

Nonkilling Arts Research Committee (NKARC): October 2014 Letter

Dear friends

While the world politicians last month decided to go on bomb-bomb campaign to kill fanatics without recognizing that a lot of that extremism had been a result of their own previously failed militaristic acts seeking solutions to complex societal problems, it was comforting to read/view some thoughtful reflections that you kindly sent my way. I myself was busy with a 12-day Annual Ottawa Peace Festival, our 8th one. Just in case you are curious about it, click on: www.OttawaPeaceFestival.blogspot.com .

Nonkilling Cinema:

Filmmaker Nahum Laufer sent me DVDs of two documentary films made by his son Erez: One Day After Peace and Rafting to Bombay. Both films are rich in narrative and show what makes us a compassionate authentic person. Profound insight of One Day After Peace for me was that “we become prisoners of our own inhumanity when we kill” whether the killing is by a soldier or a resistance fighter. Intersections in the film are about truth and reconciliation work being done in South Africa, Israel and Palestine raising the issue of basic human right, that is, we have right not to kill and not to be killed as mentioned in the Nobel Peace Laureates Charter of World Without Violence. ODAP’s protagonist Robi Damelin’s persistent search as a mother of a soldier son killed by the other side eventually has led to a strong movement of wars-affected grieved mothers in Israel and Palestine.

Rafting to Bombay documentary is equally important in enhancing our understanding about how one becomes a refugee forever. This is a story of Holocaust survivor from Poland to India to Israel to India. Nahum-Erez team deserves kudos as wonderful chroniclers of Laufer family history of displacement and loss. Their family roots trip to Mumbai gets a jolt when the district they were to stay is subject to terrorist attack at Taj Mahal Hotel on the day of their arrival. They become witness to killings of many innocent people including Rabbi of Bombay Synagogue. Nahum sums up that there is no choice while bad do their bad deeds, good people have to continue doing good. As one Indian interviewed remarks - search for good within oneself and in others so that at some point we recognize that there is 'no other'.

Strength of both these films come from the fact that without being defensive of one side or the other, the films are able to focus upon our common humanity bearing the burden of killings, religious discrimination, and racial identities in search of finding solutions to them

For more on the film and its producers, click on: <http://onedayafterpeace.com/index.php>
<http://docsforeducation.com/> <<http://docsforeducation.com/index.php>>

Nahum Laufer, Docs for Education, Erez Laufer Films, Holland st. 10, Afula 18371
Israel

Nonkilling creativity:

Our colleague Glenn Paige commenting on CGNK perspective on Israel-Gaza conflict last month wrote about the important role of nonkilling creativity. He writes: “We truly need

"nonkilling lighthouse narratives," nonfiction or fictional, in scenarios, novels, films, epic poetry, or in any form to inform and invite creativity beyond pessimism and passivity to Stop Killing Start Talking and Change. For example in the present crisis, narratives of plausible paths toward Nonkilling Israel and Nonkilling Palestine with Jerusalem as A Nonkilling Capital of the World where the spirits of Nonkilling Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Humanism converge in faith and fact to inspire, guide, and complement other actions to bring about a killing-free world. Even now, if nonkilling narrative creators in any field from sciences through professions to arts would review the nonkilling knowledge discoveries already made freely available by CGNK (maybe a week's reading and listening)-combined with their inner genius-21st century classics would surely be created to invite universal confidence that local to global nonkilling societies are possible. As new nonkilling knowledge and applied experiences grow, new narratives can be envisioned." Food for thought.

Nonkilling non-fiction writing:

A. Khalid Sohail

Last month received two transformative pieces from our new NKARC colleague Dr. Khalid Sohail. The articles are entitled: "From Holy War to War to Global Peace" and "The Last Killing". Both confessional pieces inspire one to say aloud, "No More Killing" revealing that seeds of peace and humanity are deeply rooted in us. Sohail writes: "I grew up in a violent culture in Pakistan, on the border of Afghanistan, and gradually became a peace loving humanist. I graduated from Medical School in Pakistan and did my psychiatry training at Memorial University in Canada. After receiving my FRCP I became a psychotherapist. Now I practice psychotherapy in my Creative Psychotherapy Clinic in Whitby, Ontario, Canada. I am sending you my personal story of transformation from violent consciousness to peace consciousness." (www.drsohail.com)

See doc attachment for Sohail's "Holy War to Global Peace". For his 2nd piece, The Last Killing, was posted this week on IFLAC site, click on: <http://iflac.wordpress.com/>

B. Mony Dojeiji and Alberto Agraso

Another beautiful piece of writing came from NKARC colleagues Mony Dojeiji and Alberto Degrasso, writer-artist 'walker' couple on their reflection on Gaza, entitled, Responding to Conflict. They write: "During moments of conflict, Alberto and I are sometimes asked why we keep silent, why we don't add our voices in support of one side or another, why we don't publish inflammatory remarks or images, why we don't condemn what we see. How, we are asked, can we be silent when image after image shows evidence of the inhumanity and cruelty being perpetrated?"

Of course, at times, I feel overwhelmed by anger and despair at what I see. I keep asking myself: when are people going to wake up? When are they going to realize that war solves nothing, no matter the arguments from either side?"

- Continue reading on: <http://walkingforpeace.com/reflections/english/responding-to-conflict.html#sthash.y7UQBWS5.dpuf>

Mony and Alberto walked over 5000 km a decade ago in their nonviolent search in making Jerusalem a city of peace. They walked 20 km daily on way from Rome to Jerusalem on the route which is called “Path of Soul” to reach their geographical destination, and in the process reached also another destination within. For more, see: <https://walkingforpeace.com>

Nonkilling Poetry:

Enclosed below are thoughtful poems from NKARC colleagues, they are about War, Displacement, Reconciliation and Hopeful Choices...

1. WEEDS . . . Metaphors . . . WARS by Anthony J. Marsella

I speak here of weeds growing across our land,
Wild, uninvited, unwelcome, festering!
I speak here of weeds inhabiting gardens and lawns,
Growing amidst driveways, sidewalks, curb cracks.
I speak here of weeds flourishing, thriving, resisting extinction.
I speak here of weeds challenging human presence,
Marring efforts after perfection:
Enemies to be destroyed,
Soaked with sprays,
Drenched with toxic mists,
Until yellowed and wilted in the sun!

II.

I speak here of weeds mocking beatific visions:
Blemishes to perfection,
Sullied lawns, plants, fields,
Flaws in uniform green vistas.
Endless foes of varying color and shape.

III.

Churchill’s words adopted for the struggle:
***“We will fight them in our yards,
In our gardens,
In our lawns,
This is not the end,
No, it is the beginning of the end.”***

It is a war against a worthy foe,
A war we can win!
Ahhh, if only there was a jingo,
An anthem to strengthen resolve?

The list prepared:
Garden gloves, powders, masks,
Chemical sprays — buy only “New and Improved!” brands.
Commercials recalled:
Happy . . . beautiful . . . perfect people . . .
Laughing as they direct streams of “letter, number, symbol fluids,”
Inviting you to share their pleasure,
Words spoken with sincere insincerity,
Southern accent, to soften message:

***“Don’t you just detest those weeds?
I use “X-out!” . . . the moment weeds appear.
If you leave them overnight, they multiply.
Buy — X-OUT!***

The name comforts,
Instills confidence!
Hundreds of blue plastic bottles,
A colorful display!
A mythic moment!
Grip the bottle.
Hold it!
A good fit!
Non-drip!

IV.

In the checkout line,
Customers share words,
Content with their decisions!
A poet disturbs certainty with virtuous words:

“A weed is a flower whose virtues have yet to be discovered.”

He pays and leaves humming an old folk song:
“Where have all the flowers gone? Long time passing”

Glares, stares, murmurs, contempt, frowns abound:

***“Sounds like a new-age minister!”
“This isn’t his choir!”
A collective litany begins – “Group Think:”***

*“Weeds are pests — like insects, rodents, spiders, varmints.
Kill’em all.*

*“This here stuff is new,
Just out!
Saw it on TV.”*

*“I’ll tell you how I kill those SOBs:
Just go out there and stare them down,
Talk to them,
Tell them you remember them from last year.”*

*“The more complex the chemical names,
On the package, the more I am likely to buy it.”*

*“I want a lawn without crabgrass, milkweed, dandelions.
Just perfect Bermuda green, Like our golf course.
That makes a man’s Spring and Summer.”*

*“You know, you have to apply the killers in the winter
To be prepared for the spring.
They grow even in the cold.
There’s no end to their presence.”*

*“Where I live,
“Our Neighborhood Board
Requires us to have a lawn-free of weeds.
One of the Board Members owns a lawn service.”*

“I say a little prayer. It always works:”

*“Caste them away from us,
Free us from their evil spectacle,
Strengthen our struggle.
Gird our loins.
We ask this in thy name.
Amen”*

*In mock execution,
A hero aims a plastic bottle,
“Gotcha! Take that you . . .”
Applause!*

There is no remorse in killing weeds,
No guilt, no shame, no regret.
Shared targets for inner rage,
Scapegoats,
Without them,
Who would we curse,
Who would we eradicate?

Tony's comment: I wrote this poem as thoughts about widespread violence continued to occupy my mind. Violent crimes are commonplace. Wars pandemic! The "weed" metaphor came to mind. Competition and struggle have crept into so many aspects of our lives – entertainment, education, marriages, business, government. Violence thrives amidst struggles! There are so many struggles in daily life we ignore or do not consider. Weeds? Just another foe!

Anthony Marsella is a past president of Psychologists for Social Responsibility, Emeritus Professor of psychology at the University of Hawaii, and past director of the World Health Organization Psychiatric Research Center in Honolulu. He is a pioneer figure in the study of culture and psychopathology who challenged the ethnocentrism and racial biases of many assumptions, theories, and practices in psychology and psychiatry. He can be reached at marsella@hawaii.edu

2. The recent Alt. t h e a t r e journal has a poem by Ahmed Ali, entitled DISPLACED. Ahmed writes: "We only hear the stories of those who have conquered their struggle and survived – never those who have conquered their struggle but fall to illness or misfortune. I am telling their story because everyone has a story, but not everyone can be a storyteller." For complete poem see: *attachment alt. theatre pdf*.
3. **NKARC colleague and IFLAC founder Ada Aharoni sent a beautiful reflection: Reconciliation: The Sulha Pomegranate. Sulha means reconciliation in Arabic. An excerpt from the poem:**

Yitzhak:
Good for you Sulha!
Do you mean to say
Ishmael, my brother, that a second tragedy
Can cancel the first one
Or one another?

Ishmael:
It is not that two tragedies cancel one another
But it makes it an easier burden to bear
When we know the other has already paid
For the Sulha a long, long time ago...
Wait, don't cut the pomegranate yet.

Now I can identify with you my brother –
As a mutual victim in pain,
And you can identify with me.

For Ada's full poem, click on: <http://iflac.wordpress.com/2014/09/20/sulha-pomegranate/>

4. Humanity's Choice

by Rana Ehtisham Rabbani

Planet Earth, part of Universe

Blessed by Nature

With enormous resources

Many in kind

Air, Water, Food, Minerals

Yet

Fear, Deprivation, Greed and Lust

Turned Human being Violent

Wars were waged, which led to killings

In the name of interest, personal, national

The horror continues

21st Century, Era of awareness, interconnectivity

Need of the time – sharings in all spheres of life

With open mind and big heart

With wisdom, positive acts and deeds

Lets brush aside

Discrimination prejudice, hatred, arrogance and greed.

Spread love, respect

Treating each other equal and alike

Oneness of Humanity

With waves of empathy compassion

With spirit of non killing, security, safety, prosperity for all

In peace

Deleting the words, violence, wars and killings

From vocabulary

Choice of Humanity

Maturity or Immaturity

Sharings or Wars

Pleasantries or Sorrows

Relief or Pains

Step forward for Peace

Share on parity

RANA EHTISHAM RABBANI

President Peace & Humanity Forum Pakistan

www.humanityworld.com

My deep gratitude to fellow contributors – Nahum and Erez Laufer, Glenn D. Paige, Khalid Sohail, Mony Dojeiji, Alberto Degrosso, Anthony J. Marsella, Ahmed Ali, Ada Aharoni, and Rana Ehtisham Rabbani. Keep up the good work.

Nonkilling Regards,
Bill

Bill (Balwant) Bhaneja

Coordinator

Nonkilling Arts Research Committee

Center for Global Nonkilling(CGNK)

www.nonkilling.org

"Nonkilling is THE measure of human progress"