Act. Ian Dixon, Terry Chandler, Trevor Hatton, Michael Randle, Pat Pottle, and Helen Allegranza were found guilty and imprisoned in February 1962. The Committee then dissolved into 13 regional Committees. The London Committee of 100 was the most active, launching a national magazine, Action for Peace, in April 1963, later The Resistance, 1964.

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February 11

On this day in 1990, Nelson Mandela was freed from prison. He went on to play a key role in the official ending of Apartheid in South Africa. With assistance from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Nelson Mandela was arrested on charges of treason, and stayed in prison from 1962-1990; however, he remained the figurehead and practical leader of the antiapartheid movement. Four years after being released from prison, he was elected president of South Africa, allowing him to pass a new constitution, creating equal political rights for blacks and whites. Mandela avoided retribution and pursued truth and reconciliation for his country. He said he believed that love could conquer evil and that everybody must take an active part in resisting oppression and hate. Mandela's ideas can be summarized in the following quote: "No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." In order to end war and create a society filled with peace, there must be activists like Nelson Mandela who are willing to devote their whole lives for the cause. This is a good day to celebrate nonviolent action, diplomacy, reconciliation, and restorative justice.

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February 12

On this day in 1947, the first peacetime draft card burning in the United States took place. There is a common misconception that opposition to the draft began in the Vietnam War; in reality, many have opposed military conscription since its beginnings in the U.S. Civil War. An estimated 72,000 men objected to the draft during World War II, and after the war, many of the same individuals took a stand and burned their draft cards. World War II was over and there was no new imminent draft, but burning their draft cards was a political statement. Around 500 military veterans of both world wars burned their cards in New York City and Washington, D.C. in order to show that they would not participate or condone continued violence by the U.S. military. Many of these veterans rejected the long history of violent interventions in Native American and other countries around the world since the birth of the United States. The United States has been at war almost constantly since 1776, and is a nation deeply entwined with violence. But simple acts like burning draft cards have communicated powerfully to the U.S. government that citizens won't accept a nation constantly in a state of war. The United States is currently at war, and it is imperative that citizens find creative nonviolent means of communicating their disapproval with the actions of their government.

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February 13

On this day in 1967, carrying huge photos of Napalmed Vietnamese children, 2,500 members of the group Women Strike for Peace stormed the Pentagon, demanding to see “the generals who send our sons to Vietnam.” Leaders inside the Pentagon originally locked the doors and refused to allow the protestors inside. After continued efforts, they were finally allowed inside, but they were not granted their meeting with the generals they had planned to meet with. Instead, they met with a congressman who provided no answers. The Women Strike for Peace group demanded answers from an administration that wouldn’t provide clarity, so they decided that it was time to take the fight to Washington. This day and others, the U.S. government refused to acknowledge its use of illegal poisonous gases in the war against the Vietnamese. Even with pictures of napalmed Vietnamese children, the Johnson administration continued to place the blame on the North Vietnamese. The United States government lied to its citizens in order to continue its so-called “war against communism,” despite seeing no results and incredibly high casualty rates. The Women Strike for Peace organization realized the futility of war in Vietnam and wanted real answers as to how the conflict would be ended. Lies and deception fueled the Vietnam War. These protestors wanted answers from the generals inside the Pentagon, but the military leaders continued to deny the use of poisonous gases despite overwhelming evidence. Yet the truth came out and is no longer disputed.

PEACE ALMANAC



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February 14

On this day in 1957, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was founded in Atlanta. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference began a few months after the Montgomery bus system was desegregated by the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The SCLC was inspired by Rosa Parks and fueled by individuals like Martin Luther King Jr. who served as an elected officer. The organization's continued mission is to use nonviolent protest and action in order to secure civil rights and eliminate racism. In addition, the SCLC seeks to spread Christianity as what it believes is a way to create a peaceful environment for all people throughout the United States. The SCLC has struggled using peaceful methods to bring about change in the United States, and they have been extremely successful. There is still racism, personal and structural, and the country is not equal, but there have been major advancements in social mobility for African Americans. Peace is not something that will come about in our world without leaders like the SCLC acting in order to create change. Currently, there are chapters and affiliated groups throughout the United States, no longer limited to the South. Individuals can join groups such as the SCLC, which fosters peace through religion and can make a real difference by continuing to act on what is right. Religious organizations such as the SCLC have played an integral role in diminishing segregation and promoting peaceful environments.

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February 15

On this day in 1898, a U.S. ship called the U.S.S. Maine blew up in the harbor in Havana, Cuba. U.S. officials and newspapers, some of whom had been openly angling for an excuse to launch a war for years immediately blamed Spain, despite the absence of any evidence. Spain proposed an independent investigation and committed to abiding by the decision of any third-party arbiter. The United States preferred to rush into a war that would in no way have been justified had Spain been guilty. A U.S. investigation over 75 years too late concluded, just as had U.S. Naval Academy professor Philip Alger at the time (in a report suppressed by a war lusty Theodore Roosevelt) that the Maine almost certainly was sunk by an internal and accidental explosion. Remember the Maine and to Hell with Spain was the war cry, still encouraged by dozens of memorials displaying pieces of the ship all over the United States to this day. But to hell with facts, sense, peace, decency, and the people of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam was the reality. In the Philippines, 200,000 to 1,500,000 civilians died from violence and disease. A hundred and five years after the day the Maine sank, the world protested the threatened U.S.-led assault on Iraq in the largest day of public protest in history. As a result, many nations opposed the war, and the United Nations refused to sanction it. The United States proceeded anyway, in violation of the law. This is a good day to educate the world about war lies and war resistance.

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February 16

On this day in 1941, a pastoral letter read in all Norwegian Church pulpits enjoined the congregants to “stand fast, guided by God’s word... and be faithful to your inner conviction...” For its own part, the Church greeted all of its followers “in the joy of faith and boldness in our Lord and Savior.” The letter sought to rally Norwegians to resist an intended Nazi takeover of the established Lutheran State Church of Norway, following the German invasion of the country on April 9, 1940. The Church also took its own direct actions to thwart Nazi incursions. On Easter Sunday, 1942, a document sent by the Church to all pastors was read aloud to nearly all congregations. Titled “Foundation of the Church,” it called on every pastor to resign as a State Church minister—an action the Church knew would subject them to Nazi persecution and imprisonment. But the strategy worked. When all of the pastors did resign, the people supported them with love, loyalty, and money, forcing Nazi church authorities to abandon plans to remove them from their parishes. With the resignations, however, the State Church was dissolved and a new Nazi church organized. It was not until May 8, 1945, with the surrender of the German army, that the churches in Norway could be restored to their historical form. Still, the pastoral letter read in Norwegian pulpits more than four years before had played its own important role. It had shown again that ordinary people can be expected to find the courage to resist oppression and defend the values they consider central to their humanity.



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February 17

On this day in 1993, leaders of the 1989 student protests in China were released. Most were arrested in Beijing where in 1949, on Tiananmen Square, Mao Zedong proclaimed a “People’s Republic” under the current communist regime. The need for true democracy grew for forty years until those in Tiananmen, Chengdu, Shanghai, Nanjing, Xi’an, Changsha, and other regions shocked the world as thousands of students were killed, injured, and/or imprisoned. Despite China’s attempt to block the press, some received international recognition. Fang Lizhi, professor of astrophysics, was granted asylum in the U.S., and taught at the University of Arizona. Wang Dan, a 20-year-old Peking University history major, was jailed twice, exiled in 1998, and became a guest researcher at Oxford, and chairman of the Chinese Constitutional Reform Association. Chai Ling, a 23-year-old psychology student escaped after ten months in hiding, graduated from Harvard Business School, and became chief operating officer in developing internet portals for universities. Wu’er Kaixi, a 21-year-old hunger striker rebuked Premier Li Peng on national television, fled to France, then studied economics at Harvard. Liu Xiaobo, a literary critic who initiated “Charter 08,” a manifesto calling for individual rights, freedom of speech, and multi-party elections, was held in an undisclosed location near Beijing. Han Dongfang, a 27-year-old railway worker who helped set up the Beijing Autonomous Workers’ Federation in 1989, the first independent trade union in communist China, was imprisoned and exiled. Han escaped to Hong Kong, and started the China Labour Bulletin to defend the rights of Chinese workers. The man videotaped blocking a line of tanks has never been identified.

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February 18

On this date in 1961, the 88-year-old British philosopher/activist Bertrand Russell led a march of some 4,000 people to London's Trafalgar Square, where speeches were delivered protesting the arrival from America of Polaris nuclear-armed submarine-launched ballistic missiles. The marchers then proceeded to Britain's Ministry of Defence, where Russell taped a message of protest to the building doors. A sit-down demonstration followed in the street, which lasted almost three hours. The February event was the first organized by the new anti-nuke activist group, the "Committee of 100," to which Russell had been elected president. The Committee differed significantly from the U.K.'s established Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, from which Russell had resigned as president. Instead of organizing simple street marches with supporters carrying signs, the Committee's purpose was to stage forceful and attention-getting direct acts of non-violent civil disobedience. Russell explained his reasons for setting up the Committee in an article in the *New Statesman* in February 1961. He said in part: "If all those who disapprove of government policy were to join massive demonstrations of civil disobedience they could render government folly impossible and compel the so-called statesmen to acquiesce in measures that would make human survival possible." The Committee of 100 staged its most effective demonstration on Sept. 17, 1961, when it successfully blocked the pier heads at the Holy Loch Polaris submarine base. Afterwards, however, various factors caused its swift decline, including differences over the group's ultimate goals, mounting police arrests, and involvement in campaigns based on issues other than nuclear weapons. Russell himself resigned from the Committee in 1963, and the organization was disbanded in October 1968.

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February 19

On this day in 1942, during Germany's World War II occupation of Norway, Norwegian teachers began a successful campaign of non-violent resistance to a planned Nazi takeover of the country's education system. The takeover had been decreed by the infamous Nazi collaborator Vidkun Quisling, then the Nazi-appointed Minister-President of Norway. Under terms of the decree, the existing teachers union was to be dissolved and all teachers registered by February 5, 1942 with a new Nazi-led Norwegian Teachers Union. The teachers refused to be cowed, however, and ignored the February 5 deadline. They then followed the lead of an underground anti-Nazi group in Oslo, which sent all of the teachers a short statement they could use to announce their collective refusal to cooperate with the Nazi demand. The teachers were to copy and mail the statement to the Quisling government, with their name and address affixed. By February 19, 1942, most of Norway's 12,000 teachers had done just that. Quisling's panicked response was to order Norway's schools to be closed for a month. That action, however, prompted indignant parents to write some 200,000 letters of protest to the government. The teachers themselves defiantly held classes in private settings, and underground organizations paid lost salaries to families of the more than 1,300 male teachers who were arrested and imprisoned. Conceding the failure of their plans to hijack Norway's schools, the Fascist rulers released all of the imprisoned teachers in November 1942, and the education system was restored to Norwegian control. The strategy of non-violent mass resistance had succeeded in combating the oppressive designs of a ruthless occupying force.

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February 20

On this day in 1839, Congress passed legislation that prohibited dueling in the District of Columbia. The passage of the law was prompted by public outcry over an 1838 duel at the infamous Bladensburg Dueling Grounds in Maryland, just over the D.C. border. In that contest, a popular Congressman from Maine named Jonathan Cilley had been shot to death by another Congressman, William Graves of Kentucky. The proceeding was viewed as especially sordid, not only because three exchanges of fire were required to end it, but because the survivor, Graves, had not been personally affronted by his victim. He had entered the duel as a stand-in to vindicate the reputation of a friend, a New York newspaper editor named James Webb, whom Cilley had called corrupt. For its part, the House of Representatives chose not to censure Graves or two other Congressmen present at the duel, even though dueling was already against the law in D.C. and in most American states and territories. Instead, it presented a bill that would “prohibit the giving or accepting within the District of Columbia, of a challenge to fight a duel, and for the punishment thereof.” After its passage by Congress, the measure assuaged public demand for a ban on dueling, but it did little to actually end the practice. As they had done regularly since 1808, duelists continued to meet at the Bladensburg site in Maryland, mostly in the darkness. Following the Civil War, however, dueling fell out of favor and declined rapidly throughout the U.S. The last of some fifty-plus duels at Bladensburg was fought in 1868.

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February 21

On this date in 1965, the African-American Muslim minister and human rights activist Malcolm X was assassinated by gun-fire as he prepared to address the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), a secular group he had founded the year before that sought to reconnect African Americans with their African heritage and help establish their economic independence. In championing human rights for black people, Malcolm X projected various points of view. As a member of the Nation of Islam, he condemned white Americans as “devils” and advocated racial separatism. In contrast to Martin Luther King, he urged black people to advance themselves “by any means necessary.” Before leaving the Nation of Islam, he disparaged the organization for its refusal to aggressively counter police abuse of blacks and to collaborate with local black politicians in advancing black rights. Finally, after taking part in the 1964 Hajj to Mecca, Malcolm came to the view that the true enemy of African Americans was not the white race, but racism itself. He had seen Muslims of “all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans,” interacting as equals and concluded that Islam itself was the key to overcoming racial problems. It is commonly assumed that Malcolm was killed by members of the American Nation of Islam (NOI) sect from which he had defected a year before. NOI threats against him had in fact intensified leading up to the assassination, and three NOI members were subsequently convicted of the killing. Yet, two of the three alleged killers have consistently maintained their innocence, and decades of research have cast doubt on the case made against them.

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February 22

On this day in 1952, the North Korean Foreign Ministry formally accused The US military of dropping infected insects over North Korea. During the Korean War (1950-53), Chinese and Korean soldiers had been suffering outbreaks of fatal illnesses shockingly determined to be smallpox, cholera, and the plague. Forty-four who had already died had tested positive for meningitis. The US denied any hand in biological warfare, even though many eye-witnesses came forward including an Australian reporter. The worldwide press invited international investigations while the U.S. and its allies continued to call the allegations a hoax. The U.S. proposed an investigation by the International Red Cross to clear any doubt, but the Soviet Union and its allies refused, convinced the U.S. was lying. Finally, the World Peace Council set up an International Scientific Commission for the Facts Concerning Bacterial Warfare in China and Korea with distinguished scientists, including a renowned British biochemist and sinologist. Their study was backed by eyewitnesses, doctors, and four American Korean War prisoners who confirmed the U.S. had sent biological warfare from airfields in American-occupied Okinawa to Korea starting in 1951. The final report, in September of 1952, showed the US was using biological weapons, and the International Association of Democratic Lawyers publicized these results in its "Report on U.S. Crimes in Korea." The report revealed that the US had taken over earlier Japanese biological experiments brought to light in a trial conducted by the Soviet Union in 1949. At the time, the US called these trials "vicious and unfounded propaganda." The Japanese, however, were found guilty. And then, so was the U.S.

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February 23

On this day in 1836, the Battle of the Alamo began in San Antonio. The fight for Texas started in 1835 when a group of Anglo-American settlers and Tejanos (mixed Mexicans and Indians) captured San Antonio which was under Mexican rule, claiming the land in “Texas” as an independent state. Mexican General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna was called in, and threatened the army would “take no prisoners.” The American Commander in Chief Sam Houston responded by ordering settlers to leave San Antonio as the less than 200 were vastly outnumbered by an army of 4,000 Mexican troops. The group resisted, taking refuge instead in an abandoned Franciscan monastery built in 1718 known as The Alamo. Two months later, on February 23, 1836, six hundred Mexican troops died in battle as they attacked and killed one hundred and eighty-three settlers. The Mexican army then set the bodies of these settlers on fire outside of the Alamo. General Houston recruited an army of support for those killed in their battle for independence. The phrase “Remember the Alamo” became a rallying call for Texas fighters, and a decade later for U.S. forces in the war that stole a far larger territory from Mexico. Following the massacre at the Alamo, Houston’s military quickly defeated the Mexican army in San Jacinto. In April of 1836, The Peace Treaty of Velasco was signed by General Santa Anna, and the new Republic of Texas declared its independence from Mexico. Texas did not become part of the United States until December of 1845. It was enlarged in the subsequent war.

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February 24

On this day in 1933, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations. The League had been founded in 1920 in the hope of maintaining world peace following the Paris Peace Conference that ended World War I. Original members included: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, El Salvador, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Persia, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Siam, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Yugoslavia. In 1933, the League released a report finding Japan at fault for the fighting in Manchuria, and asked for withdrawal of Japanese troops. Japanese Representative Yosuke Matsuoka refuted the report's findings with the statement: "... Manchuria belongs to us by right. Read your history. We recovered Manchuria from Russia. We made it what it is today." He said that Russia and China caused "deep and anxious concern," and Japan felt "compelled to conclude that Japan and other members of the league entertain different views on the manner to achieve peace in the Far East." He reiterated that Manchuria was a matter of life and death for Japan. "Japan has been and will always be the mainstay of peace, order and progress in the Far East." He asked, "Would the American people agree to such control of the Panama Canal Zone; would the British permit it over Egypt?" The US and Russia were invited to respond. Despite implied backing, the U.S., which had trained Japan in imperialism, never joined the League of Nations.

PEACE ALMANAC



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February 25

On this date in 1932, the prominent British suffragette, feminist, lay preacher, and Christian peace activist Maude Royden published a letter in the London Daily Express. Co-signed by two fellow activists, the letter proposed what may have been the most radical peace initiative of the twentieth century. Under its terms, Royden and her two colleagues would lead a volunteer “Peace Army” of British men and women to Shanghai, where they would try to stop the warring of Chinese and Japanese forces by interposing themselves unarmed between them. Fighting between the two sides was again ongoing, after a brief lull following the invasion of Manchuria by Japanese forces in September, 1931. Sometime earlier, Royden had introduced the concept of a “Peace Army” in a sermon to her congregation at a London Congregational church. There she had preached: “Men and women who believe it to be their duty should volunteer to place themselves unarmed between the combatants.” She stressed that her appeal was to men and women alike, and that volunteers should ask the League of Nations to send them unarmed to the scene of conflict. In the end, Royden’s initiative was simply ignored by the League of Nations and lampooned in the press. But, though the Peace Army never mobilized, some 800 men and women volunteered to join its ranks, and a Peace Army council was established that remained active for several years. In addition, Royden’s concept of what she called “shock troops of peace” received academic recognition over time as the blueprint for all subsequent interventions by what are now identified as “unarmed interpositionary peace forces.”

PEACE ALMANAC



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February 26

On this day in 1986, Corazon Aquino assumed power after a nonviolent revolt deposed Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines. Marcos, reelected president of the Philippines in 1969, was barred from a third term, and defiantly declared martial law with control of the military, dissolution of the Congress, and imprisonment of his political opponents. His most prominent critic, Senator Benigno Aquino, spent seven years in jail before developing a heart condition. He had been falsely accused of murder, convicted, and sentenced to death when the United States intervened. As he healed in the U.S., Aquino decided to return to the Philippines to remove Marcos from power. The works and writings of Gandhi inspired him to nonviolence as the best way to subdue Marcos. As Aquino arrived back in the Philippines in 1983, however, he was shot and killed by police. His death inspired hundreds of thousands of supporters who took to the streets demanding “Justice for All Victims of Political Repression and Military Terrorism!” Benigno’s widow Corazon Aquino, organized a rally at Malacanang Palace on the one-month anniversary of Aquino’s assassination. As Marines fired into the crowd, 15,000 peaceful demonstrators continued their march from the palace to the Mendiola Bridge. Hundreds were injured and eleven killed, yet these protests continued until Corazon ran for president. When Marcos claimed to have won, Corazon called for nationwide civil disobedience, and 1.5 million responded with the “Triumph of the People Rally.” Three days later, the United States Congress condemned the election, and voted to cut military support until Marcos resigned. The Philippine Parliament revoked the corrupt election results, and declared Corazon president.



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February 27

On this day in 1943, the Nazi Gestapo in Berlin began rounding up Jewish men who were married to non-Jewish women, as well as their male children. Totalling about 2,000, the men and boys were held at a local Jewish community center on Rosenstrasse (Rose Street), pending deportation to nearby work camps. Their “mixed” families, however, could not be certain at the time that the men would not face the same fate as thousands of Berlin Jews recently deported to the Auschwitz death camp. So, in growing numbers composed mainly of wives and mothers, family members gathered daily outside the community center to wage the only major public protest by German citizens throughout the war. Wives of the Jewish detainees chanted, “Give us our husbands back.” When Nazi guards aimed machine guns at the crowd, it responded with yells of “Murderer, murderer, murderer...” Fearing that a massacre of hundreds of German women in the middle of Berlin might well cause unrest among broader sections of the German population, Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels ordered the release of the intermarried male Jews. By March 12, all but 25 of the 2,000 detained men had been released. Today, the Rosenstrasse community center no longer exists, but a sculpture memorial called the “Block of Women” was erected in a nearby park in 1995. Its inscription reads: “The strength of civil disobedience, the vigor of love, overcomes the violence of dictatorship. Give us our men back. Women were standing here, defeating death. Jewish men were free.”

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February 28

On this date in 1989, 5,000 Kazakhs from a wide variety of backgrounds held the first meeting of the Nevada-Semipalatinsk Antinuclear Movement—so named to show solidarity with U.S. protests against nuclear testing at a site in Nevada. By the end of the meeting, the Kazakh organizers had agreed on an action plan for ending nuclear testing in the Soviet Union and established an end goal of abolishing nuclear weapons worldwide. Their entire program was circulated as a petition and quickly received over a million signatures. The antinuclear movement had been initiated only two days before, when a poet and candidate for the Congress of People's Deputies of the Soviet Union called on concerned citizens to join in a demonstration against nuclear weapons testing at a facility in Semipalatinsk, an administrative region of Soviet Kazakhstan. Although aboveground nuclear testing had been abolished in a U.S./Soviet treaty signed in 1963, underground testing remained permissible and continued at the Semipalatinsk site. On February 12 and 17, 1989, radioactive material had leaked from the facility, putting at risk the lives of residents in highly-populated neighboring areas. Largely as a result of actions taken by the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement, the Supreme Soviet, on August 1, 1989, called for a moratorium on all nuclear testing by the United States and the Soviet Union. And in August 1991, the President of Kazakhstan officially shut down the Semipalatinsk facility as a site for nuclear testing and opened it to activists for rehabilitation. By these measures, the governments of Kazakhstan and the Soviet Union became the first to close a nuclear test site anywhere on earth.

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February 29

On this leap day in 2004, the United States kidnapped and deposed the President of Haiti. This is a good day on which to remember that the claim that democracies don't go to war with democracies ignores the habit of the U.S. democracy attacking and overthrowing other democracies. U.S. diplomat Luis G. Moreno along with armed members of the U.S. military met the popular Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide at his residence the morning of February 29th. According to Moreno, Aristide's life had been threatened by Haitian opponents, and he sought refuge. Aristide's version of that morning conflicted greatly. Aristide claimed that he and his wife had been kidnapped by U.S. forces as part of a coup d'état which secured power for groups backed by the U.S. Aristide was exiled to Africa, and tried contacting many U.S. African-American political figures. Maxine Waters, a congresswoman from California, confirmed that Aristide had stated: "The world must know it was a coup. I was kidnapped. I was forced out. That's what happened. I did not resign. I did not go willingly. I was forced to go." Another, Randall Robinson, former head of the TransAfrica social-justice and human-rights advocacy organization, confirmed that "a democratically elected president" had been "abducted" by the United States "in the commission of a [U.S.] induced coup," adding, "This is a frightening thing to contemplate." Objections to U.S. actions reported by the Congressional Black Caucus, and Haitian representatives in the U.S. led to the final liberation of President Aristide three years later, and also to the recognition of the crime the United States had committed.

PEACE ALMANAC



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March 1

Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Day, a.k.a. Bikini Day. This day marks the anniversary of the detonation of the United States' thermonuclear hydrogen bomb the 'Bravo' at Bikini Atoll in Micronesia in 1954. In 1946, a military officer representing the U.S. government asked the people of Bikini if they would be willing to leave their atoll "temporarily" so that the United States could begin testing atomic bombs for "the good of mankind and to end all world wars." The people have been prevented from returning to their home ever since because of the level of radioactive contamination that remains. The 1954 explosion gouged out a crater more than 200 feet deep and a mile wide, melting huge quantities of coral which were sucked up into the atmosphere together with vast volumes of seawater. Radiation levels in the inhabited atolls of Rongerik, Ujelang, and Likiep rose dramatically as well. The U.S. Navy did not send ships to evacuate the people of Rongelap and Utirik until nearly three days after the explosion. The people in the Marshall Islands and nearby places in the Pacific were essentially used as human guinea pigs in an inhumane attempt by the United States to pursue nuclear weapons supremacy. Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Day is a day to remember that the colonialist mindset which allowed, and in many ways encouraged, the atrocity aforementioned still exists today, as the Pacific remains neither nuclear free nor independent. This is a good day for opposing nuclear weapons.

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March 2

On this day in 1955, months before Rosa Parks, teenager Claudette Colvin was arrested in Montgomery, Alabama, for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white person. Colvin is a pioneer of the American Civil Rights Movement. On March 2nd, 1955, Colvin was riding home from school on a city bus when a bus driver told her to give up her seat to a white passenger. Colvin refused to do so, saying, “It’s my constitutional right to sit here as much as that lady. I paid my fare, it’s my constitutional right.” She felt compelled to stand her ground. “I felt like Sojourner Truth was pushing down on one shoulder and Harriet Tubman was pushing down on the other—saying, ‘Sit down girl!’ I was glued to my seat,” she told Newsweek. Colvin was arrested on several charges, including violating the city’s segregation laws. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People briefly considered using Colvin’s case to challenge the segregation laws, but they decided against it because of her age. Much of the writing on civil rights history in Montgomery has focused on the arrest of Rosa Parks, another woman who refused to give up her seat on the bus, nine months after Colvin. While Parks has been heralded as a civil rights heroine, the story of Claudette Colvin has received little notice. While her role in the fight to end segregation in Montgomery may not be widely recognized, Colvin helped advance civil rights efforts in the city.



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March 3

On this day in 1863, the first U.S. draft law was passed. It contained a clause providing draft exemption in exchange for \$300. During the Civil War, the U.S. Congress passed a conscription act that produced the first wartime draft of U.S. citizens in American history. The act called for the registration of all males between the ages of 20 and 45, including 'aliens' who had the intention of becoming citizens, by April 1st. Exemptions from the draft could be bought for \$300 or by finding a substitute draftee. This clause led to bloody draft riots in New York City, where protesters were outraged that exemptions were effectively granted only to the wealthiest U.S. citizens, as no poor man could possibly afford to purchase this exemption. Although the Civil War saw the first compulsory enlistment of U.S. citizens for wartime service, a 1792 act by Congress required that all able-bodied male citizens purchase a gun and join their local state militia. There was no penalty for non-compliance with this act. Congress also passed a conscription act during the War of 1812, but the war ended before this was enacted. During the Civil War, the government of the Confederate States of America also enacted a compulsory military draft. The U.S. enacted a military draft again during World War I, in 1940 to make the U.S. ready for its involvement in World War II, and during the Korean War. The last U.S. military draft occurred during the Vietnam War.

PEACE ALMANAC



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March 4

On this day in 1969, the Union of Concerned Scientists (or UCS) was founded. The UCS is a nonprofit science advocacy group that was founded by scientists and students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. That year, the Vietnam War was at its height and Cleveland's heavily polluted Cuyahoga River had caught fire. Appalled at how the U.S. government was misusing science both for war and for environmental destruction, the UCS founders drafted a statement calling for scientific research to be directed away from military technologies and toward solving pressing environmental and social problems. The organization's founding document says it was formed to "initiate a critical and continuing examination of governmental policy in areas where science and technology are of actual or potential significance" and to "devise means for turning research applications away from the present emphasis on military technology toward the solution of pressing environmental and social problems." The organization employs scientists, economists, and engineers engaged in environmental and security issues, as well as executive and support staff. Additionally, the UCS focuses on clean energy and safe and environmentally friendly agricultural practices. The organization is also strongly committed to the reduction of nuclear arms. The UCS helped push the U.S. Senate to approve the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) to reduce U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons stockpiles. These reductions cut down both countries' oversized nuclear arsenals. Many more organizations have joined this work, and there is much more of it to be done.



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March 5

On this day in 1970, A nuclear non-proliferation treaty went into effect after 43 nations ratified it. The treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, commonly known as the Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT, is an international treaty with the objective of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, and promoting cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Additionally, the treaty aims to further the ultimate goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament. The Treaty officially entered into force in 1970. On May 11th, 1995, the treaty was extended indefinitely. More countries have adhered to the NPT than any other arms limitation and disarmament agreement, which is a testament to the treaty's significance. A total of 191 states have joined the treaty. India, Israel, Pakistan, and South Sudan, four United Nations member states, have never joined the NPT. The treaty recognizes the United States, Russia, the UK, France, and China as five nuclear-weapons states. Four other states are known to possess nuclear weapons: India, North Korea, and Pakistan, which have admitted it, and Israel, which refuses to speak about it. The nuclear parties to the treaty are required to pursue "negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament." Their failure to do so has led non-nuclear nations to pursue a new treaty banning nuclear weapons. The high hurdle if such a new treaty is established will be persuading the nuclear states to ratify it.

PEACE ALMANAC



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March 6

On this day in 1967, Muhammad Ali was ordered by the Selective Service to be inducted into the U.S. Military. He refused, stating that his religious beliefs prohibited him from killing. After converting to Islam in 1964, Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr. changed his name to Muhammad Ali. He would go on to become a three-time world champion in boxing. During the U.S. war on Vietnam in 1967, Ali refused to enter the army. Because of his refusal, Muhammad Ali was convicted of evading the draft and was sentenced to five years in prison. He was also fined ten thousand dollars and was banned from boxing for three years. Ali managed to avoid the prison time, but he did not return to the boxing ring until October of 1970. Throughout the time Ali was banned from boxing, he continued to express his opposition to the war in Vietnam while simultaneously preparing for his return to the sport in 1970. He faced intense criticism from the public for opposing the war so openly, yet he remained true to his beliefs that it was wrong to attack the people of Vietnam when the African Americans in his own country were treated so poorly on a daily basis. Though Ali was known for his power and talent related to fighting in the boxing ring, he was not an unthinking supporter of violence. He took a stance for peace in a time when it was dangerous and frowned upon to do so.

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March 7

On this day in 1988, it was reported that the Atlanta Division of the United States District Court ruled that a peace group must have the same access to students at high school career days as military recruiters. The ruling, issued on March 4, 1988, was in response to a case brought by the Atlanta Peace Alliance (APA) alleging that the Atlanta Board of Education violated First and Fourteenth Amendment rights by denying APA members permission to present information on educational and career opportunities related to peace to students in Atlanta public schools. The APA wanted the same opportunity as military recruiters to place its literature on school bulletin boards, in school guidance offices, and to participate in Career Days and Youth Motivation Days. On August 13, 1986, the Court ruled in favor of APA and ordered the Board to provide the APA with the same opportunities provided to military recruiters. However, the Board filed an appeal, which was granted on April 17, 1987. The case was tried in October 1987. The court concluded that APA was entitled to equal treatment and ordered the Board of Education to provide equal opportunity to present students in Atlanta public high schools with information on careers in peace-making and on military service by placing literature on school bulletin boards and in school guidance offices. It also ruled that APA was entitled to participate in Career Days and that policies and regulations that ban criticism of other job opportunities and that exclude speakers whose primary focus is to discourage participation in a particular field are void because they violate First Amendment rights.

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March 8

On this day in 1965, in the *United States v. Seeger*, the United States Supreme Court expanded the basis for exemption from military service as a conscientious objector. The case had been brought by three people who claimed they had been denied conscientious objector status because they did not belong to a recognized religious sect. The denials were based on rules found in the Universal Military Training and Service Act. These rules state that individuals may be exempted from military service if “their religious beliefs or training makes them opposed to going to war or participating in military service.” Religious belief was interpreted to mean belief in a “Supreme Being.” The interpretation of religious beliefs therefore depended on the definition of “Supreme Being.” Rather than change the rules, the Court chose to broaden the definition of “Supreme Being.” The court held that “Supreme Being” should be interpreted to mean “the concept of a power or being, or a faith, to which all else is subordinate or upon which all else is ultimately dependent.” The Court therefore ruled that “conscientious objector status could not be reserved only for those who claimed conformity with the moral directives of a supreme person, but also for those whose opinions on war are derived from a meaningful and sincere belief that occupies in the life of its holder a place congruent to that filled by the God of those” who had routinely been exempted. The broadened definition of the term was also used to distinguish religious beliefs from political, social or philosophical beliefs, which are still not permitted for use under conscientious objection rulings.

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March 9

On this day in 1945, the United States firebombed Tokyo. The napalm bombs killed an estimated 100,000 Japanese civilians, injured a million, destroyed homes, and caused even the rivers to boil in Tokyo. This is considered the deadliest attack in the history of war. The bombing of Tokyo was followed by atomic attacks destroying Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and considered retaliation for the Japanese attack on the military base at Pearl Harbor. Historians found afterward that the U.S. not only knew about the possibility of the attack on Pearl Harbor, but provoked it. After the U.S. claimed Hawaii in 1893, the building of a U.S. naval base in Pearl Harbor began. The U.S. built up some of its wealth by supplying weaponry to numerous nations following WWI, and by building bases in even more of them. By 1941, the U.S. was training a Chinese Air Force while supplying them with weapons, fighting and bombing planes. Cutting off weapon supplies to Japan while building China's military was part of a strategy that angered Japan. The threat of U.S. intervention in the Pacific intensified until the U.S. ambassador to Japan heard of a possible attack on Pearl Harbor, and informed his government of the possibility eleven months before the Japanese attack. Militarism gained popularity in the U.S. as it grew and provided jobs for Americans by finding and funding wars. Over 405,000 U.S. troops died, and over 607,000 were wounded during WWII, a fraction of the 60 million or more total deaths. Despite these statistics, the Department of War grew, and was renamed the Department of Defense in 1948.

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March 10

On this day in 1987 the United Nations recognized conscientious objection as a human right. Conscientious objection is defined as a refusal on moral or religious grounds to bear arms in military conflict or to serve in armed forces. This recognition established this right as part of every person's freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. The U.N. Commission on Human rights also recommended to nations with policies of compulsory military involvement that they "consider introducing various forms of alternative service for conscientious objectors which are compatible with the reasons for conscientious objection, bearing in mind the experience of some States in this respect, and that they refrain from subjecting such persons to imprisonment." The recognition of conscientious objection, in theory, allows those who see war as wrong and immoral to refuse to participate in it. Realizing this right remains a work in progress. In the United States a member of the military who becomes a conscientious objector must persuade the military to agree. And objection to a particular war is never permitted; one can only object to all wars. But awareness and appreciation of the importance of the right is growing, with monuments around the world built to honor conscientious objectors and a holiday established on May 15th. U.S. President John F. Kennedy stressed the importance of this when he wrote these words to a friend: "War will exist until that distant day when the conscientious objector enjoys the same reputation and prestige that the warrior does today."

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March 11

On this day in 2004, 191 people were killed by Al-Qaeda bombs in Madrid, Spain. On the morning of March 11th, 2004, Spain experienced the deadliest terrorist or non-war attack in its recent history. 191 people were killed and more than 1,800 were injured when approximately ten bombs exploded on four commuter trains and in three train stations near Madrid. The explosions were caused by hand-made, improvised explosive devices. Initially, the bombs were thought to be the work of the ETA, a Basque separatist group that is classified as a terrorist group by the United States and the European Union. The group adamantly denied responsibility for the train bombings. Several days following the explosions, the terrorist group Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attacks via a videotaped message. Many in Spain as well as numerous countries around the world saw the attacks as retaliation for Spain's participation in the war in Iraq. The attacks also took place just two days before a major Spanish election in which anti-war Socialists, lead by Prime Minister Jose Rodriguez, came to power. Rodriguez ensured that all Spanish troops would be removed from Iraq, with the last of them leaving in May of 2004. In order to remember the victims of this horrific attack, a memorial forest was planted at the El Retiro Park in Madrid, nearby one of the railway stations where the initial explosion occurred. This is a good day on which to try to break a cycle of violence.



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March 12

On this day in 1930 Gandhi began the Salt March. Britain's Salt Act prevented Indians from collecting or selling salt, a mineral that was a staple of their daily diets. Citizens of India had to buy salt directly from the British who not only monopolized the salt industry but also charged a heavy tax. Independence leader Mohandas Gandhi saw defying the salt monopoly as a way for Indians to break British law in a non-violent way. On March 12th, Gandhi departed from Sabarmati with 78 followers and marched to the town of Dandi on the Arabian Sea, where the group would make their own salt from sea water. The march was approximately 241 miles long, and along the way Gandhi gained thousands of followers. Civil disobedience broke out all over India, and more than 60,000 Indians were arrested, including Gandhi himself on May 21st. Mass civil disobedience continued. In January of 1931, Gandhi was released from prison. He met with Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin, and agreed to call off the actions in exchange for a negotiating role in a London conference on the future of India. The meeting did not have the outcome that Gandhi had hoped for, but British leaders recognized the powerful influence this man had amongst the Indian people and that he could not be easily thwarted. In fact the nonviolent resistance movement to liberate India continued until the British conceded and India was freed of their occupation in 1947.

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March 13

On this day in 1968, clouds of nerve gas drifted outside the United State's Army's Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah, poisoning 6,400 sheep in nearby Skull Valley. The Dugway Proving Grounds was established during the 1940s in order to provide the military with a remote location to conduct weapons testing. Several days prior to the incident, the Army had flown a plane full of nerve gas over the Utah Desert. The plane's mission was to spray the gas over a remote section of the Utah Desert, a test that was a minor part of the ongoing chemical and biological weapons research at Dugway. The nerve gas being tested was known as VX, a substance three times as toxic as Sarin. In fact, a single drop of VX could kill a human being in approximately 10 minutes. On the day of the test, the nozzle that was used to spray the nerve gas was broken, so as the plane departed the nozzle continued to release the VX. Strong winds carried the gas to Skull Valley where thousands of sheep were grazing. Government officials disagree on the exact number of sheep that died, but it is between 3,500 and 6,400. After the incident, the army assured the public that the death of so many sheep could not possibly have been caused by just a few drops of VX sprayed so far away. This incident outraged many Americans who were extremely frustrated with the Army and its reckless use of weapons of mass destruction.

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March 14

On this day in 1879 Albert Einstein was born. Einstein, one of the most creative minds in human history, was born in Württemberg, Germany. He completed much of his education in Switzerland, where he was trained as a teacher in physics and mathematics. When he received his diploma in 1901, he was unable to find a teaching position and accepted a position as a technical assistant in the Swiss Patent Office. He produced much of his famous work during his free time. After World War II, Einstein played a major role in the World Government Movement. He was offered presidency of the State of Israel, but turned that offer down. His most important works are Special Theory of Relativity, Relativity, General Theory of Relativity, Why War?, and My Philosophy. Though Einstein's scientific contributions helped other scientists create the atomic bomb, he himself had no part in the creation of the atomic bombs dropped on Japan, and he later deplored the use of all atomic weapons. However, despite his lifelong pacifist beliefs, he did write to President Franklin D. Roosevelt on behalf of a group of scientists who were concerned with America's lack of action in the area of atomic weapons research, fearing Germany's acquisition of such a weapon. After World War II, Einstein called for the establishment of a world government that would control nuclear technology and prevent future armed conflict. He also advocated for universal refusal to participate in war. He died in Princeton, New Jersey in 1955.

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March 15

On this day in 1970, 78 protesters were arrested during an attempt by Native American activists to occupy Fort Lawton, demanding that the city of Seattle give the unused property back to Native Americans. The movement was started by the group United Indians of All Tribes, organized primarily by Bernie Whitebear. The activists who invaded Fort Lawton, a 1,100-acre army post in Seattle's Magnolia neighborhood, did so in response to the declining state of Native American reservations and to the opposition and challenges that were faced by Seattle's growing "urban Indian" population. In the 1950s, the U.S. government had set up relocation programs moving thousands of Indians into various cities, promising them better employment and educational opportunities. By the late sixties, the city of Seattle was somewhat aware of the "problem" of urban Indians, yet Native Americans were still severely misrepresented in Seattle's politics and frustrated by the city's unwillingness to negotiate. Whitebear, inspired by movements such as Black Power, decided to organize an assault on Fort Lawton. Here activists confronted the 392nd Military Police Company which was armed with riot gear. The Indians present were "armed" with sandwiches, sleeping bags, and cooking utensils. The Native Americans invaded the base from all sides, but the major confrontation took place near the edge of the base where a 40-soldier platoon arrived at the scene and began dragging people away to jail. In 1973 the military gave the majority of the land, not to Native Americans, but to the city to become Discovery Park.

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March 16

On this day in 1921, War Resisters International was founded. This organization is an antimilitarist and pacifist group that has far-reaching global influence with over 80 affiliated groups in 40 countries. Several founders of this organization were involved in resistance to the first World War, such as WRI's first secretary, Herbert Brown, who served a two-and-a-half-year prison sentence in Britain for being a conscientious objector. The organization was known as the War Resisters League, or WRL, in the United States where it was officially founded in 1923. WRI, whose headquarters are in London, believes that war is truly a crime against humanity and that all wars, no matter the intent behind them, only serve the political and economic interests of the government. Additionally, all wars lead to mass destruction of the environment, suffering and death of human beings, and ultimately new power structures of further domination and control. The group strives to end war, initiating nonviolent campaigns that involve local groups and individuals in the process of ending war. WRI runs three major programs to achieve its goals: the Nonviolence program, which promotes techniques such as active resistance and non-cooperation, the Right to Refuse to Kill Program, which supports conscientious objectors and monitors military service and recruitment, and finally, the Countering the Militarization of Youth Program, which tries to identify and challenge the ways that the youth of the world are encouraged to accept military values and morals as being glorious, decent, normal, or inevitable.

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March 17

On this day in 1968 at the largest Vietnam antiwar march in Britain to date, 25,000 people attempted to storm the American Embassy at Grosvenor Square in London. The event had begun in a relatively peaceful and organized fashion, with about 80,000 people gathered to protest the United States military action in Vietnam and Britain's support for America's involvement in the war. The United States embassy was surrounded by hundreds of police. Only actress and anti-war activist Vanessa Redgrave and her three supporters were allowed to enter the embassy to deliver a written protest. On the outside, the crowd was held back from entering the embassy as well, yet they refused to stand down, throwing stones, firecrackers, and smoke bombs at the police officers. Some eyewitnesses claimed that the protesters resorted to violence after "skinheads" started chanting pro-war slogans at them. About four hours later, approximately 300 people had been arrested and 75 people were hospitalized, including about 25 police officers. Lead singer and co-founder of the legendary rock group The Rolling Stones Mick Jagger was one of the protesters in Grosvenor Square on this day, and some believed the events inspired him to write the songs Street Fighting Man and Sympathy for the Devil. There were several Vietnam war protests in the years that followed, but none in London were as large as the one that took place on March 17th. Larger protests followed in the United States, and the last U.S. troops finally left Vietnam in 1973.

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March 18

On this day in 1644, the third Anglo-Powhatan war began. The Anglo-Powhatan Wars were a series of three wars that were fought between the Indians of the Powhatan Confederacy and the English settlers of Virginia. For about twelve years following the ending of the second war, there was a period of peace between the Native Americans and the colonists. However, on March 18th 1644, the Powhatan warriors made one final effort to rid their territory of the English settlers once and for all. The Native Americans were led by Chief Opechancanough, their leader and the younger brother to Chief Powhatan who organized the Powhatan Confederacy. Around 500 colonists were killed in the initial attack, but this number was relatively small in comparison to an attack in 1622 that had taken out approximately a third of the population of colonists. Months after this attack, the English captured

Opechancanough, who was between 90 and 100 years old at the time, and brought him to Jamestown. Here, he was shot in the back by a soldier who decided to take matters into his own hands. Treaties were later made between the English and Opechancanough's successor Necotowance. These treaties severely restricted the Powhatan people's territory, confining them to very small reservations in areas north of the York River. The treaties were intended to and did establish a pattern of removing Native Americans from invading European colonists in order to take over their land and settle it before expanding and moving them again.

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March 19

On this day in 2003, the United States, along with coalition forces attacked Iraq. U.S. President George W. Bush said in a televised address that the war was to “disarm Iraq, free its people, and to defend the world from grave danger.” Bush and his Republican and Democratic allies often justified the war in Iraq by claiming falsely that Iraq possessed nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and that Iraq was allied with al Qaeda — a claim that convinced a majority of the U.S. public that Iraq was connected to the crimes of September 11, 2001. By the most scientifically respected measures available, the war killed 1.4 million Iraqis, saw 4.2 million injured, and 4.5 million people become refugees. The 1.4 million dead was 5% of the population. The invasion included 29,200 air strikes, followed by 3,900 over the next eight years. The U.S. military targeted civilians, journalists, hospitals, and ambulances. It used cluster bombs, white phosphorous, depleted uranium, and a new kind of napalm in urban areas. Birth defects, cancer rates, and infant mortality soared. Water supplies, sewage treatment plants, hospitals, bridges, and electricity supplies were devastated, and not repaired. For years, the occupying forces encouraged ethnic and sectarian division and violence, resulting in a segregated country and the repression of rights that Iraqis had enjoyed even under Saddam Hussein’s brutal police state. Terrorist groups, including one that took the name ISIS, arose and flourished. This is a good day on which to advocate for reparations to the people of Iraq.

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March 20

On this day in 1983, 150,000 individuals, approximately 1% of Australia's population, participated in anti-nuclear rallies. The Nuclear disarmament movement began in the 1980s in Australia, and it developed unevenly across the country. The organization People for Nuclear Disarmament was founded in 1981, and its formation broadened the movement's leadership, especially in Victoria, where the group was founded. The group was largely made up of independent socialists and radical academics who began the movement through a peace studies organization. People for Nuclear Disarmament called for the closure of U.S. bases in Australia, and it adopted a policy of opposition to Australia's military alliance with the United States. Other statewide organizations later emerged with similar structures to PND. Australia has a long history of anti-militarism. During the Vietnam War in 1970, approximately 70,000 people marched in Melbourne and 20,000 in Sydney in opposition to the war. In the 80s, Australians strived to end any contribution of the nation to U.S. nuclear-war fighting capabilities. The March 20th rally of 1983, which took place on the Sunday before Easter, was known as the first "Palm Sunday" rally, and it raised general peace and nuclear disarmament concerns that Australian citizens had. These Palm Sunday rallies continued in Australia throughout the 1980s. Because of the widespread opposition to nuclear expansion that was visible in these demonstrations, the broadening of Australia's nuclear program was halted.

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March 21

On this day in 1966, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was designated by the United Nations. This day is observed throughout the world with a series of events and activities that aim to draw people's attention to the highly negative and damaging consequences of racial discrimination. Additionally, the day serves as a reminder to all people of their obligation to try to combat racial discrimination in all aspects of life as citizens of a complex and dynamic global community that depends on tolerance and the acceptance of other races for our continued survival. This day is also intended to help younger people throughout the world voice their opinions and promote peaceful ways to combat racism and encourage tolerance within their communities, as the UN acknowledges that instilling these values of tolerance and acceptance within today's youth may be one of the most valuable and effective ways to combat future racial intolerance and discrimination. This day was established six years after what is known as the Sharpeville Massacre. During this tragic event, police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful protest against the apartheid laws in South Africa. The UN asked the international community to strengthen its resolve to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination when it proclaimed this day in observance of the massacre in 1966. The UN continues to work to combat all forms of racial intolerance and political violence related to racial tensions.

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March 22

On this day in 1980, 30,000 people marched in Washington, D.C., against mandatory draft registration. During the protest, issues of Resistance News, created by the National Resistance Committee, were distributed to demonstrators and participants. The NRC was formed in 1980 to oppose registration to the draft, and the organization was active into the early 1990s. The leaflets of Resistance News dispersed to crowds elaborated on the stance of NRC which was that the organization was open to all forms of draft resistance, whether the reasoning for resisting was based on pacifism, religion, ideology, or any other reasons an individual might have for not believing that they should have to enter the draft. Draft registration in the United States was reinstated under President Carter in 1980 as part of “preparation” for the U.S. to potentially intervene in Afghanistan. During protests across the country on this day and throughout 1980, signs such as “Refuse to Register” or “I will not register” were seen throughout the crowds of thousands who believed it was their right as human beings to refuse draft registration. This is a good day on which to help some draft registration forms into a recycling bin and to recognize that the right to refuse to participate in violent and destructive conflict is a basic right of all human beings, as no one should be forced to be involved in such a cataclysmic event as war.

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March 23

On this day in 1980 Archbishop Óscar Romero of El Salvador delivered his famous peace sermon. He called on Salvadoran soldiers and the government of El Salvador to obey God's higher order, and to stop violating basic human rights and committing acts of repression and murder. The following day, Romero joined a monthly gathering of priests to reflect on the priesthood. That evening, he celebrated Mass at a small chapel at the Divine Providence Hospital. As he finished his sermon, a red vehicle stopped on the street in front of the chapel. A gunman got out, walked to the door of the chapel, and fired. Romero was struck in the heart. The vehicle sped off. On March 30, more than 250,000 mourners from all over the world attended his funeral. During the ceremony smoke bombs exploded on the streets near the cathedral and rifle shots came from surrounding buildings. Between 30 and 50 people were killed by gunfire and in the stampede that followed. Witnesses claimed that government security forces threw the bombs into the crowd, and army sharpshooters, dressed as civilians, fired from the balcony or roof of the National Palace. As the gunfire continued, Romero's body was buried in a crypt beneath the sanctuary. The United States, during both the Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan presidencies, contributed to the conflict by providing weapons and training to the military of the government of El Salvador. In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed March 24th the "International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims."

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March 24

On this day in 1999, the United States and NATO began 78 days of bombing Yugoslavia. The United States believed that, unlike the later case of Crimea, Kosovo had the right to secede. But the United States did not want it done, like Crimea, without any people getting killed. In the June 14, 1999 issue of *The Nation*, George Kenney, a former State Department Yugoslavia desk officer, reported: “An unimpeachable press source who regularly travels with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told this [writer] that, swearing reporters to deep-background confidentiality at the Rambouillet talks, a senior State Department official had bragged that the United States ‘deliberately set the bar higher than the Serbs could accept’” in order to avoid peace. The United Nations did not authorize the United States and its NATO allies to bomb Serbia in 1999. Neither did the United States Congress. The U.S. engaged in a massive bombing campaign that killed large numbers of people, injured many more, destroyed civilian infrastructure, hospitals, and media outlets, and created a refugee crisis. This destruction was accomplished through lies, fabrications, and exaggerations about atrocities, and then justified anachronistically as a response to violence that it helped generate. In the year prior to the bombing some 2,000 people were killed, a majority by Kosovo Liberation Army guerrillas who, with support from the CIA, were seeking to incite a Serbian response that would appeal to Western humanitarian warriors. A propaganda campaign tied exaggerated and fictional atrocities to the Nazi holocaust. There were indeed atrocities, but most of them occurred after the bombing, not before it. Most of Western reporting inverted that chronology.

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March 25

This is International Day of Remembrance of Slavery Victims and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. On this day, we take time to remember the 15 million men, women, and children who were victims of the transatlantic slave trade for over 400 years. This brutal crime will always be considered one of, if not the, darkest episodes in human history. The transatlantic slave trade was the largest forced migration in history, as millions of African Americans were forcibly removed from their homes in Africa and relocated to other areas of the world, arriving on cramped slave ships at ports in South America and the Caribbean Islands. From 1501-1830, four Africans crossed the Atlantic for every one European. This migration is still evident today, with very large populations of people of African descent living throughout the Americas. We honor and remember today those who suffered and those who died as a result of the horrific and barbaric slavery system. Slavery was officially abolished in the United States in February of 1865, but defacto slavery and legal racial segregation continued throughout most of the following century, while defacto segregation and racism remain to this day. Various events are held globally on this day including memorial services and vigils for those who died. This day is also a good occasion to educate the public, especially young people, about the effects of racism, slavery, and the transatlantic slave trade. Educational events are held throughout schools, colleges, and universities. In 2015, a memorial was erected at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

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March 26

On this day in 1979, the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Agreement was signed. During a ceremony that was held at the White House, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin signed the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty which was the first peace treaty ever between Israel and an Arab country. During the ceremony, both leaders and U.S. President Jimmy Carter prayed that this treaty would bring real peace to the Middle East and end the violence and fighting that had been ongoing since the late 1940s. Israel and Egypt had been involved in conflict since the Arab-Israeli War, which began directly after Israel was founded. The peace treaty between Israel and Egypt was the result of months of difficult negotiations. Under this treaty, both nations agreed to end the violence and conflict and to establish diplomatic relations. Egypt agreed to recognize Israel as a country and Israel agreed to leave the Sinai Peninsula that it had taken from Egypt during a six-day war in 1967. For their achievement in signing this treaty, Sadat and Begin were jointly awarded the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize. Many in the Arab world reacted angrily to the peace treaty as they saw it as a betrayal, and Egypt was suspended from the Arab League. In October of 1981, Muslim extremists assassinated Sadat. Peace efforts between the nations continued without Sadat, but despite the treaty, tensions still run high between these two Middle-Eastern countries.

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March 27

On this day in 1958, Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev became Premier of the Soviet Union. The day before his election, Khrushchev proposed a new foreign policy. His suggestion that nuclear powers consider disarmament and stop producing nuclear weapons was well received. Following the speech, Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko agreed the “banning of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons tests” was part of the Soviet agenda. Marshal Voroshilov, chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, reiterated that the new government was “holding the initiative,” and that the people of the world knew Mr. Khrushchev as a “firm, untiring champion of peace.” While proposing peaceful relations with capitalist countries, Khrushchev remained a firm believer in communism. And, of course, the Cold War continued under his administration as Hungarian protests were violently repressed, the Berlin Wall was built, and a U.S. spy plane flying over Russia was attacked and its pilot captured. The U.S. then discovered nuclear missiles at a Russian base in Cuba. Khrushchev finally agreed to remove the missiles when U.S. President John F. Kennedy promised that the U.S. would not attack Cuba, and, privately, that it would remove all nuclear weapons from a U.S. base in Turkey. Khrushchev surprised the world many times by launching the first satellite, and the first astronaut into space. His failure to convince fellow communist leader, Mao Zedong of China, to consider disarmament led to his eventual lack of support in the Soviet Union. In 1964, Khrushchev was forced to resign, but not before negotiating a partial nuclear test ban with both the U.S. and the United Kingdom.

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March 28

On this day in 1979, a nuclear power plant accident occurred at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania. A portion of the core melted in the plant's second reactor. In the months following the accident, the U.S. public staged numerous anti-nuclear demonstrations across the country. The U.S. public was told numerous falsehoods, documented by anti-nuclear activist Harvey Wasserman. First, the public was assured there were no radiation releases. That quickly proved to be false. The public was then told the releases were controlled and done purposely to alleviate pressure on the core. Both those assertions were false. The public was told the releases were "insignificant." But stack monitors were saturated and unusable, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission later told Congress it did not know how much radiation was released at Three Mile Island, or where it went. Official estimates said a uniform dose to all persons in the region was equivalent to a single chest x-ray. But pregnant women are no longer x-rayed because it has long been known a single dose can do catastrophic damage to an embryo or fetus in utero. The public was told there was no need to evacuate anyone from the area. But Pennsylvania Governor Richard Thornburgh then evacuated pregnant women and small children. Unfortunately, many were sent to nearby Hershey, which was showered with fallout. The infant death rate tripled in Harrisburg. Door-to-door surveys in the region found substantial increases in cancer, leukemia, birth defects, respiratory problems, hair loss, rashes, lesions and more.

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March 29

On this day in 1987 in Nicaragua, Vietnam Veterans for Peace marched from Jinotega and to Wicuili. The veterans involved in the march had been actively monitoring the United States' attempts to destabilize the country of Nicaragua by providing aid to the terrorist Contras. The Veterans for Peace organization was founded in 1985 by ten U.S. veterans in response to the global nuclear arms race and the U.S. military interventions in various Central American countries. The organization grew to more than 8,000 members by the time the United States invaded Iraq in 2003. When Veterans for Peace was initially formed, it was composed mainly of U.S. Military Veterans who served in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam war, and the Gulf War. It was also made up of peacetime veterans and non-veterans, but it has grown overseas in recent years and has many active members throughout the United Kingdom. The Veterans for Peace Organization works hard to promote alternatives to war and violence. The organization has opposed and continues to oppose many of the military policies of the U.S., NATO, and Israel, including military actions and threats to Russia, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, etc. Today, members of this organization remain actively engaged in campaigns to help bring understanding of the horrific costs of war, and much of their current work focuses on the seemingly-never-ending war on terror. The organization creates projects to support returning veterans, oppose drone warfare, and counter military recruitment efforts in schools.

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March 30

On this day in 2003, 100,000 people marched through Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, to demonstrate against the war in Iraq, which officially began on March 19, 2003. It was the biggest anti-war rally ever to take place in the world's largest Muslim nation. The day also saw the first officially sanctioned anti-war demonstration in China. A group of 200 foreign students were allowed to march past the U.S. embassy in Beijing chanting anti-war slogans. In Germany 40,000 people formed a 35-mile long human chain between the cities of Munster and Osnabrueck. In Berlin 23,000 took part in a rally in Tiergarten Park. Marches and rallies also took place in Santiago, Mexico City, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Caracas, Paris, Moscow, Budapest, Warsaw and Dublin, India and Pakistan. According to French academic Dominique Reynié, between January 3 and April 12, 2003, 36 million people around the world took part in 3,000 protests against the Iraq war. The biggest protests during this period were in Europe. Rome is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as holding the largest ever anti-war rally: three million people. Other huge rallies took place in London (organizers put the figure at 2 million); New York City (375,000); and 60 towns and cities across France (300,000). A March 2003 Gallup poll conducted during the first few days of the war showed that 5% of Americans had participated in anti-war demonstrations or in other ways expressed opposition to the war. New York Times writer Patrick Tyler claimed that these enormous rallies "showed that there were two super-powers on the planet, the United States and worldwide public opinion."

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March 31

On this day in 1972, a crowd rallied against nuclear arms in London's Trafalgar Square. More than 500 people met in the square that day to express feelings of fear and frustration at the continuing nuclear and atomic testing being conducted by the British government. The original black banner used by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament back in 1958 was brought to the square before they began a 56-mile Easter march from London to Aldermaston, Berkshire. The four-day march, according to Dick Nettleton, secretary of the Campaign, was planned to inform people who had been led to believe the atomic weapons research unit was being shut down that it was instead being moved to Aldermaston. The move was due to the recent official transfer of the weapons research administration from the Atomic Energy Commission to the Ministry of Defence. Nettleton noted that 81% of the Commission's work involved improvements to both nuclear weapons and the British bomb. He also added that scientists had informed him that they were concerned about their own working conditions as the push for research and development of these weapons progressed. The protestors began marching toward the town of Chiswick, hoping to draw support from neighbors along the way as they continued to the nuclear center. They expected disruptions by the police by the time they arrived in Aldermaston, but they also found three thousand supporters. Together, they placed twenty-seven black coffins at the gates, one for each year since the U.S. bombings of Japan. They also left a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament sign decorated with daffodils, a symbol of hope.

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April 1

On this day in 2018 the United States held its first Edible Book Day. President Donald Trump had established the Day on April 1, 2017 by Executive Order. The International Edible Book Festival was founded in 2000 and has been celebrated in countries including Australia, Brazil, India, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Russia, and Hong Kong. It has also been celebrated locally in the U.S.: since 2004 in Ohio, in Los Angeles in 2005, in Indianapolis in 2006, and in Florida as part of National Library Week. Trump's advisors argued that Edible Book Day was a great opportunity to give a lighthearted event a patriotic purpose. It could become the focal point on the calendar for the War on Fake News and for celebrating American Exceptionalism. Trump was especially inspired when he heard that the Perkins Library at Hastings College in Nebraska had celebrated Edible Book Day in 2008 as part of Banned Books Week. Trump's executive order set out the rules to be followed.

It shall be held annually on April 1.

It shall not be a public holiday but a social media event.

Citizens shall join before or after work, or during sanctioned breaks.

Citizens shall list the texts they choose to eat that day on Twitter.

The NSA shall collate and rank all listed texts for future action.

As Trump said when announcing the National Edible Book Day from the steps of the Library of Congress, "This day is the perfect day for all of those fake news peddlers out there to eat their words and get with the program and Make America Great Again."

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April 2

On this day in 1935, thousands of U.S. students went on strike against war. College students in the mid to late 1930s grew up feeling the horrors of WWI throughout France, Great Britain, and the United States, believing that war benefitted no one, yet fearing another. In 1934, a U.S. protest including 25,000 students was held in remembrance of the day the U.S. entered WWI. In 1935, a “Student Strike Against War Committee” was started in the U.S. attracting an even larger movement of 700 students from Kentucky University joined by 175,000 more across the U.S., and thousands more around the world. Students from 140 campuses from 31 countries left their classes that day feeling: “protest against mass slaughter was more beneficial than an hour of class.” As concerns grew about Germany’s occupations, trouble between Japan and the Soviet Union, Italy and Ethiopia, the pressure built for students to speak out. At KU, Kenneth Born, a member of the debate team, questioned the \$300 billion spent on World War I, arguing that “rationalism could bring a better solution.” While he was at the podium, the crowd was exposed to tear gas, yet Born persuaded the students to stay by declaring, “You will face worse than this in war.” Charles Hackler, a law student, described the demonstrations as reminders that “war was not inevitable,” calling the current ROTC parades “war propaganda for capitalists, munitions dealers, and other war profiteers.” As many of these same students were finally coerced into fighting and dying in Europe, Asia, and Africa during WWII, their words have become ever more poignant.

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April 3

On this day in 1948, the Marshall Plan went into effect. Following WWII, the United Nations began providing humanitarian help to devastated countries across Europe. The U.S., which had not suffered significant damage, offered financial and military assistance. President Truman then appointed former U.S. Army Chief of Staff George Marshall, known for his diplomacy as Secretary of State. Marshall and his staff came up with the “Marshall Plan,” or the European Recovery Plan, to restore European economies. The Soviet Union was invited but declined fearing U.S. involvement in its financial decisions. Sixteen nations accepted, and enjoyed potent economic recovery between 1948-1952 leading to the North Atlantic Alliance, and later the European Union. Upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for his work, George Marshall shared these words with the world: “There has been considerable comment over the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to a soldier. I am afraid this does not seem as remarkable to me as it quite evidently appears to others. I know a great deal of the horrors and tragedies of war. Today, as chairman of the American Battle Monuments Commission, it is my duty to supervise the construction and maintenance of military cemeteries in many countries overseas, particularly in Western Europe. The cost of war in human lives is constantly spread before me, written neatly in many ledgers whose columns are gravestones. I am deeply moved to find some means or method of avoiding another calamity of war. Almost daily I hear from the wives, or mothers, or families of the fallen. The tragedy of the aftermath is almost constantly before me.”

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April 4

On this date in 1967, Martin Luther King delivered a speech before 3,000 congregants at the interdenominational Riverside Church in New York City. Entitled “Beyond Vietnam: a Time To Break Silence,” the speech marked a transition in King’s role from civil rights leader to a prophet of the social gospel. In it, he not only laid out a comprehensive program to end the war, but, in the same measured, non-rhetorical tones, plumbed a “far deeper malady within the American spirit” of which the war was a symptom. We must, he insisted, “undergo a radical revolution of values.... A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.” Following the speech, King was broadly upbraided by the American establishment. The New York Times opined that “the strategy of uniting the peace movement and civil rights could very well be disastrous for both causes,” and similar criticism came from the black press and the NAACP. Yet, despite the put-downs and possible racist retribution, King did not retreat. He set out on a radical course and began planning the Poor People’s Campaign, a project to unite all of America’s dispossessed, regardless of race or nationality, in the common cause of human dignity. He summed up his new attitude in these words: “The cross may mean the death of your popularity.” Even so, “Take up your cross and just bear it. That’s the way I have decided to go. Come what may, it doesn’t matter now.” A year after the speech, precisely to the day, he was assassinated.

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April 5

On this day in 1946, General Douglas MacArthur spoke about the ban on war included as Article 9 of Japan's new Constitution. Article 9 includes language nearly identical to that of the Kellogg-Briand Pact to which many nations are party. "While all provisions of this proposed new constitution are of importance, and lead individually and collectively to the desired end as expressed at Potsdam," he said, "I desire especially to mention that provision dealing with the renunciation of war. Such renunciation, while in some respects a logical sequence to the destruction of Japan's war-making potential, goes yet further in its surrender of the sovereign right of resort to arms in the international sphere. Japan thereby proclaims her faith in a society of nations by just, tolerant and effective rules of universal social and political morality and entrusts its national integrity thereto. The cynic may view such action as demonstrating but a childlike faith in a visionary ideal, but the realist will see in it far deeper significance. He will understand that in the evolution of society it became necessary for man to surrender certain rights. . . . The proposal . . . but recognizes one further step in the evolution of mankind. . . . dependent upon a world leadership which does not lack the moral courage to implement the will of the masses who abhor war. . . . I therefore commend Japan's proposal for the renunciation of war to the thoughtful consideration of all peoples of the world. It points the way — the only way."

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April 6

On this day in 1994, the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were assassinated. The evidence points to the U.S.-backed and U.S.-trained war-maker Paul Kagame — later president of Rwanda — as the guilty party. This is a good day to remember that while wars cannot prevent genocides, they can cause them. U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said “the genocide in Rwanda was one hundred percent the responsibility of the Americans!” This was because the United States backed an invasion of Rwanda on October 1, 1990, by a Ugandan army led by U.S.-trained killers, and supported their attack on Rwanda for three-and-a-half years. The Rwandan government, in response, did not follow the model of the U.S. internment of Japanese during World War II. Nor did it fabricate the idea of traitors in its midst, as the invading army in fact had 36 active cells in Rwanda. But the Rwandan government did arrest 8,000 people and hold them for a few days to six-months. People fled the invaders, creating a huge refugee crisis, ruined agriculture, wrecked economy, and shattered society. The United States and the West armed the warmakers and applied additional pressure through the World Bank, IMF, and USAID. Among the results was increased hostility between Hutus and Tutsis. Eventually the government would topple. First would come the mass slaughter known as the Rwandan Genocide. And before that would come the murder of two presidents. Killing of civilians in Rwanda has continued ever since, although the killing has been much more heavy in neighboring Congo, where Kagame’s government took the war — with U.S. aid and weapons and troops.

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April 7

On this day in 2014 Ecuador's President Rafael Correa told the U.S. military to leave his country. Correa was concerned by the "very high number" of U.S. military officers meddling in Ecuador's affairs. All 20 U.S. military employees, with the exception of the U.S. military attaché, were affected. This was the latest step to date in Ecuador's efforts to regain sole sovereignty from the U.S. in the conduct of its internal security. The first step had been taken in 2008 when Correa had purged his own military whose forces had allegedly been infiltrated and influenced by the CIA. Then in 2009 Ecuador evicted U.S. troops stationed there when it refused to renew an expiring 10-year rent-free lease on a U.S. military base in the city of Manta on Ecuador's Pacific coast. The U.S. Air Force euphemistically referred to this base as its southern most "Forward Operating Location" purportedly intended to stop drug trafficking from Colombia. Before the closing, Correa did make an offer to keep the base open. "We'll renew the base on one condition," he said, "that they let us put a base in Miami – an Ecuadorean base." Of course, the United States had no interest in that proposal. The hypocrisy of the U.S. position was summed up by Ecuadorean National Assembly Member Maria Augusta Calle whom the New York Times reported as saying "It's an issue of dignity and sovereignty. How many foreign bases are there in the U.S.?" Of course we know the answer. But on the question of whether U.S. bases in other people's countries can be closed, Ecuador's story provides one inspirational answer.

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April 8

On this day in 1898, Paul Robeson was born. Paul's father escaped slavery before settling in Princeton, and graduating from Lincoln University. Despite segregation nationwide, Paul earned an academic scholarship to Rutgers University where he graduated as Valedictorian before moving on to Columbia Law School. Racism impeded his career, so he found another in theatre promoting African-American history and culture. Paul became known for award winning roles in plays such as Othello, Emperor Jones, and All God's Chillun Got Wings, and for his stunning performance of Old Man River in Showboat. His performances worldwide left audiences craving encores. Robeson studied language, and performed songs about peace and justice in 25 countries. This led to friendships with African leader Jomo Kenyatta, India's Jawaharlal Nehru, W.E.B. Du Bois, Emma Goldman, James Joyce, and Ernest Hemingway. In 1933, Robeson donated the proceeds from his All God's Chillun to Jewish refugees. In 1945, he asked President Truman to pass an anti-lynching law, questioned the Cold War, and asked why African Americans should fight for a country with such rampant racism. Paul Robeson was then labeled a Communist by the House Un-American Activities Committee, effectively halting his career. Eighty of his concerts were cancelled, and two attacked while state police looked on. Robeson responded: "I'm going to sing wherever the people want me to sing... and I won't be frightened by crosses burning in Peekskill or anywhere else." The U.S. revoked Robeson's passport for 8 years. Robeson wrote an autobiography *Here I Stand* before his death, which appears to have followed drugging and electro-shocking at the hands of the CIA.

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April 9

On this day in 1947, the first freedom ride, “Journey of Reconciliation,” was sponsored by CORE and FOR. Following WWII, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that segregation on interstate trains and buses was unconstitutional. As the ruling was ignored throughout the South, the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), and a team of eight African-Americans and eight whites from the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE), including group leaders Bayard Rustin and George House, began boarding buses and sitting together. They boarded both Greyhound and Trailways buses in Washington DC, heading towards Petersburg where the Greyhound then headed for Raleigh, and the Trailways for Durham. The Greyhound driver called the police as they reached Oxford when Rustin refused to move from the front of the bus. The police did nothing as the driver and Rustin argued for 45 minutes. Both buses made it to Chapel Hill the following day, but before leaving for Greensboro on April 13, four riders (two African-American and two white) were forced into the nearby police station, arrested, and assigned a \$50 bond each. The incident drew the attention of many in the area including several taxi drivers. One of them struck white rider James Peck in the head as he disembarked to pay the bonds. Martin Watkins, a white disabled war veteran, was beaten by taxi drivers for speaking with an African-American woman at a bus stop. All charges against the white attackers were dropped as the victims were charged with inciting violence. The ground-breaking work of these civil rights defenders eventually led to the Freedom Rides of 1960 and 1961.

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April 10

On this date in 1998, the Good Friday Agreement was signed in Northern Ireland, bringing an end to 30 years of sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland known as “The Troubles.” The conflict resolved by the agreement stemmed from the mid-1960s, when Protestants in Northern Ireland attained a demographic majority that allowed them to control state institutions in ways that disadvantaged the region’s Roman Catholic minority. In the late ‘60s, an active civil rights movement on behalf of the Catholic population led to bombings, assassinations, and rioting between Catholics, Protestants, and British police and troops that continued into the early 1990s. As late as the beginning of 1998, prospects for peace in Northern Ireland remained poor. The historically Protestant Ulster Unionist Party (advocates of union with Britain) still refused to negotiate with Sinn Féin, the mainly Catholic and Irish-republican political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA); and the IRA itself remained unwilling to lay down its arms. Yet, ongoing multiparty talks, begun in 1996, which involved representatives of Ireland, various political parties of Northern Ireland, and the British government, eventually bore fruit. An agreement was reached that called for an elected Northern Ireland Assembly responsible for most local matters, cross-border cooperation between the governments of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and continued consultation between the British and Irish governments. In May 1998, the agreement was overwhelmingly approved in a jointly held referendum in Ireland and Northern Ireland. And on December 2, 1999, the Republic of Ireland removed its constitutional territorial claims to the whole of the island of Ireland, and the United Kingdom yielded direct rule of Northern Ireland.

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April 11

On this day in 1996, the Treaty of Pelindaba was signed in Cairo, Egypt. When implemented, the Treaty would make the entire African continent a nuclear weapons-free zone; it would also round out a series of four such zones covering the whole of the southern hemisphere. Forty-eight African nations signed the treaty, which requires each party to not “conduct research on, develop, manufacture, stockpile or otherwise acquire, possess or have control over any nuclear explosive device by any means anywhere.” The Treaty also bans testing of nuclear explosive devices; requires the dismantling of any such devices already manufactured and the conversion or destruction of any facilities designed to create them; and forbids the dumping of radioactive material in the zone covered by the treaty. In addition, nuclear states are enjoined to not “use or threaten to use” nuclear weapons against any state in a nuclear weapons-free zone. A press release issued by the U.N. Security Council the next day, April 12, 1996, summed up the significance of the Treaty of Pelindaba, which finally came into force some 13 years later, on July 15, 2009, when it was ratified by a required 28th African state. Though the Security Council had hoped to secure the Treaty’s rapid implementation, it recognized that its acceptance in principle by more than 40 African countries, as well as by almost all of the nuclear-weapons states, constituted “an important contribution to... international peace and security.” Its press release concluded: “The Security Council seizes this occasion to encourage such regional efforts...on the international and regional level aimed at achieving the universality of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.”

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April 12

On this date in 1935, some 175,000 college students across America engaged in classroom strikes and peaceful demonstrations in which they pledged never to participate in an armed conflict. Student anti-war mobilizations similar to those in 1935 were also held in the U.S. in 1934 and 1936, increasing in numbers from 25,000 in 1934 to 500,000 in 1936. Because many college students viewed the threat of war posed by fascism in Europe as emerging from the chaos produced by World War I, each of the demonstrations was held in April to mark the month the U.S. entered World War I. Believing that only big business and corporate interests had benefited from that war, the students abhorred what they saw as the senseless slaughter of millions and sought to make plain their unwillingness to take part in yet another meaningless war abroad. Interestingly, however, their fervent opposition to war was not based on anti-imperialist or isolationist political views, but primarily on a spiritual pacifism that was either personal or derived from membership in an organization that promoted it. A single anecdote seems to aptly illuminate this. In 1932, Richard Moore, a student at the University of California at Berkeley, had immersed himself in anti-war activities. "My position," he later explained, "was, one: I don't believe in killing, and two: I was not willing to submit myself to a higher authority, whether it was God or the United States of America." Such authenticity may also explain why hundreds of thousands of young men of the time believed that war can be eliminated if all young men simply refuse to fight.

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April 13

On this date in 1917, President Woodrow Wilson established the Committee on Public Information (CPI) by executive order. The brainchild of George Creel, a muckraking journalist of the time who was appointed its chairman, the CPI aimed to wage a sustained propaganda campaign to build both domestic and international support for America's belated entry into World War I just a week before. To carry out its mission, the CPI blended modern advertising techniques with a sophisticated understanding of human psychology. In what came close to outright censorship, it implemented "voluntary guidelines" to control media reports about the war, and flooded cultural channels with pro-war material. The CPI's Division of News distributed some 6,000 press releases that each week filled more than 20,000 newspaper columns. Its Division of Syndicated Features recruited leading essayists, novelists, and short-story writers to convey the official government line in easily digestible form to twelve million people each month. The Division of Pictorial Publicity plastered powerful posters, in patriotic colors, on billboards across the country. Scholars were recruited to churn out pamphlets such as *German War Practices and Conquest and Kultur*. And the Division of Films generated movies with titles such as *The Kaiser: The Beast of Berlin*. With the creation of the CPI, the U.S. became the first modern nation to disseminate propaganda on a very large scale. In doing so, it imparted an important lesson: If even a nominally democratic government, let alone a totalitarian one, is determined to go to war, it may well seek to unify a divided nation behind it through a comprehensive and prolonged campaign of fraudulent propaganda.

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April 14

On this date in 1988, Denmark's parliament passed a resolution insisting that its government inform all foreign warships seeking to enter Danish ports that they must state affirmatively before doing so whether they do or do not carry nuclear weapons. Despite Denmark's 30-year-old policy barring nuclear weapons anywhere on its territory, including its ports, the policy had been routinely circumvented by Denmark's acceptance of a stratagem employed by the United States and other NATO allies. Known as NCND, "neither confirming nor denying," this policy effectively allowed NATO ships to carry nuclear weapons into Danish ports at will. The new, restrictive, resolution, however, presented problems. Before its passage, the American ambassador in Denmark had told Danish politicians that the resolution could well keep all NATO warships from visiting Denmark, thereby ending common exercises at sea and impairing military cooperation. Since more than 60 percent of Danes wanted their country in NATO, the threats were taken seriously by the center-right Danish government. It called for an election on May 10, which resulted in keeping the conservatives in power. On July 2, when an American warship approaching a Danish port refused to divulge the nature of the ship's armaments, a letter thrown aboard the ship advising it of the new Danish policy was unceremoniously tossed back to shore. On June 8, Denmark reached a new agreement with the U.S. that would again allow NATO ships to enter Danish ports without confirming or denying that they were carrying nuclear weapons. To help placate antinuclear sentiment at home, Denmark simultaneously informed NATO governments of its long prohibition of nuclear weapons on its territory during peacetime.

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April 15

On this day in 1967 the largest anti-Vietnam war demonstrations in U.S. history, up to that time, took place in New York, San Francisco, and many other cities across the United States. In New York, the protest began in Central Park and ended at the Headquarters of the United Nations. More than 125,000 people participated, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Harry Belafonte, James Bevel, and Dr. Benjamin Spock. Over 150 draft cards were burned. Another 100,000 marched from Second and Market Street in downtown San Francisco to Kezar Stadium in Golden Gate Park, where the actor Robert Vaughn as well as Coretta King spoke against America's involvement in the Vietnam War. Both marches were part of the Spring Mobilization to End the Vietnamese War. The Spring Mobilization organizing group first met on November 26, 1966. It was chaired by veteran peace activist A. J. Muste and included David Dellinger, the editor of *Liberation*; Edward Keating, the publisher of *Ramparts*; Sidney Peck, of Case Western Reserve University; and Robert Greenblatt, of Cornell University. In January 1967, they named the Reverend James Luther Bevel, a close colleague of Martin Luther King, Jr., as director of the Spring Mobilization. At the end of the New York march, Bevel announced that the next stop would be Washington D.C. On May 20–21, 1967, 700 antiwar activists gathered there for the Spring Mobilization Conference. Their purpose was to evaluate April's demonstrations and to chart a future course for the antiwar movement. They also created an administrative committee – the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam – to plan future events.

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April 16

On this day in 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill ending slavery in Washington, D.C. This is Emancipation Day in Washington, D.C. Ending slavery in Washington, D.C., involved no war. While slavery elsewhere in the United States was ended by creating new laws after killing three-quarters of a million people in numerous large fields, slavery in Washington, D.C., was ended the way it was ended in much of the rest of the world, namely by skipping ahead and simply creating new laws. The law that ended slavery in D.C. used compensated emancipation. It didn't compensate the people who had been enslaved, but rather the people who had enslaved them. Slavery and serfdom were global and were largely ended within a century, far more often through compensated emancipation than with war, including in colonies of Britain, Denmark, France, and the Netherlands, and in most of South America and the Caribbean. In retrospect it certainly looks advantageous to end injustices without mass killing and destruction, which beyond its immediate evil also tends to fail to completely end an injustice, and tends to breed long-lasting resentment and violence. On June 20, 2013, the Atlantic Magazine published an article called "No, Lincoln Could Not Have 'Bought the Slaves.'" Why not? Well, the slave owners didn't want to sell. That's perfectly true. They didn't, not at all. But The Atlantic focuses on another argument, namely that it would have just been too expensive, costing as much as \$3 billion (in 1860s money). Yet, if you read closely, the author admits that the war cost more than twice that amount.

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April 17

On this day in 1965, the first march on Washington against the war on Vietnam was held. The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) initiated the march drawing 15,000-25,000 students from across the nation, the Women's Strike for Peace, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Bob Moses of the Mississippi Freedom Summer, and singers Joan Baez and Phil Ochs. The questions posed then by SDS president Paul Potter are still relevant today: "What kind of system is it that justifies the United States or any country seizing the destinies of the Vietnamese people and using them callously for its own purpose? What kind of system is it that disenfranchises people in the South, leaves millions upon millions of people throughout the country impoverished and excluded from the mainstream and promise of American society, that creates faceless and terrible bureaucracies and makes those the place where people spend their lives and do their work, that consistently puts material values before human values-and still persists in calling itself free and still persists in finding itself fit to police the world? What place is there for ordinary men in that system and how are they to control it... We must name that system. We must name it, describe it, analyze it, understand it and change it. For it is only when that system is changed and brought under control that there can be any hope for stopping the forces that create a war in Vietnam today or a murder in the South tomorrow or all the incalculable, innumerable more subtle atrocities that are worked on people all over—all the time."

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April 18

On this day in 1997, the “Choose Life” plowshares action took place at Bofors weapons factory in Karlskoga, Sweden. The name “plowshares” refers to the text of prophet Isaiah who said that weapons shall be beaten into plowshares. Plowshares actions became known in the early 1980s when several activists damaged nuclear warhead nose cones. Bofors was an exporter of weapons to Indonesia. As recounted by activist Art Laffin, two Swedish peace activists, Cecelia Redner, a priest in the church of Sweden, and Marja Fischer, a student, entered the Bofors Arms factory in Karlskoga, Sweden, planted an apple tree and attempted to disarm a naval canon being exported to Indonesia. Cecilia was charged with attempt to commit malicious damage and Marija with assisting. Both were also charged with violating a law which protects facilities “important to society.” Both women were convicted on February 25, 1998. They argued, over repeated interruptions by the judge, that, in Redner’s words, “When my country is arming a dictator I am not allowed to be passive and obedient, since it would make me guilty to the crime of genocide in East Timor. I know what is going on and I cannot only blame the Indonesian dictatorship or my own government. Our plowshares action was a way for us to take responsibility and act in solidarity with the people of East Timor.” Fischer added, “We tried to prevent a crime, and that is an obligation according to our law.” Redner was sentenced to fines and 23 years of correctional education. Fischer was sentenced to fines and two years suspended sentence. No jail sentence was imposed.

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April 19

On this day in 1775, the U.S. revolution turned violent with battles at Lexington and Concord. This turn followed the growing use of nonviolent techniques often associated with later eras, including major protests, boycotts, the promotion of local and independent manufacturing, the development of committees of correspondence, and the takeover of local power in much of rural Massachusetts. The violent war for independence from Britain was driven primarily by the very wealthiest white male landowners in the colonies. While the result included what was for the time a groundbreaking Constitution and Bill of Rights, the revolution was part of a larger war between the French and the British, could not have been won without the French, transferred power from one elite to another, constituted no populist act of equalizing, saw rebellions by poor farmers and enslaved people as frequently after as before, and saw people escape slavery to support the British side. One motivation for the war was the maintenance of slavery, following the growth of a British abolition movement and the British court ruling that freed a man named James Sommerset. Patrick Henry's "give me liberty or give me death" was not just written decades after Henry died, but he owned people as slaves and was at no risk of becoming one. A motivation for the war was the desire to expand westward, slaughtering and robbing the native peoples. Like many U.S. wars since, the first one was a war of expansion. The pretense that the war was inevitable or desirable is aided by ignoring the fact that Canada, Australia, India, and other places did not need wars.

PEACE ALMANAC



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April 20

On this date in 1999, two students at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, went on a shooting spree, killing 13 people and wounding more than 20 others before turning their guns on themselves and committing suicide. At the time, this was the worst high school shooting in U.S. history and prompted a national debate on gun control, school safety, and the forces that drove the two gunmen, Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17. Addressing the gun-control issue, the National Rifle Association waged an ad campaign that seemed to accept as reasonable the extension of instant background checks already required at gun stores and pawn shops to gun shows, where the killers' weapons had been fraudulently purchased by a friend. Behind the scenes, however, the NRA waged a \$1.5-million lobbying effort that succeeded in killing a bill with precisely such a requirement then pending in Congress. Efforts were also made to beef up school safety through the use of security cameras, metal detectors and additional security guards, but proved ineffective in eliminating violence. Among many attempts to understand the psychopathology of the killers, Michael Moore's documentary film *Bowling for Columbine* hinted strongly at a cultural connection between the actions of the killers and America's penchant for war—depicted both by war scenes and the nearby presence of Lockheed Martin, a major weapons manufacturer. One reviewer of Moore's film suggests that these depictions, and another that illustrates the effects of poverty in breaking down family cohesion, point clearly to both the underlying sources of terrorism in U.S. society and the only way it can be effectively eradicated.

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April 21

On this date in 1989, some 100,000 Chinese university students gathered at Beijing's Tiananmen Square to commemorate the death of Hu Yaobang, the deposed reform-minded leader of the Chinese Communist Party, and to voice their discontent with China's autocratic government. The following day, at an official memorial service held for Hu in Tiananmen's Great Hall of the People, the government turned down the students' demand to meet with Premier Li Peng. That led to a student boycott of Chinese universities, widespread calls for democratic reforms, and, in spite of government warnings, a student march to Tiananmen Square. Over the following weeks, workers, intellectuals, and civil servants joined the student demonstrations, and by mid-May hundreds of thousands of protesters thronged the streets of Beijing. On May 20, the government declared martial law in the city, calling in troops and tanks to disperse the crowds. On June 3, the troops, under orders to forcibly clear Tiananmen Square and Beijing's streets, gunned down hundreds of demonstrators and arrested thousands. However, the protesters' peaceful demand for democratic reforms in the face of brutal repression evoked both sympathy and outrage from the international community. Their courage was in fact made legendary by media proliferation on June 5th of a now iconic photograph that shows a lone white-shirted man, dubbed "Tank Man," standing in steadfast defiance in front of a column of crowd-dispersing military tanks. Three weeks later, the United States and other countries imposed economic sanctions on China. Though the sanctions did set back the country's economy, international trade was resumed in late 1990, due partly to China's release of several hundred imprisoned dissidents.

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April 22

This is Earth Day, and also the birthday of Immanuel Kant. J. Sterling Morton, a journalist from Nebraska who advocated for the planting of trees across the state's prairies in 1872, designating April 10 as the first "Arbor Day." Arbor Day became a legal holiday ten years later, and was moved to April 22 in honor of Morton's birthday. The day was celebrated nationally as the "logging era" brought on by U.S. expansion between 1890 and 1930 cleared forests. By 1970, a growing grassroots movement to protect the environment from pollution was backed by Wisconsin Governor Gaylord Nelson and San Francisco activist John McConnell. The first "Earth Day" march took place on the Spring Equinox that year, March 21, 1970. Earth Day events continue to be held in the U.S. on both March 21st and April 22nd. Immanuel Kant, the German scientist and philosopher, was also born on April 22, in 1724. Kant made several important scientific discoveries, yet is most known for his contributions to philosophy. His philosophy centered on how we autonomously construct our own worlds. According to Kant people's actions should be held to moral laws. Kant's conclusion about what is truly necessary for each of us to experience a better world is to strive for the highest good for all. These thoughts are aligned with those who support preservation of the Earth, as well as those who work for peace. In Kant's words, "For peace to reign on Earth, humans must evolve into new beings who have learned to see the whole first."

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April 23

On this day in 1968, students at Columbia University seized buildings to protest war research & the razing of buildings in Harlem for a new gym. Universities across the United States were challenged by students questioning the role of education in a culture promoting the horrors of war, an unending draft, rampant racism and sexism. A student's discovery of papers showing Columbia's involvement with the Defense Department's Institute for Defense Analysis which did research for the war in Vietnam, along with its ties to the ROTC, led to the protest by Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). They were joined by many, including the Student Afro-American Society (SOS) who also objected to a segregated gym being built by Columbia in Morningside Park displacing hundreds of African Americans who lived below in Harlem. The reactive policing led to a faculty-student strike that shut Columbia down for the remainder of the semester. While the protests at Columbia led to the beatings and arrests of 1,100 students, more than 100 other campus demonstrations were taking place across the U.S. in 1968. This was the year students saw the assassinations of both Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy, and several thousand anti-war protestors being beaten, gassed, and imprisoned by police at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. In the end, their protests inspired much needed change. Classified war research was no longer conducted at Columbia, the ROTC left campus along with military and CIA recruiters, the gym idea was abandoned, a feminist movement and ethnic studies were introduced. And finally, the war on Vietnam, as well as the draft, came to an end.

PEACE ALMANAC



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April 24

On this date in 1915, several hundred Armenian intellectuals were rounded up, arrested, and exiled from the Turkish capital city Constantinople (now Istanbul) to the region of Ankara, where most were eventually murdered. Led by a group of reformers known as the “Young Turks,” who had come to power in 1908, the Muslim government of the Ottoman Empire considered Christian non-Turks a threat to the empire’s security. According to most historians, it therefore set out to “Turkify,” or ethnically cleanse, the caliphate by systematically expelling or killing off its Christian Armenian population. In 1914, the Turks entered World War I on the side of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and declared holy war on all unallied Christians. When Armenians organized volunteer battalions to help the Russian army fight the Turks in the Caucasus region, the Young Turks pushed for the mass removal of Armenian civilians from war zones along the Eastern Front. Ordinary Armenians were sent on death marches without food or water, and tens of thousands more were massacred by killing squads. By 1922, less than 400,000 of an original two-million Armenians remained in the Ottoman Empire. Since its surrender in World War I, the Turkish government has vehemently claimed that it did not commit genocide against the Armenians, but necessary acts of war against people it viewed as an enemy force. In 2010, however, a U.S. Congressional panel finally recognized the mass killing as genocide. The action helped refocus attention on how easily distrust or fear of the Other, in either internal or international conflicts, can escalate to hateful retribution that exceeds all moral boundaries.

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April 25

On this day in 1974 the Carnation Revolution overthrew the government of Portugal, an authoritarian dictatorship that had been in place since 1933 – the longest surviving authoritarian regime in Western Europe. What started as a military coup, organized by the Armed Forces Movement (a group of military officers who opposed the regime), quickly became a bloodless popular uprising as people ignored the call to stay in their homes. The Carnation Revolution gets its name from the red carnations – they were in season – put into the muzzles of the soldiers' rifles by the people who joined them on the streets. The coup was provoked by the regime's insistence on keeping its colonies, where they had been fighting insurgents since 1961. These wars were popular neither with the people nor with many within the military. The young were emigrating to avoid conscription. 40% of the Portugal's budget was consumed by wars in Africa. Very quickly after the coup independence was granted to the former Portuguese colonies of Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola, and East Timor. The United States played an ambiguous role in the Carnation Revolution. Henry Kissinger was strongly against supporting it, in spite of the strong recommendation from the U.S. ambassador. He insisted it was a communist insurgency. It was only after a visit to Portugal by Teddy Kennedy and his strong recommendation to support the revolution that the U.S. decided to do so. In Portugal, to celebrate the event, April 25 is now a national holiday, known as Freedom Day. The Carnation Revolution demonstrates that you don't have to use violence and aggression to achieve peace.

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April 26

On this date in 1986, the world's worst nuclear accident happened at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant near Pripyat, Ukraine, in the Soviet Union. The accident occurred during a test to see how the plant would operate if it lost power. Plant operators made several mistakes during the procedure, creating an unstable environment in the No. 4 reactor which resulted in a fire and three explosions that blew off the reactor's 1,000-ton steel top. As the reactor melted down, flames shot 1,000 feet into the sky for two days, spouting radioactive material that spread over the western Soviet Union and Europe. As many as 70,000 residents in the area suffered severe radiation poisoning, from which thousands died, as did an estimated 4,000 clean-up workers at the Chernobyl site.

Additional consequences included the forced permanent relocation of 150,000 residents in an 18-mile radius around Chernobyl, a dramatic increase in birth defects in the area, and a tenfold higher incidence of thyroid cancer throughout Ukraine. Since the Chernobyl disaster, experts have expressed widely contrasting views on the viability of nuclear power as an energy source. For instance, The New York Times reported immediately following the March 2011 nuclear disaster at Japan's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant that "the Japanese have already taken precautions that should prevent the accident from becoming another Chernobyl, even if additional radiation is released." On the other hand, Helen Caldicott, founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility, argued in an April 2011 Times op-ed that "there is no such thing as a safe dose of radiation" and that, therefore, nuclear power should not be used.

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April 27

On this date in 1973, the British government completed the forced expulsion of the entire indigenous population of Diego Garcia and other islands of the Chagos Archipelago in the central Indian Ocean. Beginning in 1967, the three- to four-thousand native islanders, known as “Chagossians,” were transported in squalid ship cargo holds to Mauritius, a former self-governing British colony in the Indian Ocean located some 1,000 miles away off the southeast coast of Africa. The expulsions had been stipulated in a 1966 agreement under which the United Kingdom leased the islands, known officially as the British Indian Ocean Territory, to the U.S. for use as a geopolitically strategic military base. In return, the British received cost breaks on U.S. supplies for its submarine-launched Polaris ICBM system. Though the agreement proved advantageous to both countries, the deported Chagos Islanders in Mauritius struggled mightily to survive. They were awarded a distributed monetary compensation of 650,000 British pounds in 1977, but a prospective right of return to Diego Garcia remained buried under petitions and lawsuits. Finally, in November 2016, the British government issued a crushing edict. Citing “feasibility, defense and security interests, and cost to the British taxpayer,” the government declared that the locals evicted from their homes nearly a half-century before could not be allowed to return. Instead, it extended by an additional 20 years the U.S. lease of its Indian Ocean territory for use as a military base, and promised the deported Chagossians another 40-million pounds in compensation. The U.K. Chagos Support Association, for its part, labeled the British ruling a “senseless and heartless decision that shames the nation.”

PEACE ALMANAC



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April 28

On this date in 1915, the International Congress of Women, consisting of some 1,200 delegates from 12 countries, convened in the Hague, Netherlands, to develop strategies to help end the war then raging in Europe and to institute a program for preventing future wars by studying and proposing ways to eliminate their causes. To advance their first goal, convention delegates issued resolutions and sent representatives to most of the belligerent nations in World War I, believing that, as women, their peaceful action would have a positive moral effect. But, for the ongoing work of studying and eliminating the causes of war, they created a new organization called the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). The group's first international president, Jane Addams, was personally received by President Woodrow Wilson in Washington, who based nine of his famous Fourteen Points for negotiating an end to World War I on ideas promulgated by WILPF. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the League functions today at the international, national, and local levels, and with national sections worldwide, to organize meetings and conferences that study and address vital issues of the day. Among them, on the domestic side, are full rights for women and racial and economic justice. At the global level, the organization works to advance peace and freedom, dispatch missions to countries in conflict, and, with international bodies and governments, to bring about peaceful resolution of conflicts. For their efforts in these activities, two of the League's leaders have won the Nobel Peace Prize: Jane Addams in 1931 and, in 1946, WILPF's first International Secretary, Emily Greene Balch.

PEACE ALMANAC



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April 29

On this date in 1975, as South Vietnam was about to fall to Communist forces, more than 1,000 Americans and 5,000 Vietnamese were evacuated by helicopter from the capital city, Saigon, onto U.S. ships in the South China Sea. The use of helicopters had been dictated by the heavy bombing of Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airport earlier in the day. Though massive in scope, the operation was in fact overshadowed by the impromptu flight of another 65,000 South Vietnamese who, in fishing boats, barges, homemade rafts, and sampans, hoped to make it to the 40 U.S. warships beckoning on the horizon. The evacuations followed by more than two years a peace agreement signed in January 1973 by representatives of the U.S., South Vietnam, the Vietcong, and North Vietnam. It called for a cease-fire throughout Vietnam, the withdrawal of U.S. forces, the release of prisoners of war, and the unification of North and South Vietnam by peaceful means. Though all U.S. troops had left Vietnam by March 1973, some 7,000 Department of Defense civilian employees were kept behind to aid South Vietnamese forces in repelling violations of the cease-fire by the North Vietnamese and Vietcong that soon escalated again to full-scale war. When the war ended with Saigon's fall on April 30, 1975, North Vietnamese Colonel Bui Tin remarked to the remaining South Vietnamese: "You have nothing to fear. Between Vietnamese there are no victors and no vanquished. Only the Americans have been defeated." It was at the cost, however, of 58,000 American dead and the lives of as many as four million Vietnamese soldiers and civilians.

PEACE ALMANAC



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April 30

On this day in 1977, 1,415 people were arrested in a landmark protest of a nuclear power plant then under construction in Seabrook, New Hampshire. In triggering one of the largest mass arrests in U.S. history, the standoff at Seabrook helped spark a national backlash against nuclear power and played a significant role in curbing ambitions of the U.S. nuclear industry and federal policy makers to build hundreds of reactors across the country. Initially planned for two reactors to come online by 1981 at a cost of less than \$1 billion, the Seabrook installation was ultimately reduced to a single reactor that cost \$6.2 billion and didn't come commercially online until 1990. Over the years, the Seabrook plant has maintained an outstanding safety record. It has also played an important role in helping the state of Massachusetts comply with mandated cuts in carbon emissions. Nevertheless, anti-nuclear-power advocates cite a number of reasons to continue the trend of shutting down nuclear reactors, rather than building more. These include extremely high construction and maintenance costs; the increasing appeal of alternative clean renewable energy sources; the catastrophic consequences of an accidental reactor melt-down; the need to ensure workable evacuation strategies; and, perhaps most importantly, the continuing problem of safe disposal of nuclear waste. Such concerns, brought to public awareness in part as a legacy of the Seabrook protest, have greatly diminished the role of nuclear power plants in U.S. energy production. By 2015, a peak number of 112 reactors in the U.S. in the 1990s had been cut to 99. Seven more were slated for shut-down in the following decade.

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May 1

May Day is a traditional day to celebrate rebirth in the Northern hemisphere, and — since the 1886 Haymarket incident in Chicago — a day in much of the world to celebrate labor rights and organizing.

Also on this day in 1954 the inhabitants of what was once paradise woke up to two suns and endless radiation sickness for themselves and descendants because the U.S. government tested a hydrogen bomb.

Also on this day in 1971 massive demonstrations were held against the American War on Vietnam. Also on this day in 2003 President George W. Bush ludicrously declared “mission accomplished!” standing in a flight suit on an aircraft carrier in San Diego Harbor as the destruction of Iraq got underway.

Also on that same day in 2003 the U.S. Navy finally gave in to public protest and stopped bombing the island of Vieques.

Also on this day in 2005, the Sunday Times of London published the Downing Street Minutes which revealed the content of a July 23, 2002, meeting of the cabinet of the British government at 10 Downing Street. They revealed U.S. plans to go to war against Iraq and to lie about the reasons why. This is a good day to educate the world about war lies.

PEACE ALMANAC



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May 2

On this date in 1968, marchers were scheduled to arrive in Washington D.C. to inaugurate the Poor People's Campaign, the last civil-rights movement envisioned by Martin Luther King Jr. in his pursuit of non-violent social reform in America. King himself didn't live to see the Campaign take shape; he had been assassinated less than a month before. Nevertheless, his Southern Christian Leadership Conference, with new leaders and a broader agenda than any King himself had ever pursued, launched the movement he sought with only a two-week delay. From May 15 to June 24, 1968, some 2,700 poor people and anti-poverty activists, representing African-American, Asian-American, and Hispanic and Native Americans from all over the country, occupied Washington's National Mall in a tent encampment known as Resurrection City. Their role was to demonstrate support for five core Campaign demands. These included federal guarantees of a meaningful job at a living wage for every employable citizen, and a secure income for people unable to find jobs or to work at all. No legislation based on these demands was ever enacted, but the six weeks of demonstrations at Resurrection City were not without success. In addition to drawing public attention to the problems poor people face, the demonstrators had the time over six weeks to share their personal experience of poverty with demonstrators in other ethnic groups. Those exchanges helped bring the previously independent and narrowly focused groups together as a single broad-based activist force. In recent years this organizational model has been adopted by Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, the 2017 Women's March, and the revived Poor People's Campaign of 2018.

PEACE ALMANAC



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May 3

On this day in 1919, Pete Seeger was born in New York City. Pete's father taught music at the University of California, Berkeley while his mother taught violin at the Juilliard School. Pete's brother, Mike, became a member of the New Lost City Ramblers, and his sister, Peggy, a folk musician performing with Ewan McColl. Pete preferred political activism expressed through folk music. By 1940, Pete's song writing and performing skills led him to join the pro-labor, anti-war activist group The Almanac Singers with Woodie Guthrie. Pete wrote an unusual song entitled "Dear Mr. President," addressing the need to stop Hitler, which became the title track of an Almanac Singers Album. Subsequently, he served during WWII, returning to revive American folk music by joining The Weavers, who inspired the Kingston Trio, the Limelighters, the Clancy Brothers, and the overall popularity of the folk scene throughout the 1950s-60s. The Weavers were eventually blacklisted by Congress, and Pete was subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Pete refused to answer to these charges, citing First Amendment rights: "I am not going to answer any questions as to my association, my philosophical or religious beliefs or my political beliefs, or how I voted in any election, or any of these private affairs. I think these are very improper questions for any American to be asked, especially under such compulsion as this." Pete was then convicted of contempt which, a year later, was overturned. Pete continued to keep activism alive by writing songs such as "Where Have All the Flowers Gone" and "If I had a Hammer."

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May 4

On this day in 1970 the Ohio National Guard fired into a crowd of Kent State University protestors wounding nine and killing four.

President Richard Nixon had been elected largely on his promise to end the Vietnam War. On April 30th, he announced that he was expanding the war to Cambodia. Protests erupted at numerous colleges. At Kent State there was a large anti-war rally followed by rioting in town. The Ohio National Guard was ordered to Kent. Before they could arrive, the students burned the ROTC building. On May 4th 2,000 students rallied on campus. Seventy-seven guard members using tear gas and bayonets forced them off the commons and over a hill. One student, Terry Norman, also had a gas mask and was armed with a 38 revolver. He was supposedly photographing the oncoming guard troops. But several students noticed he was mostly taking pictures of protesters. After a scuffle, he was chased. Pistol shots were heard. As Terry ran to another group of guardsmen at the charred ROTC, his chaser called out, "Stop him. He has a gun". Terry handed his gun to the campus police detective who'd hired him. Members of the WKYC TV crew heard the detective say, "My God. It's been fired four times!" Meanwhile the troops who had gained the top of the hill had heard pistol shots. Thinking they were being fired upon, they fired a volley into the crowd. The four resulting student deaths sparked massive protests that closed 450 colleges across the US. The Kent Shootings were a prime catalyst for ending the Vietnam War.

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May 5

On this date in 1494, Christopher Columbus, on his second voyage to the Americas, landed on the West Indies island of Jamaica. At the time, the island was populated by the Arawaks, a simple and peaceful Indian people, numbering some 60,000, who subsisted on small-scale farming and fishing. Columbus himself saw the island as mainly a place to hold supplies and produce crops and livestock while he and his men searched for new lands for Spain in the Americas. Nevertheless, the site also attracted Spanish settlers, and in 1509 it was formally colonized under a Spanish governor. This spelled disaster for the Arawaks. Forced into the strenuous labor needed to build a new Spanish capital, and exposed to European diseases they couldn't resist, they were to be made extinct within fifty years. As the Arawak population began to deteriorate, the Spanish imported slaves from West Africa to maintain their intensive slave labor force. Then, in the mid-17th century, the English attacked, lured by reports of Jamaica's valuable natural resources. The Spanish quickly surrendered, and, after first freeing their slaves, known as the "Maroons," fled to Cuba. The Maroons then entered into years of conflict with the English colonists, before they were fully liberated by the British Emancipation Act of 1833. In 1865, following an uprising by the neglected poor among the English colonists, Jamaica became a British Crown Colony and took significant social, constitutional and economic steps toward sovereignty. The island was granted its independence from Britain on August 6, 1962, and is now governed as a democratic parliamentary constitutional monarchy.

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May 6

On this date in 1944, Mahatma Gandhi, 73 years of age, in failing health, and in need of surgery, was released from his seventh and final imprisonment for actions taken as leader of a non-violent campaign for India's independence from British rule. He had been arrested on August 9, 1942, following approval by his Indian National Congress Party of the "Quit India" resolution, which launched a Satyagraha civil-disobedience campaign in support of its demand for immediate independence. When Gandhi's arrest instead sparked a violent reaction among his followers, it drove the British Raj to tighten its already strict control and to try to tarnish Gandhi with fabricated political smears. On his release from detention nearly two years later, Gandhi himself was confronted with growing Muslim sentiment for partitioning the subcontinent into Muslim and Hindu zones, an idea he vehemently opposed. Other political conflicts ensued. But in the end, both the outcome and terms of India's struggle for independence were determined by the British themselves. Finally accepting the inexorability of Indian claims, they voluntarily granted India its independence by an act of Parliament on June 15, 1947. Contrary to Gandhi's hopes for a united, religiously plural India, the Indian Independence Act divided the subcontinent into two dominions, India and Pakistan, and called for each to be granted official independence by August 15. Gandhi's grander vision was recognized decades later, however, when he was included in TIME's "Person of the Century" issue. Commenting on his combined work and spirit, the magazine noted that it had "awakened the 20th century to ideas that serve as a moral beacon for all epochs."

PEACE ALMANAC



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May 7

On this date in 1915, Germany sank the Lusitania — a horrible act of mass-murder. The Lusitania had been loaded up with weapons and troops for the British — another horrible act of mass-murder. Most damaging, however, were the lies told about it all. Germany had published warnings in New York newspapers and newspapers around the United States. These warnings had been printed right next to ads for sailing on the Lusitania and had been signed by the German embassy. Newspapers had written articles about the warnings. The Cunard company had been asked about the warnings. The former captain of the Lusitania had already quit — reportedly due to the stress of sailing through what Germany had publicly declared a war zone. Meanwhile Winston Churchill is quoted as having said “It is most important to attract neutral shipping to our shores in the hope especially of embroiling the United States with Germany.” It was under his command that the usual British military protection was not provided to the Lusitania, despite Cunard having stated that it was counting on that protection. U.S. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan resigned over the U.S. failure to remain neutral. That the Lusitania was carrying weapons and troops to aid the British in the war against Germany was asserted by Germany and by other observers, and was true. Yet the U.S. government said then, and U.S. text books say now, that the innocent Lusitania was attacked without warning, an action alleged to justify entering a war. Two years later, the United States officially joined in the madness of World War I.

PEACE ALMANAC



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May 8

On this date in 1945, which also ended World War II in Europe, Oskar Schindler urged Jews he had saved from Nazi death camps not to pursue revenge against ordinary Germans. Schindler was personally not a model of propriety or moral principle. Following the Nazis into Poland in September 1939, he was quick to make friends with Gestapo bigwigs, bribing them with women, money and booze. With their help, he acquired an enamelware factory in Krakow that he could run with cheap Jewish labor. In time, however, Schindler began to sympathize with the Jews and find repugnant the Nazi brutality against them. In the summer of 1944, as depicted in the 1993 movie *Schindler's List*, he saved 1,200 of his Jewish employees from near-certain death in the gas chambers of Poland by relocating them at great personal risk to a factory branch in the Sudetenland of Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia. When he spoke to them following their liberation on the first V-E Day, he urged emphatically: "Avoid every act of revenge and terrorism." Schindler's actions and words continue to encourage hope for a better world. If, flawed as he was, he could nevertheless find the compassion and courage to right great wrongs, it suggests that capacity resides in all of us. Today, we again need the virtues Schindler displayed to combat a system of predatory corporate interests backed by national killing machines that serves the interests of only a venal few. The world could then work together to meet the real needs of ordinary people, making possible our survival as a species and the realization of our true human potential.

PEACE ALMANAC



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May 9

On this date in 1944, the autocratic president of El Salvador, General Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez, resigned his office, following a non-violent student-organized national strike begun in the first week of May that crippled most of El Salvador's economy and civil society. After coming to power in the early 1930s as the result of a coup, Martinez had created a secret police force and gone on to outlaw the Communist Party, ban peasant organizations, censor the press, imprison perceived subversives, target labor activists, and assume direct control over universities. In April of 1944, university students and faculty began organizing against the regime, staging a peaceful nationwide work strike that, by the first week in May, included workers and professionals from all walks of life. On May 5, the strikers' negotiating committee demanded that the president step down immediately. Instead, Martinez took to the radio, urging citizens to return to work. This led to expanded public protest and more aggressive police action that killed a student demonstrator. Following the youth's funeral, thousands of protesters demonstrated in a square near the National Palace and then rushed into the palace itself, only to find it abandoned. With his options narrowing drastically, the president met with the negotiating committee on May 8 and finally agreed to resign—an action officially accepted the next day. Martinez was replaced as president by a more moderate official, General Andres Ignacio Menendez, who ordered amnesty for political prisoners, declared freedom of the press, and began planning for general elections. The push to democracy proved short-lived, however. Just five months later, Menendez himself was overthrown by a coup.

PEACE ALMANAC



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May 10

On this day in 1984, the International Court of Justice in the Hague, Netherlands, unanimously granted Nicaragua's request for a preliminary restraining order that required the United States to immediately halt its underwater mining of Nicaraguan ports that had damaged at least eight ships from various nations in the preceding three months. The U.S. accepted the decision without objection, indicating that it had already ended the operations in late March and would not resume them. The mining had been carried out by a combination of U.S.-financed guerrillas fighting the leftist Sandinista government, and highly trained Latin American employees of the CIA. According to U.S. officials, the operations were part of a CIA effort to redirect the strategy of the guerrillas, known as the "Contras," from failed attempts to seize territory in the country to hit-and-run economic sabotage. The handmade acoustic devices used for the mining effectively helped meet that goal by discouraging outgoing and incoming shipments of goods. Nicaraguan coffee and other exports collected on piers, and supplies of imported oil dwindled. At the same time, the CIA began to assume a more direct role in training and guiding the anti-Sandinista rebels, and administration officials acknowledged an interest in making the Sandinista government more "democratic" and less tied to Cuba and the Soviet Union. For its part, the International Court added to its ruling on U.S. mining a statement affirming that Nicaragua's political independence "should be fully respected and...not be jeopardized by any military or paramilitary activities." This provision, however, did not receive unanimous support. Though adopted by a 14 to 1 margin, U.S. judge Stephen Schwebel voted "Nay."

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May 11

On this day in 1999, the largest international peace conference in history got underway in the Hague, Netherlands. The conference marked the centennial of the first international peace conference, held in The Hague in May 1899, which had begun the process of interaction between civil society and governments aimed at preventing war and controlling its excesses. The 1999 Hague Appeal for Peace Conference, held over five days, was attended by more than 9,000 activists, government representatives, and community leaders from over 100 countries. The event was especially significant, because, unlike subsequent UN global summits, it was organized entirely not by governments, but by members of civil society, who showed themselves ready to push for a world beyond war even if their governments were not. Attendees, including notables such as UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Queen Noor of Jordan, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, took part in over 400 panels, workshops, and roundtables, discussing and debating mechanisms for abolishing war and creating a culture of peace. The result was an action plan of 50 detailed programs that set a decades-long international agenda for conflict prevention, human rights, peacekeeping, disarmament, and dealing with the root causes of war. The conference also successfully redefined peace to mean not only the absence of conflict between and within states, but the absence of economic and social injustice. That conceptual broadening has since made it possible to bring together environmentalists, human rights advocates, developers, and others who have traditionally not thought of themselves as “peace activists” to work toward a sustainable culture of peace.

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May 12

On this date in 1623, English colonists in Virginia held so-called peace talks with the Powhatan Indians, but deliberately poisoned the wine they provided, killing 200 of the Powhatans before shooting and scalping 50 others. From 1607, when Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in North America, was founded on the banks of the James River in Virginia, the colonists had been in and out of war with a regional alliance of tribes called the Powhatan Confederation, led by its supreme chief, Powhatan. A major issue was the settlers' expansionist incursions on Indian lands. Nevertheless, when Powhatan's daughter Pocahontas married the prominent English colonist and tobacco farmer John Rolfe in 1614, Powhatan reluctantly agreed to an unlimited truce with the colonists. Pocahontas had in fact contributed significantly to the early survival of the Jamestown settlement, famously saving English captain John Smith from execution in 1607 and, after her forced conversion to Christianity in 1613, serving successfully as a missionary among the natives. With her untimely death in March 1617, prospects for continued peace slowly faded. After Powhatan himself died in 1618, his youngest brother took command and, in March 1622, led an all-out attack in which colonist settlements and plantations were burned and a third of their inhabitants, approximately 350, were shot or hacked to death. It was this "Powhatan Uprising" that led to the spurious "peace parley" in May, 1623, where the colonists aimed for nothing more than sinister vengeance. The Uprising had left the Jamestown settlement in total disarray, and in 1624 Virginia was made a royal colony. It would remain so until the American revolution.

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May 13

On this date in 1846, the U.S. Congress voted to approve President James K. Polk's request to declare war on Mexico. The war was precipitated by border disputes involving Texas, which in 1836 had won its own independence from Mexico as a sovereign republic but had become a U.S. state following Congressional passage of a U.S./Texas Treaty of Annexation signed in March 1845 by Polk's predecessor, John Tyler. As a U.S. state, Texas claimed the Rio Grande as its southern boundary, while Mexico claimed as the legal boundary the Nueces River to the north-east. In July 1845, President Polk ordered troops into the disputed lands between the two rivers. When efforts to negotiate a settlement failed, the U.S. army advanced to the mouth of the Rio Grande. The Mexicans responded in April 1846 by sending their own troops across the Rio Grande. On May 11, Polk asked Congress to declare war on Mexico, charging that Mexican forces had "invaded our territory and shed the blood of our fellow-citizens on our own soil." The President's request was overwhelmingly approved by Congress two days later, but it also evoked both moral and intellectual reproof from leading figures in American politics and culture. Despite this, the conflict was ultimately settled on terms that favored not justice, but superior power. The peace treaty ending the war in February 1848 made the Rio Grande the southern boundary of Texas, and ceded California and New Mexico to the United States. In return, the U.S. would pay Mexico the sum of \$15 million and agree to settle all claims of U.S. citizens against Mexico.

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May 14

On this date in 1941, when World War II already raged in Europe, a first wave of U.S. conscientious objectors reported to a work camp in the Patapsco State Forest in Maryland, ready to provide meaningful alternative service to their country. For many of the objectors, the opportunity to pursue that alternative had resulted from society's broader understanding of how religion can shape belief. Previously, almost all draft-eligible American males had qualified for conscientious-objector status through their membership in historic "peace churches," such as the Quakers and Mennonites. The 1940 Selective Training and Service Act, however, had extended eligibility for that status to persons who had derived beliefs from any religious background that caused them to oppose all forms of military service. If drafted, such persons could now be assigned to "work of national importance under civilian direction." The Patapsco camp was the first of an eventual 152 camps in the U.S. and Puerto Rico that, under a program called Civilian Public Service, greatly expanded the availability of such work. The Service provided work assignments for some 20,000 conscientious objectors from 1941 to '47, largely in the areas of forestry, soil conservation, fire fighting, and agriculture. The program's unique organization also helped neutralize the public's anti-objector prejudice by appealing to its historic support for private over public initiatives. The camps were set up and operated by committees of the Mennonite, Brethren, and Quaker churches, and the entire program cost the government and taxpayers nothing. Draftees served without wages and their church congregations and families were entirely responsible for meeting their incidental needs.

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May 15

On this day in 1948, Palestine held its first Nakba Day, the day of catastrophe. The day was established by Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian National Authority, to commemorate the displacement of Palestinians during the first Arab-Israeli War (1947 – 49). Nakba Day falls the day after Israeli Independence Day. By May 14, 1948, the day Israel declared independence, approximately 250,000 Palestinians had already fled or been expelled from what became Israel. From May 15, 1948 onwards, expulsion of Palestinians became a regular practice. Altogether, more than 750,000 Palestinian Arabs fled or were expelled from their homes, approximately 80 percent of the Palestinian Arab population. Many of those with means fled into the Palestinian diaspora before they were expelled. Of those without means, many settled in refugee camps in neighboring states. The reasons for the exodus were many and included the destruction of Arab villages (between 400 and 600 Palestinian villages were sacked and urban Palestine was devastated); Jewish military advances and the fear of another massacre by Zionist militias following the Deir Yassin massacre; direct expulsion orders by Israeli authorities; the collapse of Palestinian leadership; and an unwillingness to live under Jewish control. Later, a series of laws passed by the first Israeli government prevented Palestinians from returning to their homes or claiming their property. To this day many Palestinians and their descendants remain refugees. Their status as refugees, as well as whether Israel will grant them their claimed right to return to their homes or be compensated, are key issues in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Some historians have described the expulsion of the Palestinians as ethnic cleansing.

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May 16

On this date in 1960, a crucial diplomatic summit in Paris between U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, which both sides had hoped might result in improved bilateral relations, instead broke up in anger. Fifteen days earlier, Soviet surface-to-air missiles had for the first time shot down a U.S. high-atmosphere U-2 spy plane over Soviet territory as it took detailed photos of military installations on the ground. After twenty-two previous U-2 flights, Khrushchev finally had hard evidence of a program the U.S. had previously denied. When Eisenhower refused his demand to ban all future spy-plane flights, Khrushchev angrily left the meeting, effectively ending the summit. The spy plane over-flights were the brainchild of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Since 1953, the agency had been headed by Allen Dulles, who, in an atmosphere of intense anti-communism and xenophobia, had spawned a morally bankrupt secret government. Its many transgressions are traced by David Talbot in his eye-opening 2015 book *The Devil's Chessboard*. . . . It was the CIA, Talbot notes, which introduced “regime change” and the undermining and assassination of foreign leaders as tools of American foreign policy. Talbot also strongly suggests that the CIA set up the Cuban Bay of Pigs invasion for failure in order to force the hand of the young President Kennedy into bombing the island and sending in the Marines. Such skullduggery and betrayal, if true, clearly demonstrate how the fanaticism of the Cold War distorted American politics, undermined the country’s democratic principles, and fostered a dark state willing to turn its physical and moral violence inward onto those who resist it.

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May 17

On this day in 1968, nine people burned draft files in Catonsville, Maryland. Father Daniel and Father Philip Berrigan along with Catholic civil rights activists David Darst, John Hogan, Tom Lewis, Marjorie Bradford Melville, Thomas Melville, George Mische, and Mary Moylan were arrested for removing hundreds of draft records from the Selective Service offices in Catonsville, MD, and destroying them with homemade napalm in protest of the draft and the ongoing Vietnam War. Their subsequent imprisonment angered many as newspapers shared the story. In the words of Father Daniel, “Our apologies, dear friends, for the fracture of good order, the burning of paper instead of children...we could not, so help us God do otherwise.” As the trial began in Baltimore, “the Nine” were supported by groups from across the country aligned in opposition to the draft. The anti-war movement drew even more support from clergy, Students for a Democratic Society, Cornell students, and the Baltimore Welfare Workers Union. Thousands marched through the streets of Baltimore calling for release of the Nine, and an end to the “Selective Slavery” imposed by the draft to back the growing imperialism evident not only in Vietnam, but in South America, Africa, and around the world. The Nine made it clear during their trial that citizens have no choice but civil disobedience when moral, religious, and patriotic principles are incompatible. The Nine never denied their actions, but focused on their intent. This intent continues to inspire those who oppose the sentencing of America’s youth to endless wars despite the guilty verdicts, convictions, and sentencing imposed on The Nine objectors.

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May 18

On this day in 1899 the Hague Peace Conference opened. This conference was proposed by Russia “on behalf of disarmament and the permanent peace of the world.” Twenty-six nations, including the US, met to discuss alternatives to war. The delegates were divided into three commissions to present ideas. The first commission unanimously agreed that “the limitation of the military charges which so oppress the world is greatly to be desired.” The second commission proposed revisions to both the Declaration of Brussels concerning the rules of war, and to the Geneva Convention to extend protections provided by the Red Cross. The third commission called for arbitration to settle international conflicts peacefully, leading to the International Court of Arbitration. Seventy-two judges were chosen as unbiased arbitrators to oversee rules and procedures to formulate the code of law. By May 18, 1901, the court was established as “the most important step forward, of a worldwide humanitarian character, that has ever been taken by the joint powers, as it must ultimately banish war, and further, being of opinion that the cause of peace will greatly benefit by the erection of a court house and library for the permanent Court of Arbitration...” Within seven years, 135 arbitration treaties were signed with 12 involving the US. Nations agreed to submit their differences to the Hague Tribunal when they did not infringe upon “the independence, the honor, the vital interests, or the exercise of sovereignty of the contracting countries, and provided it has been impossible to obtain an amicable solution by means of direct diplomatic negotiations or by any other method of conciliation.”

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May 19

On this date in 1967, the Soviet Union ratified an agreement that prohibited deployment of nuclear weapons in orbit around the earth. The agreement also banned nations from using the moon, other planets, or any other “celestial bodies” as military outposts or bases. Before Soviet ratification, the “Outer Space Treaty,” as the agreement was called when it entered into force in October 1967, had already been signed and/or ratified by the United States, Great Britain, and dozens of other nations. It represented an international response, led by the United Nations, to a widespread fear that the U.S. and Soviet Union could well make space the next frontier for nuclear weapons. The Soviets themselves had initially held out on agreeing to a ban on nuclear weapons in space, insisting they could accept such an agreement only if the U.S. first eliminated foreign bases at which it had already stationed short-range and medium-range missiles — a demand the U.S. rejected. The Soviets dropped the requirement, however, after signing onto the U.S./Soviet Limited Test Ban Treaty in August 1963, which prohibited nuclear testing everywhere except underground. In the decades that followed, the U.S. military nonetheless pursued the use of space for war-making and resisted initiatives by Russia and other nations to ban all weaponization of space and use of nuclear power in space. The use of satellites in targeting missiles, and the continued development of space weapons is part of what the U.S. military refers to as the goal of “full spectrum dominance” — a concept that still includes what President Ronald Reagan referred to as Star Wars or Missile Defense.

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May 20

May 20. On this date in 1968, Boston's highly progressive Arlington Street Unitarian Church was one of the first houses of worship to grant sanctuary to Vietnam War resisters. Of the two taking sanctuary, William Chase, a soldier absent without leave, surrendered to army authorities after nine days, having received assurances regarding his status as a conscientious objector. But Robert Talmanson, a draftee who had failed to successfully challenge his induction into the military, was seized from the church's pulpit by U.S. marshals and escorted through protestors outside with the assistance of Boston police. In granting its sanctuary, the Arlington Street Church had taken its lead from Yale University Chaplain William Sloane Coffin, who urged reviving the ancient tradition as a way to effectively symbolize religious resistance to the unjust war in Vietnam. Coffin had made the appeal during an anti-war demonstration at the church the previous October. In it, 60 men burned their draft cards in the church chancel, and another 280 handed their draft cards to four clergymen, including Coffin and Arlington Street's minister Dr. Jack Mendelsohn, all of whom themselves risked possible penalties by collaborating with the war resisters. On the following Sunday, Dr. Mendelsohn delivered words targeted directly at his congregation that summed up the event's significance: "When...there are those," he said, "who, having exhausted without effect every lawful means of opposing the monstrous crimes being committed in their name by their government...and choose instead the Gethsemene of civil disobedience, how is the church to respond? You know how [the church] answered last Monday. But the continuing answer, the one that really counts, is yours."

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May 21

On this date in 1971, members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) occupied an abandoned U.S. naval air station in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The occupation followed a similar takeover five days before by AIM members and other Indian organizations and tribes of a soon-to-close naval air station near Minneapolis, where they planned to establish an all-Indian school and cultural center. The action was justified on the basis of Article 6 of the Sioux Treaty of 1868, by which property that originally belonged to the Indians was to revert to them if and when the government abandoned it. However, because the May 21 takeover of the abandoned Milwaukee station had disrupted associated naval operations, the occupiers of the Minneapolis facility were arrested, putting an end to their plans. AIM was founded in 1968 to pursue five primary Native American goals: economic independence, revitalization of traditional culture, protection of legal rights, autonomy over tribal areas, and restoration of tribal lands that were illegally seized. In pursuit of these goals, the organization has been involved in a number of memorable protests. They include the occupation of Alcatraz Island from 1969 to 1971; the 1972 march on Washington to protest U.S. violations of treaties; and the 1973 takeover of a site at Wounded Knee to protest the government's Indian policies. Today, the organization, based nationwide, continues to pursue its founding goals. On its website, AIM asserts that Native American culture is worthy "of pride and defense" and urges all Native Americans to "stay strong spiritually, and to always remember that the movement is greater than the accomplishments or faults of its leaders."

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May 22

On this day in 1998 voters in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland approved the Northern Ireland Peace Accord, also known as the Good Friday Agreement, ending nearly 30 years of conflict between the Nationalists and Unionists in Northern Ireland. The Accord, agreed in Belfast on Good Friday, 10 April 1998, has two parts, a multi-party agreement among most of Northern Ireland's political parties (the DUP, the Democratic Unionist Party, was the only party not to agree) and an international agreement between the governments of Britain and the Republic of Ireland. The accord created a number of institutions that linked Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, as well as the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom. These included the Northern Ireland Assembly, cross-border institutions with the Irish Republic, and a body linking devolved assemblies across the UK (Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) with parliaments in the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic. Also central to the accord were agreements on sovereignty, civil and cultural rights, the decommissioning of weapons, demilitarization, justice and policing. Gerry Adams, President of the Northern Irish Nationalist organization Sinn Féin, expressed the hope that the historical gap in trust between the Nationalists and Unionists would "be bridged on the basis of equality. We are here reaching out the hand of friendship." Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble responded that he saw "a great opportunity . . . to start a healing process." Bertie Ahern, leader of the Republic of Ireland, added that he hoped a line could now be drawn under the "bloody past". The Accord came into force on 2 December 1999.

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May 23

On this day in 1838 began the final removal of Native Americans from their ancestral lands in the Southeast of North America to lands west of the Mississippi River that were designated as Indian Territory. By the 1820s, European settlers in the Southeast were demanding more land. They began settling illegally on Indian lands and pressuring the federal government to remove Indians from the Southeast. In 1830, President Andrew Jackson was able to have the Indian Removal Act passed by Congress. This Act authorized the federal government to extinguish the title to lands in the Southeast belonging to Indians. Forced relocations, although vehemently opposed by some, including U.S. Congressman Davy Crockett of Tennessee, quickly followed. The Act affected the Native Americans known as the Five Civilized Tribes: the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole. The Choctaw were the first to be removed, beginning in 1831. The removal of the Seminoles, in spite of their resistance, began in 1832. In 1834 the Creek were removed. And in 1837 it was the Chickasaw. By 1837, with the relocation of these four tribes, 46,000 Indians had been removed from their homelands, opening 25 million acres for European settlement. In 1838 only the Cherokee were left. Their forced relocation was carried out by State and local militias, who rounded the Cherokee up and corralled them in large and cramped camps. Exposure to the elements, quickly spreading communicable diseases, harassment by local frontiersmen, and insufficient rations killed up to 8,000 of the more than 16,000 Cherokee who began the march. The 1838 forced relocation of the Cherokee became known as the Trail of Tears.

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May 24

On this date annually, the International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament (IWDPD) is celebrated around the world. Instituted in Europe in the early 1980s, the IWDPD recognizes the historic and current efforts of women in international peace-building and disarmament projects. According to an IWDPD pronouncement on the web, the women activists it honors refuse violence as a solution to the world's challenges and work instead for a just and peaceful world that meets human—not military—needs. Women's activism for peace has a long history, dating back to before 1915, when some 1,200 women from both warring and neutral countries demonstrated against World War I in The Hague, Netherlands. During the Cold War, women activist groups around the world organized conferences, education campaigns, seminars, and demonstrations aimed at ending arms stockpiling, prohibiting the use of chemical and biological weapons, and preventing possible use of nuclear weapons. As the twentieth century neared its end, the women's peace movement significantly extended its agenda. Driven by the perceptions that various forms of domestic violence, including violence against women, can be linked to violence experienced in war, and that domestic peace is linked to cultural respect for women, activist groups within the movement began pursuing the dual goals of disarmament and women's rights. In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution on women, peace and security that specifically mentions the need to incorporate gender perspectives in all areas of peace support, including disarmament, demobilization, and rehabilitation. That document still serves as an historic turning point in acknowledging women's direct contributions to the cause of peace.

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May 25

On this day in 1932, the Bonus Army of World War I veterans demonstrated in Washington, D.C., and were assaulted with tear gas by Douglas MacArthur. WWI veterans were promised a bonus by Congress with the stipulation that they would have to wait for their payments until 1945. By 1932, the Depression had left many veterans unemployed and homeless. About 15,000 organized as the “Bonus Expeditionary Force,” marched to Washington, and demanded their payments. They put together shelters for their families, and camped across the river from the Capitol as they waited for a response from Congress. Fears from local residents led to each of the veterans being required to provide copies of their honorable discharges. The head of the BEF, Walter Waters, then said: “We’re here for the duration and we’re not going to starve. We’re going to keep ourselves a simon-pure veteran’s organization. If the Bonus is paid it will relieve to a large extent the deplorable economic condition.” On June 17th, the bonus was voted down, and veterans began a silent “Death March” on the Capitol until Congress adjourned July 17th. On July 28, the Atty. General ordered their evacuation from government property by police who arrived and killed two marchers. President Hoover then ordered the army to clear the rest out. When General Douglas MacArthur along with Major Dwight D. Eisenhower sent a cavalry led by Major George Patton along with six tanks, the veterans assumed they were being supported. Instead, they were sprayed with tear gas, their camps set on fire, and two babies died as area hospitals filled with veterans.

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May 26

On this date in 1637, English colonists launched a night attack on a large Pequot village at Mystic, Connecticut, burning and killing all 600 to 700 of its residents. Originally part of the Puritan settlement in Massachusetts Bay, English colonists had spread into Connecticut and come into increasing conflict with the Pequot. To strike fear into the Indians, Massachusetts Bay Governor John Endicott organized a large military force in the spring of 1637. The Pequot, however, defied the mobilization, instead sending 200 of their warriors to attack a colonial settlement, killing six men and three women. In retaliation, the colonists attacked the Pequot village at Mystic in what is now called the Mystic Massacre. Colonial Captain John Mason, leading a militia backed by nearly 300 Mohegan, Narragansett, and Niantic warriors, gave the order to set the village on fire and block off the only two exits from the palisade surrounding it. The trapped Pequot who tried climbing over the palisade were shot, and any who succeeded were killed by the Narragansett fighters. Was this genocide, as several historians have claimed? The colonial captain, John Underhill, who led a 20-man militia during the attack, had no trouble justifying the killing of women, children, the elderly, and infirm. He pointed to Scripture, which “declareth women and children must perish with their parents.... We had sufficient light from the Word of God for our proceedings.” Following two additional assaults on Pequot villages in June and July 1637, the Pequot War came to an end and most surviving Indians were sold into slavery.

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May 27

On this date in 1907, the brilliant nature writer and pioneering American environmentalist Rachel Carson was born in Silver Spring, Maryland. In 1962, Carson sparked widespread debate with the publication of *Silent Spring*, her landmark book about the dangers posed to natural systems by the misuse of chemical pesticides such as DDT. Carson may also be remembered for her wider moral critique of U.S. society. She was in fact part of a large revolt among scientists and leftist thinkers of the 1950s and '60s that arose initially from concerns over the effects of radiation from aboveground nuclear tests. In 1963, the year before her death from breast cancer, Carson identified herself for the first time as an “ecologist” in a speech before some 1,500 physicians in California. In defiance of a prevailing social ethos based on greed, domination, and a reckless faith in science unconstrained by moral principle, she argued passionately that all humans are in fact part of a cohesive network of natural interconnections and interdependencies that they threaten only at their peril. Today, as evidenced by climate chaos, nuclear threats, and calls for more “usable” nuclear weapons, the people of the world are still imperiled — though perhaps more dangerously — by the social ethos Carson sought to transform. Now, more than ever, it is time for environmental groups to join the efforts of arms-control and anti-war organizations constructively working for peace. Given their millions of committed members, such groups could effectively build the case that nuclear weapons and war are paramount threats to the interconnected global environment.

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May 28

On this day in 1961, Amnesty International was founded. In an article from The Observer, “The Forgotten Prisoners,” British lawyer Peter Benenson proposed that a human rights organization was needed to enforce the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Benenson wrote of his concerns about increased violations of Article 18: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion... and Article 19: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression: this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers...” The Dutch began working with Benenson in defense of civil rights in 1962, and by 1968 Amnesty International in the Netherlands was born. Their campaigning to end torture, abolish the death penalty, stop political murders, and end imprisonments based on race, religion, or sex led to an Amnesty International Section in many countries supported by over seven million people from around the world. Their thorough research, investigation, and documentation resulted in archives stored at the International Institute of Social History including tapes of interviews and propaganda materials from case histories denying civil rights. The International Secretariat contains files on human rights violations such as prisoners of conscience being sentenced by countries using unlawful imprisonment to suit their agendas. Amnesty International has been criticized for its refusal to oppose war, even while opposing numerous atrocities created by wars, as well as for helping to initiate Western wars by supporting dubious allegations of atrocities used as propaganda.

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May 29

On this day in 1968, the Poor Peoples Campaign began. At a Southern Christian Leadership Conference in December 1967, Martin Luther King proposed a campaign to eradicate inequality and poverty in America. His vision was that the poor might organize and meet with government officials in Washington to address the ongoing war, lack of jobs, fair minimum wage, education, and a voice for the growing number of impoverished adults and children. The campaign was supported by many diverse groups including American Indians, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and increasingly poor white communities. As the campaign began drawing national attention, King was murdered on April 4, 1968. The Rev. Ralph Abernathy took King's place as the leader of the SCLC, continued the campaign, and arrived in Washington with hundreds of demonstrators on Mother's Day, May 12, 1968. Coretta Scott King also arrived accompanied by thousands of women calling for an economic bill of rights, and vowing to make daily pilgrimages to federal agencies to discuss the issues of inequality and injustice. By the end of that week, despite intense rain turning the Mall to mud, the group numbered 5,000 setting up tents with campsites they named "Resurrection City." Robert Kennedy's wife was one of the Mother's Day arrivals, and along with the rest of the world, watched in disbelief as her husband was murdered on June 5. Kennedy's funeral procession was routed past Resurrection City on its way to Arlington National Cemetery. The Department of the Interior then forced the closure of Resurrection City citing an expiration of the permit issued for the campaign's use of park land.

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May 30

On this day in 1868, Memorial Day was first observed when two women in Columbus, MS, placed flowers on both Confederate and Union graves. This story about women recognizing lives sacrificed on each side due to the Civil War by visiting gravesites with flowers in their hands actually took place two years earlier, on April 25, 1866. According to the Center for Civil War Research, there were countless wives, mothers, and daughters spending time in graveyards. In April of 1862, a chaplain from Michigan joined some ladies from Arlington, VA to decorate graves in Fredericksburg. On July 4, 1864, a woman visiting her father's grave joined by many who had lost fathers, husbands, and sons left wreaths at every grave in Boalsburg, PA. In the spring of 1865, a surgeon, who would become Surgeon General of the National Guard in Wisconsin, witnessed women placing flowers on graves near Knoxville, TN as he passed by on a train. "Daughters of the Southland" were doing the same on April 26, 1865 in Jackson, MS, along with women in Kingston, GA, and Charleston, SC. In 1866, the women of Columbus, MS felt a day should be devoted to remembering, leading to the poem "The Blue and the Gray" by Francis Miles Finch. A wife and daughter of a deceased Colonel from Columbus, GA, and another grieving group from Memphis, TN made similar appeals to their communities, as did others from Carbondale, IL, and both Petersburg and Richmond, VA. Regardless of who was the first to conceive of a day to remember veterans, it was finally acknowledged by the US government.

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May 31

On this day in 1902, the Treaty of Vereeniging ended the Boer War. During the Napoleonic wars, the British had taken control of the Dutch Cape Colony at the tip of South Africa. The Boers (Dutch for farmers) inhabiting this coastal area since the 1600s moved north into African Tribal territory (The Great Trek) leading to the establishment of both the Transvaal and Orange Free State republics. Their subsequent discovery of diamonds and gold in these areas soon led to another British invasion. As the British took over their cities in 1900, the Boers launched a fierce guerilla war against them. British forces responded by bringing in enough troops to defeat the guerillas, destroy their lands, and imprison their wives and children in concentration camps where over 20,000 suffered torturous deaths due to starvation and disease. By 1902, the Boers agreed to the Treaty of Vereeniging accepting British rule in exchange for the release of Boer forces and their families, along with the promise of independent rule. By 1910, the British established the Union of South Africa, ruling over the Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Transvaal and the Orange State as colonies of the United Kingdom. As tension spread across Europe, American President Theodore Roosevelt called for a conference which led to law-making treaties, and to international courts forbidding imperialist takeovers. This call to action earned President Roosevelt a Nobel Peace Prize, and led to the slowing of British colonialism in Africa. The Boers regained independent control of their republics as international concern and the demand for accountability changed the world's perspective on "rules" of war.

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June 1

On this date in 1990, U.S. President George Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev signed a historic agreement to end the production of chemical weapons and begin the destruction of both nations' stockpiled reserves. The accord called for an eventual 80-percent reduction of the two nations' chemical weapons arsenals, a process begun in 1992 under monitoring conducted by inspectors sent by each country to the other. By the 1990s, most nations had the technology needed to build chemical weapons, and Iraq, for one, had already used them in its war against Iran. Consequently, a further purpose of the Bush/Gorbachev agreement was to create a new international climate that would discourage smaller countries from stockpiling chemical weapons for potential use in war. That aim succeeded. In 1993, more than 150 nations signed on to the Chemical Weapons Convention, a treaty banning chemical weapons worldwide that was ratified by the U.S. Senate in 1997. That same year, an intergovernmental organization based in The Hague, Netherlands, known as the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, was founded to oversee implementation of the weapons ban. Its duties included the inspection of chemical weapons production and destruction sites, as well as the investigation of cases where chemical weapons were alleged to have been used. As of October 2015, about 90 percent of the world's stockpile of chemical weapons had been destroyed. This represents an historic achievement, suggesting that similar programs for worldwide banning and destruction of nuclear weapons, and ultimately global disarmament and the abolition of war, are not beyond the reach of human aspiration and political determination.

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June 2

On this day in 1939 a German ship full of desperate Jewish refugees sailed close enough to see the lights of Miami, Florida, but was turned away, as President Franklin Roosevelt had blocked all efforts in Congress to admit Jewish refugees. This is a good day on which to remember that justifications for wars are sometimes concocted only after the wars are over. On May 13, 1939, nine hundred Jewish refugees boarded the S.S. St. Louis of the Hamburg-America Line headed for Cuba to escape concentration camps in Germany. They had little money by the time they were forced to leave, yet outrageous fees imposed for the trip made plans for starting over in a new country even more intimidating. Once they arrived in Cuba, they believed they would eventually be welcomed into the United States. Still, tension aboard the ship led to a few suicides before entering Cuba's harbor where they were not allowed to disembark. The captain set up a suicide patrol to keep watch on passengers during the nights they spent in the harbor, struggling to understand the reason. Then, they were ordered to leave. The captain sailed along the coast of Florida hoping to see welcome signs, but U.S. planes and Coast Guard ships arrived only to steer them away. By June 7, there was little food left when the captain announced they would have to head back to Europe. As their story spread, Holland, France, Great Britain, and Belgium offered to accept some refugees. By June 13-16, the St. Louis met up with ships heading for these countries, arriving just as WWII began.

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June 3

On this date in 1940, the Battle of Dunkirk ended with a German victory and with the Allies' forces in full retreat from Dunkirk to England. From May 26 to June 4, Allied forces were taken directly off the beaches, a very difficult process. Hundreds of British and French civilian boats voluntarily acted as shuttles to and from the larger ships; troops waited for hours shoulder-deep in water. Over 300,000 British, French, and Belgian troops were saved. Long known as the "Miracle of Dunkirk" based on the belief that God had answered prayers, in reality, it was the culmination of a devastating picture of the horrors of war. Germany had invaded northern Europe in the Low Countries and France. A blitzkrieg followed and by May 12 the Dutch had surrendered. By May 22, the German panzers headed north up the coast for Calais and Dunkirk, the last escape ports left. The British suffered a terrible defeat and Britain itself was threatened. Almost all of its heavy equipment, tanks, artillery, motorized transport and more than 50,000 troops were left on the Continent, most captured by the Germans. Over ten percent of them were killed. A thousand British soldiers were lost during the evacuation. While being made to wait for rescue, around 16,000 French soldiers died. Ninety percent of Dunkirk was destroyed during the battle. The 300,000 troops evacuated raises concerns in light of British and U.S. assertions throughout the war that they had neither the time nor the ability to evacuate Jews from Germany.

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June 4

On this date every year, the UN-sponsored International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression is observed around the world. The Children Victims day was established in August 1982 by a special assembly of the United Nations in response to the many deaths of Lebanese children in Beirut and other Lebanese cities following the first Israeli air strikes of the Lebanon War on June 4, 1982. In practice, the Children Victims day is designed to serve two broader purposes: to acknowledge the many children throughout the world who are victims of physical, mental, and emotional abuse, whether in war or peace, or at home or school; and to encourage individuals and organizations worldwide to be aware of the scale and impact of the abuse of children and to learn from, or take part in, campaigns aimed at protecting and preserving their rights. As UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar noted in his message for the 1983 Children Victims day, “Children who suffer injustice and poverty need to be protected and empowered by the adult world that creates these situations, not only through their direct actions but also indirectly through global problems such as climate change and urbanization.” The International Day of Children Victims is only one of more than 150 annually observed UN International Days. The Days are in turn part of a broader UN educational project in which particular events or issues are associated with specific days, weeks, years, and decades. The repeated observances build public awareness of the various events or issues, and promote actions to address them that remain consistent with UN objectives.

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June 5

On this day in 1962, the Port Huron Statement was completed. This was a manifesto produced by Students for a Democratic Society, and chiefly authored by Tom Hayden, a student at the University of Michigan. Students attending U.S. universities in the 1960s felt compelled to do something about the lack of freedom and individual rights they were witnessing in a country “of, by, and for the people.” The statement noted that “First, the permeating and victimizing fact of human degradation, symbolized by the Southern struggle against racial bigotry, compelled most of us from silence to activism. Second, the enclosing fact of the Cold War, symbolized by the presence of the Bomb, brought awareness that we ourselves, and our friends, and millions of abstract ‘others’ we knew more directly because of our common peril, might die at any time... With nuclear energy whole cities can easily be powered, yet the dominant nation-states seem more likely to unleash destruction greater than that incurred in all wars of human history.” They also feared the nation’s ambivalence toward: “The worldwide outbreak of revolution against colonialism and imperialism, the entrenchment of totalitarian states, the menace of war, overpopulation, international disorder, super-technology—these trends were testing the tenacity of our own commitment to democracy and freedom... we ourselves are imbued with urgency, yet the message of our society is that there is no viable alternative to the present.” Lastly, the manifesto expressed an urgent plea for “changing the conditions of humanity... an effort rooted in the ancient, still unfulfilled conception of man attaining determining influence over his circumstances of life.”

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June 6

On this date in 1968, at 1:44 a.m., presidential candidate Robert Kennedy died from mortal gunshot wounds inflicted by an assassin just after midnight the day before. The shooting took place in the kitchen pantry of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, which Kennedy was exiting after celebrating his victory in the California presidential primary with supporters. Since that event, people have asked, How would the country be different if Robert Kennedy had gone on to become president? Any answer must include the caveat that Kennedy was hardly a shoe-in to be elected president. Neither the power brokers in the Democratic Party nor the so-called “Silent Majority” of Americans—fearful of rioting blacks, Hippies, and college radicals—were likely to provide him much support. Still, the wave of cultural change in the 1960s had made it possible to build a coalition of haves and have-nots who wanted to end the war in Vietnam and tackle the problems of race and poverty. Bobby Kennedy seemed to many the candidate who could best create that coalition. In his extemporaneous remarks to inner-city blacks on the night of Martin Luther King’s assassination, and his behind-the-scenes role in negotiating an end to the Cuban Missile Crisis, he had clearly demonstrated qualities of empathy, passion, and rational detachment that could inspire transformational change. Congressman and prominent civil-rights activist John Lewis said about him: “He wanted... not just to change laws.... He wanted to build a sense of community.” Arthur Schlesinger, Kennedy’s campaign aide and biographer, commented bluntly: “Had he been elected president in 1968 we would have gotten out of Vietnam in 1969.”

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June 7

On this day in 1893, in his first act of civil disobedience, Mohandas Gandhi refused to comply with racial segregation rules on a South African train and was forcibly ejected at Pietermaritzburg. This led to a life spent fighting for civil rights through nonviolent means, bringing freedom to many Indians in Africa, and to India's independence from Great Britain. Gandhi, an intelligent and inspirational man, was known for a spirituality which encompassed all religions. Gandhi believed in "Ahimsa," or the positive force of love, integrating it into his political philosophy of "holding fast to truth or firmness in a righteous cause." This belief, or "Satyagraha," allowed Gandhi to turn political issues into the moral and righteous ones they really are. While surviving three attempts on his life, attacks, illnesses, and long imprisonments, Gandhi never attempted to retaliate against his opponents. Instead, he promoted peaceful change, inspiring all to do the same. When Britain imposed the unfair Salt Tax on the impoverished, he gave life to the Indian Independence movement by leading a march across India to the sea. Many died or were imprisoned before the British agreed to release all political prisoners. As Britain lost control of the country, India regained its independence. Known as the Father of his Nation, Gandhi's name was then changed to Mahatma, meaning "soulful one." Despite his nonviolent approach, it has been noted that every government that opposed Gandhi finally had to yield. His gift to the world was his dispelling of the belief that war is ever needed. Gandhi's birthday, October 2, is celebrated worldwide as the International Day of Nonviolence.

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June 8

On this date in 1966, 270 students at New York University walked out of graduation ceremonies to protest the presentation of an honorary degree to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. On the same date one year later, two-thirds of the graduating class of Brown University turned their backs on Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, the graduation speaker. Both protests expressed the alienation felt by increasing numbers of U.S. college students from their government's actions in the Vietnam War. By 1966, after President Lyndon Johnson had dramatically escalated the U.S. troop presence and bombing campaigns in Vietnam, the war had become for students a focal point of political activism. They held demonstrations, burned draft cards, protested military and Dow Chemical job fairs on campus, and chanted slogans like "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?" Most protests were locally- or campus-based, but almost all of them were inspired by a common objective: to sever ties between the U.S. war machine and the university, with its inherently "liberal" ideals. For some students, that objective may well have resulted from the broadened intellectual perspective often gained in university studies. Other students championed student-centered university independence for different reasons, and many were willing to risk injury or arrest by demanding it in such direct actions as occupying university buildings and administrative offices. That willingness to overstep legal boundaries for moral ends was evident in a survey conducted in 1968 by the Milwaukee Journal. There, seventy-five percent of a representative sample of all students expressed their support for organized protest as a "legitimate means of expressing student grievances."

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June 9

On this date in 1982 General Efraín Ríos Montt declared himself President of Guatemala, deposing the elected president. Ríos Montt was a graduate of the notorious School of the Americas (the U.S. military school that has trained so many Latin American killers and torturers). Ríos Montt set up a military three-person junta with himself as president. Under martial law, a suspended constitution, and no legislature, this junta held secret tribunals, and curtailed political parties and labor unions. Ríos Montt forced the other two in the junta to resign. He claimed that campesinos and the indigenous were communists, and began kidnapping, torturing, and murdering them. A guerilla army formed to resist Ríos Montt, and a 36-year civil war ensued. Tens of thousands of non-combatants were killed and “disappeared” by the regime at a rate of more than 3,000 per month. The Reagan administration and Israel supported the dictatorship with arms and provided spying and training. Ríos Montt was himself ousted by a coup in 1983. Until 1996 the killing continued in Guatemala in a culture of impunity. Prohibited from running for president by the Constitution, Ríos Montt was a Congressman between 1990 and 2007, immune from prosecution. When his immunity ended, he quickly found himself charged with genocide and crimes against humanity. Sentenced to 80 years in prison, Ríos Montt was not incarcerated due to supposed senility. Ríos Montt died on April 1, 2018, at the age of 91. In March 1999, U.S. President Bill Clinton apologized for U.S. support of the dictatorship. But the basic lesson of the harm in exporting militarism has yet to be learned.

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June 10

On this day in 1963 President John. F. Kennedy spoke in favor of peace at American University. Just five short months before his assassination, Kennedy's remarks on the beauty of universities and of their role led to some unforgettable words of wisdom including the following: "I have, therefore, chosen this time and this place to discuss a topic on which ignorance too often abounds and the truth is too rarely perceived—yet it is the most important topic on earth: world peace...I speak of peace because of the new face of war. Total war makes no sense in an age when great powers can maintain large and relatively invulnerable nuclear forces and refuse to surrender without resort to those forces. It makes no sense in an age when a single nuclear weapon contains almost ten times the explosive force delivered by all of the allied air forces in the Second World War. It makes no sense in an age when the deadly poisons produced by a nuclear exchange would be carried by wind and water and soil and seed to the far corners of the globe and to generations yet unborn... First: Let us examine our attitude toward peace itself. Too many of us think it is impossible. Too many think it unreal. But that is a dangerous, defeatist belief. It leads to the conclusion that war is inevitable—that mankind is doomed—that we are gripped by forces we cannot control. We need not accept that view. Our problems are manmade—therefore, they can be solved by man."

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June 11

On this day in 1880 Jeannette Rankin was born. The first woman elected to Congress was a graduate of the University of Montana who began her career in social work. As both a pacifist and a suffragist, Rankin helped women win the right to vote by introducing a bill granting them citizenship independent of their husbands. As Rankin took her seat in April 1917, U.S. participation in WWI was being debated. She voted NO, despite extreme opposition, leading to her loss of a second term. Rankin then went to work for the National Conference for the Prevention of War before running for Congress once again with the slogan “Prepare to the Limit for Defense; Keep our Men out of Europe!” She attributed her second win in 1940 to women who appreciated her vote against WWI. Rankin was back in Congress when President Franklin Roosevelt asked Congress to vote for a Declaration of War on Japan taking the United States into WWII. Rankin’s was the only dissenting vote. Amid much backlash, she continued her work, including organizing the Jeannette Rankin Brigade for a 1968 march on Washington to protest the Vietnam War. Rankin called on Congress to address people’s needs, decrying the choices given women who “let their sons go off to war because they’re afraid their husbands will lose their jobs in industry if they protest.” She lamented that U.S. citizens were only offered “a choice of evils, not ideas.” Rankin’s words seemed to go unheard as wars continued despite the simple alternative she worked a lifetime for. She said: “If we disarmed, we’d be the safest country in the world.”

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June 12

On this day in 1982 one million people demonstrated against nuclear weapons in New York. This is a good day to oppose nuclear weapons. While the United Nations held a Special Session on Disarmament, the crowd in Central Park drew international attention to the number of Americans opposed to the nuclear arms race. Dr. Randall Caroline Forsberg was one of the leading organizers of the “Nuclear Freeze,” and the number of protesters joining her in New York led to what was deemed to be “the largest political demonstration in the history of America.” Forsberg received a “genius award” from the MacArthur Fellowship acknowledging her work for a better, peaceful world by calling attention to the crises inherent in the accelerating nuclear weapons program. At the time, President Ronald Reagan was not appreciative, going so far as to suggest that members of the Nuclear Freeze movement must be “unpatriotic,” “communist supporters,” or possibly even “foreign agents.” By his second term, his administration had felt enough pressure to begin talks on reducing the size of nuclear arsenals. A meeting was arranged with the Soviet Union, and talks began between President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to eliminate weapons from both Eastern and Western Europe with the joint acknowledgment that “A nuclear war cannot be won, and should never be fought.” This followed a meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, where a proposal by Gorbachev to abolish all nuclear weapons by the year 2000 was not accepted by the United States. But by 1987, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was signed to require both countries to begin reducing their arsenals.

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June 13

On this day in 1971, the Pentagon Papers excerpted in the New York Times, gave details of U.S. involvement in Vietnam from the end of World War II to 1968. On June 13, 1971, after years of protests against the draft, the prolonged killings in Vietnam, and the cries for reason that went unanswered by the U.S. government, the New York Times received some “classified” information from a former military analyst. Frustrated by his own ongoing efforts to stop the war, Daniel Ellsberg contacted the New York Times, allowing them a glimpse into the real reasons the United States had become a military state: “A massive study of how the United States went to war in Indochina, conducted by the Pentagon three years ago, demonstrates that four administrations progressively developed a sense of commitment to a non-Communist Vietnam, a readiness to fight the North to protect the South, and an ultimate frustration with this effort — to a much greater extent than their public statements acknowledged at the time.” The U.S. Attorney General accused the Times of violating the law by disclosing government secrets, silencing them two days later. The Washington Post began to publish the story, and was also brought before the Federal Court. The country waited in disbelief until the benchmark decision for freedom of the press was finally made. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of publication with one of the justices, Hugo L. Black, releasing the following statement: “In revealing the workings of the government that led to the Vietnam War, the newspapers nobly did that which the Founding Fathers hoped and trusted they would do.”

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June 14

On this day in 1943 the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated the compulsory flag salute for school children. The original “Pledge to the Flag,” written in the 1800s for a celebration of the discovery of America, read: “I pledge allegiance to my Flag, and to the republic for which it stands, one Nation, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.” During WWII, politics found benefits in turning this pledge into law. The words “of the United States,” and “of America” were then added; and by 1945, the title was changed, and regulations regarding proper salutation of the flag were added. Salutation rules were changed when they were compared to those of Nazi Germany from the first: “Stand, raising the right hand with exposed palm to the forehead;” to: “Stand, placing the right hand over the heart.” The words “under God” were added after “one Nation,” and signed into law by President Eisenhower in 1954. Initially, 35 states mandated that public school students from K-12 stand to salute the flag each day with hands over their hearts while reciting the “Pledge of Allegiance.” As the number of pledge states grew to 45, many questioned the hypocrisy of a law requiring children to pledge allegiance to a flag representing “Liberty and Justice for all.” Others noted a conflict between the pledge and their religious beliefs, citing the violation of First Amendment rights. Although it was acknowledged by the courts in 1943 that students cannot be required to pledge allegiance to the flag, those who do not stand, salute, and pledge daily continue to be criticized, ostracized, suspended, and labelled “Unpatriotic.”

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June 15

On this day in 1917, and May 16, 1918, the Espionage and Sedition Acts were passed. The Espionage Act was imposed as the US became involved in World War I to prohibit citizens from doing anything that could undermine the military in its fight against Germany and its allies. The Act was amended less than a year later in what became known as the Sedition Act of 1918. The Sedition Act was more inclusive, making anything done, said, or written against the US involvement in WWI illegal. This left many US citizens fearing arrest for expressing their opinions opposing the military draft or involvement in the war, as well as questioning this violation of the right to free speech. Any criticism of the Constitution, the draft, the flag, the government, the military, or even the military uniform was made illegal. It also became illegal for anyone to obstruct the sale of US bonds, display a German flag in their homes, or speak in support of any cause supported by countries now considered enemies of the US. Any violations of these new laws led to arrests with fines of up to ten thousand dollars, and sentencing which could lead to imprisonment for up to twenty years. At least seventy-five newspapers were not allowed to print anything against the war if they expected to continue, and 2,000 people were arrested. There were 1,000 people, many of them immigrants, convicted and imprisoned during this time. Although the Sedition Act was repealed in 1921, many of the laws under the Espionage Act remained in effect in the US as one war led to another.

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June 16

On this day in 1976, the Soweto massacre occurred. 700 children were killed for refusing to learn Afrikaans. Even before the Nationalist Party took over in 1948, South Africa struggled with segregation. While education for whites was free, black children were neglected by the Bantu School System. Ninety percent of black South African schools were run by Catholic missionaries with minimal state assistance. In 1953, the Bantu Education Act cut all financing of education from state spending for Africans, followed by a University Education Act prohibiting black students from attending white universities. The move that led to the Soweto uprising was the Bantu decree that a language be used for instruction and examination that even teachers were not fluent in, the Afrikaans. As exam time approached, students from two high schools inspired by the South African Students Movement organized the Action Committee of the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC) to plan a peaceful protest against these increasingly difficult demands. The march began in Soweto passing other high schools where they were joined by students from these schools, and continued to meet up until thousands marched together to “Uncle Tom’s” Municipal Hall at Orlando. By the time they arrived, they had been disrupted by police and attacked with tear gas and bullets. By the time the mass shootings began, the marchers had been joined by over 300 white students and countless black workers in the fight against Apartheid and Bantu education. Police brutality was met with calm persistence by surviving students and supporters who continued for months the determined struggle for equality inspired by this memorable African “Youth Day.”

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June 17

On this date in 1974, the Provisional Irish Republican Army bombed the Houses of Parliament in London, injuring eleven. This dramatic act was one of many blasts in the thirty years of the “Troubles.” In 1920, in an attempt to quell violence, the British Parliament had passed an Act that split Ireland, with both parts still formally part of the United Kingdom. Instead of the intended peace, guerrilla activity increased between the northern Protestants loyal to the UK and southern Catholics who wanted an independent and united Ireland. Occupation by British troops in 1969 increased the violence. The IRA bombed targets in England from 1972 until 1996. The mainland campaign claimed 175 lives. Subsequent ceasefire agreements were made but collapsed. A high profile assassination in the Troubles came when the Provisional IRA murdered the vacationing British Lord Louis Mountbatten in Northern Ireland in 1979 with a bomb aboard his boat. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement formally ended the struggle, with a power-sharing arrangement in government. During the decades of terror attacks launched by both nationalist and unionist paramilitaries, nearly 3600 lives were lost. But danger still lay just below the surface. The narrow result of a UK vote to break away from the European Union, called Brexit, produced a dispute over future customs arrangements, since Ireland would be split between European Union and non-European Union. A car bomb in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, was blamed on the Real Irish Republican Army, a group fighting for a united Ireland a hundred years after partition. That action, like hundreds of others over the years, displayed the uselessness of violence and the counterproductive results of blowing people up.

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June 18

On this day in 1979, the SALT II agreement to limit long-range missiles and bombers was signed by Presidents Carter and Brezhnev. This agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Republics was made as both became: “Conscious that nuclear war would have devastating consequences for all mankind...,” and “Reaffirming their desire to take measures for the further limitation and for the further reduction of strategic arms, having in mind the goal of achieving general and complete disarmament...” President Carter sent the agreement to Congress where debate went on until the Russian invasion of Afghanistan left it unratified. In 1980, President Carter announced that, regardless, the United States would comply with major stipulations of the agreement if Russia would reciprocate, and Brezhnev agreed. The foundation for the SALT treaties began when President Ford met with Brezhnev to lay the foundation which set a limit on multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle systems, banned construction of new land-based inter-continental ballistic missile launchers, limited deployment of new strategic offensive arms, strategic nuclear delivery vehicles, and kept the agreement valid through 1985. President Nixon agreed, as did President Reagan, who then declared violations by the Russians in 1984 and 1985. In 1986, Reagan announced that “...the US must base decisions regarding its strategic force structure on the nature and magnitude of the threat posed by Soviet strategic forces and not on standards contained in the SALT structure...” He did add that the US would “...continue to exercise the utmost restraint, while protecting strategic deterrence, in order to help foster the necessary atmosphere for significant reductions in the strategic arsenals of both sides.”

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June 19

On this date each year, many Americans celebrate “Juneteenth,” the 19th of June in 1865 when African-Americans still enslaved in Galveston, Texas learned they had been legally freed 2-1/2 years earlier. President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, issued on New Year’s Day, 1863, had mandated the freeing of all slaves in states and localities rebelling against the Union in the Civil War, but Texas slaveholders had apparently chosen not to act upon the order until they were forced to. That day came when two-thousand Union soldiers arrived at Galveston on June 19, 1865. Major General Gordon Granger read aloud a document which informed the people of Texas that “... in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free ... and the connection heretofore existing between [masters and slaves] becomes that between employer and free laborer.” Among the freed slaves, reaction to the news ranged from shock to jubilation. Some lingered to learn more about the new employer/employee relationship, but many others, impelled by the exhilaration of their freedom, departed immediately to build a new life in new places. Facing severe challenges, the migrating ex-slaves over time made the “Juneteenth” of their liberation an annual occasion for reuniting with other family members in Galveston to exchange supportive reassurances and prayers. Over the years, the celebration spread to other areas and grew in popularity, and in 1980 Juneteenth became an official state holiday in Texas. Today, new local and national Juneteenth organizations use the commemoration to promote knowledge and appreciation of African-American history and culture, while also encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures.

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June 20

This is World Refugee Day. Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, was appointed in January 2017 after a lifetime spent working to stop the endless suffering that wars impose on innocents. Born in Lisbon in 1949, he earned a degree in engineering and became fluent in Portuguese, English, French, and Spanish. His election to the Portuguese Parliament in 1976 introduced him to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe where he chaired the Committee on Demography, Migration, and Refugees. Twenty years of working as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees allowed Guterres to witness more than most the suffering, starvation, torture, disease, and deaths of civilian men, women, and children in refugee camps and war zones. While serving as Prime Minister of Portugal from 1995-2002, he remained involved in international efforts as president of the European Council. His backing led to the adoption of the Lisbon Agenda for jobs and growth, and to the designation by the UN in December of 2000 of World Refugee Day. June 20 was chosen in remembrance of a 1951 Refugee Status Convention held fifty years earlier, and to acknowledge the continuing rise in the number of refugees worldwide to 60 million. Guterres' words were chosen to introduce the World Refugee Day website: "This is not about sharing a burden. It is about sharing a global responsibility, based not only on the broad idea of our common humanity but also on the very specific obligations of international law. The root problems are war and hatred, not people who flee; refugees are among the first victims of terrorism."

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June 21

On this date in 1971, the International Court of Justice determined that South Africa was to pull out of Namibia. From 1915 to 1988 Namibia was known as South West Africa, considered nearly a province of South Africa. It had been highly colonized, first by Germany and then by Britain. South Africa was independent of Britain by World War I, but successfully invaded the German area in support of the Empire. The League of Nations placed SW Africa under a British mandate with South African administration. After World War II, the United Nations continued the policy. By 1960 the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) was a political force, starting a guerrilla campaign with its People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). In 1966, the U.N. General Assembly revoked South Africa's mandate, but South Africa disputed its authority and imposed apartheid, a whites-only government, and bantustans, or black ghettos. In 1971 the International Court of Justice upheld UN authority over Namibia and determined that the South African presence in Namibia was illegal. South Africa refused to withdraw, and a debilitating war ensued in the area extending into Angola, which was aided there by Cuban troops. Exhausted, and fearful of the Cuban presence, South Africa signed a ceasefire in 1988. The war took 2,500 South African soldiers' lives, and cost a billion dollars a year. Independence of Namibia was declared in 1990. Mining of diamonds, other gemstones, and uranium in Namibia had fueled South Africa's interest in colonizing the area. This is a good day to consider the true reasons for colonization, consequent wars, and their repercussions.

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June 22

On this date in 1987, more than 18,000 Japanese peace activists formed a 10.4-mile human chain to protest the ongoing U.S. military occupation of Okinawa. The 1945 Battle of Okinawa was the deadliest assault in the Pacific War—an 82-day “typhoon of steel” that left 200,000 dead. More than 100,000 Japanese soldiers were killed, captured, or committed suicide; the Allies suffered more than 65,000 casualties; and a quarter of Okinawa’s civilian population was killed. Under a 1952 treaty, the US gained full control of Okinawa and ruled over the island for 27 years, confiscating private land to build bases and airfields—including the sprawling Kadena Air Base, which U.S. bombers later used to attack Korea and Vietnam. Over seven decades, the Pentagon contaminated the island’s sea, land, and air with arsenic, depleted uranium, nerve gas, and chemical carcinogens, giving Okinawa the nickname, “Junk Heap of the Pacific.” In 1972, a new treaty allowed Japan to regain some control of Okinawa but 25,000 US troops (and 22,000 family members) remained stationed there. And nonviolent protests have remained a constant presence. In 2000, 25,000 activists formed a human chain around the Kadena Air Base. By 2019, 32 U.S. bases and 48 training sites covered 20% of the island. Despite years of grassroots resistance, the Pentagon began expanding its presence with a new Marine Air Base at Henoko in northern Okinawa. Henoko’s beautiful coral reef was to be buried under tons of sand, threatening not only the coral, but sea turtles, endangered dugongs, and many other rare creatures.

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June 23

On this date each year, the United Nations' Public Service Day is observed by public service organizations and departments around the world. Instituted by the UN General Assembly in December 2002, Public Service Day is rooted in the recognition that a competent civil service plays an important role in fostering successful governance and social and economic development. The Day's purpose is to celebrate the work of people in local and national communities around the world who are determined to exert their energies and skills to serve the common good. Whether the contributors are paid civil servants such as mail carriers, librarians, and teachers, or people who provide unpaid services to organizations such as volunteer fire departments and ambulance corps, they meet fundamental human needs and are essential to the well-being of society. For this reason, Public Service Day is also intended to encourage young people to pursue careers in the public sector. Organizations and departments taking part in the Day typically use a variety of means to meet its objectives. They include setting up stalls and booths from which to provide information about public service; organizing lunches with guest speakers; conducting internal awards ceremonies; and making special announcements to honor public servants. The general public is encouraged to join in on the spirit of Public Service Day by thanking those who provide peaceful and legal services rather than the supposed service of participation in warfare. We might all ask ourselves: Where would we be without the public servants who restore our power after a nasty storm, keep our streets free from sewage, and collect our garbage?

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June 24

On this date in 1948, President Harry Truman signed into law the Selective Service Act, which became the basis of the modern U.S. system for drafting young men into military service. The act stipulated that all men 18 years and older were required to register with the Selective Service and that those between the ages of 19 and 26 were eligible to be drafted for a service requirement of 21 months. Few young Americans opposed the draft until the mid-1960s, when many college students began to link it with misgivings over the United States' expanding war on Vietnam. Some also resented the often subjectively-based draft deferments granted by local draft boards for reasons of family status or academic standing. In 1966, Congress passed legislation that rationalized the deferment system but did little to stem student resistance to the draft. Over time, however, modifications were made to the Selective Service Act which removed its conscription powers, and, today, the U.S. military is fully established as an all-volunteer body. Many draft-age Americans undoubtedly value the freedom this gives them to get on with their lives. It should not be overlooked, however, that many young men who do volunteer to serve the nation's war machine do so primarily because it provides them the only recourse they have to a job, a culturally respected role in society, and self-esteem. Few among them fully consider that those benefits may come only at the risk of their own life and of grave harm and injustice to others. Selective Service remains in place for future military drafts, a practice that has been abolished in many countries.

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June 25

On this date in 1918, Eugene Debs, leader of the United States' Socialist Party and an accomplished orator famous for his scathing attacks on the nation's plutocrats, was arrested for speaking against U.S. participation in World War I. Debs and his Socialists were hardly alone in their opposition, however. The United States' entry into the war in 1917 had quickly catalyzed dissent in Congress and among civil libertarians and religious pacifists. In response, Congress passed the Espionage Act, which made it illegal for anyone to incite active opposition to the war. Debs, however, was undeterred. In a speech in Canton, Ohio on June 18, 1918, he spoke truths about war in general that remain relevant more than a century later. "In all the history of the world," he proclaimed, "the master class has always declared the wars. The subject class has always fought the battles.... You need to know that you are good for something more than slavery and cannon fodder..." The Canton speech, however, would prove to be Debs's last before his arrest. On September 12, 1918, he was convicted by a jury in the U.S. District Court in Cleveland for violating the Espionage Act. Seven months later the conviction was upheld on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court and Debs was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison. His subsequent confinement to a cell in Atlanta, however, did not stop him from running for President in 1920. Those who work for peace today can take encouragement in the fact that, despite Debs's imprisonment, he received nearly a million popular votes in the election.

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June 26

On this date each year the UN's International Day in Support of Victims of Torture is observed by UN member nations, civil society groups, and individuals around the world. Instituted in December 1997 by a resolution of the UN General Assembly, the Support of Victims of Torture observance recognizes the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment that took effect in June 1987 and is now ratified by most countries. The aim of the annual observance is to help ensure effective functioning of the anti-torture Convention, which recognizes torture as a war crime under international law and prohibits its use as a tool of war under any circumstances. Yet, in today's wars, the use of torture and other forms of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment remains all too common. Documented use of torture by the United States goes unprosecuted and undeterred. The UN-sponsored observance in Support of Victims of Torture plays an important role in calling attention to the problem. Organizations such as the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims and Amnesty International have played active roles in organizing events around the world to boost people's awareness of issues related to human torture. Such organizations also promote support for the prompt and specialized programs needed to help victims of torture recover from their trauma. Funded by such agencies as The UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, rehabilitation centers and organizations around the world have demonstrated that victims can in fact make the transition from horror to healing.

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June 27

On this day in 1869 Emma Goldman was born. Growing up in Lithuania, Goldman survived the Russian Revolution and antisemitism driving many to migrate. By age fifteen, a marriage pre-arranged by her father led Goldman, along with a sister, to flee to America. In New York, ten and a half hour days spent working at a coat factory led her to join a newly established labor union calling for fewer hours. As she began speaking out for women's and workers' rights, Goldman became known as a feminist anarchist who incited radical behavior. She routinely endured arrests. When President William McKinley was assassinated, Goldman was criticized nationally as one of her lectures had been attended by the assassin. By 1906, she started a magazine, "Mother Earth," to educate readers on the ideologies of feminism and anarchism. As the US entered WWI, legislation such as the Sedition Act ended free speech, labelling pacifists as unpatriotic. Goldman continued to encourage anti-war efforts through her magazine, and organized a "No-Conscription League," along with fellow activists Leonard Abbott, Alexander Berkman, and Eleanor Fitzgerald, to oppose "all wars by capitalist governments." She and Berkman were arrested for conspiring to lower draft registrations, fined \$10,000, and sentenced to two years in prison. Goldman was deported to Russia upon her release. While there, she wrote *My Disillusionment in Russia*, followed by her autobiography, *Living My Life*. Her last years were spent traveling and lecturing to fans all over Europe. She was allowed a ninety day tour back in the US before her request to be buried in Chicago was granted following her death in 1940.

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June 28

On this date in 2009 a military coup, ultimately backed by the United States, overthrew the democratically elected government of Honduras. The country's leftist president, Manuel Zelaya, was forced into exile in Costa Rica after more than a dozen soldiers rushed into his residence early in the morning and arrested him. The action concluded a long battle over a national referendum scheduled for the same day, by which the president hoped to demonstrate popular support for considering possible reforms to the country's Constitution. Political opponents, however, contended that Zelaya's true aim was to eliminate the existing Constitution's limitation on a president's tenure of office to a single four-year term. Soon after the coup, U.S. President Barack Obama stated, "We believe that the coup was not legal and that President Zelaya remains the president of Honduras..." That perspective, however, was soon superseded by the actions of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. In her 2014 memoir, *Hard Choices*, Clinton writes: "I spoke with my counterparts around the hemisphere.... We strategized on a plan to restore order in Honduras and ensure that free and fair elections could be held quickly and legitimately, which would render the question of Zelaya moot." Not unexpectedly, the U.S.-backed post-coup government that came to power in 2010 rewarded coup loyalists with top ministries, opening the door to governmental and civil corruption, violence, and anarchy that persisted for years. Progressive activists in Honduras continued to organize and work hard for a future in which a legitimately elected government could operate honestly for the good of all, including those who were marginalized and poor.

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June 29

On this date in 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Furman v. Georgia* that the death penalty, as then employed by the states, was unconstitutional. The Court's decision also applied to two other cases, *Jackson v. Georgia* and *Branch v. Texas*, which both concerned the constitutionality of the death sentence for a conviction of rape. The facts leading to the *Furman v. Georgia* case were these: Furman was burglarizing a private home when a family member discovered him. In attempting to flee, Furman tripped and fell, causing the gun he was carrying to go off and kill a resident of the home. At trial, Furman was convicted of murder and sentenced to death. The question in this case, as in the two others, was whether the death penalty constituted a violation of either the Eighth Amendment banning cruel and unusual punishment, or the Fourteenth Amendment, which assures all persons equal protection of the law. The Court's one-page majority opinion, based on a 5-4 decision, held that the imposition of the death penalty in all three cases constituted cruel and unusual punishment and violated the Constitution. Only Justices Brennan and Marshall, however, believed the death penalty to be unconstitutional in all instances. The three other justices who concurred with the majority opinion focused on the arbitrariness with which death sentences were commonly imposed, often indicating a racial bias against black defendants. The Court's decision forced states and the national legislature to rethink their statutes for capital offenses to ensure that the death penalty would not be administered in a capricious or discriminatory manner.

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June 30

On this day in 1966, first GIs, Fort Hood Three, refused to be sent to Vietnam. Private David Samas, Private Dennis Mora, and Private First Class James A. Johnson met at Fort Gordon, Georgia before each were reassigned to the 142nd Battalion of the 2nd Armored Division at Fort Hood, Texas. Their anticipated deployment orders were issued despite their opposition to the escalating war in Vietnam. Protests taking place across the US led them to use the 30-day leave granted before their deployment date to find a lawyer, and connect with anti-war activists. They managed to meet up with Dave Dellinger, Fred Halstead, and A.J. Muste, well known pacifists with ties to the influential Parade Committee, and set up a press conference in New York City. The Three arrived, backed by hundreds of supporters from civil rights groups at the Press Conference, where they invited other GIs to join them in their refusal to be deployed. Their refusal was simply a call for reason: "The war in Vietnam must be stopped... We want no part of a war of extermination. We oppose the criminal waste of American lives and resources. We refuse to go to Vietnam!" Police were then sent to deliver The Three to Fort Dix, NJ, where they were ordered to leave immediately for Saigon by Commanding General Hightower. Again, they refused, declaring the Vietnam War illegal. The Three were imprisoned, court-martialed in September, and sentenced to three more years with the Supreme Court refusing all appeals. During those three years, hundreds of active duty service members and veterans felt inspired to join the anti-war movement.

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July 1

On this day in 1656, the first Quakers arrived in America, having come to what would become Boston. The Puritan colony in Boston was well established by the 1650s with strict rules based on its religion. When the Quakers arrived from England in 1656, they were greeted with accusations of witchcraft, arrests, imprisonment, and the demand that they leave Boston on the next ship. An edict imposing heavy fines on ship captains bringing Quakers to Boston was soon passed by the Puritans. Quakers who stood their ground in protest continued to be attacked, beaten, and at least four were executed before a ruling by Prince Charles II banned executions in the New World. As more diverse settlers began arriving in Boston Harbor, the Quakers found enough acceptance to establish a colony of their own in Pennsylvania. The Puritans' fear, or xenophobia, collided in America with the founding premise of liberty and justice for all. As America grew, so did its diversity. Acceptance of others was a practice greatly contributed to by the Quakers, who also modeled for others the practices of respecting Native Americans, opposing slavery, resisting war, and pursuing peace. The Quakers of Pennsylvania demonstrated for the other colonies the moral, financial, and cultural benefits of practicing peace rather than war. Quakers taught other Americans about the need to abolish slavery and all forms of violence. Many of the best threads running through U.S. history begin with the Quakers steadfastly promoting their viewpoints as radical minorities dissenting from nearly universally accepted doctrines.

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July 2

On this day in 1964, U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law. Enslaved people had become U.S. citizens with the right to vote in 1865. Yet, their rights continued to be suppressed throughout the South. Laws passed by individual states to support segregation, and brutal actions by white supremacy groups such as the Ku Klux Klan threatened the freedoms promised to former slaves. In 1957, the U.S. Justice Department created a Civil Rights Commission to investigate these crimes, which went unaddressed by federal law until President John F. Kennedy was moved by the Civil Rights movement to propose a bill in June of 1963 stating: “This nation was founded by men of many nations and backgrounds. It was founded on the principle that all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened.” Kennedy’s assassination five months later left President Johnson to follow through. In his State of the Union address, Johnson pleaded: “Let this session of Congress be known as the session which did more for civil rights than the last hundred sessions combined.” As the bill reached the Senate, heated arguments from the South were met with a 75-day filibuster. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 finally passed by a two-thirds vote. This Act prohibits segregation in all public accommodations, and bans discrimination by employers and labor unions. It also established an Equal Opportunity Employment Commission offering legal assistance to citizens trying to make a living.

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July 3

On this date in 1932, *The Green Table*, an anti-war ballet reflecting the inhumanity and corruption of war, was performed for the first time in Paris at a choreography competition. Written and choreographed by the German dancer, teacher, and choreographer Kurt Jooss (1901-1979), the ballet is modeled on the “dance of death” depicted in medieval German woodcuts. Each of eight scenes dramatizes a different way in which society complies with the call to war. The figure of Death successively seduces politicians, soldiers, a flag bearer, a young girl, a wife, a mother, refugees, and an industrial profiteer, all of whom are brought into Death’s dance on the same terms by which they live their lives. Only the figure of the wife offers a hint of resistance. She turns into a rebellious partisan and murders a soldier returning from the front. For this offense, Death drags her off to be executed by a firing squad. Before the first shots, however, the wife turns toward Death and genuflects. Death in turn gives her a nod of acknowledgement, then looks up into the audience. In a 2017 review of *The Green Table*, freelance editor Jennifer Zahrt writes that another reviewer at the performance she attended commented, “Death gazed out at us all as if to ask if we understand.” Zahrt responds, “Yes,” as if agreeing that Death’s call to war is always in some way affirmed. It should be observed, however, that modern history offers many instances in which a small fraction of a given population, organized as a non-violent resistance movement, has managed to silence Death’s call for everyone.

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July 4

On this date each year, while the United States celebrates its declaration of independence from England in 1776, an unconditionally non-violent activist group headquartered in Yorkshire, England observes its own “Independence from America Day.” Known as the Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign (MHAC), the group’s core purpose since 1992 has been to explore and illuminate the issue of British sovereignty as it relates to U.S. military bases operating in the United Kingdom. The central focus of the MHAC is the Menwith Hill U.S. base in North Yorkshire, established in 1951. Run by the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA), Menwith Hill is the largest U.S. base outside the U.S. for information-gathering and surveillance. Largely by asking questions in parliament and testing British law in court challenges, the MHAC was able to determine that the 1957 formal agreement between the U.S. and UK relating to NSA Menwith Hill was passed without parliamentary scrutiny. MHAC also revealed that activities pursued by the base in support of U.S. global militarism, the U.S. so-called Missile Defense system, and the NSA’s information-gathering efforts had profound implications for civil liberties and electronic surveillance practices that received little public or parliamentary discussion. The declared ultimate aim of MHAC is the total removal of all U.S. military and surveillance bases in the UK. The organization liaises with, and supports, other activist groups around the world that share similar objectives in their own countries. If such efforts are ultimately successful, they would represent a major step toward global demilitarization. The U.S. currently operates some 800 major military bases in more than 80 countries and territories abroad.

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July 5

On this date in 1811, Venezuela became the first Spanish American colony to declare its independence. A War of Independence had been fought from April 1810. The First Republic of Venezuela had an independent government and a constitution, but lasted only one year. Venezuela's masses resisted being governed by the white elite of Caracas and remained loyal to the crown. The famous hero, Simón Bolívar Palacios, was born in Venezuela of a prominent family and armed resistance to the Spanish continued under him. He was acclaimed El Libertador as a Second Republic of Venezuela was declared and Bolívar was given dictatorial powers. He once again overlooked the aspirations of non-white Venezuelans. It also lasted only one year, from 1813-1814. Caracas remained in Spanish control, but in 1819, Bolívar was named president of the Third Republic of Venezuela. In 1821 Caracas was liberated and Gran Colombia was created, now Venezuela and Colombia. Bolívar left, but carried on fighting on the continent and saw his dream of a united Spanish America come to some fruition in the Confederation of the Andes uniting what is now Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru. Again, the new government proved difficult to control and did not last. People in Venezuela resented the capital Bogotá in far-off Colombia, and resisted the Gran Colombia. Bolívar prepared to leave for exile in Europe, but he died at age 47 of tuberculosis in December 1830, before leaving for Europe. As he was dying, the frustrated liberator of northern South America said that "All who served the revolution have plowed the sea." Such is the futility of war.

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July 6

On this date in 1942, thirteen-year-old Anne Frank, her parents and sister moved into an empty back section of an office building in Amsterdam, Holland in which Anne's father Otto carried on the family banking business. There the Jewish family—native Germans who had sought refuge in Holland following Hitler's rise in 1933—hid themselves from the Nazis who now occupied the country. During their seclusion, Anne kept a diary detailing the family's experience which would make her world-famous. When the family was discovered and arrested two years later, Anne and her mother and sister were deported to a German concentration camp, where all three succumbed within months to typhus fever. All this is common knowledge. Fewer Americans, however, know the rest of the story. Documents disclosed in 2007 indicate that Otto Frank's continuous nine-month effort in 1941 to secure visas that would get his family into the U.S. were foiled by increasingly prejudicial U.S. vetting standards. After President Roosevelt warned that Jewish refugees already in the U.S. could be "spying under compulsion," an administrative mandate was issued that barred U.S. acceptance of Jewish refugees with close relatives in Europe, based on the far-fetched notion that the Nazis might hold those relatives hostage in order to force the refugees to undertake espionage for Hitler. The response emblemized the folly and tragedy that can result when war-fevered fears over national security take precedence over humane concerns. It not only suggested that the ethereal Anne Frank might be pressed into service as a Nazi spy. It may also have contributed to the avoidable deaths of untold numbers of European Jews.

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July 7

On this date in 2005, a series of coordinated terrorist suicide attacks took place in London. Three men detonated homemade bombs separately but simultaneously in their backpacks in the London Underground and a fourth did the same on a bus. Including the four terrorists, fifty-two people of various nationalities died, and seven hundred were injured. Studies have found that 95% of suicide terrorist attacks are motivated by a desire to get a military occupier to end an occupation. These attacks were not exceptions to that rule. The motivation was ending the occupation of Iraq. A year before, on March 11, 2004, Al Qaeda bombs had killed 191 people in Madrid, Spain, just before an election in which one party had been campaigning against Spain's participation in the U.S.-led war on Iraq. The people of Spain voted the Socialists into power, and they removed all Spanish troops from Iraq by May. There were no more bombs in Spain. Following the 2005 attack in London, the British government committed to continuing the brutal occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Terrorist attacks in London followed in 2007, 2013, 2016, and 2017. Interestingly, in world history a grand total of zero suicide terrorist attacks have been documented to have been driven by resentment of gifts of food, medicine, schools, or clean energy. Reducing suicide attacks can be aided by reducing collective suffering, deprivation, and injustice, and by responding to nonviolent appeals, which generally precede violent acts but are often times ignored. Treating these crimes as crimes, rather than as acts of war can break a vicious cycle.

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July 8

On this date in 2014, in a seven-week conflict that became known as the 2014 Gaza War, Israel launched a seven-week air and ground offensive against the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip. The stated aim of the operation was to stop rocket fire from Gaza into Israel, which had increased after a June kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers by two Hamas militants in the West Bank had triggered an Israeli crackdown. For its part, Hamas sought to generate international pressure on Israel to lift its blockade of the Gaza Strip. When the war ended, however, civilian deaths, injuries, and homelessness were so one-sidedly on the outgunned Gazan side—well over 2000 Gazan civilians died, compared to only five Israelis—that a special session of the international Russell Tribunal on Palestine was called to investigate possible Israeli genocide. The jury had little difficulty concluding that the Israeli pattern of attack, as well as its indiscriminate targeting, amounted to crimes against humanity, since they imposed collective punishment on the entire civilian population. It also rejected the Israeli claim that its actions could be justified as self-defense against the rocket attacks from Gaza, since those attacks constituted acts of resistance by a people who suffered under punishing Israeli control. Nevertheless, the jury declined to call the Israeli actions “genocide,” since that incrimination legally required compelling evidence of an “intent to destroy.” Of course, to the thousands of dead, injured, and homeless Gazans, these conclusions were of little consequence. For them, and for the rest of the world, the only real answer to the misery of war remains its total abolition.

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July 9

On this day in 1955, Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell and seven other scientists warned that a choice must be made between war and human survival. Distinguished scientists the world over, including Max Born of Germany, and French Communist Frederic Joliot-Curie, joined Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell in an attempt to abolish war. The Manifesto, the last document Einstein signed before his death, read: “In view of the fact that in any future world war nuclear weapons will certainly be employed, and that such weapons threaten the continued existence of mankind, we urge the governments of the world to realize, and to acknowledge publicly, that their purpose cannot be furthered by a world war, and we urge them, consequently, to find peaceful means for the settlement of all matters of dispute between them.” Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara expressed his own fear that a nuclear catastrophe was inevitable unless nuclear arsenals were dismantled, noting: “The average U.S. warhead has a destructive power 20 times that of the Hiroshima bomb. Of the 8,000 active or operational U.S. warheads, 2,000 are on hair-trigger alert... The U.S. has never endorsed the policy of ‘no first use,’ not during my seven years as secretary or since. We have been and remain prepared to initiate the use of nuclear weapons—by the decision of one person, the president....the president is prepared to make a decision within 20 minutes that could launch one of the most devastating weapons in the world. To declare war requires an act of Congress, but to launch a nuclear holocaust requires 20 minutes’ deliberation by the president and his advisors.”

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July 10

On this date in 1985, the French government bombed and sunk the Greenpeace flagship The Rainbow Warrior, moored at a wharf in Auckland, a major city in New Zealand's North Island. Pursuing its interest in protecting the environment, Greenpeace had been using the ship to stage another of its nonviolent campaigns against French nuclear testing in the Pacific. New Zealand was strongly supportive of the protests, reflecting its role as a leader in the international anti-nuclear movement. France, on the other hand, saw nuclear testing as essential to its security, and feared mounting international pressure that could possibly force its termination. The French were especially wary of Greenpeace plans to sail the ship from the Auckland wharf and stage still another protest at French Polynesia's Mururoa Atoll in the southern Pacific. As a flagship, The Rainbow Warrior could lead a flotilla of smaller protest yachts capable of nonviolent tactics the French navy would find difficult to control. The ship was also large enough to carry enough supplies and communications equipment to maintain both a protracted protest and a flow of radio contact with the outside world and reports and photos to international news organizations. To avoid all this, French Secret Service agents had been sent to sink the ship and prevent it from moving on. The action led to a serious deterioration in relations between New Zealand and France and did much to promote an upsurge in New Zealand nationalism. Because Britain and the United States failed to condemn this act of terrorism, it also hardened support within New Zealand for a more independent foreign policy.

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July 11

On this date each year, the UN-sponsored World Population Day, established in 1989, focuses attention on such issues relating to population growth as family planning, gender equality, human and environmental health, education, economic equity, and human rights. In addition to these concerns, population experts have also recognized that brisk population growth in poor countries places stress on available resources that can quickly lead to social instability, civil conflict, and war. This is true in significant part because a fast increase in population tends to produce a sizeable majority of people under thirty. When such a population is led by a weak or autocratic government, and falls short both on vital resources and basic education, health, and employment opportunities for young people, it becomes a potential hot spot for civil conflict. The World Bank cites Angola, Sudan, Haiti, Somalia, and Myanmar as extreme examples of “low-income countries under stress.” In all of them, stability is undermined by a population density that taxes available space and resources. Once consumed by civil conflict, such nations find it hard to resume economic development – even if they are rich in natural resources. Most experts warn that countries with high population growth and not enough resources to provide for their people are likely to breed unrest locally. Of course so-called developed countries exporting weapons, wars, death squads, coups, and interventions, rather than humanitarian and environmental aid, also fuel violence in poor and overpopulated parts of the globe, some of them no more overpopulated, simply far more impoverished, than is Japan or Germany.

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July 12

On this day in 1817 Henry David Thoreau was born. Though perhaps best known for his philosophical transcendentalism—by which, as in *Walden*, he viewed the manifestations of nature as reflections of spiritual laws—Thoreau was also a nonconformist who believed that moral behavior derives not from obedience to authority but from the individual conscience. This view is elaborated in his long essay *Civil Disobedience*, which inspired later civil rights advocates such as Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. The issues which most concerned Thoreau were slavery and the Mexican War. His refusal to pay taxes to support the war in Mexico led to his imprisonment, and his opposition to slavery to writings such as “Slavery in Massachusetts” and “A Plea for Captain John Brown.” Thoreau’s defense of radical abolitionist John Brown ran counter to the widespread condemnation of Brown following his attempt to arm slaves by stealing weapons from the Harper’s Ferry arsenal. The raid had resulted in the death of one U.S. Marine along with thirteen of the rebels. Brown was charged with murder, treason, and inciting a rebellion by enslaved people, and eventually hanged. Thoreau, however, continued to defend Brown, noting that his intentions had been humane and born of an adherence both to conscience and U.S. Constitutional Rights. The Civil War that followed would tragically result in the deaths of some 700,000 people. Thoreau died as the war began in 1861. Yet, many who supported the Union cause, both soldiers and civilians, remained inspired by Thoreau’s view that abolishing slavery was necessary to a nation claiming to recognize humanity, morals, rights, and conscience.

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July 13

On this date in 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, the first wartime draft of U.S. civilians spurred four days of riots in New York City that rank among the bloodiest and most destructive in U.S. history. The uprising did not principally reflect moral opposition to the war. A root cause may have been the discontinuation of cotton imports from the South that were used in 40 percent of all goods shipped from the city's port. Anxieties produced by the resulting job loss were then exacerbated by the President's Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862. Lincoln's edict raised fears among working white men that thousands of freed blacks from the South might soon replace them in an already shrunken job market. Prompted by these fears, many whites began to perversely hold African-Americans responsible both for the war and their own uncertain economic future. Passage of a military conscription law in early 1863 that allowed the wealthy to produce a substitute or buy their way out, drove many white working men to riot. Forced to risk their lives for a Union they felt had betrayed them, they gathered by the thousands on July 13th to perpetrate violent acts of resentment on black citizens, homes, and businesses. Estimates of the number of people killed reach 1,200. Though the rioting was ended on July 16 by arriving federal troops, war had once again produced tragic unintended consequences. Yet, better angels would also play a role. New York's own African-American abolitionist movement slowly rose again from dormancy to advance black equality in the city and change its society for the better.

PEACE ALMANAC



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July 14

On this date in 1789, the people of Paris stormed and dismantled the Bastille, a royal fortress and prison that had come to symbolize the tyranny of the French Bourbon monarchs. Though hungry and paying heavy taxes from which the clergy and nobility were exempt, the peasants and urban laborers marching to the Bastille sought only to confiscate the army's gun powder stored there for provision of troops the king had decided to station around Paris. When an unexpected pitched battle ensued, however, the marchers freed the prisoners and arrested the prison governor. Those actions mark the symbolic beginning of the French Revolution, a decade of political turmoil that spawned wars and created a Reign of Terror against counter-revolutionaries in which tens of thousands of people, including the king and queen, were executed. In light of those consequences, it can be argued that a more meaningful event in the Revolution's early unfolding took place on August 4, 1789. On that day the country's new National Constituent Assembly met and undertook sweeping reforms that effectively ended France's historical feudalism, with all of its old rules, tax provisions, and privileges favoring the nobility and clergy. For the most part, France's peasants welcomed the reforms, seeing them as answers to their most pressing grievances. Yet, the Revolution itself would stretch on for ten years, until Napoleon's seizure of political power in November 1799. By contrast, the August 4 reforms alone display such remarkable willingness on the part of privileged elites to place the peace and welfare of the nation ahead of private interests as to merit world-historical attention.

PEACE ALMANAC



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July 15

On this date in 1834, the Spanish Inquisition, known officially as The Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, was definitively abolished during the minority reign of Queen Isabel II. The office had been instituted under papal authority in 1478 by the joint Catholic Monarchs of Spain, King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile. Its original purpose was to help consolidate the newly united Spanish kingdom by weeding out heretical or backsliding Jewish or Muslim converts to Catholicism. Brutal and humiliating methods were employed in pursuing both that end and an ever-widening crackdown on religious non-conformity. Over the Inquisition's 350 years, around 150,000 Jews, Muslims, Protestants and insubordinate Catholic clerics were prosecuted. Of them, 3,000 to 5,000 were executed, largely by burning at the stake. In addition, some 160,000 Jews who refused Christian baptism were expelled from Spain. The Spanish Inquisition will always be remembered as one of history's most deplorable episodes, yet the potential for the rise of oppressive power remains deeply rooted in every age. The signs of it are always the same: ever-increasing control of the masses for the wealth and benefit of the governing elites; ever-diminishing wealth and freedom for the people; and the use of mendacious, immoral or brutal techniques to keep things that way. When such signs appear in the modern world, they can be met effectively by an opposing political activism that shifts control to a wider citizenry. The people themselves can be trusted best to champion humane objectives that force those who govern them to seek not elitist power, but the common good.

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July 16

On this date in 1945 the U.S. successfully tested the world's first atomic bomb at the Alamogordo bombing range in New Mexico. The bomb was the product of the so-called Manhattan Project, a research and development effort that began in earnest in early 1942, when fears arose that the Germans were developing their own atomic bomb. The U.S. project culminated at a facility in Los Alamos, New Mexico, where the problems of achieving sufficient critical mass to trigger a nuclear explosion and the design of a deliverable bomb were worked out. When the test bomb was detonated in the New Mexico desert, it vaporized the tower on which it sat, sent a searing light 40,000 feet into the air, and generated the destructive power of 15,000 to 20,000 tons of TNT. Less than a month later, on August 9, 1945, a bomb of the same design, called Fat Boy, was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, killing an estimated 60,000 to 80,000 people. Following World War II, a nuclear arms race developed between the U.S. and the Soviet Union that was ultimately, or at least temporarily, reined in by a series of arms control agreements. Some were subsequently abrogated by U.S. administrations seeking strategic military advantage in global power relations. Few would argue, however, that either the planned or accidental use of ever more powerful nuclear weapons endanger humanity and other species, and that it is imperative to strengthen disarmament agreements between the two major nuclear powers. Organizers of a new treaty banning all nuclear weapons were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017.

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July 17

On this date in 1998, a treaty adopted at a diplomatic conference in Rome, known as the Rome Statute, established the International Criminal Court. The Court's purpose is to serve as a last resort for trying military and political leaders in any signatory nation on charges of genocide, war crimes, or crimes against humanity. The Rome Statute establishing the Court entered into force on July 1, 2002, having been ratified or signed by more than 150 countries —though not by the U.S., Russia, or China. For its part, the U.S. government has consistently opposed an international court that could hold its military and political leaders to a uniform global standard of justice. The Clinton administration participated actively in negotiating the treaty establishing the Court, but sought initial Security Council screening of cases that would have enabled the U.S. to veto any prosecutions it opposed. As the Court neared implementation in 2001, the Bush administration vigorously opposed it, negotiating bilateral agreements with other countries aimed at ensuring that U.S. nationals would be immune from prosecution. Years after the Court's implementation, the Trump administration perhaps revealed most clearly why the U.S. government remains opposed to it. In September 2018, the administration ordered the closure of the Palestine Liberation Organization office in Washington and threatened sanctions against the Court if it should pursue investigations into alleged war crimes by the U.S., Israel, or any of its allies. Might this not suggest that U.S. opposition to the International Criminal Court has less to do with defending the principle of national sovereignty than with protecting unfettered freedom to exercise might over right?

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July 18

This date marks the annual observance of the United Nations' Nelson Mandela International Day. Coinciding with Mandela's birthday, and held in honor of his many contributions to the culture of peace and freedom, the Day was officially declared by the UN in November 2009 and first observed on July 18, 2010. As a human rights lawyer, a prisoner of conscience, and the first democratically elected president of a free South Africa, Nelson Mandela devoted his life to a variety of causes vital to the promotion of democracy and a culture of peace. They include, among others, human rights, promotion of social justice, reconciliation, race relations, and conflict resolution. About Peace, Mandela remarked in a January 2004 speech in New Delhi, India: "Religion, ethnicity, language, social and cultural practices are elements which enrich human civilization, adding to the wealth of our diversity. Why should they be allowed to become a cause of division and violence?" Mandela's contribution to peace had little to do with strategic efforts to end global militarism; his focus, which no doubt supports that end, was to bring disparate groups together at the local and national levels in a new sense of shared community. The UN encourages those who wish to honor Mandela on his Day to devote 67 minutes of their time—one minute for each of his 67 years of public service—to carrying out a small gesture of solidarity with humanity. Among its suggestions for doing this are these simple measures: Help someone get a job. Walk a lonely dog at a local animal shelter. Befriend someone from a different cultural background.

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July 19

On this date in 1881, Sitting Bull, chief of the Sioux Indian tribes of the American Great Plains, surrendered with his followers to the U.S. Army after crossing back into Dakota Territory following four years of exile in Canada. Sitting Bull had led his people across the border to Canada in May 1877, following their participation a year earlier in the Battle of the Little Big Horn. That was the last of the Great Sioux Wars of the 1870s, in which the Plains Indians fought to defend their heritage as fiercely independent buffalo hunters from the White Man's encroachments. The Sioux had been victorious at Little Big Horn, even killing the celebrated commander of the U.S. Seventh Cavalry, Lieutenant Colonel George Custer. Their triumph, however, prompted the U.S. army to double-down on efforts to force the Plains Indians onto reservations. It was for this reason that Sitting Bull had led his followers to the safety of Canada. After four years, however, the virtual wipe-out of the Plains buffalo, due in part to overzealous commercial hunting, had brought the exiles to the brink of starvation. Coaxed by U.S. and Canadian authorities, many of them headed south to reservations. Eventually, Sitting Bull returned to the United States with only 187 followers, many old or sick. Following two years of detention, the once proud chief was assigned to the Standing Rock reservation in present-day South Dakota. In 1890, he was shot and killed in an arrest scuffle by U.S. and Indian agents who feared he would help lead the growing Ghost Dance movement aimed at restoring the Sioux way of life.

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July 20

On this date in 1874, Lieutenant Colonel George Custer led an expeditionary force consisting of more than 1,000 men and horses and cattle of the U.S. Seventh Cavalry into the previously uncharted Black Hills of modern-day South Dakota. The 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty had set aside reservation lands in the Black Hills region of the Dakota Territory for the Sioux Indian tribes of the Northern Great Plains who agreed to settle there, and barred whites from entering. The Custer expedition's official purpose was to reconnoiter potential sites for military forts in or near the Black Hills that could control the Sioux tribes that had not signed on to the Laramie Treaty. In reality, however, the expedition also sought to find rumored reserves of minerals, lumber, and gold that U.S. leaders were eager to access by flouting the treaty. As it happened, the expedition did in fact discover gold, which drew thousands of miners illegally to the Black Hills. The U.S. effectively abandoned the Laramie Treaty in February 1876, and the ensuing June 25th Battle of the Little Bighorn in south-central Montana resulted in an unexpected Sioux victory. In September, however, the U.S. army, using tactics that prevented the Sioux from returning to the Black Hills, defeated them in the battle of Slim Buttes. The Sioux called this battle "The Fight Where We Lost the Black Hills." The U.S., however, may itself have suffered a significant moral defeat. In depriving the Sioux of a safe homeland central to their culture, it sanctioned a foreign policy with no humane limits on its ambitions for economic and military domination.

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July 21

On this date in 1972, the award-winning standup comedian George Carlin was arrested on charges of disorderly conduct and profanity after performing his famous “Seven Words You Can Never Use on Television” routine at the annual Summerfest music festival in Milwaukee. Carlin had begun his standup career in the late 1950s as a clean-cut comic known for his clever wordplay and his reminiscences of his Irish working-class upbringing in New York. By 1970, however, he had reinvented himself with a beard, long hair, and jeans, and a comic routine that, according to one critic, was steeped in “drugs and bawdy language.” The transformation drew an immediate backlash from nightclub owners and patrons, so Carlin began appearing at coffee houses, folk clubs, and colleges, where a younger, hipper audience embraced his new image and irreverent material. Then came Summerfest 1972, where Carlin learned that his forbidden “Seven Words” were no more welcome on a stage on the Milwaukee lakefront than on television. Over the following decades, however, those same words—with initials s-p-f-c-c-m-t came to be broadly accepted as a natural part of a standup’s satirical rhetoric. Did the change reflect a coarsening of American culture? Or was it a victory for unfettered free speech that helped the young see through the numbing hypocrisies and depredations of American private and public life? Comedian Lewis Black once offered a view on why his own obscenity-laced comic indignation never seemed to go out of favor. It didn’t hurt, he noted, that the U.S. government and its leaders gave him a constant flow of fresh material to work from.

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July 22

On this date in 1756, the pacifist Religious Society of Friends in colonial Pennsylvania, commonly known as the Quakers, established “The Friendly Association for Regaining and Preserving Peace with the Indians by Pacific Measures.” The stage for this action had been set in 1681, when the English nobleman William Penn, an early Quaker and founder of the Province of Pennsylvania, signed a peace treaty with Tammany, the Indian leader of the Delaware Nation. The general outreach to which the Friendly Association aspired was facilitated by the Quakers’ religious beliefs that God can be experienced without the mediation of clergy and that women are spiritually equal to men. Those tenets harmonized with the shamanistic and egalitarian background of Native American culture, making it easier for the Indians to accept the Quakers as missionaries. For the Quakers, the Association was to serve as a shining example to both Indians and other Europeans of how intercultural relations should be conducted. In practice, therefore, unlike other European charities, the Association actually spent its funds on Indian welfare, did not condemn Indian religions, and welcomed Indians into the Quaker meetinghouse for worship. In 1795, the Quakers appointed a committee to introduce Indians to what they felt were the necessary arts of civilization, such as animal husbandry. They also offered moral advice, urging the Seneca, for example, to be sober, clean, punctual, and industrious. They made no effort, however, to convert any Indians to their faith. To this day, the little-known Friendly Association still serves notice that the surest way to build a better world is through peaceful, respectful, and neighborly relations among nations.

PEACE ALMANAC



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July 23

On this date in 2002, British Prime Minister Tony Blair met with senior U.K. government, defense, and intelligence figures at 10 Downing Street, the Prime Minister's official residence in London, to discuss the looming prospect of a U.S.-led war against Iraq. The minutes of that meeting were recorded in a document known as the Downing Street "Memo," which was published without official authorization in The [London] Sunday Times in May 2005. Proving once more that War Is a Lie, the Memo plainly reveals not only that the U.S. Bush Administration had made up its mind to go to war against Iraq well before it unsuccessfully sought UN authorization to do so, but also that the British had already agreed to participate in the war as military partners. That agreement had been reached in spite of the recognition by British officials that the case for war against Iraq was "thin." The Bush administration had grounded its case against the Saddam regime on its alleged combined support of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. But in doing so, the British officials noted, the administration had fixed its intelligence and facts to fit its policy, not the policy to fit its intelligence and facts. The Downing Street Memo did not come to light early enough to head off the Iraq War, but it may well have helped to make future U.S. wars less probable if the U.S. corporate media had done its best to bring it to the public's attention. Instead, the media did its best to suppress the Memo's documented evidence of fraud when it was finally published three years later.

PEACE ALMANAC



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July 24

This date in 1893 marks the birth in Negley, Ohio, of the largely forgotten American peace activist Ammon Hennacy. Born to Quaker parents, Hennacy practiced a very personal brand of peace activism. He did not join others in directly attacking the complex system of U.S. militarism that supports war. Instead, in what he dubbed a “One-Man Revolution,” he appealed to the conscience of ordinary people by protesting war, state executions, and other forms of violence often at the risk of arrest or by prolonged fasting. Calling himself a Christian anarchist, Hennacy refused to register for military service in both world wars, serving two years in jail for his resistance to the first—partly in solitary confinement. He also refused to pay income taxes, which would be used in part to support the military. In his autobiography *The Book of Ammon*, Hennacy implores his fellow Americans to refuse to register for the draft, buy war bonds, make munitions for war, or pay taxes for war. He did not expect political or institutional mechanisms to bring about change. But he apparently did believe that he himself, along with a few other peace-loving, wise, and courageous citizens, could, by the moral example of their words and actions, move a critical mass of their fellow citizens to insist that conflicts at every level be resolved by peaceful means. Hennacy died in 1970, when the Vietnam War was yet far from over. But he may well have looked forward to the day when the era’s iconic peace slogan was no longer fanciful but real: “Suppose they gave a war and nobody came.”

PEACE ALMANAC



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July 25

On this date in 1947, the U.S. Congress passed the National Security Act, which established much of the bureaucratic framework for the making and implementation of the nation's foreign policy during the Cold War and beyond. The Act had three components: it brought together the Navy Department and War Department under a new Department of Defense; it established the National Security Council, which was charged with preparing brief reports for the President from an increasing flow of diplomatic and intelligence information; and it set up the Central Intelligence Agency, which was charged not only with gathering intelligence from the various military branches and Department of State, but also with conducting covert operations in foreign nations. Since their founding, these agencies have grown steadily in terms of authority, size, budgets, and power. However, both the ends to which those assets have been applied, and the means by which they are maintained, have raised profound moral and ethical questions. The CIA operates in secrecy at the expense of the rule of law and of the possibility of democratic self-governance. The White House wages secret and public wars without Congressional or United Nations or public authorization. The Department of Defense controls a budget that by 2018 was greater than that of at least the next seven highest military-spending nations combined, yet remains the only U.S. government agency never to be audited. The enormous resources wasted on militarism could otherwise be used to help meet the often desperate physical and economic needs of ordinary people in the United States and around the world.

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July 26

On this date in 1947, President Harry Truman signed an executive order aimed at ending racial segregation in the U.S. Armed Forces. Truman's directive was consistent with growing popular support for ending racial segregation, a goal toward which he had hoped to make modest headway through Congressional legislation. When those efforts were stymied by threats of a Southern filibuster, the president accomplished what he could by using his executive powers. His highest priority was desegregation of the military, in no small part because it was the least susceptible to political resistance. African Americans constituted approximately 11 per cent of all registrants liable for military service and a higher proportion of inductees in all branches of the military except the Marine Corps. Nevertheless, staff officers from all branches of the military expressed their resistance to integration, sometimes even publicly. Full integration did not come until the Korean War, when heavy casualties forced segregated units to merge for survival. Even so, desegregation of the armed forces represented only a first step toward racial justice in the United States, which remained incomplete even after the major civil rights legislation of the 1960s. Beyond that, too, still lay the issue of humane relations among the peoples of the world—which, as displayed at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, remained a bridge too far for Harry Truman. Yet, even in a journey of a thousand miles, first steps are needed. It is only by continual progress in seeing the other's needs as our own that we can one day realize the vision of human brotherhood and sisterhood in a peaceful world.

PEACE ALMANAC



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July 27

On this date in 1825, the U.S. Congress approved the establishment of Indian Territory. This cleared the way for the forced relocation of the so-called Five Civilized Tribes on the “Trail of Tears” to present-day Oklahoma. The Indian Removal Act was signed by President Andrew Jackson in 1830. The five tribes affected were the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole, all coerced unscrupulously to assimilate and live under U.S. law or leave their homelands. Called the Civilized Tribes, they had integrated to various degrees into a westernized culture and, in the case of the Cherokee, developed a written language. The educated competed with white settlers amid great resentment. The Seminoles fought, and were finally paid to relocate. The Creeks were forcefully removed by the military. No treaty was made with the Cherokee, who brought their case through the courts to the U.S. Supreme Court where they lost. There was much political maneuvering on both sides and after six years, the Treaty of New Echota was proclaimed in force by the President. It gave people two years to cross west over the Mississippi to live in the Indian Territory. When they did not move, they were brutally invaded, their homes burned and looted. Seventeen thousand Cherokees were rounded up and herded into a concentration camp, transported in railway cars, then forced to walk. Four thousand died on the “Trail of Tears.” By 1837, the Jackson administration had removed by war and criminal means, 46,000 Native American people, opening 25 million acres of land to racist white settlement and to slavery.

PEACE ALMANAC



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July 28

In 1914, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, starting WWI. After the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Franz Ferdinand, was assassinated along with his wife by a Serbian nationalist in retaliation for ongoing conflicts with his country, World War I began. Growing nationalism, militarism, imperialism, and war alliances across Europe awaited a spark like the assassination. As nations had tried to free themselves from authoritarian rule, the Industrial Revolution had fueled an arms race. Militarization had allowed the Austro-Hungarian Empire to control as many as thirteen nations, and rising imperialism incited even more expansion by growing military powers. As colonization continued, empires began to collide and then to seek out allies. The Ottoman Empire plus Germany and Austria, or the Central Powers, aligned with the Austro-Hungarian Empire, while Serbia was backed by the Allied Powers of Russia, Japan, France, Italy and the British Empire. The United States joined the Allies in 1917, and citizens from every country found themselves suffering and forced to choose a side. Over nine million troops, and countless citizens died before the fall of the German, Russian, Ottoman, and Austro-Hungarian Empires. The war was ended with a vindictive settlement that predictably helped lead to the next world war. Nationalism, militarism, and imperialism continued despite the horrors inflicted on people all over the world. During World War I, protests sparked by the realization of the tragic cost of war were outlawed in various nations, while war propaganda came into its own as a powerful force of social control.

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July 29

On this date in 2002, President George W. Bush described an ‘Axis of Evil’ that supposedly sponsored terrorism, in his State of the Union address. The Axis included Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. It was not simply a rhetorical phrase. The U.S. Department of State designates countries which allegedly provide support for international terrorist acts. Strict sanctions are imposed on these countries. Sanctions include, amongst other conditions: a ban on arms-related exports, prohibitions on economic assistance, and financial restrictions including prohibiting any U.S. citizen from engaging in a financial transaction with a terrorist-list government, as well as restriction of entry to the United States. Beyond sanctions, the United States led an aggressive war on Iraq beginning in 2003, and repeatedly threatened similar attacks on Iran and North Korea for many years. Some roots of the axis of evil idea can be found in the publications of the think tank called the Project for the New American Century, one of which stated: “We cannot allow North Korea, Iran, Iraq...to undermine American leadership, intimidate American allies, or threaten the American homeland itself.” The think tank’s website was subsequently taken down. The former executive director of the organization said in 2006 that it had “already done its job,” suggesting that “our view has been adopted.” The disastrous and counterproductive wars of the years following 2001 have many roots in what was tragically a quite influential vision for endless war and aggression — a vision dependent fundamentally on the ridiculous idea that a few small, poor, independent nations constitute an existential threat to the United States.

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July 30

This date, as proclaimed in 2011 by resolution of the UN General Assembly, marks the annual observance of the International Day of Friendship. The resolution recognizes young people as future leaders, and places particular emphasis on involving them in community activities that include different cultures and promote international understanding and respect for diversity. The International Day of Friendship follows on two previous UN resolutions. The Culture of Peace resolution, proclaimed in 1997, recognizes the enormous harm and suffering caused to children through different forms of conflict and violence. It makes the case that these scourges can be best prevented when their root causes are addressed with a view to solving problems. The other precedent for the International Day of Friendship is a 1998 UN resolution proclaiming an International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. Observed from 2001 through 2010, this resolution proposes that a key to international peace and cooperation is to educate children everywhere on the importance of living in peace and harmony with others. The International Day of Friendship draws on these precedents in promoting the message that friendship between countries, cultures, and individuals can help produce the foundation of trust necessary for international efforts to overcome the many forces of division that undermine personal security, economic development, social harmony, and peace in the modern world. To observe the Day of Friendship, the UN encourages governments, international organizations, and civil society groups to hold events and activities that contribute to efforts by the international community to promote a dialog aimed at achieving global solidarity, mutual understanding, and reconciliation.

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July 31

On this day in 1914 Jean Jaurès was assassinated. An ardent humanist and pacifist leader of the French Socialist Party, Jaures strongly opposed war, and spoke out against the imperialism promoting it. Born in 1859, Jaures' death has been considered by many as another reason for France's entry into the First World War. His arguments for peaceful solutions to conflict drew tens of thousands to his lectures and writings, and to consider the benefits of a united European resistance to increasing militarization. Jaures was in the process of organizing workers for a unionized protest just before the war began when he was shot and killed while sitting near a window in a Parisian café. His assassin, French nationalist Raoul Villain, was arrested then acquitted in 1919 before fleeing France. Former opponent President Francois Hollande responded to Jaures death by placing a wreath at the café, and acknowledging his lifelong work towards "peace, unity, and the coming together of the republic." France then entered WWI with the hope of reversing the perceived loss of status as well as territory acquired by Germany following the Franco-Prussian War. Jaures' words might have inspired a much more rational choice: "What will the future be like, when the billions now thrown away in preparation for war are spent on useful things to increase the well-being of people, on the construction of decent houses for workers, on improving transportation, on reclaiming the land? The fever of imperialism has become a sickness. It is the disease of a badly run society which does not know how to use its energies at home."

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August 1

On this date in 1914, Harry Hodgkin, a British Quaker, and Friedrich Siegmund-Schulte, a German Lutheran pastor, departed from a peace conference in Konstanz, Germany. They had assembled there with 150 other Christian Europeans to plan actions that might help avert a looming war in Europe. Regrettably, that hope had been effectively dashed four days earlier by the first skirmishes in what was to become World War I. On leaving the conference, however, Hodgkin and Siegmund-Schulte pledged to each other that they would continue sowing the “seeds of peace and love, no matter what the future might bring.” For the two men, that pledge meant more than a simple abstention from personal participation in war. It meant reestablishing peace between their two nations, no matter what the policies of their governments. Before the year was out, the men had helped found a peace organization in Cambridge, England named the Fellowship of Reconciliation. By 1919, the Cambridge group had become part of an International Fellowship of Reconciliation (known as IFOR),” which over the next hundred years spawned branches and affiliated groups in more than 50 countries of the world. Peace projects undertaken by IFOR are grounded in the vision that love for the Other has the power to transform unjust political, social, and economic structures; the projects are therefore committed to peaceful conflict resolution, to pursuing justice as the primary basis for peace, and to dismantling systems that foster hatred. IFOR’s international campaigns are coordinated by an International Secretariat in the Netherlands. The organization also works closely with like-minded non-governmental organizations and maintains permanent representatives at the United Nations.

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August 2

On this date in 1931, a letter written by Albert Einstein was read to a conference held in Lyon, France by War Resisters' International, a global network of antimilitarist and pacifist groups working together for a world without war. As the leading physicist of his time, Einstein carried on his scientific work with dedication. Yet, he was also an ardent pacifist, who pursued the cause of international peace throughout his life. In his letter to the Lyon conference, Einstein appealed to "the scientists of the world to refuse to cooperate in research for the creation of new instruments of war." To the assembled activists, he wrote directly: "The people of 56 countries whom you represent have a potential power far mightier than the sword.... Only they themselves can bring disarmament into this world." He also warned those who planned to attend a disarmament conference in Geneva the following February to "refuse to give further assistance to war or to war preparations." For Einstein, these words would soon prove prophetic. The disarmament conference came to nothing—precisely because, in Einstein's view, the conferees had failed to heed his admonition to not address issues relating to the preparation for war. "One doesn't make wars less likely to happen by formulating rules of warfare," he declared at a press briefing during a short visit to the Geneva conference. "I think the conference is heading for a bad compromise. Whatever agreement is made about the types of arms permissible in war would be broken as soon as war began. War can't be humanized. It can only be abolished."

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August 3

On this date in 1882, the United States Congress passed the country's first general immigration law. The Immigration Act of 1882 set the broad future course of U.S. immigration policy by establishing various categories of foreigners deemed "undesirable for entry." Enforced first by the Secretary of the Treasury in cooperation with the states, the Act prohibited entry of "any convict, lunatic, idiot, or any person unable to take care of himself or herself without becoming a public charge." Those who could not demonstrate the financial ability to support themselves were returned to their home countries. The law did, however, make an exception for financially unqualified foreigners convicted of political offenses, reflecting the traditional U.S. belief that America should provide a haven for the persecuted. Still, later iterations of the Immigration Act became progressively more restrictive. In 1891, Congress established exclusive federal control over immigration. In 1903, it acted to end the policy of accepting poor migrants who faced retribution at home for political offenses; instead, it forbade immigration of persons "opposed to organized government." Since then, the immigration law has added numerous exclusions based on national origin, and continued to discriminate against migrants thought likely to become public charges. The law has yet to make real the dream of "the mighty woman with a torch" in New York Harbor who declares, "Give me your tired, your poor / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." Yet, against the "Build the Wall" frenzy pushed by the Trump administration more than a century after the statue's unveiling, her message remains a U.S. ideal showing the way to human solidarity and world peace.

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August 4

On this date in 1912, an occupying force of 2,700 U.S. marines invaded Nicaragua, landing at ports on both its Pacific and Caribbean sides. Facing unrest in a country in which it pursued both strategic and commercial interests, the U.S. aimed to re-establish and maintain a government in Nicaragua whose support it could rely on. The year before, the U.S. had recognized a coalition government in Nicaragua headed by the conservative president Jose Estrada. That administration had allowed the U.S. to pursue a policy with Nicaragua called “dollars for bullets.” One of its aims was to undermine European financial strength in the region, which could be used to compete with American commercial interests. Another was to open the door for U.S. banks to lend money to the Nicaraguan government, ensuring U.S. control over the country’s finances. Political differences in the Estrada coalition soon surfaced, however. General Luis Mena, who as Minister of War had developed strong nationalistic sentiments, forced Estrada to resign, elevating his vice president, the conservative Adolfo Diaz, to the presidency. When Mena later rebelled against the Diaz government, accusing the president of “selling out the nation to New York bankers,” Diaz requested help from the U.S. that resulted in the August 4 invasion and caused Mena to flee the country. After Diaz was re-elected in a U.S.-supervised election in 1913 in which liberals refused to participate, the U.S. kept small marine contingents in Nicaragua almost continually until 1933. To Nicaraguans aspiring to independence, the Marines served as a constant reminder that the U.S. was willing to use force to keep U.S.-compliant governments in power.

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August 5

On this day in 1963, the U.S., USSR, and Great Britain signed a treaty banning nuclear testing in the atmosphere. President John F. Kennedy ran for office pledging to eliminate nuclear weapons testing. Radioactive deposits found in crops and milk in the Northern United States by scientists in the 1950s led them to condemn the post WWII nuclear arms race as unwarranted poisoning of the environment. The United Nations Disarmament Commission called for an immediate end to all nuclear testing, initiating a temporary moratorium between the U.S. and the Soviets from 1958-61. Kennedy attempted to ban the ongoing underground testing by meeting with Soviet Premier Khrushchev in 1961. The threat of inspections to verify the ban led to the fear of spying, and Soviet testing continued until the Cuban Missile Crisis brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. Both sides then agreed to more direct communication, and the Moscow-Washington hotline was established. Discussions eased tensions and led to Kennedy's unprecedented challenge to Khrushchev "not to an arms race, but to a peace race." Their subsequent talks led to both eliminating weapons from other countries, and a Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty allowing underground testing "as long as no radioactive debris falls outside the boundaries of the nation conducting the test." The United Nations finally passed a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1996 banning all, even underground, nuclear testing. Seventy-one nations, most without these weapons, agreed that a nuclear war would benefit no one. President Bill Clinton signed the comprehensive treaty. The U.S. Senate, however, in a vote of 48-51, chose to continue the nuclear arms race.

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August 6

On this day in 1945 the American bomber Enola Gay dropped a five-ton atomic bomb — equivalent to 15,000 tons of TNT — on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The bomb destroyed four square miles of the city and killed 80,000 people. In the weeks following, thousands more died from wounds and radiation poisoning. President Harry Truman, who had assumed office less than four months earlier, claimed that he made the decision to drop the bomb after being told by his advisers that dropping the bomb would end the war quickly and would avoid the need to invade Japan, which would result in the deaths of a million American soldiers. This version of history does not hold up to scrutiny. Several months earlier, General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in the Southwest Pacific Area, had sent a 40-page memo to President Roosevelt that summarized five different offers of surrender from high-ranking Japanese officials. The USA, however, knew that the Russians had made significant advances in the east and in all likelihood would be in Japan by September, well before the U.S. could mount an invasion. If this were to pass, Japan would surrender to Russia, not the U.S. This was unacceptable to the U.S., which had already developed a post-war strategy of economic and geo-political hegemony. So, despite strong opposition from military and political leaders and Japan's willingness to surrender, the bomb was dropped. Many have called this the first act of the Cold War. Dwight D. Eisenhower said years later, "Japan was already defeated . . . dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary."

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August 7

This date marks the birth in 1904 of Ralph Bunche, an African American political scientist, professor and diplomat who became the highest-ranking U.S. official at the United Nations. Bunche's distinguished career began with a scholarship for graduate work at Harvard University, where in 1934 he received a Ph.D. in government and international relations. His doctoral dissertation on colonialism in Africa culminated two years later in his classic book on the subject, *A World View of Race*. In 1946, Bunche was appointed to the executive branch — or Secretariat — of the United Nations, where he was responsible for overseeing the administration of former colonies held in trust by the UN and monitoring their progress toward self-government and independence. Bunche's most notable accomplishment, however, followed his appointment as chief UN negotiator in talks aimed at ending the First Arab-Israeli War. Following five months of unrelenting and difficult mediation, he was able to achieve an armistice in June 1949 based on agreements between Israel and four Arab states. For that historic feat of international diplomacy, Bunche was awarded the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize, becoming the first African American to be so honored. In the years following, Bunche continued to play significant peacekeeping and mediation roles in conflicts involving emerging nation states. By the end of his life in 1971, he had established a legacy at the UN that is perhaps best defined by an honorary title his colleagues had given him. Because Bunche had conceived, as well as implemented, many of the techniques and strategies used in international peacekeeping operations, he had come to be widely regarded as the “Father of Peacekeeping.”

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August 8

On this date in 1883, President Chester A. Arthur met with Chief Washakie of the Eastern Shoshone tribe and Chief Black Coal of the Northern Arapaho tribe at the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, thereby becoming the first U.S. president to officially visit a Native American reservation. Arthur's stop at Wind River was in fact incidental to the main purpose of his long rail trip west, which was to visit Yellowstone National Park and indulge his passion for fishing in its vaunted trout streams. The reservation drop-in allowed him, however, to test the viability of a plan he had proposed in his inaugural 1881 Annual Message to Congress for resolving what he called America's "Indian complications." The plan, which was later enshrined in the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, called for an "allotment in severalty," to such Indians as desired it, of "a reasonable quantity of land [for farming, which was to be] secured to them by patent, and...made inalienable for twenty or twenty-five years." It isn't surprising that both tribal leaders resolutely rejected the plan, since it would have undercut the traditional communal land ownership and way of life central to the self-identity of their people. Nevertheless, the presidential failure at Wind River does seem to offer a valuable lesson for the post-industrial age. To achieve lasting peace, powerful nations must respect the right of emerging and developing nations to create their own economy and social order, and be willing to work with them to help meet the basic needs of their people. History has already shown that coercive approaches only produce resentment, blowback, and often war.

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August 9

On this date in 1945, a U.S. B-29 bomber dropped a nuclear bomb on Nagasaki, Japan, killing some 39,000 men, women, and children on the day of the bombing and an estimated 80,000 by the end of the year. The Nagasaki bombing came just three days after the first use of a nuclear weapon in warfare, the bombing of Hiroshima that by year's end claimed the lives of an estimated 150,000 people. Weeks earlier, Japan had sent a telegram to the Soviet Union expressing its desire to surrender and end the war. The United States had broken Japan's codes and read the telegram. President Harry Truman referred in his diary to "the telegram from Jap Emperor asking for peace." Japan objected only to surrendering unconditionally and giving up its emperor, but the United States insisted on those terms until after the bombs fell. Also on August 9th the Soviets entered the war against Japan in Manchuria. The United States Strategic Bombing Survey concluded that, "... certainly prior to 31 December, 1945, and in all probability prior to 1 November, 1945, Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated." One dissenter who had expressed this same view to the Secretary of War prior to the bombings was General Dwight Eisenhower. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William D. Leahy agreed, saying, "The use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan."

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August 10

On this date in 1964, U.S. President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which opened the way to full-fledged U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. Shortly before midnight on August 4, the president had broken into regular TV programming to announce that two U.S. ships had come under fire in the international waters of the Gulf of Tonkin off the coast of northern Vietnam. In response, he had ordered air actions against “facilities in North Vietnam which have been used in these hostile operations” — among them an oil depot, a coal mine, and a significant portion of the North Vietnamese navy. Three days later, Congress passed a joint resolution that authorized the president “to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the U.S. and to prevent further aggression.” That resolution, signed by the president on August 10, 1964, would lead by the war’s end in 1975 to the violent deaths of 3.8 million Vietnamese plus hundreds of thousands of Laotians and Cambodians and 58,000 members of the U.S. military. It would also prove again that “War is a Lie” — based in this case on nearly 200 documents and transcripts relating to the Gulf of Tonkin incident that were released more than 40 years later. A comprehensive study by National Security Agency historian Robert Hanyok concluded that the U.S. air strikes and the request for Congressional authorization were in fact based on faulty signals intelligence that had been characterized by the president and Secretary of so-called Defense Robert McNamara as “vital evidence” of an attack that never occurred.



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August 11

On this date in 1965, riots broke out in the Watts district of Los Angeles following a scuffle that ensued when a white California Highway Patrol officer pulled over a car and tried to arrest its young and frightened black driver after he failed a sobriety test. In minutes, initial witnesses to the traffic stop were joined by a gathering crowd and back-up police, which triggered a widening fray. Riots soon broke out all over Watts, lasting six days, involving 34,000 people, and resulting in 4,000 arrests and 34 deaths. In responding to them, Los Angeles police employed “paramilitary” tactics decreed by their Chief, William Parker, who compared the riots to the Viet Cong insurgency in Vietnam. Parker also called in about 2,300 National Guardsmen and instituted a policy of mass arrest and blockades. In retaliation, rioters hurled bricks at the Guardsmen and police, and used others to smash their vehicles. Though the uprising was largely quelled by the morning of August 15, it succeeded in reminding the world of an important truth. When any minority community in a largely affluent society is condemned to shoddy living conditions, poor schools, virtually no opportunities for self-advancement, and routinely adversarial interactions with police, it is likely to rebel spontaneously, given the right provocation. Civil rights leader Bayard Rustin explained how that reaction might have been prevented in Watts: “...Negro youth—jobless, hopeless—does not feel a part of American society.... [We] have...to find them work, decent housing, education, training, so they can feel a part of the structure. People who feel a part of the structure do not attack it.”

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August 12

On this date in 1995, between 3,500 and 6,000 demonstrators in Philadelphia engaged in one of the largest rallies against the death penalty in U.S. history. The protestors were demanding a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal, an African-American activist and journalist who had been convicted in 1982 of the 1981 murder of a Philadelphia police officer and sentenced to death row at Pennsylvania's Greene State Correctional Institution. Abu-Jamal had clearly been present at the fatal shooting, which took place when he and his brother were pulled over in a routine traffic stop and the police officer struck the brother with a flashlight during an ensuing scuffle. Yet, many in the African-American community doubted that Abu-Jamal had in fact committed the murder or that justice would be served by executing him. Exculpatory evidence had been offered at his trial, and there was widespread suspicion that both his conviction and sentencing had been tainted by racial prejudice. By 1982, Abu-Jamal was well-known in Philadelphia as a former Black Panther Party spokesperson and a vocal critic of the openly racist Philadelphia police force. In prison, he became a radio commentator for National Public Radio, critiquing the inhumane conditions in U.S. prisons and the disproportionate incarceration and execution of black Americans. Abu-Jamal's growing celebrity fueled an international "Free Mumia" movement that eventually bore fruit. His death sentence was dropped in 2011 and transmuted to life imprisonment at Pennsylvania's Frackville State Correctional Institution. And when a judge reinstated his rights of appeal in December 2018, he was given what a lawyer called "the best opportunity we have had for Mumia's freedom in decades."

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August 13

On this date in 1964, the death penalty was carried out for the last time in Great Britain, when two jobless men, Gwynne Evans, 24, and Peter Allen, 21, were hanged in separate prisons for the murder of a 53-year-old laundry van driver at his home in Cumbria. The assailants had planned to rob the victim, whom one of them knew, but ended up killing him. For the perpetrators, the timing of the deed proved highly unlucky. Only two months after they were executed, Britain's Labour Party came to power in the House of Commons and rallied support for what became the 1965 Homicide Act. The new law suspended capital punishment in Great Britain for five years, substituting for it a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment. When the Act came to a vote, it received overwhelming support in both the Commons and the House of Lords. The same level of support was displayed in 1969, when votes were taken to make the Act permanent. In 1973, Northern Ireland also abolished the death penalty for murder, thereby ending its practice throughout the United Kingdom. In acknowledging the 50th Anniversary of the Homicide Act in 2015, Amnesty International's global issues director, Audrey Gaughran, commented that the people of the UK can be proud to live in a country that has been abolitionist a long time. In dealing honestly with the real effects of capital punishment, especially its irreversibility, rather than calling for its reinstatement as "a quick fix, particularly around election times," she said, the UK has helped promote a continuous downward trend in the number of executions globally.

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August 14

On this date in 1947, at around 11:00 p.m., thousands of Indians gathered near government buildings in Delhi to hear an address by Jawaharlal Nehru, who would become their country's first prime minister. "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny," Nehru proclaimed. "At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom." When the hour arrived, officially signaling India's release from British rule, the assembled thousands broke into joyous celebration of the nation's first Independence Day, now annually observed on August 15. Notably absent from the event, however, was the man whom another speaker, Britain's Lord Mountbatten, had extolled as "the architect of India's freedom through nonviolence." This was, of course, Mohandas Gandhi, who, since 1919, had led a nonviolent Indian independence movement that episodically loosened the grip of British rule. Mountbatten had been appointed viceroy of India and charged with brokering terms for its independence. After failing to negotiate a power-sharing agreement between Hindu and Muslim leaders, however, he had determined that the only solution was to partition the Indian subcontinent to accommodate a Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan—the latter gaining statehood a day earlier. It was this division that caused Gandhi to miss the Delhi event. In his view, while the partition of the subcontinent might be the price of Indian independence, it was also a capitulation to religious intolerance and a blow to the cause of peace. While other Indians celebrated the achievement of a long-sought goal, Gandhi fasted in hopes of attracting popular support for ending the violence between Hindus and Muslims.

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August 15

On this date in 1973, as required by Congressional legislation, the United States ceased dropping bombs on Cambodia, ending its military involvement in Vietnam and Southeast Asia that had killed and maimed millions, mostly unarmed peasants. By 1973, the war had aroused strong opposition in the U.S. Congress. The Paris Peace Agreement signed in January had called for a ceasefire in South Vietnam and the withdrawal of all U.S. troops and advisers within sixty days. Congress worried, however, that this would not prevent President Nixon from reintroducing U.S. forces in the event of renewed hostilities between North and South Vietnam. Senators Clifford Case and Frank Church therefore introduced a bill in late January 1973 that barred any future use of U.S. forces in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The bill was approved by the Senate on June 14, but scuttled when President Nixon vetoed separate legislation that would have ended continued U.S. bombing of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. A modified Case-Church bill was then passed into law, signed by the president on July 1. It allowed the bombing in Cambodia to continue until August 15, but prohibited all use of U.S. forces in Southeast Asia after that date without advance approval from Congress. Later, it was revealed that Nixon had in fact secretly promised South Vietnam's president Nguyen Van Thieu that the U.S. would resume bombing in North and South Vietnam if it proved necessary to enforce the peace settlement. The Congressional action may therefore have prevented the infliction of even more suffering and death on the Vietnamese people than an unconscionable U.S. war had already brought them.

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August 16

On this date in 1980, striking union workers at the Gdansk shipyards in Poland joined with other Polish workers' unions to pursue a cause that would play a major role in the eventual fall of Soviet domination in Central and Eastern Europe. The collective undertaking had been motivated by the autocratic decision of the shipyards management to fire a female employee for union activity just five months before her scheduled retirement. For Polish trade unions, that decision had catalyzed a new sense of mission, raising it from state-controlled arbitration of narrow bread-and-butter issues to independent collective pursuit of wide-ranging human rights. The following day at Gdansk, the unified strike committees put forward 21 demands, including legal formation of independent trade unions and the right to strike, which the communist government in large part accepted. On August 31, the Gdansk movement was itself approved, after which twenty trade unions merged under the leadership of Lech Walesa into a single national organization called Solidarity. During the 1980s, Solidarity used the methods of civil resistance to advance workers' rights and social change. In response, the government attempted to destroy the union, first by imposing martial law and then through political repression. Eventually, however, new talks between the government and its union opposition led to semi-free elections in 1989. A Solidarity-led coalition government was formed, and, in December 1990, Lech Walesa was elected president of Poland in a free election. That set off peaceful anti-communist revolutions throughout Central and Eastern Europe, and, by Christmas, 1991, the Soviet Union itself was gone and all of its former territories had again become sovereign states.

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August 17

On this date in 1862, desperate Dakota Indians attacked a white settlement along the Minnesota River, beginning the tragic Dakota War. The Minnesota Dakota Indians comprised four tribal bands that lived on reservations in the southwest region of the Minnesota Territory, where they had been relocated by treaty in 1851. In response to a mounting influx of white settlers into the area, the U.S. government had prevailed on the Dakotas to cede 24-million acres of their fertile native lands in southwestern Minnesota for three-million dollars in cash and annual annuities. By the late 1850s, however, payments of the annuities had become increasingly unreliable, causing traders to eventually refuse credit to the Dakotas for essential purchases. In the summer of 1862, when cutworms destroyed much of the Dakotas' corn crop, many families faced starvation. A Minnesota cleric's warning that "A nation which sows robbery will reap a harvest of blood" would soon prove prophetic. On August 17th, an attempt by four young Dakota warriors to steal some eggs from a white farming family turned violent and led to the deaths of five family members. Sensing that the incident would make war with the U.S. inevitable, Dakota leaders seized the initiative and attacked local government agencies and the white settlement of New Ulm. The attacks killed over 500 white settlers and prompted the intervention of the U.S. Army. Over the next four months, some 2,000 Dakotas were rounded up and over 300 warriors were sentenced to death. The war then quickly ended on December 26, 1862, when 38 Dakota men were hanged in the largest mass execution in U.S. history.

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August 18

On this date in 1941, almost 4 months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Winston Churchill met with his cabinet at 10 Downing Street. The prime minister's transcribed statements show clearly that President Roosevelt was willing to take deliberately provocative actions against Japan that would draw the U.S. into a second world war most Americans wished to avoid. In Churchill's words, the President had told him "everything was to be done to force an incident." Churchill had in fact long hoped that Japan would attack the United States. U.S. military engagement in Europe was crucial to defeating the Nazis, but Congressional approval was unlikely because the Nazis presented no military threat to the U.S. By contrast, a Japanese attack on a U.S. military base would enable Roosevelt to declare war both on Japan and, by extension, its Axis ally, Germany. Consistent with that end, Roosevelt had issued an executive order in June freezing Japanese assets, and both the U.S. and Britain had cut off oil and scrap metal to Japan. These were clear provocations that U.S. officials knew would compel a Japanese military response. For Secretary of War Henry Stimson, the question was "how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves." The answer was cynical, but easy. Since broken codes had revealed a likely Japanese air attack on Pearl Harbor in early December, the Navy would keep its fleet in place and its sailors in the dark about the expected strike. It came on December 7, and the next day Congress duly voted for war.

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August 19

On this date in 1953, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) orchestrated a coup d'état that toppled the democratically elected government of Iran. Seeds for the coup had been planted in 1951, when Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh nationalized Iran's oil industry, then controlled by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Mossadegh believed the Iranian people were entitled to benefit from their own country's vast oil reserves. Britain, however, was determined to reclaim its profitable overseas investment. Beginning in 1953, the CIA worked with British Intelligence to undermine Mossadegh's government by acts of bribery, libel, and orchestrated riots. In response, the prime minister called on his supporters to take to the streets in protest, prompting the Shah to leave the country. When British intelligence backed away from the debacle, the CIA worked on its own with pro-Shah forces and the Iranian military to organize a coup against Mossadegh. Some 300 people died in firefights in the streets of Tehran, and the prime minister was overthrown and sentenced to three years in prison. The Shah then quickly returned to take power, signing over forty percent of Iran's oil fields to U.S. companies. Propped up by U.S. dollars and arms, he maintained dictatorial rule for more than two decades. In 1979, however, the Shah was forced from power and replaced by a theocratic Islamic republic. Later the same year, angry militants seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran and held the American staff hostage until January 1981. These were the first of many aftershocks following the upheaval of Iran's first democratic government that would later convulse the Middle East and prove to have lasting repercussions.

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August 20

On the night of this date in 1968, 200,000 Warsaw Pact troops and 5,000 tanks invaded Czechoslovakia to crush a brief period of liberalization in the communist country known as the “Prague Spring.” Led by the reformer Alexander Dubcek, then in his eighth month as First Secretary of the communist party’s Central Committee, the liberalization movement pushed for democratic elections, the abolition of censorship, freedom of speech and religion, and an end to restrictions on travel. Public support for what Dubcek called “socialism with a human face” was so broadly based that the Soviet Union and its satellites saw it as a threat to their domination of Eastern Europe. To counter the threat, Warsaw Pact troops were called on to occupy Czechoslovakia and bring it to heel. Unexpectedly, the troops were met everywhere by spontaneous acts of nonviolent resistance that prevented them from gaining control. By April 1969, however, unrelenting Soviet political pressure did succeed in forcing Dubcek from power. His reforms were quickly reversed and Czechoslovakia again became a cooperative member of the Warsaw Pact. Nevertheless, the Prague Spring did in the end play at least an inspirational role in restoring democracy to Czechoslovakia. In spontaneous street protests beginning on August 21, 1988, the official 20th anniversary of the Soviet-led invasion, marchers chanted Dubcek’s name and called for freedom. The following year, the Czech playwright and essayist Vaclav Havel led an organized nonviolent movement called “The Velvet Revolution” that finally forced an end to Soviet domination of the country. On November 28, 1989, Czechoslovakia’s communist party announced that it would relinquish power and dismantle the one-party state.

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August 21

On this date in 1983, Filipino nonviolent freedom fighter Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino was assassinated by a shot to the head at the Manila International Airport after stepping off a plane that had brought him home from three years of exile in the United States. By 1972, Aquino, a Liberal Party senator and outspoken critic of the repressive regime of President Ferdinand Marcos, had become widely popular and a favorite to defeat Marcos in the 1973 presidential election. Marcos, however, declared martial law in September 1972, which not only suppressed constitutional liberties but made Aquino a political prisoner. When Aquino suffered a heart attack in prison in 1980, he was allowed to travel to the United States for surgery. But, after extending his stay in U.S. academic circles, he felt a need by 1983 to return to the Philippines and persuade President Marcos to restore democracy through peaceful means. The airport bullet ended that mission, but, during Aquino's absence, a plunging economy in the Philippines had already caused mass civil unrest. By early 1986, Marcos was pressured to call a snap presidential election in which he ran against Aquino's wife, Corazon. The nation overwhelmingly backed "Cory," but widespread cheating and fraud made the election results moot. Having no other choice, some two million Filipinos, chanting "Cory, Cory, Cory," staged their own bloodless revolution in downtown Manila. On February 25, 1986, Corazon Aquino was inaugurated President and went on to restore democracy to the Philippines. Yet, Filipinos also annually celebrate the man who provided the spark for their revolution. For many, Ninoy Aquino remains "the greatest president we never had."

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August 22

On this date in 1934, retired Marine Corps Major General Smedley Butler was urged by a bond salesman for a major Wall Street financier to lead a coup d'état against President Roosevelt and the U.S. government. Plans for the coup had been developed by Wall Street financiers who were particularly affronted by the President's Depression-related abandonment of the Gold Standard, which they believed would undermine both personal and business wealth and lead to national bankruptcy. To avert that catastrophe, the Wall Street emissary told Butler that the conspirators had assembled 500,000 veterans of the First World War who could overpower the country's feeble peacetime military and open the way to creation of a fascist government that would be more favorable to business. Butler, they believed, was the perfect candidate to lead the coup, as he was revered by the veterans for his public support of the Bonus Army campaign for early payout of extra money the government had promised them. The conspirators, however, were unaware of one crucial fact. Despite Butler's intrepid leadership in war, he had come to resent the country's frequent misuse of the military as a corporate cudgel. By 1933, he had started publicly denouncing both bankers and capitalism. Yet, he also remained a steadfast patriot. On November 20, 1934, Butler reported the coup plot to the House Un-American Activities Committee, which in its report acknowledged compelling evidence of planning for a coup, but brought no criminal charges. For his own part, Smedley Butler went on to publish *War is a Racket*, which advocated transitioning the U.S. military into a defense-only force.

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August 23

On this date in 1989, an estimated two-million people joined hands in a 400-mile chain across the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In a united nonviolent demonstration called “The Baltic Way,” they were protesting the continuing domination of their countries by the Soviet Union. The mass protest was staged on the fiftieth anniversary of the Hitler-Stalin non-aggression pact of August 23, 1939, breached by Germany in 1941. But the same pact also contained secret protocols that defined how the two countries would later divide the nations of Eastern Europe to meet their own strategic interests. It was under these protocols that the Soviet Union first occupied the Baltic states in 1940, forcing their Western-leaning populations to live under the dictatorship of the Communist Party. Yet, until 1989, the Soviets claimed that the Hitler-Stalin Pact contained no secret protocols, and that the Baltic states had voluntarily joined the Soviet Union. In the Baltic Way demonstration, participants demanded that the Soviet Union publicly acknowledge the protocols and allow the Baltic states to finally renew their historical independence. Remarkably, the massive demonstration, which climaxed three years of protests, did persuade the Soviet Union to finally admit to the protocols and declare them invalid. Together, the three years of nonviolent protests showed how powerful a resistance campaign can be, if it pursues a common goal in brotherhood and sisterhood. The campaign served as a positive example for other Eastern European countries seeking independence, and proved a stimulus to the reunification process in Germany. The Baltic states regained their own independence after the fall of the Soviet Union in December 1991.

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August 24

On this day in 1967, Abbie Hoffman & Jerry Rubin threw 300 one-dollar bills from the balcony onto the floor of the New York Stock Exchange to disrupt business as usual. Abbie Hoffman, a theater loving psychologist, moved to New York in the 1960s as activists and anti-war protesters were staging sit-ins and marches in Central Park. Hoffman had been involved with an activist group connected to the theater, the Diggers, in San Francisco. Through experiences there, he learned the value of performances in regard to drawing attention to causes, as protests and marches were becoming so common they sometimes went unacknowledged by the media. Hoffman met activist Jerry Rubin who shared his disdain for capitalism as the root cause of war and inequality in the United States. Together with gay-rights activist Jim Fouratt, Hoffman and Rubin organized a demonstration at the New York Stock Exchange inviting Marty Jezer, editor of the War Resisters League publication WIN magazine, Korean War veteran Keith Lampe, and peace activist Stewart Albert, along with a dozen others, and reporters. The group asked for a tour of the NYSE building where Hoffman shared handfuls of one dollar bills with each before they were guided to the second floor where they stood looking down on the Wall Street brokers. The bills were then tossed over the rail, raining down onto the floor below. Brokers stopped their trading as they scrambled to collect as many bills as possible, leading to claims of possible trade losses. Hoffman later simply explained: "Showering money on the Wall Street brokers was the TV-age version of driving the money changers from the temple."

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August 25

On this date in 1990, the UN Security Council gave the world's navies the right to use force to stop violations of trade sanctions against Iraq. The United States considered the action a major victory. It had worked hard to convince the Soviet Union, China, and wavering Third World countries that urgent action was needed to check violations of the comprehensive economic sanctions that had been imposed on Iraq after its August 2 invasion of Kuwait. The sanctions, however, failed to force a withdrawal of occupying Iraqi troops. They were instead ousted militarily in late February 1991 in the U.S.-led Gulf War. Yet, even with the restoration of Kuwaiti independence, the sanctions were kept in place, allegedly as leverage to press for Iraqi disarmament and other goals. In reality, however, both the U.S. and UK had always made it clear that they would block any lifting or serious reforming of sanctions as long as Saddam Hussein remained president of Iraq. This was despite strong evidence that the sanctions were failing to pressure Saddam but were badly hurting innocent Iraqi citizens. These conditions prevailed until March 2003, when the U.S. and UK again made war on Iraq and swept away the Saddam government. Soon after, the U.S. called for and obtained the lifting of UN sanctions, giving it full control over Iraq's oil sales and industry. The thirteen years of sanctions, however, had produced well-documented human suffering. That result has since raised doubts throughout the international community about the effectiveness of economic sanctions in achieving policy goals and their legality under international law governing humanitarian treatment and human rights.

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August 26

On this date in 1920, U.S. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby certified the 19th Amendment for inclusion in the U.S. Constitution, giving U.S. women the right to vote in all elections. This historic advance in U.S. civil rights was the culmination of the women's suffrage movement, which dated back to the mid-19th century. Using tactics such as parades, silent vigils, and hunger strikes, women pursued various strategies in states across the country to win the right to vote—often in the face of fierce resistance from opponents who heckled, jailed, and sometimes physically abused them. By 1919, suffragettes had won full voting rights in fifteen of the forty-eight states, primarily in the west, and gained limited suffrage in most of the others. At that point, however, most major suffrage organizations were united in the belief that full voting rights in all states could only be achieved through a Constitutional amendment. That became a viable goal after President Wilson voiced his support for an amendment in 1918. He told the Senate: “I regard the extension of suffrage to women as vitally essential to the successful prosecution of the great war of humanity in which we are engaged.” An immediate effort to pass a proposed amendment failed in the Senate by just two votes. But on May 21, 1920, it was passed overwhelmingly by the House of Representatives, and two weeks later by the Senate with the required two-thirds majority. The amendment was ratified on August 18, 1920, when Tennessee became the 36th of the 48 states to approve it, thus obtaining the required agreement of three-fourths of the states.

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August 27

This is the date, in 1928, on which the Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawing war was ratified in Paris by the major nations of the world. Named after its authors, U.S. Secretary of State Frank Kellogg and French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand, the Pact became effective in July 1929. It renounced war as an instrument of national policy and stipulated that all international conflicts of whatever nature must be settled only by pacific means. Every war since 1928 has violated this treaty, which prevented some wars and served as the basis for the first prosecutions for the crime of war at the end of World War II, since which time wealthy well-armed nations have not gone to war with each other — choosing instead to wage war on and facilitate war between poor countries. Post World-War II, conquest of territory was largely ended. The year 1928 became the dividing line for determining which conquests were legal and which not. Colonies sought their freedom, and smaller nations began to form by the dozens. The United Nations Charter twisted the Peace Pact's ban on war into a ban on wars that are neither defensive nor authorized by the United Nations. Wars that have been illegal even under the UN Charter, but which many have claimed or imagined were legal, have included wars on Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, Libya, Yemen, and Syria. Almost 90 years after the creation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the International Criminal Court adopted the policy of prosecuting the crime of war, but the world's most frequent war-maker, the United States, claimed the right to operate outside the rule of law.

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August 28

On this date in 1963, American Civil Rights advocate Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his nationally televised “I Have a Dream” speech before a crowd of some 250,000 people at the March on Washington. The speech made strategic use of King’s gifts for poetic rhetoric, which enabled him to claim equal rights for African Americans by appealing to a unifying spirit that bridges human divides. Following introductory remarks, King made use of metaphor to explain that the marchers had come to the capital to cash a “promissory note” that guaranteed life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to every American, but had previously come back to people of color marked “insufficient funds.” About halfway through the speech, King departed from his prepared text to intone from memory his previously tested “I have a dream” refrains. One of these dreams is now indelibly etched in the national consciousness: “that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” The speech concluded in a final brilliant burst of rhythmic rhetoric, based on the chant “Let freedom ring”: “When we let it ring from every village and every hamlet...,” King declaimed, “we will be able to speed up that day when all of God’s children...will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: ‘Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!’” In 2016, Time Magazine recognized the speech as one of the ten greatest orations in history.

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August 29

On this date each year, the United Nations International Day against Nuclear Tests is observed. Peace organizations around the world make use of the Day to educate the public about the need to end global nuclear weapons tests, which pose potentially catastrophic dangers to people, the environment, and the planet. First observed in 2010, the International Day against Nuclear Tests was inspired by the closing on August 29, 1991 of a nuclear weapons test site in Kazakhstan, then part of the Soviet Union. Hundreds of nuclear devices had been detonated there over a period of forty years, both above and below ground, and had caused severe damage over time to surrounding populations. As of 2016, radiation levels in the soil and water near the town of Semey (formerly Semipalatinsk), 100 miles east of the site, were still ten times higher than normal. Babies continued to be born with deformities, and, for half the population, life expectancy remained less than 60 years. In addition to its warnings about the dangers of nuclear weapons testing, the International Day against Nuclear Tests serves to remind the world that a treaty already adopted by the UN to end such testing has not yet come into force. The 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) would ban all nuclear testing or explosions in any setting. But it can do so only when all 44 states that participated in negotiations to create the treaty, and possessed nuclear power or research reactors at the time, have ratified it. Twenty years later, eight states, including the United States, had still not done so.

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August 30

On this date in 1963, a “Hot Line” communications link was established between the White House and Kremlin designed to dramatically speed up diplomatic exchanges between the two nations’ leaders in the event of an emergency. The innovation had been motivated by the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, in which telegrammed dispatches took hours to reach the other side, aggravating the already tense negotiations between antagonistic nuclear-armed world powers. With the new Hot Line technology, phone messages typed into a teletype machine could reach the other side in just minutes. Fortunately, no need for the Hot Line arose until 1967, when President Lyndon Johnson used it to notify then-Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin of a tactical plan he was considering for intervention in the Arab-Israeli Six-Day War. By 1963, President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev had already established a productive relationship based on mutual understanding and trust. It was largely the product of a steady two-year exchange of both official and personal letters. One major offshoot of the correspondence was the reasoned compromise that had ended the Cuban Missile Crisis. It had also given impetus both to the limited nuclear test ban treaty of August 5, 1963, and the President’s American University speech two months earlier on U.S.-Soviet relations. There, Kennedy had called for “not merely peace in our time but peace for all time.” In a letter paying tribute to Kennedy after his death, Khrushchev characterized him as “a man of broad views who sought to realistically assess the situation in the world and to look for ways of solving unsettled international problems through negotiation.”

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August 31

On this date in 1945, some two-thousand people in London's Westminster Central Hall invoked the theme of "World Unity or World Destruction" in rallying against the spread of nuclear weapons. At Westminster, as around the world, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki only a few weeks before had caused thousands of people to join in a popular crusade to save humanity from nuclear destruction. In the beginning, fears of a global nuclear holocaust went hand-in-hand with the idea of world government. It was championed by Bertrand Russell, among others, and drew crowds of thousands to public meetings at which it was discussed. The phrase "One world or none" was intoned not only by Russell, but by Gandhi and Einstein. Even the London Times opined that "it must be made impossible for war to begin, or else mankind perishes." In ensuing months and years, however, speakers at British anti-war rallies, while continuing to condemn the Japan bombings, began to also advocate for nuclear arms control and disarmament. By the 1950s, "One World" was no longer an integral theme of the anti-bomb movement, but primarily an aspiration of pacifists and advocates for world government. Nevertheless, by emphasizing the potential catastrophe of an unfettered proliferation of nuclear weapons, peace and disarmament groups in Britain and throughout the West helped generate a shift in popular thinking toward greater acceptance of limits on national sovereignty. Confronted by the unprecedented dangers of nuclear war, people showed a remarkable willingness to accept new thinking about international relations. Our thanks to historian Lawrence S. Wittner, whose exhaustive writings on anti-nuclear movements provided information for this article.

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September 1

On this day in 1924 the Dawes Plan went into effect, a financial rescue of Germany that might have prevented the rise of Nazism if begun sooner and made larger or more generous. The Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I had sought to punish the entire nation of Germany, not just the war makers, leading keen observers to predict World War II. That later war was ended with aid to Germany rather than financial punishment, but World War I was followed by the demand that Germany pay through the nose. By 1923 Germany had defaulted on its war debt payments, leading French and Belgian troops to occupy the Ruhr River Valley. The inhabitants engaged in nonviolent resistance to the occupation, effectively shutting industries down. The League of Nations asked American Charles Dawes to chair a committee to solve the crisis. The resulting plan pulled the troops out of the Ruhr, reduced the debt payments, and loaned Germany money from U.S. banks. Dawes was awarded the 1925 Nobel Peace Prize and served as U.S. Vice President from 1925-1929. The Young Plan further reduced Germany's payments in 1929, but was too little too late to undo the growth of bitter resentment and thirst for revenge. Among those opposing the Young Plan was Adolf Hitler. The Dawes plan, for better or worse, bound European economies to that of the United States. Germany finally paid off its World War I debt in the year 2010. Tens of thousands of U.S. troops remain permanently stationed in Germany.

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September 2

On this day in 1945, World War II ended with the Japanese surrender at Tokyo Bay. On July 13th, Japan had sent a telegram to the Soviet Union expressing its desire to surrender. On July 18th, after meeting with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, U.S. President Harry Truman wrote in his diary of Stalin mentioning the telegram, and added, "Believe Japs will fold up before Russia comes in. I am sure they will when Manhattan appears over their homeland." That was a reference to the Manhattan Project that created nuclear bombs. Truman had been told for months of Japan's interest in surrendering if it could keep its emperor. Truman's advisor James Byrnes told him that dropping nuclear bombs on Japan would allow the U.S. to "dictate the terms of ending the war." Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal wrote in his diary that Byrnes was "most anxious to get the Japanese affair over with before the Russians got in." Truman ordered the bombings on August 6th and 9th, and the Russians attacked in Manchuria on August 9th. The Soviets overpowered the Japanese, while the U.S. continued non-nuclear bombing. Experts called the United States Strategic Bombing Survey concluded that by November or December, "Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated." General Dwight Eisenhower had expressed a similar view prior to the bombings. Japan kept its emperor.

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September 3

On this day in 1783, the Peace of Paris was made as Britain acknowledged U.S. independence. The governing of the colonies that became the United States shifted from a wealthy white male elite loyal to Britain to a wealthy white male elite loyal to the United States. Popular rebellions by farmers and workers and enslaved people did not lessen after the revolution. The gradual development of rights for the population proceeded to generally keep pace, sometimes outpace a bit, and often lag behind the same development in countries such as Canada that never fought a war against Britain. The Peace of Paris was bad news for Native Americans, as Britain had restricted Western expansion, which now opened up rapidly. It was also bad news for everyone enslaved in the new nation of the United States. Slavery would be abolished in the British Empire considerably earlier than in the United States, and in most places without another war. The taste for war and expansion was, in fact, so alive in the newly formed nation, that in 1812 Congressional talk of how Canadians would welcome a U.S. takeover as liberation led to the War of 1812, which got the new capital city of Washington burned. The Canadians, it turned out, had no more interest in being occupied than would the Cubans, or the Filipinos, or the Hawaiians, or the Guatemalans, or the Vietnamese, or the Iraqis, or the Afghans or the people in so many countries over so many years where U.S. imperial troops have taken on the role of the British redcoats.

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September 4

On this day in 1953 Garry Davis established a World Government. He had been a U.S. citizen, a Broadway star, and a bomber in World War II. “Ever since my first mission over Brandenburg,” he later wrote, “I had felt pangs of conscience. How many men, women and children had I murdered?” In 1948 Garry Davis renounced his U.S. passport to become a world citizen. Five years later he created a World Government which signed up nearly a million citizens and issued passports that were often recognized by nations. “The World Passport is a joke, Davis said, “but so are all the other passports. Theirs are a joke on us and ours is a joke on the system.” Davis camped out in front of the United Nations in Paris, disrupted meetings, led rallies, and generated extensive media coverage. Denied entrance to Germany or return to France, he camped on the border. Davis objected to the UN as an alliance of nations designed to use war to end war — a hopeless contradiction. Many years have only seemed to strengthen his case. Do we need to overcome nations to end wars? Many nations don’t make war. Few make it often. Can we create a global government without global scale corruption within it? Perhaps we can begin by encouraging each other to think like Davis when we use words like “we.” Even peace activists use “we” to mean war makers when they say “We secretly bombed Somalia.” What if we were to use “we” to mean “humanity” or more than humanity?

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September 5

On this day in 1981, Greenham Peace Camp was established by the Welsh organization “Women for Life on Earth” in Greenham Common, Berkshire, England. Thirty-six women who had walked from Cardiff to oppose the stationing of 96 nuclear cruise missiles delivered a letter to a base commander at RAF Greenham Common Airbase and then chained themselves to the base fence. They established a women’s peace camp outside the base, which they often entered in protest. The camp lasted 19 years until the year 2000, although the missiles were removed and flown back to the United States in 1991-92. The camp did not just eliminate missiles, but also impacted global understanding of nuclear war and weaponry. In December of 1982, 30,000 women joined hands around the base. On April 1, 1983, some 70,000 protesters formed a 23-kilometer human chain from the camp to an ordnance factory, and in December 1983 some 50,000 women encircled the base, cut the fence, and in many cases were arrested. More than a dozen similar camps were modeled on the example of the Greenham Peace Camp, and many others through the years have looked back to this example. Journalists from all over the world for years reported on the camp and the message it promoted. The campers lived without electricity, telephones, or running water, but also without the failure to resist nuclear weapons. Nuclear convoys were blocked and nuclear war practices disrupted. The treaty between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. that removed the missiles echoed the campers in professing itself “conscious that nuclear weapons would have devastating consequences for all mankind.”

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September 6

On this day in 1860 Jane Addams was born. She would receive the 1931 Nobel Peace Prize as one of that minority of Nobel Peace Prize winners over the years who actually met the qualifications laid out in Alfred Nobel's will. Addams worked in many fields toward the creation of a society capable of living without war. In 1898 Addams joined the Anti-Imperialist League to oppose the U.S. war on the Philippines. When World War I began, she led international efforts to try to resolve and end it. She presided over the International Congress of Women in The Hague in 1915. And when the United States entered the war she spoke out publicly against the war in the face of vicious accusations of treason. She was the first leader of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 1919 and of its predecessor organization in 1915. Jane Addams was part of the movement in the 1920s that made war illegal through the Kellogg-Briand Pact. She helped found the ACLU and the NAACP, helped win women's suffrage, helped reduce child labor, and created the profession of social worker, which she viewed as a means of learning from immigrants and building democracy, not as participation in charity. She created Hull House in Chicago, started a kindergarten, educated adults, supported labor organizing, and opened the first playground in Chicago. Jane Addams authored a dozen books and hundreds of articles. She opposed the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I and predicted that it would lead to a German war of revenge.



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September 7

On this day in 1910, the Newfoundland Fisheries case was settled by the Permanent Court of Arbitration. That court, located in the Hague, resolved a long and bitter dispute between the United States and Great Britain. The example of two heavily militarized and war-prone nations submitting to the rule of an international body and peacefully settling their dispute was widely seen as an encouraging example for the world, and remains such to this day, despite the outbreak four years later of World War I. Within weeks of the settlement, a number of nations submitted cases for arbitration to the Permanent Court, including a dispute between the United States and Venezuela. The actual settlement of the Newfoundland Fisheries case gave both the United States and Britain some of what they had wanted. It allowed Britain to create reasonable regulations for fishing in the waters of Newfoundland, but gave the power to determine what was reasonable to an impartial authority. Would the United States and Great Britain have gone to war in the absence of this arbitration? Likely not, at least not right away, and not over the question of fishing. But had one or both nations desired war for other reasons, fishing rights might have served as a justification. Less than a century earlier, in 1812, somewhat similar disputes had served to justify a U.S. invasion of Canada in the War of 1812. Just over a century later, in 2015, disputes over trade agreements in Eastern Europe were leading to talk of war from the Russian and U.S. governments.

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September 8

On this day in 1920, Mohandas Gandhi launched his first non-cooperation campaign. He had followed the Irish campaign for home rule in the 1880s which included a rent strike. He had studied the Russian mass strike of 1905. He had drawn inspiration from numerous sources and created a Passive Resistance Association in India in 1906 to resist new discriminatory laws against Indians. Back in his native, British-occupied India in 1920, on this day, Gandhi won approval by the Indian National Congress for a campaign of nonviolent noncooperation with British rule. This meant boycotting schools and courts. It meant making clothes and boycotting foreign cloth. It meant resignations from office, refusal to support the occupation, and civil disobedience. The effort took many years and advanced by stages, with Gandhi calling it off when people used violence, and with Gandhi spending years in prison. The movement advanced new ways of thinking and living. It engaged in the constructive program of creating self-sufficiency. It engaged in the obstructive program of resisting British operations. It engaged in efforts to unite Muslims with Hindus. Resistance to a salt tax took the form of a march to the sea and the illegal manufacture of salt, as well as attempts to enter an existing salt works, which included brave protesters stepping forward to be violently beaten back. By 1930 civil resistance was everywhere in India. Prison became a mark of honor rather than shame. The people of India were transformed. In 1947 India won independence, but only at the cost of splitting Hindu India from Muslim Pakistan.

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September 9

On this day in 1828 Leo Tolstoy was born. His books include War and Peace and Anna Karenina. Tolstoy saw a contradiction between opposing murder and accepting war. He framed his concern in terms of Christianity. In his book *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*, he wrote: “Everyone in our Christian society knows, either by tradition or by revelation or by the voice of conscience, that murder is one of the most fearful crimes a man can commit, as the Gospel tells us, and that the sin of murder cannot be limited to certain persons, that is, murder cannot be a sin for some and not a sin for others. Everyone knows that if murder is a sin, it is always a sin, whoever are the victims murdered, just like the sin of adultery, theft, or any other. At the same time from their childhood up men see that murder is not only permitted, but even sanctioned by the blessing of those whom they are accustomed to regard as their divinely appointed spiritual guides, and see their secular leaders with calm assurance organizing murder, proud to wear murderous arms, and demanding of others in the name of the laws of the country, and even of God, that they should take part in murder. Men see that there is some inconsistency here, but not being able to analyze it, involuntarily assume that this apparent inconsistency is only the result of their ignorance. The very grossness and obviousness of the inconsistency confirms them in this conviction.”

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September 10

On this day in 1785 the King of Prussia Frederick the Great signed the first post-independence treaty with the United States. The Treaty of Amity and Commerce promised peace but also addressed how the two nations were to relate if one or both were at war, or even if they fought each other, including proper treatment of prisoners and civilians — standards that would forbid most of what war consists of today. “And all women & children,” it reads, “scholars of every faculty, cultivators of the earth, artisans, manufacturers and fishermen unarmed and inhabiting unfortified towns, villages or places, & in general all others whose occupations are for the common subsistence & benefit of mankind, shall be allowed to continue their respective employments, & shall not be molested in their persons, nor shall their houses or goods be burnt, or otherwise destroyed, nor their fields wasted by the armed force of the enemy, into whose power, by the events of war, they may happen to fall; but if any thing is necessary to be taken from them for the use of such armed force, the same shall be paid for at a reasonable price.” The treaty was also the first U.S. free trade agreement, although 1,000 pages too short to resemble a modern free-trade agreement. It was not written by or for or about corporations. It included nothing to protect large companies against small ones. It established no corporate tribunals with the power to overturn national laws. It included no prohibitions on national restrictions on business activities.

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September 11

On this day in 1900, Gandhi launched Satyagraha in Johannesburg. Also on this day in 1973 the United States backed a coup that overthrew the government of Chile. And on this day in 2001 terrorists attacked in the United States using hijacked airplanes. This is a good day to oppose violence and nationalism and revenge. On this day in 2015, tens of thousands of people in Chile demonstrated on the 42nd anniversary of the coup that put the brutal dictator Augusto Pinochet in power and overthrew the elected president Salvador Allende. The crowd marched to a cemetery and paid tribute to the victims of Pinochet. Lorena Pizarro, leader of a relatives' rights group, said "Forty years on, we are still demanding truth and justice. We won't rest until we find out what happened to our loved ones who were arrested and went missing never to return." Pinochet was indicted in Spain but died in 2006 without being brought to trial. U.S. President Richard Nixon, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and others involved in overthrowing Allende have also never faced trial, although Kissinger, like Pinochet, has been indicted in Spain. The United States provided guidance, weaponry, equipment, and financing for the violent 1973 coup, during which Allende killed himself. Chile's democracy was destroyed, and Pinochet remained in power until 1988. Some sense of what happened on September 11, 1973, is provided by the 1982 film *Missing* starring Jack Lemmon and Sissy Spacek. It tells the story of U.S. journalist Charles Horman who disappeared that day.

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September 12

On this day in 1998, the Cuban Five were arrested. Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González were from Cuba and were arrested in Miami, Florida, charged, tried, and convicted in a U.S. court for conspiracy to commit espionage. They denied being spies for the Cuban government, which in fact they were. But no one disputes that they were in Miami for the purpose of infiltrating, not the U.S. government, but Cuban American groups whose purpose was to commit espionage and murder in Cuba. The five had been sent on that mission following several terrorist bombings in Havana planned by former CIA operative Luis Posada Carriles, who lived then and for many years to come in Miami without facing any criminal prosecution. The Cuban government gave the FBI 175 pages on Carriles's role in the 1997 bombings in Havana, but the FBI did not act against Carriles. Rather, it used the information to uncover the Cuban Five. After their arrest they spent 17 months in solitary, and their lawyers were denied access to the prosecution's evidence. Human rights groups questioned the fairness of the Cuban Five's trial, and the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the sentences but later reinstated them. The U.S. Supreme Court refused to consider the case, even as the five became a global cause and national heroes in Cuba. The U.S. government freed one of the five in 2011, one in 2013, and the other three in 2014 as part of a new diplomatic opening toward somewhat normalized relations with Cuba.

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September 13

On this day in 2001, two days after planes hit the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, President George W. Bush made public a letter to Congress saying “Our first priority is to respond swiftly and surely,” and asking for \$20 billion. Phyllis and Orlando Rodriguezes’ son Greg was one of the World Trade Center victims. They published this statement: “Our son Greg is among the many missing from the World Trade Center attack. Since we first heard the news, we have shared moments of grief, comfort, hope, despair, fond memories with his wife, the two families, our friends and neighbors, his loving colleagues at Cantor Fitzgerald/ESpeed, and all the grieving families that daily meet at the Pierre Hotel. We see our hurt and anger reflected among everybody we meet. We cannot pay attention to the daily flow of news about this disaster. But we read enough of the news to sense that our government is heading in the direction of violent revenge, with the prospect of sons, daughters, parents, friends in distant lands, dying, suffering, and nursing further grievances against us. It is not the way to go. It will not avenge our son’s death. Not in our son’s name. Our son died a victim of an inhuman ideology. Our actions should not serve the same purpose. Let us grieve. Let us reflect and pray. Let us think about a rational response that brings real peace and justice to our world. But let us not as a nation add to the inhumanity of our times.”

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September 14

On this day in 2013, the United States agreed to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons in cooperation with Russia, rather than launching missiles into Syria. Public pressure had been instrumental in preventing the missile attacks. Although those attacks were presented as a last resort, as soon as they were blocked all sorts of other possibilities were openly acknowledged. This is a good day on which to refute the nonsensical claim that wars can never be stopped. In 2015, former Finnish president and Nobel peace prize laureate Martti Ahtisaari revealed that in 2012 Russia had proposed a process of peace settlement between the Syrian government and its opponents that would have included President Bashar al-Assad stepping down. But, according to Ahtisaari, the United States was so confident that Assad would soon be violently overthrown that it rejected the proposal. That was prior to the pretended urgency to launch missiles in 2013. When U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry publicly suggested that Syria could avoid a war by handing over its chemical weapons and Russia called his bluff, his staff explained he hadn't meant it. By the next day, however, with Congress rejecting war, Kerry was claiming to have meant his remark quite seriously and to believe the process had a good chance of succeeding, as of course it did. Sadly, no new effort was made for peace beyond the removal of chemical weapons, and the United States went on inching its way into the war with weapons, training camps, and drones. None of that should obscure the fact that peace was possible.

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September 15

On this day in 2001, Congresswoman Barbara Lee cast the only vote against giving U.S. presidents a pass to wage the wars that would prove such disasters for years to come. She said, in part, “I rise today really with a very heavy heart, one that is filled with sorrow for the families and the loved ones who were killed and injured this week. Only the most foolish and the most callous would not understand the grief that has really gripped our people and millions across the world. . . . Our deepest fears now haunt us. Yet, I am convinced that military action will not prevent further acts of international terrorism against the United States. This is a very complex and complicated matter. Now this resolution will pass, although we all know that the President can wage a war even without it. However difficult this vote may be, some of us must urge the use of restraint. Our country is in a state of mourning. Some of us must say, let’s step back for a moment. Let’s just pause, just for a minute and think through the implications of our actions today, so that this does not spiral out of control. Now I have agonized over this vote. But I came to grips with it today, and I came to grips with opposing this resolution during the very painful, yet very beautiful memorial service. As a member of the clergy so eloquently said, “As we act, let us not become the evil that we deplore.”

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September 16

Beginning on this day in 1982 a Lebanese Christian force called the Phalangists, coordinated and aided by the Israeli military, massacred some 2,000 to 3,000 unarmed Palestinian refugees in the Sabra neighborhood and the adjacent Shatila refugee camp in Beirut, Lebanon. The Israeli Army surrounded the area, sent in the Phalangist forces, communicated with them by walkie-talkie and oversaw the mass-murder. An Israeli commission of inquiry later found so-called Defense Minister Ariel Sharon to be personally responsible. He was forced to step down, but was not prosecuted for any crime. In fact, he revived his career and became prime minister. Sharon's first similar crime came when he was a young major in 1953 and he destroyed many houses in the Jordanian village of Qibya, where he was responsible for the massacre of 69 civilians. He called his autobiography *Warrior*. When he died in 2014 he was widely and oddly honored in the media as a man of peace. Ellen Siegel, a Jewish American nurse, recounted the massacre, in which she saw an Israel bulldozer digging a mass grave: "They lined us up against a bullet-ridden wall, and they had their rifles ready. And we really thought this is—I mean, it was a firing squad. Suddenly, an Israeli soldier comes running down the street and halts it. I suppose the idea of gunning down foreign health workers was something that was not very appealing to the Israelis. But the fact that they could see this and stop it shows that there was—there was some communication."

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September 17

This is Constitution Day. On this day in 1787 the U.S. Constitution was adopted and had not yet been violated. That would come. Many powers given to Congress, including the power to make war, are now routinely usurped by presidents. Chief author of the Constitution James Madison remarked that “in no part of the constitution is more wisdom to be found, than in the clause which confides the question of war or peace to the legislature, and not to the executive department. Beside the objection to such a mixture to heterogeneous powers, the trust and the temptation would be too great for any one man; not such as nature may offer as the prodigy of many centuries, but such as may be expected in the ordinary successions of magistracy. War is in fact the true nurse of executive aggrandizement. In war, a physical force is to be created; and it is the executive will, which is to direct it. In war, the public treasures are to be unlocked; and it is the executive hand which is to dispense them. In war, the honours and emoluments of office are to be multiplied; and it is the executive patronage under which they are to be enjoyed. It is in war, finally, that laurels are to be gathered, and it is the executive brow they are to encircle. The strongest passions and most dangerous weaknesses of the human breast; ambition, avarice, vanity, the honourable or venial love of fame, are all in conspiracy against the desire and duty of peace.”

PEACE ALMANAC



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September 18

On this day in 1924 Mohandas Gandhi began a 21-day fast in a Muslim home, for Muslim-Hindu unity. Riots were taking place in the North-west Frontier Province of India that would later become Pakistan. Over 150 Hindus and Sikhs had been killed, and the rest of those populations fled for their lives. Gandhi undertook a 21-day fast. It was one of at least 17 such fasts he would undertake, including two in 1947 and 1948 for the same cause, still unfulfilled, of Muslim-Hindu unity. Some of Gandhi's fasts achieved significant results, as have many other fasts before and since. Gandhi also thought of them as a sort of training. "There is nothing so powerful as fasting and prayer," he said, "that would give us the requisite discipline, spirit of self-sacrifice, humility and resoluteness of will without which there can be no real progress." Gandhi also said, "A hartal," meaning a strike or work stoppage, "brought about voluntarily and without pressure is a powerful means of showing popular disapproval, but fasting is even more so. When people fast in a religious spirit and thus demonstrate their grief before God, it receives a certain response. Hardest hearts are impressed by it. Fasting is regarded by all religions as a great discipline. Those who voluntarily fast become gentle and purified by it. A pure fast is a very powerful prayer. It is no small thing for lakhs of people," meaning hundreds of thousands, "voluntarily to abstain from food and such a fast is a Satyagrahi fast. It ennoble individuals and nations."

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September 19

On this day in 2013 leaders of WOZA, which stands for Women of Zimbabwe Arise, were arrested in Harare, Zimbabwe, while celebrating the International Day of Peace. WOZA is a civic movement in Zimbabwe which was formed in 2003 by Jenni Williams to encourage women to stand up for their rights and freedoms. In 2006, WOZA decided to also form MOZA or Men of Zimbabwe Arise, which has since then organized men to work nonviolently for human rights. Members of WOZA have been arrested many times for peacefully demonstrating, including at annual Valentine's Day protests that advance the power of love as preferable to the love of power. Zimbabweans had participated in presidential and parliamentary elections in July 2013. Amnesty International observed high levels of repression prior to the elections. Robert Mugabe, who had been winning dubious elections since 1980, was re-elected president for a five year term, and his party regained majority control of Parliament. In 2012 and 2013, nearly every significant civil society organization in Zimbabwe, including WOZA, had their offices raided, or leadership arrested, or both. Twentieth-century thinking might advise WOZA to resort to violence. But studies have found that, in fact, nonviolent campaigns against cruel governments are over twice as likely to succeed, and those successes are usually much longer lasting. If Western governments can keep their noses out of it, and not use courageous nonviolent activists as tools for installing a Pentagon-friendly president, and if people of good will from around the world can support WOZA and MOZA, Zimbabwe may have a freer future.

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September 20

On this day in 1838, the world's first nonviolent organization, the New England Non-Resistance Society, was founded in Boston, Massachusetts. Its work would influence Thoreau, Tolstoy, and Gandhi. It was formed in part by radicals upset with the timidity of the American Peace Society which refused to oppose all violence. The new group's Constitution and Declaration of Sentiments, drafted primarily by William Lloyd Garrison, stated, in part: "We cannot acknowledge allegiance to any human government... Our country is the world, our countrymen are all mankind... We register our testimony, not only against all war — whether offensive or defensive, but all preparations for war, against every naval ship, every arsenal, every fortification; against the militia system and a standing army; against all military chieftains and soldiers; against all monuments commemorative of victory over a foreign foe, all trophies won in battle, all celebrations in honor of military or naval exploits; against all appropriations for the defense of a nation by force and arms on the part of any legislative body; against every edict of government requiring of its subjects military service. Hence, we deem it unlawful to bear arms or to hold a military office..." The New England Non-Resistance Society actively campaigned for change, including feminism and the abolition of slavery. Members disturbed church meetings to protest inaction on slavery. Members as well as their leaders often faced the violence of angry mobs, but always they refused to return the injury. The Society attributed to this nonresistance the fact that none of its members were ever killed.

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September 21

This is the International Day of Peace. Also on this day in 1943, the U.S. Senate passed by a vote of 73 to 1 the Fulbright Resolution expressing commitment to a post-war international organization. The resulting United Nations, along with other international institutions created at the end of World War II, has of course had a very mixed record in terms of advancing peace. Also on this day in 1963 the War Resisters League organized the first U.S. demonstration against the war on Vietnam. The movement that grew from there eventually played a major role in ending that war and in turning the U.S. public against war to such an extent that war mongers in Washington began to refer to public resistance to war as a disease, the Vietnam Syndrome. Also on this day in 1976 Orlando Letelier, a leading opponent of Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet, was killed, on Pinochet's order, along with his American assistant, Ronni Moffitt, by a car bomb in Washington, D.C. — the work of a former CIA operative. The International Day of Peace was first celebrated in 1982, and is recognized by many nations and organizations with events all over the world every September 21st, including day-long pauses in wars that reveal how easy it would be to have year-long or forever-long pauses in wars. On this day, the United Nations Peace Bell is rung at UN Headquarters in New York City. This is a good day on which to work for permanent peace and to remember the victims of war.

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September 22

On this day in 1961 the Peace Corps Act was signed by President John Kennedy after having been passed by Congress the previous day. The Peace Corps thus created is described in that act as working “to promote world peace and friendship through a Peace Corps, which shall make available to interested countries and areas men and women of the United States qualified for service abroad and willing to serve, under conditions of hardship if necessary, to help the peoples of such countries and areas in meeting their needs for trained manpower.” Between 1961 and 2015, nearly 220,000 Americans have joined the Peace Corps and have served in 140 countries. Typically, Peace Corps workers help with economic or environmental or educational needs, not with peace negotiations or by serving as human shields. But neither are they typically part of plans for war or government overthrow as is often the case with the CIA, USAID, NED, or U.S. personnel working for other acronymed government agencies abroad. How hard, how respectfully, how wisely Peace Corps volunteers work varies with the volunteers. At the very least they show the world unarmed U.S. citizens and themselves acquire a view of part of the outside world — an enlightening experience that perhaps accounts for the presence of many Peace Corps veterans among peace activists. The concepts of peace tourism and citizen diplomacy as means toward reducing the risks of wars have been taken up by peace studies programs and by numerous non-governmental organizations that sponsor foreign exchanges, either in reality or via computer screen.

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September 23

On this day in 1973 the United Farm Workers adopted a Constitution including a commitment to nonviolence. Some 350 delegates had gathered in Fresno, California, to approve a Constitution and elect a board and officers for this newly chartered labor union. The event was a celebration of having overcome great odds, and much violence, to form this union of farm workers used to poor wages and intimidation. They'd faced arrests, beatings, and killings, as well as government indifference and hostility, and competition from a larger union. Cesar Chavez had begun the organizing a decade earlier. He popularized the slogan "Yes, we can!" or "¡Sí se puede!" He inspired young people to become organizers, many of whom are still at it. They or their students organized many of the great social justice campaigns of the late 20th century. The UFW vastly improved the working conditions of farm workers in California and around the country, and pioneered numerous tactics that have been used with great success ever since, including most famously the boycott. Half the people in the United States stopped eating grapes until the people who picked the grapes were allowed to form a union. The UFW developed the technique of targeting a corporation or politician from numerous angles at once. The farm workers used fasting, human billboards, street theater, civic participation, coalition building, and voter outreach. The UFW recruited candidates, got them elected, and then did sit-ins in their offices until they kept their commitments – a very different approach from making oneself a follower of a candidate.

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September 24

On this day in 1963 the U.S. Senate ratified the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, also known as the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty because it banned nuclear explosions above ground or underwater, but not underground. The treaty aimed to and did reduce nuclear fallout in the planet's atmosphere, which was being created by nuclear weapons testing, particularly by the United States, the Soviet Union, and China. The United States had rendered a number of islands in the Marshall Islands uninhabitable and caused high rates of cancer and birth defects among the inhabitants. The treaty was ratified in the fall of 1963 also by the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom. The Soviet Union had proposed a test ban combined with disarmament of nuclear and non-nuclear weapons. It found agreement from the other two on the test ban alone. The U.S. and U.K. wanted on-site inspections for a ban on underground testing, but the Soviets did not. So, the treaty left underground testing out of the ban. In June President John Kennedy, speaking at American University, had announced that the United States would immediately cease nuclear tests in the atmosphere as long as others did, while pursuing a treaty. "The conclusion of such a treaty, so near and yet so far," said Kennedy months before its conclusion, "would check the spiraling arms race in one of its most dangerous areas. It would place the nuclear powers in a position to deal more effectively with one of the greatest hazards which man faces in 1963, the further spread of nuclear arms."

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September 25

On this day in 1959 U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev met. This was considered a remarkable warming of Cold War relations and created an atmosphere of hope and excitement for a future without nuclear war. Prior to a two-day visit with Eisenhower at Camp David and at Eisenhower's farm in Gettysburg, Khrushchev and his family toured the United States. They visited New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Des Moines. In L.A., Khrushchev was extremely disappointed when the police told him it would not be safe for him to visit Disneyland. Khrushchev, who lived from 1894 to 1971, came to power after the death of Josef Stalin in 1953. He denounced what he called the "excesses" of Stalinism and said he sought "peaceful co-existence" with the United States. Eisenhower claimed to want the same thing. Both leaders said the meeting was productive and that they believed "the question of general disarmament is the most important one facing the world today." Khrushchev assured his colleagues he could work with Eisenhower, and invited him to visit the Soviet Union in 1960. But in May, the Soviet Union shot down a U-2 spy plane, and Eisenhower lied about it, not realizing the Soviets had captured the pilot. The Cold War was back on. A U.S. radar operator for the top-secret U-2 had defected six months earlier and reportedly told the Russians everything he knew, but he was welcomed back by the U.S. government. His name was Lee Harvey Oswald. The Cuban Missile Crisis was yet to come.

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September 26

This is the UN International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Also on this day in 1924 the League of Nations first endorsed the Declaration of Rights of the Child, later developed into the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The United States is the world's leading opponent of the elimination of nuclear weapons, and the world's sole holdout on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which 196 nations are party. Of course, some parties to the treaty violate it, but the United States is so intent on behaviors that would violate it, that the U.S. Senate refuses to ratify it. The common excuse for this is to mumble something about the rights of the parents or the family. But in the United States, children under 18 can be put in prison for life without parole. U.S. laws allow children as young as 12 to be put to work in agriculture for long hours under dangerous conditions. One-third of U.S. states allow corporal punishment in schools. The U.S. military openly recruits children into pre-military programs. The U.S. president has murdered children with drone strikes and checked their names off a kill list. All of these policies, some of them backed by very profitable industries, would violate the Convention on the Rights of the Child were the United States to join it. If children had rights, they'd have rights to decent schools, protection from guns, and a healthy and sustainable environment. Those would be crazy things for the U.S. Senate to commit to.

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September 27

On this day in 1923, in a peace-making victory for the League of Nations, Italy pulled out of Corfu. The victory was decidedly a partial one. The League of Nations, which existed from 1920 to 1946, and which the United States refused to join, was young and was being tested. Corfu is a Greek island, and the dispute there grew out of another partial victory. A League of Nations commission headed by an Italian named Enrico Tellini settled a border dispute between Greece and Albania in a manner that failed to satisfy the Greeks. Tellini, two aides, and an interpreter were murdered, and Italy blamed Greece. Italy bombarded and invaded Corfu, killing two dozen refugees in the process. Italy, Greece, Albania, Serbia, and Turkey began preparing for war. Greece appealed to the League of Nations, but Italy refused to cooperate and threatened to withdraw from the League. France favored keeping the League out of it, because France had invaded part of Germany and didn't want any precedent set. The League's Conference of Ambassadors announced terms to settle the dispute that were very favorable to Italy, including a large payment of funds by Greece to Italy. The two sides complied, and Italy withdrew from Corfu. As wider war did not break out, this was a success. As the more aggressive nation largely got its way, this was a failure. No peaceworkers were sent in, no sanctions, no court prosecutions, no international condemnations or boycotts, no multi-party negotiations. Many solutions did not exist yet, but a step had been taken.

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September 28

This is St. Augustine's Feast Day, a good time to consider what's wrong with the idea of a "just war." Augustine, born in the year 354, tried to merge a religion opposed to killing and violence with organized mass-murder and extreme violence, thus launching the just-war field of sophistry, which is still selling books today. A just war is supposed to be defensive or philanthropic or at least retributive, and the suffering supposedly being halted or avenged is supposed to be much greater than the suffering that will be inflicted by the war. In reality, war inflicts more suffering than anything else. A just war is supposed to be predictable and to have a high probability of success. In reality, the only thing easy to predict is failure. It is supposed to be a last resort after all peaceful alternatives have failed. In reality there are always peaceful alternatives to attacking foreign nations, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and so on. During a so-called just war, only fighters are supposed to be targeted. In reality, most victims in wars since World War II have been civilians. Killing of civilians is supposed to be "proportionate" to the military value of an attack, but that's not an empirical standard anyone can be held to. In 2014, a Pax Christi group stated: "CRUSADES, INQUISITION, SLAVERY, TORTURE, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, WAR: Over many centuries, Church leaders and theologians justified each of these evils as consistent with the will of God. Only one of them retains that position in official Church teaching today."

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September 29

On this day in 1795, Immanuel Kant published *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*. The philosopher listed things he believed would be needed for peace on earth, including: “No treaty of peace shall be held valid in which there is tacitly reserved matter for a future war,” and “No independent states, large or small, shall come under the dominion of another state by inheritance, exchange, purchase, or donation,” as well as “No state shall, during war, permit such acts of hostility which would make mutual confidence in the subsequent peace impossible: such are the employment of assassins, ... and incitement to treason in the opposing state.” Kant also included a ban on national debts. Other items on his list of steps to get rid of war came close to simply stating, “There shall be no more war,” such as this one: “No state shall interfere with the Constitution or government of another state,” or this one which gets to the heart of it: “Standing armies shall in time be abolished.” Kant opened up a much needed conversation but may have done more harm than good, as he announced that the natural state of men (whatever that means) is war, that peace is something artificial dependent on the peacefulness of others (so don’t abolish your armies too quickly). He also claimed representative governments would bring peace, including to non-European “savages” whom he fantasized as eternally at war.

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September 30

On this day in 1946, the U.S.-led Nuremberg trials found 22 Germans guilty of, for the most part, crimes that the United States had and would continue to engage in itself. The ban on war in the Kellogg-Briand Pact was transformed into a ban on aggressive war, with the victors deciding that only the losers had been aggressive. Dozens of aggressive U.S. wars since have seen no prosecutions. Meanwhile, the U.S. military hired sixteen hundred former Nazi scientists and doctors, including some of Adolf Hitler's closest collaborators, men responsible for murder, slavery, and human experimentation, including men convicted of war crimes. Some of the Nazis tried at Nuremberg had already been working for the U.S. in either Germany or the U.S. prior to the trials. Some were protected from their past by the U.S. government for years, as they lived and worked in Boston Harbor, Long Island, Maryland, Ohio, Texas, Alabama, and elsewhere, or were flown by the U.S. government to Argentina to protect them from prosecution. Former Nazi spies, most of them former S.S., were hired by the U.S. in post-war Germany to spy on — and torture — Soviets. Former Nazi rocket scientists began developing the intercontinental ballistic missile. Former Nazi engineers who'd designed Hitler's bunker, designed underground fortresses for the U.S. government in the Catskill and Blue Ridge Mountains. Former Nazis developed the U.S. chemical and biological weapons programs, and were put in charge of a new agency called NSA. Former Nazi liars drafted classified intelligence briefs falsely hyping the Soviet menace — the justification for all this evil.

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October 1

On this day in 1990, the United States backed an invasion of Rwanda by a Ugandan army led by U.S.-trained killers. The U.S. supported their attack on Rwanda for three-and-a-half years. This is a good day to remember that while wars cannot prevent genocides, they can cause them. When you oppose war these days you'll very quickly hear two words: "Hitler" and "Rwanda." Because Rwanda faced a crisis in need of police, the argument goes, Libya or Syria or Iraq must be bombed. But Rwanda faced a crisis created by militarism, not a crisis in need of militarism. U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali maintained that "the genocide in Rwanda was one hundred percent the responsibility of the Americans!" Why? Well, the United States backed an invasion of Rwanda on October 1, 1990. Africa Watch (later called Human Rights Watch/Africa) exaggerated and denounced human rights violations by Rwanda, not the war. People not killed fled the invaders, creating a refugee crisis, ruined agriculture, and wrecked economy. The U.S. and the West armed the warmakers and applied additional pressure through the World Bank, IMF, and USAID. Hostility increased between Hutus and Tutsis. In April 1994, the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were killed, almost certainly by U.S.-backed war-maker and Rwandan president-to-be Paul Kagame. The chaotic and not simply one-sided genocide followed that killing. At that point, peaceworkers, aid, diplomacy, apology, or legal prosecutions might have helped. Bombs would not have. The U.S. sat back until Kagame seized power. He would take the war into Congo, where 6 million would die.

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October 2

On this date each year the UN International Day of Non-Violence is observed throughout the world. Established in 2007 by resolution of the UN General Assembly, the Day of Non-Violence was deliberately tied to the birth date of Mahatma Gandhi, the great exponent of non-violent civil disobedience who led India to its independence from British rule in 1947. Gandhi considered non-violence “the greatest force at the disposal of mankind...mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.” It is important to note that his conception of that force was broader than his own use of it to help win the independence of his country. Gandhi also recognized that non-violence is critical to building good relationships between people of different religions and ethnicities, expanding women’s rights, and reducing poverty. Since his death in 1948, many groups around the world, such as anti-war and civil-rights campaigners in the U.S., have successfully used non-violent strategies to advance political or social change. The actions taken have included protests and persuasion, including marches and vigils; non-cooperation with a governing authority; and nonviolent interventions, such as sit-ins and blockades, to impede unjust actions. In its resolution creating the Day of Non-Violence, the UN reaffirmed both the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence and its efficacy in securing a culture of peace, tolerance, and understanding. To help advance that cause on the Day of Non-Violence, individuals, governments, and non-government organizations around the world offer lectures, press conferences, and other presentations aimed at educating the public on how non-violent strategies can be used to promote peace both within and between nations.

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October 3

On this date in 1967, more than 1,500 men across the United States returned their draft cards to the U.S. government in the country's first "turn-in" demonstration against the Vietnam War. The protest was organized by an activist anti-draft group called "The Resistance," which, along with other anti-war activist groups, would stage a few additional "turn-ins" before petering out. However, another form of draft-card protest had arisen in 1964 that was to prove more durable and consequential. This was the burning of draft cards, predominantly in demonstrations organized by university students. By this act of defiance, students sought to assert their right to get on with their own lives after graduation, rather than be forced to put them at risk in what many deemed an outrageously immoral war. The act reflected both courage and conviction, as the U.S. Congress had passed a law in August 1965, later upheld by the Supreme Court, which made destruction of draft cards a crime. In reality, however, few men were convicted of the crime, as draft-card burnings came to be widely regarded not as acts of draft evasion, but of war resistance. In that context, recurrent images of the burnings in print and on television helped turn public opinion against the war by illustrating the degree to which it was alienating traditional loyalties. The burnings also played a role in disrupting the ability of the U.S. Selective Service System to maintain the levels of fresh manpower needed to effectively run the U.S. war machine in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. In that way, too, they helped bring an unjust war to an end.

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October 4

On this date each year, the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi is observed by Roman Catholics around the world. Born in 1181, Francis is one of the great figures of the Roman Catholic Church, the founder of its largest religious order, and a recognized saint just two years after his death in 1226. Yet, it is posterity's understanding of Francis the man—based both on fact and the embellishments of legend—that continues to inspire millions of people of various faiths, or none, to follow his lead in valuing and seeking to uplift the lives of other people and animals. Francis himself led a life of radical devotion to poor people and the sick. But, because he found his inspiration in nature, the flesh, and simple things, he was also deeply empathetic and capable of relating with equal ease to children, tax collectors, foreigners, and Pharisees. In his lifetime, Francis inspired those who sought a life of meaning and service. His meaning for us today, however, is not as an icon, but in showing the way to openness, reverence for nature, love of animals, and respect and peaceful relations with all other people. The universal significance of Francis's respect for life is highlighted by the fact that UNESCO, a United Nations agency committed to building peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences, and Culture, designated the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi a world heritage site. The secular UN institution found a kindred spirit in Francis, and seeks with him to build world peace from its necessary foundation in the hearts of men and women.

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October 5

On this date in 1923, the American peace activist Philip Berrigan was born in Two Harbors, Minnesota. In October 1967, Berrigan, then a Roman Catholic priest, joined with three other men in the first of two memorable acts of civil disobedience against the Vietnam War. The “Baltimore Four,” as the group was called, symbolically poured their own and poultry blood on Selective Service records filed at the Baltimore Customs House. Seven months later, Berrigan teamed up with eight other men and women, including his brother Daniel, himself a priest and anti-war activist, to hand-carry hundreds of 1-A draft files in wire baskets from the Catonsville, Maryland draft board to its parking lot. There, the so-called “Catonsville Nine” set the files afire, using, again symbolically, home-made napalm. This act propelled both Berrigan brothers to fame and stirred debate about the war in households across the nation. For his part, Philip Berrigan denounced all war as “a curse against God, the human family, and the earth itself.” For his many acts of nonviolent resistance to war, he paid the price, over his lifetime, of eleven years in jail. Those lost years, however, granted him a meaningful insight, which he spelled out in his 1996 autobiography, *Fighting the Lamb’s War*: “I see little difference between the world inside prison gates and the world outside,” Berrigan wrote. “A million-million prison walls can’t protect us, because the real dangers — militarism, greed, economic inequality, fascism, police brutality — lie outside, not inside, prison walls.” This heroic champion of a world beyond war died on December 6, 2002, at the age of 79.

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October 6

On this date in 1683, thirteen mostly Quaker families from the Rhineland region of western Germany arrived in Philadelphia harbor after a 75-day transatlantic trip aboard the 500-ton schooner Concord. The families had suffered religious persecution in their homeland following the upheavals of the Reformation, and, based on reports, believed that the new colony of Pennsylvania would offer them both the farmland and religious freedom they sought. Its governor, William Penn, adhered to the Quaker tenets of freedom of conscience and pacifism, and had drafted a charter of liberties that guaranteed freedom of religion. The emigration of the German families had been organized by Penn's friend Francis Pastorius, a German agent for a land-purchasing company in Frankfurt. In August 1683, Pastorius had negotiated with Penn the purchase of a tract of land northwest of Philadelphia. After the emigrants' arrived in October, he helped them establish there what was to be known as the "Germantown" settlement. The settlement thrived, as its inhabitants built textile mills along the streams and grew flowers and vegetables in their three-acre plots. Pastorius later served as town mayor, establishing a school system and writing the first resolution in the United States against chattel slavery. Though the resolution was not followed by concrete actions, it deeply embedded in the Germantown community the notion that slavery belies Christian belief. Nearly two centuries later, slavery was officially ended in United States. Yet, evidence continues to suggest that the depravity on which it was based can never be fully erased until the Quaker principle that all actions must be tied to moral conscience is universally accepted.

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October 7

On this date in 2001, the United States attacked Afghanistan and began one of the longest wars in U.S. history. Children born after it began fought on the U.S. side and died on the Afghan side. This is a good day to remember that wars are more easily prevented than ended. This one surely could have been prevented. After the 9/11 attacks, the United States demanded that the Taliban surrender suspected mastermind Osama Bin Laden. Consistent with Afghan tradition, the Taliban asked for evidence. The U.S. responded with an ultimatum. The Taliban dropped the request for evidence and suggested negotiating Bin Laden's extradition for trial in another country, perhaps one that might even decide to send him on to the U.S. The U.S. responded to that by beginning a bombing campaign and invading a country that had not attacked it, killing the first of the hundreds of thousands of civilians who would die in the 9/11 revenge wars. Considering the worldwide outpouring of sympathy after 9/11, the United States might have gained UN approval for some kind of military action, even though there was in actuality no lawful justification for it. The U.S. did not bother to try. The U.S. eventually drew in the UN and even NATO, but maintained its unilateral intervention force, quaintly named "Operation Enduring Freedom." Eventually, the U.S. was left virtually alone to continue the effort to prop up the warlords it had chosen over other warlords in an ongoing war that had lost any semblance of meaning or justification. It is indeed a good day to remember that wars are more easily prevented than ended.

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October 8

On this date in 1917, the English poet Wilfred Owen mailed his mother the earliest surviving draft of one of the best-known war poems in the English language. Given a Latin title that translates to “Sweet and Fitting It Is,” the poem satirically contrasts Owen’s own bleak and horrific experience as a soldier in World War I with the nobility of war envisioned in an ode written by the Roman poet Horace. In translation, the first line of Horace’s poem reads: “Sweet and fitting it is to die for one’s country.” Owen’s deflation of such pretense is already presaged in a message he sent his mother with an early draft of his own poem: “Here is a gas poem,” he noted sardonically. In the poem, in which Horace is referenced as “my friend,” Owen evokes the horrors of gas warfare as it is exemplified in the case of one soldier who can’t get his mask on in time. He writes:

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

Horace’s sentiment is a lie, because the reality of battle indicates that, for the soldier, the act of dying for his country is anything but “sweet and fitting.” But, one might also ask, What about war itself? Can the killing and maiming of masses of people ever be characterized as noble?

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 9

On this date in 1944, proposals for a postwar organization to succeed the League of Nations were submitted to all of the world's countries for study and discussion. The proposals were the product of representatives from China, Great Britain, the USSR and the United States, who had convened seven weeks earlier at Dumbarton Oaks, a private mansion in Washington, D.C. Their mission was to create a blueprint for the organization of a new international body, to be known as the United Nations, which could gain broad acceptance and also effectively maintain international peace and security. To that end, the proposal stipulated that member states place armed forces at the disposal of a planned Security Council, which would take collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace or acts of military aggression. This mechanism remained a critical feature of the resulting United Nations, founded in October 1945, but its record of effectiveness in preventing or ending war has been disappointing. A major problem has been the veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council—the U.S., Russia, Britain, China, and France—which enables them to reject any resolution that threatens their own strategic interests. In effect, the UN has been limited in its efforts to keep the peace by a mechanism that gives precedence to the interests of power rather than those of humanity and justice. It is likely that war will only be ended when the great nations of the world finally agree to its total abolition and institutional structures are established by which that agreement can be systematically upheld.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 10

On this date in 1990, a 15-year-old Kuwaiti girl testified before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus that, in her duties as a volunteer at Kuwait's al-Adan hospital, she had seen Iraqi troops rip scores of babies out of incubators, leaving them "to die on the cold floor." The girl's account was a bombshell. It was repeated many times by President George H.W. Bush to help gain public support for a massive U.S.-led air offensive planned for January 1991 to drive Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. Later, however, it was revealed that the young Congressional witness was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the U.S. Her testimony was the contrived product of a U.S. PR firm whose research in behalf of the Kuwaiti government had revealed that charging "the enemy" with atrocities was the best way to gain public support for a war that was proving a hard sell. After Iraqi forces had been driven out of Kuwait, an ABC-network investigation there determined that premature babies did in fact die during the occupation. The cause, however, was that many Kuwaiti doctors and nurses had fled their posts—not that Iraqi troops had ripped Kuwaiti babies from their incubators and left them to die on the hospital floor. In spite of these revelations, polls have shown that many Americans consider the 1991 assault on Iraqi occupation forces a "good war." At the same time, they view the 2003 invasion of Iraq unfavorably, because the alleged rationale for it, "weapons of mass destruction," proved to be a lie. In fact, both conflicts prove again that all war is a lie.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 11

On this date in 1884, Eleanor Roosevelt was born. As a trailblazing First Lady of the United States from 1933 to 1945, and until her death in 1962, she invested her authority and energies in the cause of promoting social justice and civil and human rights. In 1946, President Harry Truman appointed Eleanor Roosevelt as the first U.S. delegate to the United Nations, where she served as the first chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights. In that position, she was instrumental in formulating and overseeing the drafting of the UN's 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document to which she herself and experts in various academic fields contributed. Two key ethical considerations underscore the document's main tenets: the inherent dignity of every human being, and nondiscrimination. To uphold these principles, the Declaration comprises 30 articles that contain a comprehensive listing of related civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Though the document is not binding, many informed thinkers see this apparent weakness as a plus. It allows the Declaration to serve as a springboard for the development of new legislative initiatives in international human rights law, and helps promote nearly universal acceptance of the concept of human rights. Eleanor Roosevelt worked to the end of her life to gain acceptance and implementation of the rights set forth in the Declaration, and it now constitutes her enduring legacy. Her contributions to its shaping are reflected in the constitutions of scores of nations and an evolving body of international law. For her work, President Truman in 1952 proclaimed Eleanor Roosevelt "First Lady of the World."

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 12

On this date in 1921, the League of Nations achieved its first major peaceful settlement, of the Upper Silesia dispute. This was a banner day for intelligence overcoming brute force. The sanity of civility reigned at least momentarily. An organization created to build bridges of peaceful integrity made its first successful entry on to the world stage. The League of Nations was an intergovernmental organization that was founded as a result of the Paris Peace Conference. The League was initially established as a worldwide peace-keeping organization. The League's primary goals included prevention of war through collective security and disarmament, and settling international disputes through negotiation and arbitration. Created on January 10, 1920 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, its first action was to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, officially ending World War I, in 1919. Although the debate goes on as to the effectiveness of the League, it certainly had many small success in the 1920's, and stopped conflicts, saving lives and creating the groundwork for what would eventually follow in 1945, the United Nations. As to the Silesia Dispute it arose after the First World War and was a land battle between Poland and Germany. When no compromise seemed to work, the decision was handed over to the fledgling League of Nations. The League's decision was accepted by both parties in October of 1921. The decision and its acceptance placed sanity above brutality and held out hope that some day nations could rely on discourse and understanding as opposed to violence and destruction.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 13

On this date in 1812, troops from the New York state militia refused to cross the Niagara River into Canada to reinforce militia and regular army troops in a fight against the British known as the Battle of Queenston Heights. Four months into the War of 1812, the battle was fought to achieve one of three planned U.S. invasions of Canada intended to set the groundwork for capturing Montreal and Quebec. Goals of the war included ending sanctions on U.S. trade with France and ending impressments into the British Navy of seamen on U.S. vessels, but also the conquest of Canada and its addition to the United States. The Battle of Queenston Heights started well for the Americans. Advance troops crossed the Niagara River from the New York village of Lewiston and established themselves on a steep escarpment above the town of Queenston. At first the troops successfully defended their position, but, in time, they could no longer hold off the British and their Indian allies without reinforcements. Yet, few in the New York militia, the main body of reinforcement troops in Lewiston, were willing to cross the river and come to their aid. Instead, they cited clauses in the Constitution they believed required them only to defend their state, not to help the United States invade another country. Without support, the remaining advance troops on the Queenston Heights were soon surrounded by the British, who forced their surrender. It was an outcome perhaps emblematic of all war. At the cost of many lives, it failed to settle disputes that might well have been resolved through diplomacy.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 14

On this date in 1644, William Penn was born in London, England. Although the son of a distinguished Anglican British navy admiral, Penn became a Quaker at the age of 22, adopting moral tenets that included tolerance of all religions and ethnicities and a refusal to bear arms. In 1681, King Charles II of England settled a large loan from Penn's deceased father by granting William a sprawling territory west and south of New Jersey, to be named Pennsylvania. Becoming its colonial governor in 1683, Penn implemented a democratic system that offered full freedom of religion, attracting Quakers and European immigrants of every dissident sect. From 1683 to 1755, in stark contrast to other British colonies, Pennsylvania's settlers avoided hostilities and maintained friendly relations with the native nations by not taking their land without fair compensation and not plying them with alcohol. Religious and ethnic tolerance were in fact so broadly associated with the colony that even the Native Tuscaroras of North Carolina were moved to send messengers there asking permission to establish a settlement. Pennsylvania's avoidance of war also meant that all the money that might have been spent on militias, forts, and armaments was available instead to develop the colony and build the city of Philadelphia, which by 1776 surpassed Boston and New York in size. While the superpowers of the day were battling for control of the continent, Pennsylvania prospered more rapidly than any of its neighbors who believed war was needed for growth. In its place, they were reaping the fruits of tolerance and peace planted by William Penn almost a century before.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 15

On this date in 1969, an estimated two-million Americans participated in a nation-wide protest against the Vietnam War. Organized around a planned one-day nationwide work stoppage, and identified as the “Peace Moratorium,” the action is believed to be the largest demonstration in U.S. history. By late 1969, public opposition to the war was rapidly growing. Millions of Vietnamese and some 45,000 U.S. military members had already been killed. And, though then-President Nixon had campaigned on a promised plan to end the war, and had already begun a gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops, a half-million remained deployed in Vietnam in a war many deemed pointless or immoral. In staging the Moratorium, large numbers of middle-class and middle-aged Americans throughout the country for the first time joined college students and young people in expressing opposition to the war in seminars, religious services, rallies, and meetings. Though small groups of war supporters also expressed their views, the Moratorium was most significant in spotlighting the defection from government war policy by millions of Americans the President had perceived as a compliant “Silent Majority.” In this way, the protest played a significant role in keeping the administration on course toward what proved a prolonged extrication from the war. Following three more years of death and destruction, the U.S. ended its active military engagement in all of Southeast Asia by signing the Paris Peace Accords in January 1973. Fighting among the Vietnamese themselves, however, continued until April 1975. Saigon then fell to North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops, and the country was unified under the Communist government in Hanoi as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 16

This date in 1934 marks the beginnings of the Peace Pledge Union, the oldest secular pacifist organization in Great Britain. Its creation was sparked by a letter in the Manchester Guardian written by a well-known pacifist, Anglican priest, and World War I army chaplain named Dick Sheppard. The letter invited all men of fighting age to send Sheppard a postcard stating their commitment to “renounce war and never again to support another.” Within two days, 2,500 men responded, and, over the next few months, a new anti-war organization with 100,000 members took shape. It became known as “The Peace Pledge Union,” because all of its members took the following pledge: “War is a crime against humanity. I renounce war, and am therefore determined not to support any kind of war. I am also determined to work for the removal of all causes of war.” Since its inception, the Peace Pledge Union has worked independently, or with other peace and human rights organizations, to oppose war and the militarism that breeds it. In addition to nonviolent anti-war actions, the Union pursues educational campaigns in workplaces, universities, and local communities. Their purpose is to challenge government systems, practices, and policies designed to convince the public that the use of armed force can effectively serve humanitarian ends and contribute to national security. In rebuttal, The Peace Pledge Union makes the case that lasting security can only be achieved when human rights are promoted by example, not by force; when diplomacy is based on compromise; and when budgets are reallocated for tackling the root causes of war and long-term peace-building.



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October 17

On this date in 1905, Czar Nicholas II of Russia, under pressure from fearful nobles and upper-class advisers, issued an “October Manifesto” that promised substantive reforms in response to a nonviolent nationwide strike of some 1.7-million workers from all industries and professions. The strike had originated in December 1904, when ironworkers in St. Petersburg circulated a petition that called for shorter working days, higher wages, universal suffrage, and an elected government assembly. That action soon sparked a general workers strike throughout the Russian capital that drew 135,000 petition signatures. On January 9, 1905, a group of workers, accompanied by as many as 100,000 marchers still loyal to the Czar, sought to deliver the petition to his Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. Instead, they were met by gunfire from panicked palace guards, and several hundred were killed. In conciliation, Nicholas II announced his acceptance of a new national advisory council. But his gesture failed, in large part because factory workers would be excluded from membership. That set the stage for “The Great October Strike,” which crippled the country. Though it was effectively cut short by the Czar’s October Manifesto, which promised an elected general assembly and better working conditions, many laborers, liberals, peasants, and minority groups remained deeply dissatisfied. In coming years, political change in Russia would no longer be marked by nonviolence. It would lead, instead, to the Russian Revolution of 1917, which dismantled the Czarist autocracy and put the tyrannical Bolsheviks in power. After a two-year civil war, it would end with the dictatorship of the Communist Party and the murder of the Czar and his family.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 18

On this date in 1907, a second set of Hague Conventions addressing the conduct of war was signed at an international peace conference held at The Hague in the Netherlands. Following on an earlier set of international treaties and declarations negotiated at The Hague in 1899, the 1907 Hague Conventions are among the first formal statements relating to war and war crimes in secular international law. A major effort in both conferences was the creation of an international court for compulsory binding arbitration of international disputes—a function considered necessary to replace the institution of war. Those efforts failed, however, though a voluntary forum for arbitration was established. At the Second Hague Conference, a British effort to secure limits on armaments failed, but limits on naval warfare were advanced. Overall, the 1907 Hague Conventions added little to those of 1899, but the meeting of major world powers helped inspire later 20th-century attempts at international cooperation. Of these, the most significant was the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, in which 62 signatory states promised not to use war to resolve “disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin....” The Pact’s intent to permanently abolish war remains critical, not only because war is deadly, but because a society willing to use war for gain must continually prepare to come out ahead. That imperative fosters a militaristic mindset that turns moral priorities upside-down. Instead of spending to meet basic human needs and help heal the natural environment, the society invests at far greater expense in developing and testing more effective weaponry, which itself does major damage to the environment.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 19

On this date in 1960, Martin Luther King Jr. was arrested with 51 student demonstrators during an anti-segregation sit-in at “The Magnolia Room,” a chic tea room in Rich’s Department Store in Atlanta, Georgia. The sit-in was one of many in Atlanta that had been inspired by the black-college Atlanta Student Movement, but the elegant Magnolia Room helped showcase the integration cause. It was an Atlanta institution, but also part of the South’s Jim Crow culture. African Americans could shop at Rich’s, but they couldn’t try on clothing or take a table in the Magnolia Room. When the demonstrators did just that, they were charged with violating an existing statute that required all persons to leave private property when asked. Those arrested were all released on bond or had their charges dismissed, except for Martin Luther King. He faced a four-month sentence in a Georgia public work camp for driving in the state in violation of an “anti-trespass” law specifically enacted to curb lunch-counter sit-ins. An intervention by presidential candidate John Kennedy led quickly to King’s release, but it would take almost another year of sit-ins and Ku Klux Klan counter-protests throughout Atlanta before business losses forced the city to integrate. Full racial equality in the United States had still to be achieved even a half-century later. But, commenting during a commemoration of the Atlanta Student Movement, Lonnie King, co-founder of the movement and himself a Magnolia Room demonstrator, expressed optimism. He continued to find hope for reaching racial equality in the campus roots of the student movement. “Education,” he asserted, “has always been the artery for advancement, certainly in the South.”

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 20

On this day in 1917, Alice Paul began a seven-month jail sentence for nonviolently protesting for suffrage. Born in 1885 in a Quaker village, Paul entered Swarthmore in 1901. She went on to the University of Pennsylvania studying economics, political science, and sociology. A trip to England confirmed her belief that the suffrage movement both at home and abroad was the most significant social injustice going unaddressed. While earning three more degrees in law, Paul devoted her life to ensuring that women were allowed a voice and treated as equal citizens. Her first organized march in Washington, DC, took place on the eve of Woodrow Wilson's 1913 inauguration. The suffrage movement was initially ignored, yet led to four years of nonviolent lobbying, petitioning, campaigning, and broadening marches. As WWI loomed, Paul demanded that before supposedly spreading democracy abroad, the U.S. government should address it at home. She and a dozen followers, the "Silent Sentinels," began to picket at the White House Gates in January of 1917. The women were periodically attacked by men, especially war supporters, finally arrested, and imprisoned. Although the war was capturing headlines, some word of the severe treatment shown to the suffrage movement drew increasing support to their cause. Many who had gone on hunger strikes in prison were being force fed under brutal conditions; and Paul had been confined to a prison psychiatric ward. Wilson finally agreed to support women's suffrage, and all charges were dropped. Paul continued to fight for the Civil Rights Act, and then the Equal Rights Amendment, setting precedents throughout her life by peaceful protest.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 21

On this date in 1837, the U.S. Army turned the tide in its wars with the Seminole Indians by resorting to duplicity. The event stemmed from the resistance of the Seminoles to the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which gave the U.S. government authority to open land to white settlers by removing five Indian tribes east of the Mississippi to the Indian Territory in Arkansas and Oklahoma. When the Seminoles resisted, the U.S. Army went to war to try to remove them forcibly. However, in a climactic battle in December 1835, only 250 Seminole fighters, led by the renowned warrior Osceola, soundly defeated a column of 750 U.S. soldiers. That defeat and Osceola's continuing successes prompted one of the most disgraceful acts in U.S. military history. In October 1837, U.S. troops captured Osceola and 81 of his followers, and, promising peace talks, led them under a white flag of truce to a fort near St. Augustine. On arriving there, however, Osceola was carted off to prison. Without its leader, most of the Seminole Nation had been relocated to the Western Indian Territory before the war ended in 1842. It was not until 1934, with the introduction of the Indian Reorganization Act, that the U.S. government finally stepped back from reflexively serving the interests of white usurpers of Indian land. The Reorganization Act, which remains in effect, contains provisions that, on their face, can help Native Americans build a more secure life while maintaining their tribal traditions. It is still to be seen, however, whether the government will provide the support needed to help make that vision a reality.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 22

On this date in 1962, President John Kennedy announced in a television address to the U.S. people that the U.S. government had confirmed the presence of Soviet nuclear missile bases in Cuba. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev had given the go-ahead to install nuclear missiles in Cuba in the summer of 1962, both to protect a strategic ally from a possible U.S. invasion and to counterbalance U.S. superiority in long- and medium-range nuclear weapons based in Europe. With confirmation of the missile bases, Kennedy had demanded that the Soviets dismantle them and ship all their offensive weapons in Cuba back home. He had also ordered a naval blockade around Cuba to prevent the delivery of any additional offensive military equipment. On October 26, the U.S. took the further step of raising its military force preparedness to a level capable of supporting all-out nuclear war. Fortunately, a peaceful resolution was soon achieved—largely because efforts to find a way out were centered directly in the White House and Kremlin. Attorney General Robert Kennedy urged the President to respond to two letters the Soviet Premier had already sent to the White House. The first offered to remove the missile bases in exchange for a promise by U.S. leaders not to invade Cuba. The second offered to do the same if the U.S. also agreed to remove its missile installations in Turkey. Officially, the U.S. accepted the terms of the first message and simply ignored the second one. Privately, however, Kennedy agreed to later withdraw U.S. missile bases from Turkey, a decision that effectively ended the Cuban Missile Crisis on October 28.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 23

On this date in 2001, a major step was taken to resolve one of the most intractable sectarian conflicts in modern history. Starting in 1968, predominantly Roman Catholic nationalists and mainly Protestant unionists in Northern Ireland engaged in more than thirty years of unrelenting armed violence known as “The Troubles.” The nationalists wanted the British province to become part of the Republic of Ireland, while the unionists wanted to remain part of the United Kingdom. In 1998, the Good Friday Agreement provided a framework for a political settlement based on a power-sharing arrangement between factions aligned with the two sides. The accord included a program of “devolution”—a transfer of police, judicial, and other powers from London to Belfast—and a stipulation that paramilitary groups aligned with both sides immediately begin a process of verifiable total disarmament. At first, the heavily armed Irish Republican Army (IRA) was unwilling to divest itself of assets that advantaged the nationalist cause. But, at the urging of its political branch, Sinn Féin, and recognizing the futility of its intransigence, the organization announced on October 23, 2001 that it would start an irreversible decommissioning of all armaments in its possession. It was not until September 2005 that the IRA had confiscated the last of its weapons, and, from 2002 to 2007, continuing political turmoil forced London to reimpose direct rule on Northern Ireland. Yet, by 2010 the multiple political factions in Northern Ireland were governing peacefully together. Undoubtedly, an important factor in that outcome was the IRA’s decision to renounce its efforts to advance the cause of a unified Irish Republic through violence.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 24

On this date, United Nations Day is annually observed around the world, marking the official anniversary of the UN's founding in 1945. The Day provides an occasion to celebrate the UN's support of international peace, human rights, economic development, and democracy. We can also applaud its many accomplishments, which include saving the lives of millions of children, protecting the earth's ozone layer, helping eradicate smallpox, and setting the stage for the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. At the same time, however, many UN observers have pointed out that the current UN operating structure, composed mainly of representatives of each state's executive branch, is unequipped to respond meaningfully to problems that pose an immediate challenge to people around the world. They are therefore calling for the creation of an independent UN parliamentary assembly, composed mostly of representatives from existing national or regional assemblies. The new body would help meet such developing challenges as climate change, food insecurity, and terrorism, while also facilitating political and economic cooperation and the promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. As of August 2015, an international appeal for the establishment of a UN parliamentary assembly had been signed by 1,400 sitting and former members of parliament from over 100 countries. Through such an assembly, representatives accountable to their constituents, as well as some outside of government, would provide oversight of international decision-making; serve as a link between the world's citizens, civil society, and the UN; and give greater voice to minorities, youth, and indigenous peoples. The result would be a more inclusive UN, with enhanced capacity to meet global challenges.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 25

On this date in 1983, a force of 2,000 U.S. marines invaded Grenada, a small Caribbean island nation north of Venezuela with a population of fewer than 100,000. In publicly defending the action, President Ronald Reagan cited the threat posed by Grenada's new Marxist regime to the safety of nearly a thousand U.S. nationals living on the island—many of them students at its medical school. Until less than a week before, Grenada had been ruled by the leftist Maurice Bishop, who had seized power in 1979 and begun to develop close relations with Cuba. On October 19, however, another Marxist, Bernard Coard, ordered Bishop's assassination and took control of the government. When the invading marines faced unexpected opposition from Grenadian armed forces and Cuban military engineers, Reagan ordered in some 4,000 additional U.S. troops. In little more than a week, the Coard government was overthrown and replaced by one more acceptable to the United States. For many Americans, however, that outcome could not justify the cost in dollars and lives of another U.S. war to achieve a political goal. Some also knew that, two days before the invasion, the U.S. State Department had been already aware that the medical students in Grenada were not in danger. The parents of 500 of the students had in fact telegraphed President Reagan not to attack, after learning that their children were free to leave Grenada whenever they wanted. Yet, like U.S. governments before and since, the Reagan administration chose war. When the war was over, Reagan took credit for the first supposed “rollback” of communist influence since the beginning of the Cold War.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 26

On this date in 1905, Norway won its independence from Sweden without resort to war. Since 1814, Norway had been forced into a “personal union” with Sweden, the result of a victorious Swedish invasion. This meant that the country was subject to the authority of Sweden’s king, but kept its own constitution and legal status as an independent state. Over succeeding decades, however, Norwegian and Swedish interests grew ever more divergent, especially as they involved foreign trade and Norway’s more liberal domestic policies. A strong nationalist sentiment developed, and, in 1905, a nation-wide independence referendum was supported by more than 99% of Norwegians. On June 7, 1905, the Norwegian parliament declared Norway’s union with Sweden dissolved, triggering widespread fear that war between the two countries would again break out. Instead, however, Norwegian and Swedish delegates met on August 31 to negotiate mutually acceptable terms of separation. Though prominent right-wing Swedish politicians favored a hard-line approach, the Swedish king strongly resisted risking another war with Norway. A major reason was that results of the Norwegian referendum had convinced the major European powers that Norway’s independence movement was for real. That caused the king to fear that Sweden could be isolated by suppressing it. In addition, neither country wanted to aggravate ill will in the other. On October 26, 1905, the Swedish king renounced his and any of his descendants’ claims to the Norwegian throne. Though Norway remained a parliamentary monarchy by appointing a Danish prince to fill the vacancy, it thus became, through a bloodless people’s movement, a fully sovereign nation for the first time since the 14th century.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 27

On this date in 1941, six weeks before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt gave a nationwide “Navy Day” radio speech in which he falsely claimed that German submarines had without provocation launched torpedoes at peaceful U.S. warships in the western Atlantic. In reality, the U.S. ships had been helping British planes track the submarines, thereby flouting international law. For reasons of both personal and national self-interest, the President’s true motive in leveling his claims was to incite public hostility toward Germany that would compel Hitler to declare war on the U.S. Roosevelt himself was reluctant to declare war on Germany, as the U.S. public seemingly had no appetite for it. The President, however, had an ace up his sleeve. The U.S. could go to war with Germany’s ally, Japan, and thereby establish a basis for also entering the war in Europe. The trick would be to force Japan to initiate a war the U.S. public could not ignore. So, beginning in October 1940, the U.S. took actions that included keeping the U.S. naval fleet in Hawaii, insisting that the Dutch refuse to take Japanese oil, and joining Great Britain in embargoing all trade with Japan. Inevitably, in little over a year, on December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor was bombed. Like all wars, World War II was based on lies. Yet, decades later, it became known as “The Good War” — in which the good will of the U.S. prevailed over the perfidy of the Axis powers. That myth has dominated the U.S. public mind ever since and is reinforced each December 7 in celebrations across the country.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 28

This date in 1466 marks the birth of Desiderius Erasmus, a Dutch Christian humanist widely considered the greatest scholar of the northern Renaissance. In 1517, Erasmus wrote a book about the evils of war that continues to have relevance today. Entitled *The Complaint of Peace*, the book speaks in the first-person voice of “Peace,” a character personified as a woman. Peace makes the case that, although she offers “the source of all human blessings,” she is scorned by people who “go in quest of evils infinite in number.” Groups as diverse as princes, academics, religious leaders, and even ordinary folks seem blind to the harm war can bring on them. Powerful people have created a climate in which speaking up for Christian forgiveness is considered treasonous, while promoting war demonstrates loyalty to the nation and devotion to its happiness. People must ignore the vengeful God of the Old Testament, Peace declares, and favor the peaceful God of Jesus. It is that God who rightly discerns the causes of war in the pursuit of power, glory, and revenge, and the basis of peace in love and forgiveness. “Peace” ultimately proposes that kings submit their grievances to wise and impartial arbiters. Even if either side considers their judgment unfair, it will be spared the much greater suffering resulting from war. It should be kept in mind that wars fought in Erasmus’s time tended to maim and kill only those who fought in them. His denunciations of war therefore carry even greater weight in our modern nuclear age, when any war may run the risk of ending life on our planet.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 29

On this date in 1983, over 1,000 British women cut down sections of the fence surrounding the Greenham Common airfield outside Newbury, England. Dressed up as witches, complete with “black cardigans” (code for bolt cutters), the women staged a “Halloween Party” protest against a NATO plan to transform the airfield into a military base housing 96 Tomahawk ground-launched nuclear cruise missiles. The missiles themselves were scheduled to arrive the following month. By cutting down sections of the airfield fence, the women meant to symbolize their need to breach the “Berlin Wall” that kept them from expressing their concerns about nuclear weapons to the military authorities and crew inside the base. The “Halloween Party,” however, was only one of a series of anti-nuclear protests waged by British women at Greenham Common. They had begun their movement in August 1981, when a group of 44 women walked 100 miles to Greenham from Cardiff City Hall in Wales. On arriving, four of them chained themselves to the outside of the airfield fence. After the U.S. base commander received their letter opposing the planned missile deployment, he invited the women to set up camp outside the base. They willingly did so, in fluctuating numbers, for the next 12 years, staging protest events that drew up to 70,000 supporters. Following the first U.S.-Soviet disarmament treaties signed in 1987, the women gradually began to leave the base. Their campaign there formally ended in 1993, following removal of the last missiles from Greenham in 1991, and a two-year continuing protest against other nuclear weapons sites. The Greenham base itself was disbanded in the year 2000.

PEACE ALMANAC



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October 30

On this date in 1943, the so-called Four Power Declaration was signed by the United States, United Kingdom, Soviet Union, and China at a conference in Moscow. The Declaration formally established the four-power framework that would later influence the international order of the postwar world. It committed the four allied nations in World War II to continue hostilities against the Axis powers until all enemy forces had accepted unconditional surrender. The Declaration also advocated the earliest possible establishment of an international organization of peace-loving states that would work together as equals to maintain global peace and security. Although this vision inspired the founding of the United Nations two years later, the Four Power Declaration also demonstrated how concerns over national self-interest can impede international cooperation and undermine efforts to resolve conflicts without war. For example, U.S. President Roosevelt told British Prime Minister Churchill privately that the Declaration would “in no way prejudice final decisions as to world order.” The Declaration also omitted any discussion of a permanent postwar international peacekeeping force, much less a nonviolent unarmed peacekeeping mission. And the United Nations was carefully created with special powers, including the veto, for a few nations only. The Four Power Declaration represented a hopeful departure from the realities of a horrific war by advancing the vision of an international community governed by mutual respect and cooperation. But it also revealed how far the mindset of world powers still needed to evolve to bring about such a community and a world beyond war.

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October 31

On this date in 2014, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon established a high-level independent panel to produce a report assessing the state of UN peace operations and recommending changes needed to help meet the emerging needs of the world's populations. In June 2015, the 16-member panel submitted its report to the Secretary-General, who, following careful study, transmitted it to the General Assembly and Security Council for consideration and adoption. Broadly speaking, the document offers recommendations on how peace operations can “better support the [UN’s] work to prevent conflict, achieve durable political settlements, protect civilians, and sustain peace.” In a section headed “Essential Shifts for Peace Operations,” the report states that “The task of the United Nations and other international actors is to focus international attention, leverage and resources on supporting national actors to make the courageous choices required to restore peace, address underlying conflict drivers, and meet the legitimate interest of the wide population, not just a small elite.” Related text warns, however, that this task can only be successfully pursued if it is recognized that lasting peace cannot be achieved or sustained by military and technical engagements. Instead, the “primacy of politics” must be the hallmark of all approaches to resolving conflict, conducting mediation, monitoring ceasefires, assisting implementation of peace accords, managing violent conflicts, and pursuing longer-term efforts at sustaining peace. If rigorously observed in the real world, the recommendations offered in the 2015 UN report on Peace Operations might well nudge the world’s nations a little closer to accepting international mediation, in place of armed force, as the new norm for resolving conflict.

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November 1

On this day in 1961 the Women Strike for Peace demonstration in the United States was the largest women's peace action to date. "We came into existence on November 1, 1961," said a member, "as a protest against atmospheric nuclear tests by the U.S. and the Soviet Union which were poisoning the air and our children's food." That year, 100,000 women from 60 cities came out of kitchens and jobs to demand: END THE ARMS RACE – NOT THE HUMAN RACE, and WSP was born. The group encouraged disarmament by educating on the dangers of radiation and nuclear testing. Its members lobbied Congress, protested the nuclear testing site in Las Vegas, and took part in the UN Disarmament Conferences in Geneva. Despite 20 women from the group being subpoenaed in the 1960s by the House Un-American Activities Committee, they contributed to the passage of the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963. Their protest against the Vietnam War led 1,200 women from 14 NATO countries to join them at the Hague in a demonstration against the creation of a Multilateral Nuclear Fleet. They also began meeting with Vietnamese women to organize communication between POWs and their families. They protested U.S. intervention in Central America, as well as the militarization of space, and opposed new weapon plans. The Nuclear Freeze campaign of the 1980s was backed by the WPS, and they contacted the Prime Ministers of the Netherlands and Belgium, urging them to refuse all U.S. missile bases and included a description of President Regan's "Defense Guidance Plan," an outline for fighting, surviving, and supposedly winning a nuclear war.

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November 2

On this date in 1982 a nuclear freeze referendum passed in nine U.S. states making up one-third of the U.S. electorate. It was the largest referendum on a single issue in U.S. history, and was intended to secure an agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union to halt the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons. Years earlier activists had begun organizing efforts and public education around the United States. The motto of the campaign was “Think globally; act locally.” Organizations such as the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Ground Zero movement circulated petitions, held debates, and showed films. They gave out literature about the nuclear arms race and developed resolutions that they took to town, city, and state legislatures throughout the United States. One year after the 1982 referendum, resolutions supporting a bilateral nuclear weapons freeze had been passed by 370 city councils, 71 county councils, and by one or both houses of 23 state legislatures. When the Nuclear Freeze resolution was delivered to the U.S. and Soviet governments at the United Nations, it had 2,300,000 signatures. It did not have the support of the administration of President Ronald Reagan, which views it as a disaster. The campaigners were manipulated, the White House claimed, by “a handful of scoundrels instructed directly from Moscow.” The White House initiated a public relations campaign against the Freeze referendum. Reagan charged that the Freeze “would make this country desperately vulnerable to nuclear blackmail.” Despite strong opposition, the movement continued for many years after 1982 and contributed to major disarmament steps and the survival of life on earth during the Cold War.

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November 3

On this day in 1950 the UN Uniting for Peace resolution was passed by the UN General Assembly at Flushing Meadows, NY. The resolution, 377A, reflects the obligation of the United Nations, under its Charter, to maintain international peace and security. It allows the General Assembly to consider matters where the Security Council cannot resolve an issue. There are 193 members of the UN, and 15 members of the Council. The resolution can be activated by a vote in the Security Council, or with a request by a majority of UN Members to the Secretary-General. They can then make recommendations for collective measures without the “P5” or permanent five members of the Security Council who are: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They do not have the ability to block the adoption of draft resolutions. Recommendations can include the use of armed force or the prevention thereof. The power of the veto within the Security Council could be overcome this way when one of the P5 is an aggressor. It has been used for Hungary, Lebanon, Congo, the Middle East (Palestine and East Jerusalem), Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and South Africa. It is argued that the present structure of the Security Council with permanent members with veto power does not reflect the reality of the present world situation, and it particularly leaves Africa, other developing countries, and the Middle East without a voice. The Institute for Security Studies works to have an elected Council, through the passage of changes to the UN Charter by a majority of General Assembly members, that would eliminate the permanent seats.

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November 4

On this date in 1946 UNESCO was established. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization is based in Paris. The organization's purpose is to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration and dialogue through educational, scientific, and cultural projects and reforms and to increase respect for justice, the rule of law, and human rights. To pursue these objectives, its 193 member states and 11 associate members have programs in education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communication. UNESCO has not been without controversy, particularly in its relationships with the U.S., the UK, Singapore, and the former Soviet Union, largely because of its vigorous support of freedom of the press and its budgetary concerns. The United States withdrew from UNESCO in 1984 under President Reagan, claiming that it was a platform for communists and Third World dictators to attack the West. The U.S. re-joined in 2003, but in 2011 it cut its contribution to UNESCO, and in 2017 set a deadline of 2019 for its withdrawal, in part because of UNESCO's position on Israel. UNESCO had condemned Israel for "aggressions" and "illegal measures" against Muslims' access to their holy sites. Israel had frozen all ties with the organization. Serving as a "laboratory of ideas," UNESCO helps countries adopt international standards and manages programs that foster the free flow of ideas and knowledge sharing. UNESCO's vision is that political and economic arrangements of governments are not enough to establish conditions for democracy, development, and peace. UNESCO has the difficult task of working with nations that have long histories of conflict and vested interests in war.

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November 5

On this date in 1855 Eugene V. Debs was born. Also on this date in 1968 Richard Nixon was elected U.S. president after sabotaging the Vietnam peace talks. This is a good day to think about who our real leaders are. At age 14, Eugene Victor Debs began working on the railroad and became a locomotive fireman. He helped organize the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. An effective and personable speaker and pamphleteer, he was a member of the Indiana legislature in 1885 at age 30. He united various railway unions into the American Railway Union and held a successful strike for higher wages against the Great Northern Railway in 1894. Debs spent six months in jail after leading the Chicago Pullman Car company strike. He saw the labor movement as a struggle between classes, and led the creation of the Socialist Party of America for which he was a presidential candidate five times between 1900 and 1920. He died in 1926, age 71. Richard Nixon is seen as a traitor for his successful effort to stall the Vietnam peace talks, confirmed by FBI wiretaps and handwritten notes. He sent Anna Chennault to persuade the Vietnamese to refuse a proposed cease-fire organized by Lyndon Johnson whose former vice-president, Hubert Humphrey, was Nixon's rival candidate. Nixon violated the Logan Act of 1797 which bans private citizens from intruding into official negotiations with a foreign nation. In the four years between the sabotage and the next presidential election, more than a million Vietnamese people were killed, as well as 20,000 members of the U.S. military.

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November 6

This is the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict. The United Nations General Assembly, in creating this day in 2001, attempted to focus the world's attention on the crucial need for protection of the environment we all share from the devastation of war. Wars in recent years have rendered large areas uninhabitable and generated tens of millions of refugees. War and war preparations damage the environment through the production and testing of nuclear weapons, the aerial and naval bombardment of terrain, the dispersal and persistence of land mines and buried ordnance, the use and storage of military despoliants, toxins, and waste, and enormous consumption of fossil fuels. Yet major environmental treaties have included exemptions for militarism. War and preparations for war are a major direct cause of environmental damage. They are also a pit into which trillions of dollars that could be used to prevent environmental damage are dumped. As the environmental crisis worsens, thinking of war as a tool with which to address it, treating refugees as military enemies, threatens us with the ultimate vicious cycle. Declaring that climate change causes war misses the reality that human beings cause war, and that unless we learn to address crises nonviolently we will only make them worse. A major motivation behind some wars is the desire to control resources that poison the earth, especially oil and gas. In fact, the launching of wars by wealthy nations in poor ones does not correlate with human rights violations or lack of democracy or threats of terrorism, but does strongly correlate with the presence of oil.

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November 7

On this day in 1949, Costa Rica's Constitution prohibited a national army. Costa Rica, now using entirely renewable energy, is home to the Inter-American Human Rights Court and the UN University of Peace. Following independence from Mexico under Spanish rule, Costa Rica declared its independence from the Central American Federation it shared with Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Following a brief civil war, the decision was made to abolish its army, and invest instead in its people. As an agricultural nation known for its coffee and cacao, Costa Rica is also known for its beauty, culture, music, stable infrastructure, technology, and eco-tourism. The country's environmental policy encourages the use of solar energy, eliminating carbon from the atmosphere, and preserving up to 25 percent of its land as national parks. The United Nations University of Peace was established "to provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace with the aim of promoting among all human beings the spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, to stimulate cooperation among peoples and to help lessen obstacles and threats to world peace and progress, in keeping with the noble aspirations proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations." In 1987, Costa Rican President Oscar Sanchez was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his help in ending the civil war in Nicaragua. Costa Rica has accepted many refugees, while encouraging stability throughout Central America. By providing its citizens with free education, universal healthcare and social services, Costa Rica enjoys an impressive human longevity rate. In 2017, National Geographic also declared it the "Happiest Country in the World!"

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November 8

On this day in 1897, Dorothy Day was born. As a writer, activist, and pacifist, Day is best known for initiating the Catholic Worker Movement, and promoting social justice. She left college in Illinois to move to Greenwich Village in 1916 where she lived a bohemian life, made many literary friends, and wrote for socialist and progressive newspapers. In 1917, she joined Alice Paul and the Women's Suffrage movement as one of the "Silent Sentinels" lobbying the White House. This led to one of several arrests and imprisonments endured by Day, but also to the women's right to vote. Her reputation as a "radical" continued after her conversion to Catholicism as Day pushed the church to support objectors to the draft and to the war. Her guidance challenged Catholic principles, which led to the church's support for pacifists and the needy, specifically workers suffering low wages, and rampant homelessness. When she met Peter Maurin, a former Christian Brother, in 1932, they established a newspaper promoting Catholic teachings aligned with social justice. These writings led to the "Green Revolution" and to the church's help in providing housing for the poor. Two hundred communities were finally established across the United States, and 28 in other countries. Day lived in one of these hospitality homes while encouraging support by writing books about her life and purpose. The Catholic Worker Movement protested WWII, and Day was arrested in 1973 for demonstrating against the war in Vietnam while supporting the United Farm Workers in California. Her life inspired many, including the Vatican. Day has been considered a candidate for canonization since 2000.

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November 9

On this day in 1989 the Berlin Wall began to be demolished, symbolizing the ending of the Cold War. This is a good day to remember how fast change can come and how available peace is. In 1961, the wall splitting the city of Berlin was built to deter Western “fascists,” and to control mass defections by millions of young laborers and professionals from communist East Germany. Telephone and railroad lines were cut, and people were separated from their jobs, their families, and their loved ones. The wall became symbolic of the Cold War between Western Allies and the Soviet Union following WWII. As 5,000 people managed to escape the wall, there were as many failed attempts. The wall was rebuilt over ten years, and reinforced with a series of walls up to 15 ft. tall, intense lighting, electric fences, armed guards in watch towers, attack dogs, and minefields. East German guards were ordered to shoot on sight anyone protesting the wall, or attempting to escape. The Soviet Union suffered economic decline, revolutions in countries such as Poland and Hungary gained ground, and peaceful efforts to end the Cold War progressed. The growing civil unrest both in and surrounding Germany led to attempts to dismantle the wall from the west side. East German leader, Erich Honecker, finally resigned, and official Gunter Schabowski then accidentally announced “permanent relocations” from East Germany were possible. Stunned East Germans approached the wall as the guards stood by, confused as the rest. Thousands then flocked to the wall, celebrating their freedom and reconciliation. Many began chipping away at the wall with hammers, chisels, . . . and hope for no more walls.

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November 10

On this date in 1936 the world's first peace corps, International Voluntary Service for Peace (IVSP), arrived in Bombay led by Pierre Ceresole. Ceresole was a Swiss pacifist who had refused to pay taxes that were used for arms, and had spent time in prison. He founded Service Civil International (SCI) in 1920 to provide volunteers in international work camps in areas affected by natural disasters and conflicts. He was invited by Mohandas Gandhi to come to India, and in 1934, 1935, and 1936, the organization worked in India in reconstruction after the 1934 Nepal-Bihar earthquake. The organization grew over the next decade, and Ceresole died in 1945. In 1948, several international peace organizations were brought together under the newly established leadership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). SCI was among them. In the 1970's SCI reoriented itself by standardizing international volunteer exchanges. It also expanded from being based on work camps to reflect the political implications of international peace. Still using volunteers today, SCI's principles include: nonviolence, human rights, solidarity, respect for the environment and ecosystems, inclusion of all individuals who share the aims of the movement, empowerment of people to transform the structures that affect their lives, and co-operation with local, national, and international stakeholders. Working groups, for instance, are established in regions for international development work and education dealing with immigration, refugees, East-West exchanges, gender, youth unemployment, and the environment. SCI continues to this day, known as International Voluntary Service in most English-speaking countries.

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November 11

On this date in 1918, at 11 o'clock on the 11th day of the 11th month, World War One ended on a schedule. People across Europe suddenly stopped shooting guns at each other. Up until that moment, they were killing and taking bullets, falling and screaming, moaning and dying. Then they stopped. It wasn't that they'd gotten tired or come to their senses. Both before and after 11 o'clock they were simply following orders. The Armistice agreement that ended World War I had set 11 o'clock as quitting time, and 11,000 men were killed or wounded between the signing of the Armistice and its taking effect. But that hour in subsequent years, that moment of an ending of a war that was supposed to end all war, that moment that had kicked off a world-wide celebration of joy and of the restoration of some semblance of sanity, became a time of silence, of bell ringing, of remembering, and of dedicating oneself to actually ending all war. That was what Armistice Day was. It was not a celebration of war or of those who participate in war, but of the moment a war had ended. The U.S. Congress passed an Armistice Day resolution in 1926 calling for "exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding." Some countries still call it Remembrance Day, but the United States renamed it Veterans Day in 1954. For many, the day is no longer to cheer the ending of war but to praise war and nationalism. We can choose to return Armistice Day to its original meaning.



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November 12

On this date in 1984 the United Nations passed the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace. The UN General Assembly adopted a Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. It is still a cornerstone of the UN's mandate, and declares that the right to life is fundamental. But it was not until 1984 that the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace emerged. It says that "life without war serves as the primary international prerequisite for . . . material well-being, development and progress . . . and for the full implementation of the rights and fundamental human freedoms proclaimed by the United Nations," that it is a "sacred duty" and a "fundamental obligation" of each State that "the policies of States be directed towards the elimination of the threat of war" and "above all, to avert a world-wide nuclear catastrophe." The UN has had great difficulty building upon and implementing this declaration. Much work has been done over the years, particularly by the Human Rights Council, to revise the declaration, but all such revisions have failed to pass with a sufficient majority because the nuclear countries have abstained. On December 19, 2016, a simplified version had a vote of 131 in favor, 34 against, and 19 abstentions. In 2018, it was still being debated. Special UN Rapporteurs visit particular situations in various countries to investigate specific instances of violations of the rights found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and there is a movement to appoint a Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Peace, but that has not yet been done.

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November 13

On this date in 1891 the International Peace Bureau was founded in Rome by Fredrik Bajer. Still active, its aim is to work towards a “world without war.” In its early years the organization fulfilled its goals as a coordinator of peace movements internationally, and in 1910 it received the Nobel Peace Prize. After World War I, the League of Nations and other organizations diminished its importance, and it suspended its activities during the Second World War. In 1959, its assets were given to the International Liaison Committee of Organizations for Peace (ILCOP). ILCOP named its Geneva secretariat the International Peace Bureau. The IPB has 300 member organizations in 70 countries, acts as a link for organizations working on similar projects, and is on other committees within and outside of the United Nations. Over time, several IPB board members have received the Nobel Peace Prize. Military preparations have devastating effects, not only on those who are caught up in war, but also on the process of sustainable development, and IPB’s present programs center on disarmament for sustainable development. The IPB focuses particularly on the reallocation of military expenditure to social projects and protection of the environment. The International Peace Bureau hopes to demilitarize international aid, supports a number of disarmament campaigns, including nuclear disarmament, and supplies data on the economic dimensions of weapons and conflicts. IPB established the Global Day of Action on Military Spending in 2011, working to lessen the impact and sale of small arms, landmines, cluster munitions, and depleted uranium, especially in the developing world.

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November 14

On this date in 1944 in France, Marie-Marthe Dortel-Claudot and Bishop Pierre-Marie Theas proposed the idea of Pax Christi. Pax Christi is Latin for “Peace of Christ.” Pope Pius XII in 1952 recognized it as the official international Catholic peace movement. It began as a movement to work towards reconciliation between the French and German people after World War II with the organizing of peace pilgrimages, and expanded to other European countries. It grew as “a crusade of prayer for peace among all nations.” It began to focus on human rights, security, disarmament, and demilitarization. It now has 120 member organizations worldwide. Pax Christi International is based on the belief that peace is possible, and looks at the causes & destructive consequences of violent conflict and war. Its vision is that “vicious cycles of violence and injustice can be broken.” Its International Secretariat is in Brussels and there are chapters in many countries. Pax Christi became involved in support of protesters in the civil rights movement in Mississippi, helping to organize boycotts of businesses that discriminated against blacks. Pax Christi operates by facilitating networking with other organizations involved in the peace movement, advocating for the movement internationally, and building the capacity of member organizations for nonviolent peace work. Pax Christi has consultative status as a non-governmental organization at the United Nations and says it “brings the voice of civil society to the Catholic Church, and conversely carries the values of the Catholic Church to civil society.” In 1983, Pax Christi International was awarded the UNESCO Peace Education Prize.

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November 15

On this date in 1920 the first permanent parliament of the world, the League of Nations, met in Geneva. The concept of collective security was new, a product of the horrors of the First World War. Respect for the integrity and independence of all the members, and how to join in preserving them against aggression, were addressed in the resulting Covenant. Cooperative entities such as the Universal Postal Union and other structures of social and economic life were set up, and members agreed on matters such as transport and communications, commercial relations, health, and supervision of the international arms trade. A Secretariat was set up in Geneva and an Assembly of all members was established, along with a Council made up of representatives of the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan as permanent members, with four others elected by the Assembly. However, the United States' seat in the Council was never occupied. The United States did not join the League, in which it would have been one among equals. This was a very different proposition from that of joining the later United Nations, in which the United States and four other countries were given veto power. When World War II broke out, no appeal to the League was made. No meetings of the Council or Assembly took place during the war. The economic and social work of the League was continued on a limited scale, but its political activity was at an end. The United Nations, with many of the same structures as the League, was established in 1945. In 1946, the League of Nations was formally ended.

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November 16

On this date in 1989, six priests and two other people were murdered by the Salvadoran military. The civil war in El Salvador, 1980-1992, killed more than 75,000 people, leaving 8,000 missing and a million displaced. A United Nations Truth Commission established in 1992 found that 95 percent of the human rights abuses recorded during the conflict were committed by the Salvadoran military against civilians living primarily in rural communities who were suspected of supporting leftist guerrillas. On the 16th of November 1989, Salvadoran Army soldiers killed Jesuits Ignacio Ellacuría, Ignacio Martín-Baró, Segundo Montes, Amando López, Juan Ramón Moreno, and Joaquín López, as well as Elba Ramos and her teenage daughter Celina at their residence on the campus of Jose Simeon Canas Central American University in San Salvador. Elements of the notorious elite Atlacatl Battalion raided the campus with orders to kill its rector, Ignacio Ellacuría, and to leave no witnesses behind. The Jesuits were suspected of collaborating with rebel forces and had endorsed a negotiated end to the civil conflict with the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, (FMLN). The murders attracted international attention to the Jesuits' efforts and increased international pressure for a cease-fire. This was one of the key turning points that led toward a negotiated settlement to the war. A peace agreement ended the war in 1992, but the presumed masterminds of the assassinations have never been brought to justice. Five of the six Jesuits slain were Spanish citizens. Spanish prosecutors have long sought the extradition from El Salvador of the key members of the military high command implicated in the deaths.

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November 17

On this day in 1989 the Velvet Revolution, the peaceful liberation of Czechoslovakia, began with a student march. Czechoslovakia was claimed by the Soviets following WWII. By 1948, Marxist-Leninist policies were mandatory in all schools, the media had been strictly censored, and businesses were controlled by the Communist government. Any opposition was met with fierce police brutality against both protestors and their families until free speech was silenced. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's policies eased the political climate somewhat in the mid-1980s leading students to plan a memorial march supposedly in honor of a student who had died 50 years earlier in a march against Nazi occupation. Czechoslovakian activist, author, and playwright Vaclav Havel had also organized a Civic Forum to take back the country through a "Velvet Revolution" of peaceful protest. Havel utilized underground coordination through connections with playwrights and musicians resulting in a widespread group of activists. As the students set out on November 17th, they once again were met by brutal beatings from police. The Civic Forum then continued the march, calling on citizens along the way to back students in the fight for civil rights and free speech prohibited under Communist rule. The number of marchers grew from 200,000 to 500,000, and continued until there were too many for the police to contain. On November 27th, workers across the country went on strike, joining the marchers in calling for an end to the severe Communist suppression. This peaceful march led the entire communist regime to resign by December. Vaclav Havel was elected president of Czechoslovakia in 1990, the first democratic election since 1946.

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November 18

On this date in 1916 the Battle of the Somme ended. This was a World War I battle between Germany, on one side, and France and the British Empire (including troops from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Newfoundland) on the other. The battle took place on the banks of the River Somme in France, and it had been begun on July 1st. Each side had strategic reasons for the battle, but no moral defense of it. Three million men fought each other from trenches with guns, and poison gas, and — for the first time — tanks. Some 164,000 men were killed, and another roughly 400,000 injured. None of them were so-called sacrifices for some glorious cause. Nothing good came out of the battle or the war to weigh against the damage. The tanks reached their top speed of 4 miles per hour and then generally died. The tanks were faster than the humans, who had been planning the battle since 1915. Hundreds of airplanes and their pilots were also destroyed in the battle, during which one side advanced a total of 6 miles but gained no key advantage. The war lumbered on in all of its fabulous futility. Given humanity's penchant for wishful thinking, and the then rapidly developing tools of propaganda, the sheer horror and scale of the war led many to attempt to believe that for some reason this war would put an end to the institution of war. But, of course, the creators of war (the weapons industries, the power-mad politicians, the romanticizers of violence, and the careerists and bureaucrats who would go along as directed) all remained.

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November 19

On this day in 1915 Joe Hill was executed, but never died. Joe Hill was an organizer of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a radical union known as the Wobblies which lobbied against the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and its support of capitalism. Hill was also a talented cartoonist and prolific songwriter who encouraged weak and weary workers from all industries, including women and immigrants, to join together as one. He also composed many of the songs used during IWW protests including “The Preacher and the Slave,” and “There is Power in a Union.” Resistance to the IWW was harsh throughout the conservative west in the early 1900s, and its socialist members were considered enemies by the police and politicians. When a grocery store owner was killed during a robbery in Salt Lake City, Joe Hill had visited a nearby hospital on the same night with a gunshot wound. When Hill refused to disclose how he had been shot, the police charged him with the murder of the shop owner. It was later learned that Hill had been shot by a man who was courting the same woman as Hill. Despite the lack of evidence, and the rallying support of the IWW, Hill was convicted and sentenced to death. In a telegram to IWW founder Big Bill Hayward, Hill wrote: “Don’t waste any time in mourning. Organize!” These words became the union motto. Alfred Hayes wrote the poem “Joe Hill,” which was set to music in 1936 by Earl Robinson. The words “I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night” still inspire workers.

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November 20

On this day in 1815 the Peace Treaty of Paris ended the Napoleonic Wars. The work for this treaty began five months after Napoleon I's first abdication and Napoleon Bonaparte's second abdication in 1814. In February, 1815, Napoleon escaped from his exile on the island of Elba. He entered Paris on March 20th and began the Hundred Days of his restored rule. Four days after his defeat in the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon was persuaded to abdicate again, on June 22nd. King Louis XVIII, who had fled the country when Napoleon arrived in Paris, took the throne for a second time on July 8. The peace settlement was the most comprehensive one that Europe had ever seen. It had more punitive terms than the treaty of the previous year which had been negotiated by Maurice de Talleyrand. France was ordered to pay 700 million francs in indemnities. France's borders were reduced to their 1790 status. In addition, France was to pay money to cover the cost of providing defensive fortifications to be built by the neighboring seven Coalition countries. Under the terms of the peace treaty, parts of France were to be occupied by up to 150,000 soldiers for five years, with France covering the cost; however, the Coalition occupation was only deemed necessary for three years. In addition to the definitive peace treaty between France and Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, there were four additional conventions and the act confirming the neutrality of Switzerland signed on the same day.

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November 21

On this date in 1990 the Cold War officially ended with the Paris Charter for a New Europe. The Paris Charter was the result of a meeting of many European governments and Canada, the United States, and the USSR, in Paris, from November 19-21, 1990. Mikhail Gorbachev, a passionate reformer, had come to power in the Soviet Union and introduced the policies of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring). From June of 1989 to December 1991, from Poland to Russia, communist dictatorships fell one by one. By the autumn of 1989, East and West Germans were tearing down the Berlin Wall. Within months, Boris Yeltsin, the alcoholic U.S.-backed Russian Soviet Republic's leader, took charge. The Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain were dissolved.

Americans had lived through a Cold War culture that had included McCarthyist witch hunts, backyard bomb shelters, a space race, and a missile crisis. Thousands of U.S. and millions of non-U.S. lives had been lost in wars justified by the confrontation with communism. There was a mood of optimism and euphoria over the Charter, even dreams of demilitarization and a peace dividend. The mood did not last. The US and its allies continued to rely on organizations such as NATO and old economic approaches instead of a new vision with more inclusive systems. The United States promised Russian leaders not to expand NATO eastward, but has since then done precisely that. In need of a new *raison d'être*, NATO went to war in Yugoslavia, setting a precedent for future far-flung imperial wars in Afghanistan and Libya, and the continuation of a cold war highly profitable to weapons dealers.

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November 22

On this day in 1963, President John F. Kennedy was murdered. The U.S. government set up a special commission to investigate, but its conclusions were widely deemed dubious if not laughable. Serving on the Warren Commission was Allen Dulles, a former director of the CIA who had been removed by Kennedy, and whom many view as among a group of top suspects. That group includes E. Howard Hunt who confessed to his involvement and named others on his death bed. In 2017 President Donald Trump, at the request of the CIA, illegally and without explanation, kept various JFK assassination documents secret that were scheduled to finally be released. Two of the most popular and persuasive books on this topic are Jim Douglass' JFK and the Unspeakable, and David Talbot's The Devil's Chessboard. Kennedy was no pacifist, but he was not the militarist some wanted. He wouldn't fight Cuba or the Soviet Union or Vietnam or East Germany or independence movements in Africa. He advocated disarmament and peace. He was talking cooperatively with Khrushchev, as President Dwight Eisenhower had attempted prior to the U2-shootdown. Kennedy was also the sort of opponent of Wall Street whom the CIA was in the habit of overthrowing in foreign capitals. Kennedy was working to shrink oil profits by closing tax loopholes. He was permitting the political left in Italy to participate in power. He prevented steel corporations' price hikes. No matter who killed Kennedy, over the decades that have followed, many have attributed countless acts of deference to the CIA and the military by politicians in Washington as indication of suspicion and fear.

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November 23

On this date in 1936, Carl von Ossietzky, the well-known German journalist and pacifist, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize retroactively for the year 1935. Ossietzky had been born in 1889 in Hamburg, and was a radical pacifist with excellent writing skills. He was — together with Kurt Tucholsky — co-founder of the Friedensbundes der Kriegsteilnehmer (peace alliance of the participants of war), the Nie Wieder Krieg (No More War) movement, and chief editor of the weekly Die Weltbühne (The world stage). After revealing then forbidden army training of the Reichswehr, Ossietzky was indicted in early 1931 for treason and espionage. Even when many tried to convince him to flee, he refused, stating that he would go to jail and would be a most annoying living demonstration against a politically motivated sentence. On the 28th of February 1933 Ossietzky was arrested again, this time by the Nazis. He was sent to a concentration camp where he was brutally mistreated. Suffering progressed tuberculosis, he was released in 1936 but was not allowed to travel to Stockholm to accept his prize. Time Magazine wrote: “If ever a man worked, fought and suffered for peace, it is the sickly little German, Carl von Ossietzky. For nearly a year the Nobel Peace Prize Committee has been swamped with petitions from all shades of Socialists, Liberals and literary folk generally, nominating Carl von Ossietzky for the 1935 Peace Prize. Their slogan: ‘Send the Peace Prize into the Concentration Camp.’” Ossietzky died on May 4th, 1936 in the Westend hospital in Berlin-Charlottenburg.

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November 24

On this date in 2016, after 50 years of war and 4 years of negotiations, the government of Colombia signed a peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The war had taken 200,000 Colombian lives and displaced seven million people from their land. The President of Columbia was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, though oddly his partners in peace were not. However, the rebels took more significant steps to actually follow through on the agreement than did the government. It was a complex arrangement, providing for disarmament, reintegration, prisoner exchange, amnesty, truth commissions, land ownership reform, and funding to farmers to grow crops other than illegal drugs. The government generally failed to follow through, and violated the agreement by refusing to release prisoners, and by extraditing prisoners to the United States. FARC demobilized, but the resulting vacuum was filled by new violence, illegal drug trading, and illegal gold mining. The government did not step up to protect civilians, reintegrate former fighters, guarantee the safety of former fighters, or to stimulate economic development in rural areas. The government also stalled on establishing a truth commission and a special court to try people for war crimes. Making peace is not the act of a moment, though a moment can be key. A country without war is a big step forward, but failing to end violence and injustice allows the possibility of war resuming. Colombia, like all countries, needs sincere commitments to the process of maintaining peace, not just flashy announcements and awards.

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November 25

This date is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Also on this date in 1910, Andrew Carnegie established the Endowment for International Peace. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women was issued by the UN General Assembly in 1993. It defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” One-third of the women and girls in the world have experienced physical, sexual, or psychological violence in their lives. A major source of this violence is war, in which rape is sometimes a weapon, and in which the vast majority of victims are civilians including women and children. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is a network of policy research centers. It was established in 1910 with the mission of abolishing war, after which it is to determine the second worst thing humanity does and work to eliminate that as well. In early decades of its existence, the Endowment focused on criminalizing war, building international friendship, and advancing disarmament. It worked, as required by its creator, toward the ultimate goal of complete abolition. But as Western culture has normalized war, the Endowment has prematurely moved on to working on all sorts of good causes, to the virtual elimination, not of war, but of its single original mission of antiwar advocacy.

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November 26

On this date in 1832, Dr. Mary Edwards Walker was born in Oswego, NY. Men's clothing was more practical on the family farm, and one of her several eccentricities was to always wear men's attire. In 1855 she graduated from Syracuse Medical College, the only female student in the class. Married to Albert Miller, a physician, she did not take his name. After an unsuccessful joint medical practice (the difficulty was her gender), they divorced. During the U.S. Civil War, in 1861, Walker was allowed to be a volunteer nurse with the Union Army. As an unpaid surgeon, she was the only woman doctor in the Civil War. She offered herself as a spy to the War Department but was turned down. Often crossing enemy lines to attend injured civilians, she was captured and spent four months as a prisoner of war. Long before women were legally given the vote, she voted, although she spurned the suffragette movement until later in life. After the war, President Andrew Johnson awarded Mary Edwards Walker the Medal of Honor. Changes in the award's regulations in 1917 meant that it was to be taken back, but she refused to give it up and wore it until the end of her life. She received a smaller war pension than that given to war widows. She worked in a female prison in Kentucky and in an orphanage in Tennessee. Walker published two books and exhibited herself in sideshows. Dr. Walker died February 21, 1919. She once said, "It is a shame that people who lead reforms in this world are not appreciated until after they are dead."

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November 27

On this day in 1945 CARE was founded to feed survivors of World War II in Europe. CARE stood for “Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe.” It is now the “Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere.” CARE’s food aid originally took the form of packages which were surplus war commodities. The last European food packages were sent in 1967. In the 1980’s CARE International was formed. It reports working in 94 countries, supporting 962 projects and reaching over 80 million people. Its headquarters is in Atlanta, Georgia. It has broadened its mandate over the years, essentially implementing programs “to create lasting solutions to poverty.” It advocates for policy changes addressing poverty and responds to emergencies, much as do the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. CARE says it is “committed to doing more than meeting immediate needs” by overcoming structural barriers to development such as discrimination and exclusion, corrupt or incompetent public institutions, access to essential public services, conflict and social disorder, and major public health threats. CARE does not operate within the United States. It was a pioneer NGO in investing in micro-financing for small enterprises with group savings and loans. CARE does not fund, support, or perform abortions. Instead, it attempts to reduce maternal and newborn mortality by “increasing the quality, responsiveness, and equity of health services.” CARE states that its programs focus on women and girls because women’s empowerment is an important driver of development. CARE is funded by donations from individuals and corporations and from government agencies, including the European Union and the United Nations.

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November 28

On this date in 1950 the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in South and South-East Asia was established. The Plan came from a Commonwealth conference on foreign affairs held in Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and the original group consisted of Australia, Britain, Canada, Ceylon, India, New Zealand, and Pakistan. In 1977, its name was changed to “The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific.” It is now an inter-governmental organization of 27 members, including India, Afghanistan, Iran, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, and the United States. The operational expenses of its Secretariat are paid by the member countries through an annual membership fee. Originally, airports, roads, railways, dams, hospitals, fertilizer plants, cement factories, universities, and steel mills were constructed in member countries with capital assistance and technology from developed to developing countries, with a skills training component. Its objectives include the emphasis on the concept of south-south cooperation, assimilation, and utilization of capital more efficiently, and technical cooperation and assistance in the sharing and transfer of technology. To those ends, recent programs have been aimed at providing advanced skills and experience in various fields of economic and social activities as a “means of good policy making and governance within public policy formulation in an environment of globalization and the market economy.” The Plan focuses on private sector development for economic growth and on drug abuse prevention in member countries. Its permanent programs are Drug Advisory, Capacity Building, Gender Affairs, and Environment.

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November 29

This is International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The date was established by the UN General Assembly in 1978, in response to the Nakba, or the catastrophe of the killing and evicting of Palestinians from their land and the obliteration of towns and villages during the 1948 creation of the nation of Israel. UN Resolution 181(II) on the partition of Palestine, had been adopted on this same date in 1947 to establish separate Arab and Jewish states on Palestinian land. Palestine had been colonized by Britain, and the Palestinian people were not consulted on the division of their land. This process ran contrary to the UN Charter, and thus lacks legal authority. The 1947 resolution recommended Palestine occupy 42 percent of its territory, a Jewish state 55 percent, and Jerusalem and Bethlehem 0.6 percent. By 2015, Israel had forcibly extended its reach to 85 percent of historic Palestine. By January 2015, the number of Palestinian refugees was 5.6 million. Palestinians still faced military occupation, ongoing civil control by an occupying force, violence and bombing, continued Israeli settlement construction and expansion, and deteriorating humanitarian and economic conditions. The Palestinian people have not received their inalienable rights to self-determination without external interference, as defined by the UN Declaration of Human Rights—national sovereignty, and the right to return to their property. Non-member UN observer status for Palestine was granted in 2012, and in 2015, the Palestinian flag was raised in front of UN headquarters. But the International Day is widely viewed as an attempt by the UN to mitigate a tragedy it created and to justify a resolution that has had tragic consequences for the Palestinian people.

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November 30

On this date in 1999, a wide coalition of activists nonviolently shut down the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Seattle, Washington. With 40,000 protesters, the Seattle coalition overshadowed any demonstrations in the United States up to then against organizations whose mandate is economic globalization. The WTO deals with world-wide trade rules and negotiates trade agreements among its members. It has 160 members representing 98% of world trade. To join the WTO, governments agree to adhere to trade policies set up by the WTO. The Ministerial Conference, as in Seattle, meets every two years, and makes major decisions for the membership. The WTO website says that its goal is “to open trade for the benefit of all,” and claims to aid developing countries. Its record in that regard is enormous and apparently intentional failure. The WTO has widened the gap between rich and poor while lowering employment and environmental standards. In its rules, the WTO favors rich countries and multinational corporations, harming smaller countries with high import duties and quotas. The protest in Seattle was large, creative, overwhelmingly nonviolent, and novel in its joining together of diverse interests, from labor unions to environmentalists to anti-poverty groups. While corporate media reports predictably highlighted a relative handful of people engaging in property destruction, the size and discipline and energy of the demonstrations succeeded in impacting both the decisions of the WTO and the public understanding thereof. Most importantly, the Seattle protests gave birth to numerous similar efforts at WTO and related gatherings all over the world for years to come.

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December 1

On this date in 1948 Costa Rica's president declared the country's intention to abolish its army. President Jose Figueres Ferrar announced this new national spirit in a speech that day from the nation's military headquarters, the Cuartel Bellavista, in San Jose. In a symbolic gesture he concluded his speech by smashing a hole in the wall and handing the keys of the facility to the minister of education. Today this former military facility is a national art museum. Ferrar said that, "it is time for Costa Rica to return to her traditional position of having more teachers than soldiers." Money that had been spent on the military, now is used, not only for education, but health care, cultural endeavors, social services, the natural environment, and a police force providing domestic security. The result is that Costa Ricans have a literacy rate of 96%, a life expectancy of 79.3 years — a world ranking even better than that of the United States — public parks and sanctuaries that protect a quarter of all land, an energy infrastructure based entirely on renewables, and is ranked number 1 by the Happy Planet Index compared to a ranking of 108 by the United States. While most countries surrounding Costa Rica continue to invest in armaments and have been involved in internal civil and cross border conflict, Costa Rica has not. It is a living example that one of the best ways to avoid war is to not prepare for one. Perhaps others of us should join the "Switzerland of Central America" and declare today as they have as "Military Abolition Day."



December 2

On this date in 1914 Karl Liebknecht cast the only vote against war in the German parliament. Liebknecht had been born in 1871 in Leipzig as the second of five sons. His father was a founding member of the Social Democratic Party (or SPD). When baptized, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were his baptism sponsors. Liebknecht was married twice, his second wife of Russian origin, and he had three children. In 1897, Liebknecht studied law and economy and graduated with magna cum laude in Berlin. His aim was to defend Marxism. Liebknecht was the leading element in the opposition against WWI. In 1908, while imprisoned for his anti-military writings, he was elected to the Prussian parliament. After voting for the military loan to finance the war in August 1914 – a decision based on loyalty to his party – Liebknecht, on December 2nd, was the only member of the Reichstag to vote against further loans for war. In 1916, he was ousted from the SPD and founded with Rosa Luxemburg and others the Spartacus League which disseminated revolutionary literature. Arrested during an antiwar demonstration, Liebknecht was sentenced for high treason to four years of prison, where he stayed until being pardoned in October 1918. On the 9th of November he declared Freie Sozialistische Republik (Free Socialist Republic) from a balcony of the Berliner Stadtschloss. After a failed and brutally repressed Spartacus uprising with hundreds killed, on the 15th of January Liebknecht and Luxemburg were arrested and executed by members of the SPD. Liebknecht was one of the few politicians who critiqued the human rights abuses in the Ottoman empire.

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December 3

On this day in 1997 the treaty banning land mines was signed. This is a good day on which to demand that the remaining few holdout countries sign and ratify it. The Preamble to the Ban states its main purpose: “Determined to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines that kill or maim hundreds of people every week, mostly innocent and defenseless civilians and especially children...” In Ottawa, Canada, representatives from 125 countries met with Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy, and Prime Minister Jean Chretien to sign the treaty banning these weapons whose purpose Chretien described as “for extermination in slow motion.” Landmines from previous wars remained in 69 countries in 1997, continuing the horrors of war. A campaign to end this epidemic was begun six years earlier by the International Committee of the Red Cross, and American human rights leader Jody Williams who founded the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, and was supported by the late Princess Diana of Wales. Militarized countries including the United States and Russia refused to sign the treaty. In response, Foreign Minister Axworthy noted another reason for removing mines was to raise agricultural production in countries such as Afghanistan. Dr. Julius Toth of the international medical assistance group Doctors Without Borders commented “It’s important for those countries to rethink their motives for not signing. If they can justify to the children that I have to deal with when I’m working in the countries with amputees and the victims of these mines...they’d better come up with a pretty valid reason for not being on line.”

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December 4

On this date in 1915, Henry Ford set out for Europe from Hoboken, New Jersey on a chartered ocean liner renamed The Peace Ship. Accompanied by 63 peace activists and 54 reporters, his purpose was nothing less than to end the seemingly futile carnage of World War I. As Ford saw it, the stagnant trench warfare served no ends but the death of young men and the profiteering of old ones. Determined to do something about it, he planned to sail to Oslo, Norway and, from there, set out to organize a conference of European neutral nations in The Hague that would convince leaders of the belligerent nations to make peace. On board ship, however, cohesion quickly disintegrated. News of President Wilson's call to build up the manpower and weaponry of the U.S. army pitted conservative against more radical activists. Then, when the ship arrived in Oslo on December 19, the activists found only a handful of supporters to welcome them. By Christmas Eve, Ford apparently saw the handwriting on the wall and effectively killed the Peace Ship crusade. Claiming illness, he skipped the scheduled train trip to Stockholm and sailed for home on a Norwegian liner. In the end, the peace expedition cost Ford about a half-million dollars and gained him little but ridicule. Yet, it might well be asked whether the foolishness attributed to him was rightly placed. Did it really lie with Ford, who exposed himself to failure in the fight for life? Or with European leaders who sent 11 million soldiers to their deaths in a war with no clear cause or purpose?

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December 5

On this date in 1955 the Montgomery Bus Boycott began. The secretary to the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Rosa Parks, a distinguished citizen of the highly segregated city in Alabama, had refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger four days before. She was arrested. At least 90 percent of Montgomery's black citizens stayed off the buses, and the boycott made international news. The boycott was coordinated by the Montgomery Improvement Association and its president, Martin Luther King Jr. This was his "Day of Days." At a meeting after Mrs. Parks' arrest, King said, in what would become his familiar speaking style, that they would "work with grim and bold determination to gain justice on the buses," that if they were wrong, the Supreme Court and the Constitution were wrong, and "If we are wrong, God Almighty is wrong." Protests and the boycott lasted for 381 days. King was convicted on a charge of interfering with lawful business when carpooling was organized; his home was bombed. The boycott ended with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that segregation on public buses was unconstitutional. The Montgomery boycott showed that mass non-violent protest could successfully challenge racial segregation and was an example for other southern campaigns that followed. King said, "Christ showed us the way, and Gandhi in India showed it could work." King went on to help lead many more successful uses of nonviolent action. The boycott is an outstanding example of how nonviolent action can bring about lasting change where violence cannot.

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December 6

On this date in 1904 Theodore Roosevelt added to the Monroe Doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine had been articulated by President James Monroe in 1823, in his annual message to Congress. Concerned that Spain might take over its former colonies in South America, with France joining it, he announced that the Western Hemisphere would in effect be protected by the United States, and any European attempt to control any Latin American nation would be considered a hostile act against the United States. Although initially it was a minor statement, this became a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy, particularly when President Theodore Roosevelt added the Roosevelt Corollary in response to a crisis in Venezuela. This stated that the United States would intervene in conflicts between European countries and Latin American countries to enforce European claims, rather than allowing Europeans to do so directly. Roosevelt claimed the U.S. was justified in being the “international police power” to end conflict. Henceforth, the Monroe Doctrine would be understood as justifying U.S. intervention, rather than merely preventing European intervention in Latin America. This justification was used dozens of times in the next 20 years in the Caribbean and Central America. It was renounced in 1934 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, but it never went away. The Monroe Doctrine has been acted upon continually over the decades, as the United States has assassinated, invaded, facilitated coups, and trained death squads. The Monroe Doctrine is cited to this day by U.S. leaders intent on overthrowing or controlling governments to the south. And it is understood in Latin America as an imperialist claim of superiority and domination.

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December 7

On this date in 1941, the Japanese military attacked U.S. bases in the Philippines and in Hawaii at Pearl Harbor. Getting into the war was not a new idea in the Roosevelt White House. FDR had tried lying to the U.S. public about U.S. ships including the Greer and the Kerny, which had been helping British planes track German submarines, but which Roosevelt pretended had been innocently attacked. Roosevelt also lied that he had in his possession a secret Nazi map planning the conquest of South America, as well as a secret Nazi plan for replacing all religions with Nazism. And yet, the people of the United States didn't buy the idea of going into another war until Pearl Harbor, by which point Roosevelt had already instituted the draft, activated the National Guard, created a huge Navy in two oceans, traded old destroyers to England in exchange for the lease of its bases in the Caribbean and Bermuda, and — just 11 days before the supposedly unexpected attack, and five days before FDR expected it — he had secretly ordered the creation of a list of every Japanese and Japanese-American person in the United States. On August 18th Churchill had told his cabinet, “The President had said he would wage war but not declare it,” and “everything was to be done to force an incident.” Money, planes, trainers, and pilots were provided to China. An economic blockade was imposed on Japan. U.S. military presence was expanded around the Pacific. On November 15th, Army Chief of Staff George Marshall told the media, “We are preparing an offensive war against Japan.”

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December 8

On this date in 1941, Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin cast the only vote against U.S. entry into World War II. Jeanette Rankin was born in Montana in 1880, the oldest of seven children. She studied social work in New York and quickly became an organizer for women's suffrage. Returning to Montana, she continued working for women's suffrage, and ran for election as a Progressive Republican. In 1916 she became the first and only woman in the House of Representatives. Her first vote in the House was against U.S. entry into World War I. The fact that she was not alone was ignored. She was vilified for supposedly not having the constitution for politics due to her being a woman. Defeated in 1918, she spent the next twenty-two years working for peace organizations and led a simple, self-reliant life. In 1940, at age sixty, she again won election as a Republican. Her lone "no" vote against declaring war on Japan came the day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor which turned the formerly isolationist U.S. public around about entering the war. She later wrote that the imposition of sanctions on Japan in 1940 had been provocative, done in hopes of an attack, a view that is now widely accepted. The public turned against her. Three days later, she withdrew rather than face the vote for war on Germany and Italy. She did not run again for Congress but continued to be a pacifist, travelling to India where she believed that Mahatma Gandhi promised a model for world peace. She actively protested the War on Vietnam. Rankin died at age ninety-three in 1973.

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December 9

On this date in 1961 Nazi SS Colonel Adolf Eichmann was found guilty of war crimes during World War II. In 1934 he had been appointed to work in a unit dealing with Jewish affairs. His job had been to help murder Jews and other targets, and he had been responsible for logistics for the “final solution.” He had very efficiently managed the identification, assembly, and transportation of Jews to their destinations at Auschwitz and other extermination camps. He was later called the “architect of the Holocaust.” Although Eichmann was captured by U.S. soldiers at the end of the war, he escaped in 1946 and spent years in the Middle East. In 1958, he and his family settled in Argentina. Israel was concerned about the generation growing up in that new country without direct knowledge of the Holocaust and was anxious to educate them and the rest of the world about it. Israeli secret service agents illegally arrested Eichmann in Argentina in 1960 and took him to Israel for a trial before three special judges. The controversial arrest and four-month trial led to Hannah Arendt’s reporting on what she called the banality of evil. Eichmann denied committing any offenses, saying his office had been responsible only for transport, and that he had been merely a bureaucrat following orders. Eichmann was convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity. An appeal was denied; he was killed by hanging on June 1, 1962. Adolph Eichmann is an example to the world of the atrocities of racism and war.

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December 10

On this date in 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That made this Human Rights Day. The Declaration was in response to the atrocities of World War II. The UN Commission on Human Rights, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, drafted the document over two years. It was the first international statement to use the term “human rights.” The Declaration of Human Rights has 30 articles listing specific civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights reflecting the values of freedom, dignity, and peace of the United Nations. For instance, it covers the right to life, and the prohibition of slavery and torture, the right to freedom of thought, opinion, religion, conscience, and peaceful association. It was passed with no country against, but abstentions from the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa. The authoritarian states felt it interfered with their sovereignty, and Soviet ideology placed a premium on economic and social rights while the capitalist West placed more importance on civil and political rights. By way of recognizing economic rights, the Declaration states “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family.” In the end, the document became non-binding and is looked upon, not as law, but as an expression of morality and as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. The rights have been used in treaties, economic agreements, regional human rights law, and constitutions around the world.

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December 11

On this date in 1981, the worst massacre in modern Latin American history took place in El Salvador. The killers had been trained and supported by the United States government, which opposed leftist and independent governments under the banner of saving the world from communism. In El Salvador the United States provided an oppressive government with weapons, money, and political support at a cost of one million dollars a day. The operation in remote El Mozote was carried out by the elite Atlacatl battalion which was trained in so-called counter-insurgency at the U.S. Army School of the Americas. The victims were guerrillas and campesinos who had control over much of the countryside. The Atlacatl soldiers systematically interrogated, tortured and executed the men, then took the women, shooting them after raping them, smashing the bellies of pregnant women. They slit the children's throats, hung them in trees, and burned down the houses. Eight hundred people were slaughtered, many children. A few witnesses escaped. Less than six weeks later, photos of the bodies were published in New York and Washington. The United States knew but did nothing. An amnesty law in El Salvador thwarted investigations in the following years. After seven years of exhumations, in October 2012, over thirty years after El Mozote, the UN Inter-American Court found El Salvador guilty of the massacre, of covering it up, and of failing to investigate afterwards. Compensation for surviving families was minimal. In subsequent years, El Salvador had the world's highest homicide rate. This is a good day to dedicate time to study and to protest the horrors of current military interventions in other countries.

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December 12

On this date in 1982, 30,000 women linked hands to completely encircle the nine-mile perimeter of the U.S.-run military base at Greenham Common in Berkshire, England. Their self-declared purpose was to “embrace the base,” thereby “countering violence with love.” The Greenham Common base, opened in 1942, had been used by both the British Royal Air Force and U.S. Army Air Force during the Second World War. During the ensuing Cold War, it was loaned to the U.S. for use by the U.S. Strategic Air Command. In 1975, the Soviet Union deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles with independently targetable warheads on its territory that the NATO alliance deemed a threat to the security of Western Europe. In response, NATO drew up a plan to deploy more than 500 ground-based nuclear cruise and ballistic missiles in Western Europe by 1983, including 96 cruise missiles at Greenham Common. The earliest women’s demonstration against the NATO plan took place in 1981, when 36 women marched to Greenham Common from Cardiff, Wales. When their hopes to debate the plan with officials were ignored, the women chained themselves to a fence at the air base, set up a Peace Camp there, and began what became an historic 19-year protest against nuclear weapons. With the end of the Cold War, the Greenham Common military base was closed in September 1992. Yet, the enduring demonstration there waged by tens of thousands of women remains significant. In a time of re-heightened nuclear anxieties, it reminds us that life-affirming mass collective protest offers a potent means to point up the life-negating projects of the military/industrial state.

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December 13

On this date in 1937 Japanese troops raped and mutilated at least 20,000 Chinese women and girls. Japanese troops captured Nanjing, then the capital of China. Over six weeks they murdered civilians and combatants and looted homes. They raped between 20,000 and 80,000 women and children, cut open pregnant mothers, and sodomized women with bamboo sticks and bayonets. The number of deaths is uncertain, up to 300,000. Documentation was destroyed, and the crime is still a reason for tension between Japan and China. The use of rape and sexual violence as weapons of war has been documented in many armed conflicts including in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cyprus, Haiti, Liberia, Somalia, Uganda, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Croatia, as well as in South America. It is often used in ethnic cleansing. In Rwanda, pregnant adolescent girls were ostracized by their families and communities. Some abandoned their babies; others committed suicide. Rape erodes the fabric of a community in a way that few weapons can, and the violation and pain is stamped on entire families. Girls and women are sometimes subjected to forced prostitution and trafficking, or to providing sex in return for provisions, sometimes with the complicity of governments and military authorities. During World War II, women were imprisoned and forced to satisfy occupying forces. Many Asian women were also involved in prostitution during the Vietnam war. Sexual assault presents a major problem in camps for refugees and the displaced. The Nuremberg trials condemned rape as a crime against humanity; governments must be called upon to enforce laws and codes of conduct and to supply counseling and other services for victims.

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December 14

On this date in 1962, 1971, 1978, 1979, and 1980, nuclear bomb testing was conducted in the United States, China, and the USSR. This date is a random sample chosen from total known nuclear testing. From 1945 to 2017, there were 2,624 nuclear bomb tests worldwide. The first nuclear bombs were dropped by the United States on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945, in what are now seen as early nuclear tests, since no one knew exactly how powerful they would be. Estimates of killed and wounded in Hiroshima are 150,000 and Nagasaki, 75,000. A period of nuclear proliferation followed World War II. During the Cold War, and ever since, the United States and the Soviet Union have vied for supremacy in a global nuclear arms race. The U.S. has conducted 1,054 nuclear tests, followed by the USSR which has conducted 727 tests, and France with 217. Tests have also been done by the UK, Pakistan, North Korea, and India. Israel is also known to possess nuclear weapons, though it has never officially admitted it, and U.S. officials generally go along with that pretense. The strength of nuclear weapons has increased immensely over time, from atomic bombs to thermonuclear hydrogen bombs, and nuclear missiles. Today, nuclear bombs are 3,000 times as powerful as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. A powerful anti-nuclear movement has led to disarmament agreements and reductions, including the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty of 1970 and the Nuclear Ban Treaty that began collecting ratifications in 2017. Sadly, the nuclear armed nations have not yet supported a ban, and media attention has moved away from their ongoing arms race.

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December 15

On this date in 1791 the U.S. Bill of Rights was ratified. In the United States this is Bill of Rights Day. There was much debate over drafting and ratifying the Constitution, which outlines a framework of government, but it finally came into effect in 1789, with an understanding that a Bill of Rights would be added. The Constitution can be amended by ratification by three-fourths of the States. The first ten amendments to the Constitution of the United States are the Bill of Rights, ratified two years after the Constitution was established. One well-known Amendment is the First, which protects the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and religion. The Second Amendment has evolved into a right to own guns, but originally addressed the right of states to organize militias. Early drafts of the Second Amendment included a ban on a national standing army (also found in the two-year limit on an army contained in the main text of the Constitution). Drafts also included civilian control over the military, and the right to conscientiously object to joining the military. The importance of militias was two-fold: stealing land from Native Americans, and enforcing slavery. The amendment was edited to refer to state militias, rather than a federal militia, at the behest of states that permitted slavery, whose representatives feared both slave revolts and slave emancipation through federal military service. The Third Amendment forbids compelling anyone to host soldiers in their homes, a practice rendered obsolete by hundreds of permanent military bases. The Fourth through Eighth Amendments, like the First, protect people from government abuses, but are routinely violated.

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December 16

On this date in 1966 the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) was adopted by the UN General Assembly. It came into force in 1976. As of December 2018, 172 countries had ratified the Covenant. The International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the ICCPR are collectively known as the International Bill of Rights. The ICCPR applies to all government entities and agents, and all state and local governments. Article 2 ensures that rights recognized in the ICCPR will be available to everyone in those states that have ratified the Covenant. Article 3 ensures the equal rights of men and women. Among other rights protected by the ICCPR are: the rights to life, to freedom from torture, freedom from slavery, to peaceful assembly, security of the person, freedom of movement, equality before the courts, and a fair trial. Two optional protocols state that anyone has the right to be heard by the Human Rights Committee, and abolish the death penalty. The Human Rights Committee examines reports and addresses its concerns and recommendations to a country. The Committee also publishes General Comments with its interpretations. The American Civil Liberties Union submitted a list of issues in January 2019 to the Committee about violations in the United States, such as: militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border, extraterritorial use of force in targeted killings, National Security Agency surveillance, solitary confinement, and the death penalty. This is a good day to learn more about the ICCPR and to get involved with upholding it.

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December 17

On this date in 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation in Tunisia launched the Arab Spring. Bouazizi was born in 1984 into a poor family with seven children and a sick stepfather. He worked from age ten as a street vendor and quit school to support his family, earning about \$140 a month selling produce that he went into debt to purchase. He was well-known, popular, and generous with free produce for the poor. The police harassed him and expected bribes. Reports about his action are conflicting, but his family says the police wanted to see his vendor's permit, which he didn't need for selling from a cart. A female official slapped him in the face, spat at him, took his equipment, and insulted his dead father. Her aides beat him. A woman insulting him made his humiliation worse. He tried to see the governor, but was refused.

Completely frustrated, he doused himself with gasoline, and set himself alight. Eighteen days later, he died. Along with angry street protests, five thousand people attended his funeral. An investigation ended with the woman official who had insulted him detained. Groups demanded the removal of the regime of the corrupt president, Ben Ali, in power since 1987. Use of force to suppress the protests drew international criticism, and ten days after Bouazizi's death, Ben Ali was obliged to resign and leave with his family. Protests continued with a new regime. Nonviolent protests known as the Arab Spring spread across the Middle East, with more people marching than at any time in its history. This is a good day to organize nonviolent resistance to injustice.

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December 18

On this date in 2011, the United States supposedly ended its war on Iraq, which did not actually end, and which had lasted in one form or another since the year 1990. U.S. President George W. Bush had signed an agreement to have U.S. troops removed from Iraq by 2011, and had begun to remove them in 2008. His successor as president, Barack Obama, had campaigned on ending the war on Iraq and escalating that on Afghanistan. He kept the second half of that promise, tripling U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Obama sought to keep thousands of troops in Iraq beyond the deadline but only if the Iraqi Parliament would grant them immunity for any crimes they might commit. Parliament refused. Obama withdrew most troops, but after his reelection sent thousands of troops back in, despite lacking that criminal immunity. Meanwhile the chaos created by the phase of the war launched in 2003, the 2011 war on Libya, and the arming and supporting of dictators across the region and of rebels in Syria led to more violence and the rise of a group called ISIS that served as an excuse for increased U.S. militarism in Syria and Iraq. The U.S.-led war on Iraq in the years after 2003 killed well over a million Iraqis, according to every serious study undertaken, destroyed basic infrastructure, created disease epidemics, refugee crises, environmental devastation, and effective sociocide, the killing of a society. The United States poured over a trillion dollars into the direct costs of militarism each year for many years following 2001, impoverishing itself in a manner that the September 11th terrorists could only have dreamed of.

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December 19

On this date in 1776 Thomas Paine published his first “American Crisis” essay. It begins “These are the times that try men’s souls” and was the first of his 16 pamphlets between 1776 and 1783 during the American Revolution. He had arrived in Pennsylvania from England in 1774, largely uneducated, and written and sold essays defending the idea of a republic. He hated authority in any form, denounced the “tyranny of British rule” and supported the revolution as a just and holy war. He called for theft from Loyalists, advocated their hanging, and praised mob violence against British soldiers. Paine expressed himself in very simple terms, making for ideal wartime propaganda. Rejecting complexity, he said, “I scarcely ever quote; the reason is, I always think.” Some believe that his denouncement of other thinkers reflects his lack of education. He moved back to Great Britain in 1787 but his thought was not accepted. His passionate support of the French Revolution meant he was charged with seditious libel and forced to flee England for France before he could be arrested and stand trial. France fell into anarchy, terror, and war, and Paine was imprisoned during the Terror but eventually was elected to the National Convention in 1792. In 1802, Thomas Jefferson invited Paine back to the United States. Paine held very progressive views on government, labor, economics, and religion — earning himself plenty of enemies. Paine died in New York City in 1809 and is generally listed among the Founding Fathers of the United States. This is a day to read with a critical mind.

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December 20

On this date in 1989 the United States attacked Panama. The invasion, under President George H.W. Bush, was called Operation Just Cause, deployed 26,000 troops, and was the largest U.S. war since the war on Vietnam. The stated goals were to restore to the presidency Guillermo Endara, whose election had been financed by ten million U.S. dollars, and who had been deposed by Manuel Noriega, and to arrest Noriega on drug trafficking charges. Noriega had been a paid CIA asset for two decades, but his obedience to the United States had been faltering. Motivations for the invasion included maintaining U.S. control of the Panama Canal, maintaining U.S. military bases, gaining support for U.S.-backed fighters in Nicaragua and elsewhere, painting President Bush as a macho leader rather than a wimp, selling weapons, and ending the so-called Vietnam Syndrome, meaning the reluctance of the U.S. public to support more disastrous wars. Up to 4,000 Panamanians died in this “dry run” for the later Gulf War. Panama developed a dollarized economy based on tourism, the service sector, the Panama Canal, retirement gated communities, flagship registry, tax incentives for foreign construction companies and investors, overseas banking, a low cost of living, and a soaring value of land. Panama is known for money laundering, political corruption, and cocaine transshipments. There is widespread unemployment, and the split between the rich and poor wide, with 40% of the population under the poverty level. People live in inadequate housing and have little access to medical care or proper nutrition. This is a good day to think about who gains the spoils of war and who suffers the consequences.

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December 21

On this date in 1940, planning for the firebombing of Tokyo by the United States was agreed upon with China. Two weeks shy of a year before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, China's Minister of Finance T.V. Soong and Colonel Claire Chennault, a retired U.S. Army flier, met in U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau's dining room to plan the firebombing of Japan's capital. The Colonel, who was working for the Chinese, had been urging them to use American pilots to bomb Tokyo since at least 1937. Morgenthau said he could get men released from duty in the U.S. Army Air Corps if the Chinese could pay them \$1,000 per month. Soong agreed. The U.S. provided China with planes and trainers, and then pilots. But the firebombing of Tokyo didn't happen until the night of March 9-10, 1945. Incendiary bombs were used, and the firestorm that raged destroyed 16 square miles of the city, killed an estimated 100,000 people, and left a million people homeless. It was the most destructive bombing in human history, more destructive than Dresden, or even the atomic bombs used on Japan later that year. Where the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have received much attention and condemnation, the U.S. destruction of more than sixty Japanese cities prior to that bombing has been slight. Bombing cities has been central to U.S. warfare ever since. The result is more casualties but fewer U.S. casualties. This is a good day on which to consider the value of non-U.S. human lives.

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December 22

On this date in 1847, Congressman Abraham Lincoln challenged President James K. Polk's justification for the war on Mexico. Polk had insisted Mexico had started the war by "shedding American blood on American soil." Lincoln demanded to be shown where fighting had occurred and claimed that U.S. soldiers had invaded a disputed area that was legitimately Mexican. He further criticized Polk for the "sheerest deception" about the origin of the war and for attempting to add to U.S. territory. Lincoln voted against a resolution calling the war justified, and a year later supported one that passed narrowly, declaring the war unconstitutional. The following year the war was concluded with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. The treaty forced the Mexican government to agree to the takeover of Alta California and Santa Fe de Nuevo Mexico by the United States. This added 525,000 square miles to U.S. territory, including the land that makes up all or parts of present-day Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. The United States paid \$15 million compensation and cancelled a \$3.5 million debt. Mexico acknowledge the loss of Texas and accepted the Rio Grande as its northern border. The greatest territorial expansion of the United States had taken place through Polk's annexation of Texas in 1845, negotiation of the Oregon Treaty with Great Britain in 1846, and the conclusion of the Mexican-American War. The war was viewed in the U.S. as a victory, but was criticized for human casualties, monetary cost, and heavy-handedness. Lincoln's opposition to war was no bar to his entering the White House, where, like most presidents, he abandoned it.

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December 23

On this date in 1947 President Truman pardoned 1,523 of 15,805 World War II draft resisters. Pardons had always been the prerogative of kings and emperors. In the United States in 1787, at the Constitutional Convention, the pardon power was given to the U.S. President. In 1940, the Selective Training and Service Act was passed. All men between ages 21 and 45 had to register for the draft. After the war, the number of men imprisoned for refusing induction, failing to register, or failing to meet the narrow test for conscientious objection numbered 6,086. The number of desertions was unclear, but in 1944, the Army recorded a rate of 63 desertions for every 1,000 men on active duty. Truman refused to grant an amnesty that would pardon everyone, and instead followed the practice from the First World War: selective pardon. The effect of a pardon would be to restore full civil and political rights. In 1946, Truman named a three-member board to review the cases of conscientious objectors. The board recommended pardons for only 1,523 draft resisters. The board argued that no pardons were justified for those who “set themselves up as wiser and more competent than society to determine their duty to come to the defense of the nation.” In 1948, Eleanor Roosevelt appealed to Truman to review all the cases, but Truman refused, saying the men involved were “just plain cowards or shirkers.” But in 1952, Truman gave pardons to those who had served in the Army in peacetime, and all peacetime deserters from the military.

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December 24

On this date in 1924 Costa Rica gave notice to withdraw from the League of Nations to protest the Monroe Doctrine. The Covenant of the League of Nations, adopted upon its formation in 1920, had made reference to such doctrines as a means of assuring “the maintenance of peace” in spite of the fact that most Latin American countries did not view the Monroe Doctrine as doing so. The Monroe Doctrine, created in 1823, had been interpreted to become a tool for protecting U.S. interests in the Americas even if it meant denying sovereign nations their right to self-determination. One of the most significant formal statements re-interpreting the Monroe Doctrine was the Roosevelt Corollary of 1904, which openly sanctioned U.S. imperialism in the Americas. The Roosevelt Corollary explicitly changed the Monroe Doctrine from one of non-intervention by European powers in the Americas to one of active intervention by the United States. Some supporters of this policy believed that it was a part of the “white man’s burden” to act upon the basis of racial, cultural, and religious superiority. Roosevelt had stated that “chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of a civilized society” gave the U.S. justification to resort to “international police power” in accordance with his interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine. This racist thinking, along with U.S. economic interests, had already paved the way for incursions into Hawaii, Cuba, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Nicaragua by the time Costa Rica made its historic decision in 1924.

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December 25

On this date in 1914, in a number of places along the Western Front in World War I, British and German soldiers laid down their arms and climbed from their trenches to exchange holiday greetings and goodwill with the enemy. Though the governments of the warring countries had ignored Pope Benedict XV's call two weeks earlier to establish a temporary Christmas cease-fire, the soldiers themselves declared an unofficial truce. What prompted them to do it? It may be that, after settling into the drudgery and dangers of trench warfare in northern France, they had begun to identify their own miserable lot with that of the enemy soldiers in trenches not far away. A "live and let-live" attitude had already expressed itself in "bartering and bantering" with the enemy during the "quiet time" between battles. Of course, military officers on both sides were loathe to risk any lessening of zeal for killing the enemy, leading the British by January 1915 to make further informal truces subject to severe punishment. For this reason, the Christmas Truce of 1914 was long thought to be a one-off event. Yet, evidence uncovered in 2010 by German historian Thomas Weber suggests that more localized Christmas truces were also observed in 1915 and 1916. The reason, he believes, is implicit in the fact that, following a battle, surviving soldiers often felt such remorse that they were moved to help injured soldiers on the other side. The soldiers continued to observe a Christmas truce where they could, because their humane instincts, buried in the frenzy of war, remained responsive to the greater possibilities of love and peace.

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December 26

On this day in 1872 Norman Angell was born. A love of reading led to his embracing Mill's Essay on Liberty at the age of 12. He studied in England, France, and Switzerland before migrating to California at 17. He began working for the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, and the San Francisco Chronicle. As a correspondent, he moved to Paris and became sub-editor of the Daily Messenger, then a staff contributor to *Éclair*. His reporting on the Spanish-American War, the Dreyfus affair, and the Boer War led Angell to his first book, *Patriotism under Three Flags: A Plea for Rationalism in Politics* (1903). While editing the Paris edition of Lord Northcliffe's *Daily Mail*, Angell published another book *Europe's Optical Illusion*, which he expanded in 1910 and renamed *The Great Illusion*. Angell's theory on war described in his work was that military and political power stood in the way of providing actual defense, and that it is economically impossible for one nation to take over another. *The Great Illusion* was updated throughout his career, selling over 2 million copies, and was translated into 25 languages. He served as a Labor Member of Parliament, with the World Committee against War and Fascism, on the Executive Committee of the League of Nations Union, and as President of the Abyssinia Association, while publishing forty-one more books, including *The Money Game* (1928), *The Unseen Assassins* (1932), *The Menace to Our National Defence* (1934), *Peace with the Dictators?* (1938), and *After All* (1951) on cooperation as the basis for civilization. Angell was knighted in 1931, and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1933.

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December 27

On this date in 1993 Belgrade Women in Black held a New Year protest. Communist Yugoslavia was made up of the republics of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro and Macedonia. After Prime Minister Tito died in 1980, divisions arose and were encouraged among ethnic groups and nationalists. Slovenia and Croatia declared independence in 1989, sparking conflict with the Yugoslav army. In 1992 war broke out between Bosnia's Muslims and Croats. A siege of the capital, Sarajevo, took 44 months. 10,000 people died and 20,000 women were raped in ethnic cleansing. Bosnian Serb forces took over Srebrenica and massacred Muslims. NATO bombed Bosnian Serb positions. War broke out in 1998 in Kosovo between Albanian rebels and Serbia, and again NATO began bombing, adding to the death and destruction while claiming to be fighting a so-called humanitarian war. Women in Black formed during these complex and devastating wars. Anti-militarism is their mandate, their "spiritual orientation and political choice." In the belief that women have always defended their homelands by raising children, supporting the powerless, and working unpaid in the home, they state "We reject military power...the production of arms for the killing of people...the domination of one sex, nation, or state over another." They organized hundreds of protests during and after the Balkan wars, and are active world-wide with educational workshops and conferences, as well as protests. They create women's peace groups and have received numerous UN and other women and peace prizes and nominations. This is a good day to look back at wars and ask what might have been done differently.

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December 28

On this date in 1991, the government of the Philippines ordered the United States to withdraw from its strategic naval base at Subic Bay. American and Philippine officials had reached tentative agreement the previous summer on a treaty that would have extended the lease of the base for another decade in exchange for \$203 million in annual aid. But the treaty was rejected by the Philippine Senate, which assailed the U.S. military presence in the country as a vestige of colonialism and an affront to Philippine sovereignty. The Philippine government then converted Subic Bay into the commercial Subic Freeport Zone, which created some 70,000 new jobs in its first four years. In 2014, however, the U.S. renewed its military presence in the country under terms of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. The pact allows the U.S. to build and operate facilities on Philippine bases for use by both countries in enhancing the home country's ability to defend itself against external threats. Such a need is questionable, however. The Philippines faces no foreseeable danger of invasion, attack, or occupation from anywhere—including from China, which is working with the Philippines to develop resources in the South China Sea under an agreement that precludes U.S. intervention. More broadly, it can be questioned whether the U.S. can at all justify maintaining a military presence in more than 80 countries and territories around the world. Despite the inflated threats cited by politicians and pundits, the U.S. is geographically and strategically well insulated from any real foreign dangers and has no right to incite such dangers elsewhere as self-appointed policeman of the world.

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December 29

On this date in 1890, the U.S. military killed 130-300 Sioux men, women, and children in the Wounded Knee Massacre. This was one of the last of many conflicts between the U.S. government and Native American nations during the 19th Century westward expansion of the United States. A religious ceremony known as the Ghost Dance was inspiring resistance, and perceived by the U.S. as threatening a major uprising. The U.S. had recently killed the famous Lakota Chief Sitting Bull in an attempt to arrest him and put an end to the dance. Some Lakota believed the dance would restore their old world and that wearing so-called “ghost shirts” would protect them from being shot. The Lakota, defeated and hungry, were heading for the Pine Ridge reservation. They were stopped by the U.S. 7th Cavalry, taken to Wounded Knee Creek, and surrounded by large rapid-fire guns. The story is that a shot was fired, whether by a Lakota or by a U.S. soldier is unknown. A tragic and avoidable massacre ensued. The number of dead Lakota is disputed, but it is clear that at least half of those killed were women and children. This was the last fight between federal troops and the Sioux until 1973, when members of the American Indian Movement occupied Wounded Knee for 71 days to protest conditions on the reservation. In 1977, Leonard Peltier was convicted of killing two FBI agents there. The U.S. Congress passed a resolution expressing regret for the 1890 massacre a hundred years later, but the United States largely ignores its origins in genocidal policies of war and ethnic cleansing.

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December 30

On this date in 1952 Tuskegee Institute reported that 1952 was the first year in 71 years of record keeping that no one was lynched in the U.S.—a dubious recognition that would not stand the test of time. (The last lynching in the U.S. occurred in the 21st century.) The cold statistic could hardly convey the horror of the worldwide phenomenon of the extrajudicial murder of people. Commonly committed by frenzied mobs, lynching provides a graphic example of humankind's almost universal credo to distrust and fear the “other,” the “different.”

Lynching stands as a stark illustration in miniature of the taproots of almost all war in human history, which have always featured conflict between people of different nationalities, religions, races, political systems, or philosophies. Although hardly unknown elsewhere in the world, lynching in the United States, which flourished from the post-Civil War years well into the 20th century, was characteristically a race-motivated crime. Over 73 percent of the almost 4,800 lynching victims in the U.S. were African-American. Lynchings were largely—though not exclusively—a Southern phenomenon. Indeed, a mere 12 southern states accounted for the 4,075 lynchings of African-Americans from 1877 to 1950. Ninety-nine percent of the people who carried out these crimes were never punished by either state or local officials. Nothing could be more illustrative of the current human inability to cooperate in preventing global catastrophes, such as destruction of the environment or global nuclear war than the fact that the United States Congress failed to pass a law declaring lynching a federal crime until December, 2018, after 100 years of trying.

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December 31

On this date, many people around the world celebrate the end of a year and the beginning of a new one. Often, people create resolutions or commitments to meet particular goals in the year just beginning. World BEYOND War has created a Declaration of Peace that we believe also serves as an excellent new year's resolution. This Declaration of Peace or peace pledge is found online at worldbeyondwar.org and has been signed by many thousands of individuals and organizations in almost every corner of the world. The Declaration consists of only two sentences, and reads in its entirety: "I understand that wars and militarism make us less safe rather than protect us, that they kill, injure and traumatize adults, children and infants, severely damage the natural environment, erode civil liberties, and drain our economies, siphoning resources from life-affirming activities. I commit to engage in and support nonviolent efforts to end all war and preparations for war and to create a sustainable and just peace." For anyone who has any doubts about any portions of the declaration — Is it really true that wars endanger us? Does militarism really damage the natural environment? Isn't war inevitable or necessary or beneficial? — World BEYOND War has created a whole website to answer such questions. At worldbeyondwar.org are lists and explanations of myths believed about war and reasons why we need to end war, as well as campaigns one can get involved in to advance that goal. Don't sign the peace pledge unless you mean it. But please do mean it! See worldbeyondwar.org Happy New Year!

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