STOP THE NEW NUCLEAR ARMS RACE

MAY 22-25, 2020
MARYVILLE, TENNESSEE

AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
on global collaboration
to abolish nuclear weapons

Strategizing for nuclear abolition, acting for the Ban Treaty in the shadow of the Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Complex in Oak Ridge, TN

REGISTER AT orepa.org/registration-form BY APRIL 24

nukewatchinfo.org/stop_new_nuclear_arms_race
actionfortheban@gmail.com

THE OAK RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL PEACE ALLIANCE
NUKEWATCH AND THE NUCLEAR RESISTER
You might expect a chilly evening would deter people from coming out to sit in the weather for an hour in January, but that's not the case! We had a great crowd, including our Pleasant Hill friends, for the Sunday vigil at the Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Complex, followed by a potluck at Marese Nepher's home.

Wednesday, April 1
1983 :: 14 MILE HUMAN CHAIN SURROUNDS GREENHAM COMMON IN NUCLEAR PROTEST

As nightfall does not come at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there is a twilight, when everything remains seemingly unchanged.

~ William O. Douglas
Why don’t they write about us more?
Our beauty overwhelms them.

Why can’t they hear our worlds echoing back and forth?
Sound with doubled harmony. Ears closed.

Who wanted what?
We all love falafel.

Calling us anti-Semitic
when we are Semites, too,
no joke, no one is laughing.

Why don’t they ask the right questions?
What’s too hard for you? That’s hard for me too.

Why do they stare at us as if they never saw kids before?
Where are their memories?

Have they placed their memories in iron lock boxes
buried in the cement of the drainage ditch?

Because they won’t let them cross the road?
~ Naomi Shihab Nye
Friday, April 3

What we would like to do is change the world—make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, the poor, or the destitute we can, to a certain extent, change the world; we can work for the oasis, the little cell of joy and peace to a harried world. We can throw our pebble to the pond and be confident that its ever widening circle will reach around the world.

~ Dorothy Day

Saturday, April 4

1968 :: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR ASSASSINATED, MEMPHIS, TN

When hope dies, a revolution degenerates into an undiscriminating catchall for evanescent and futile gestures. We cannot entrust our destiny to a philosophy nourished solely on despair, or to a slogan that cannot be implemented into a program.

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sunday, April 5

To see the truth requires that we must say what must be said, whoever it is that denies it. It takes no small amount of courage to speak a different truth, to ask a different question than is common to our peers, to our family, to our social class.

~ Joan Chittister

Monday, April 6

The whole idea of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all these living beings, which are all part of one another and all involved in one another.

~ Thomas Merton
Tuesday, April 7

Nothing to give you
that you would want.

Nothing big enough
but freedom.

~ Naomi Shihab Nye

Wednesday, April 8
563 :: BIRTH OF THE BUDDHA

Peace can exist only in the present moment. It is ridiculous
to say “Wait until I finish this, then I will be free to live in peace.”
What is “this”? A diploma, a job, a house, the payment of a debt? If
you think that way, peace will never come. There is always another
“this” that will follow the present one. If you are not living in peace
at this moment, you will never be able to. If you truly want to be
at peace, you must be at peace right now. Otherwise, there is only
“the hope of peace some day.”

~ Thich Nhat Hanh

The house was full, the topic was reparations, and the conversation was
animated at OREPA’s MLK Community Conversation at the Beck Cultural
Exchange Center in Knoxville in January.
Solitude is a deliberate dissociation from the social world; it is not the same as loneliness, and for many of us it contributes to well-being. It figured in the faith of Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, and other religious founders, as well as in the practices of followers. Yet, one result of solitude is to highlight the importance of relationships—whether with supernatural agents, a sacred community, or all sentient beings. The human needs for attachment and meaning underlie faith. Uniquely among animals we foresee our physical nonexistence. We ask why we are here and whether life has a purpose, but day to day we worry about being alone. Faith recruits cognitive mechanisms, but they are fueled by fear, loneliness, and longing. Parents, friends, mentors and leaders abandon us, but gods and spirits do not. They may be malevolent, but they are not indifferent. They take an interest in our actions and our destiny, and they know what we do for good and will; even without them, in Buddhism, the karmic cycle infuses every moment with meaning. Any claim to explain belief must take into account not just thinking but the strong needs that energize that thinking. This means we must listen to children, who have perhaps the strongest needs.

~ Melvin Connor
Friday, April 10
1930 :: DOLORES HUERTA BORN
1988 :: NORTHERN IRELAND PEACE AGREEMENT SIGNED

There is no better app for connecting with the natural world than not having one.
~ Paul Keeling

Saturday, April 11
MAWLID AL-NABI, MUHAMMAD’S BIRTHDAY
1996 :: AFRICAN NATIONS BAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS
1963 :: PACEM IN TERRIS, JOHN XXIII ENCyclical OPPOSES NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Wars teach us not to love our enemies, but to hate our allies.
~ W L George

Sunday, April 12

War will not cease until babies begin to come into the world with larger cerebrums and smaller adrenal glands.
~ H L Mencken

Monday, April 13
1919 :: EUGENE DEBS IMPRISONED FOR WAR OPPOSITION

When great changes happen in society, when great principles are involved, as a rule, the majority is in the wrong.
~ Eugene Debs

Tuesday, April 14
1986 :: US BOMBS LIBYA

A religion that is small enough for our understanding would not be large enough for our needs.
~ Arthur Balfour

Wednesday, April 15
1889 :: A PHILIP RANDOLPH BORN

Make wars unprofitable and you make them impossible.
~ A Philip Randolph
Memory was always staring hard at itself inside my head.

Does the wide world know there are two roads, one for them and one for us? And ours isn’t good?

The wide world! Singing of the stable and cows. Donkey and kings. Wise men. We would be so happy to meet.

Pothole, crack. Pothole, crack.

Where were the wise women? Children circling, chanting in the shadow of the wall. Small boy carrying broken candle he found on the ground. Not even a wick left. Doing the dust dance. Kicking the foot. We were waiting.

~ Naomi Shihab Nye
Friday, April 17
1960 :: STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOUNDED, GREENSBORO, NC
1961 :: US INVADES CUBA (BAY OF PIGS)

The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.

~ Helen Keller

Saturday, April 18

It’s a healthy thing now and then to place a question mark on the things you have long taken for granted.

~ Bertrand Russell

Sunday, April 19
1948 :: COSTA RICA ABOLISHES ARMY

The prophet does more than denounce evil. Prophetic spirituality envisions a world in which justice and equality, peace and community are the norm rather than the struggle.

~ Joan Chittister

Monday, April 20

You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore.

~ William Faulkner

Tuesday, April 21

We do not have to become heroes overnight. Just a step at a time, meeting each thing that comes up.

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

Wednesday, April 22
EARTH DAY

Nuclear war is the black swan we can never see, except in that brief moment when it killing us. We delay eliminating the risk at our own peril. Now is the time to address the threat, because now we are still alive.

~ Seth Baum
Children, I’ll argue, have a human right not to have their minds crippled by exposure to other people’s bad ideas—no matter who these other people are. Parents have no god-given license to enculturate their children in whatever ways they personally choose: no right to limit the horizons of their children’s knowledge, to bring them up in an atmosphere of dogma and superstition, or to insist they follow the straight and narrow path of their own faith. In short, children have a right not to have their minds addled by nonsense. And we as a society have a duty to protect them from it. So we should no more allow parents to teach their children to believe, for example, in the literal truth of the Bible or that the planets rule their lives than we should allow parents to knock their children’s teeth out or lock them in a dungeon.

~ Nicholas Humphrey
Friday, April 24
1965 :: US INVADES DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

As we grow older, our bodies get shorter and our anecdotes longer.

~ Robert Quillen

Saturday, April 25

Democracy means not “I’m as good as you are” but “You’re as good as I am.”

~ Theodore Parker

Sunday, April 26

Only a strong spiritual life, good friends, distance from the issue, and laughter really bring balm to the heart and renewed strength to the soul.

~ Joan Chittister

Monday, April 27

The notion that disarmament can put a stop to war is contradicted by the nearest dogfight.

~ George Bernard Shaw

Tuesday, April 28
1967 :: MUHAMMAD ALI REFUSES INDUCTION INTO US ARMY
1977 :: FIRST DEMONSTRATION OF MOTHERS OF THE DISAPPEARED, BUENOS AIRES

Democracy is ever eager for rapid progress, but the only progress which can be rapid is progress downhill.

~ James Jeans

Wednesday, April 29
1915 :: WOMEN’S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM FOUNDED

You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore.

~ William Faulkner
The child’s grasp of the difference between their own and others’ beliefs can be positive. Natalie, a Hopi 10-year-old in the southwestern US, was described by her teachers as a rather dull child who would not give a good interview, but she had a deep spiritual life. Coles noticed her gazing at a thundercloud. She pointed and said, “The home of the noise,” and then contrasted her beliefs with the Anglo ones. “The sky watches us and listens to us. It talks to us, and it hopes we are ready to talk back. The sky is where the God of the Anglos lives, a teacher told us. She asked where our God lives. I said, ‘I don’t know.’ I was telling the truth! Our God is the sky and lives wherever the sky is. Our God is the sun and moon, too. And our God is our people, if we remember to stay here. This is where we’re supposed to be, and if we leave, we lose God.”

~ Melvin Connor
Friday, May 1
1830 :: MOTHER JONES BIRTH CELEBRATED

The trouble with war is that all the preliminaries are arranged by matchmakers, and all they have left for fighters to do is the murdering.

~ Finley Peter Dunne

Saturday, May 2

There must be the keenest sense of duty, and with it must go the joy of living; there must be shame at the thought of shirking the hard work of the world.

~ Theodore Roosevelt

Sunday, May 3
1919 :: PETE SEEGER BORN

According to my definition of God, I’m not an atheist. Because I think God is everything. Whenever I open my eyes, I’m looking at God. Whenever I listen to something, I’m listening to God.

~ Pete Seeger

Monday, May 4
1970 :: FOUR STUDENTS KILLED BY NATIONAL GUARDSMEN FIRING ON PEACE DEMONSTRATORS AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today.

~ Franklin Roosevelt

Tuesday, May 5
1991 :: LAST CRUISE MISSILES REMOVED FROM GREENHAM COMMON BASE IN UK

Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard.

~ H L Mencken

Wednesday, May 6

Appreciation makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.

~ Voltaire
I heard that far away in other countries,
Finland and China, ancient Persian men and women
fall asleep with their hands on their hearts and by now
their hearts are shaped just like old Palestine,
not the new cut-into-bits pockmarked map of places
we are allowed to live, but the whole stitchery of towns
with melodious names, Arimathea, Bethabara,
Cana, Tiberias, Nazareth, Beersheba, Magdala,
and when these people dream, their rooms fill
with the flute music our great grandfathers loved,
the ney, that you used to hear around fires
at dusk, rising notes in thin curls of smoke.
Goat cheeses leavened and clarified,
small white mountains on an old black tarp.
No one had to do anything right then
but be quiet, and listen. When they awaken,
after dreaming like that, it is easier for them
to go on living.

~ Naomi Shihab Nye
Friday, May 8

By what authority do succeeding generations of leaders in the nuclear-weapons states usurp the power to dictate the odds of continued life on our planet? Most urgently, why does such breathtaking audacity persist at a moment when we should stand trembling in the face of our folly and united in our commitment to abolish its most deadly manifestations?

~ General Lee Butler

Saturday, May 9

Each human being is a more complex structure than any social system to which he or she belongs.

~ Alfred North Whitehead

Sunday, May 10

1994 :: SOUTH AFRICA INAUGURATES PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA

There is no passion to be found playing small – in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.

~ Nelson Mandela

Monday, May 11

1998 :: INDIA CONDUCTS 3 UNDERGROUND THERMONUCLEAR TESTS

Flags are bits of colored cloth that governments use first to shrink wrap people’s minds, then as shrouds to bury the dead.

~ Arundhati Roy

Tuesday, May 12

Love isn’t a state of perfect caring. It is an active noun like “struggle.”

~ Fred Rogers

Wednesday, May 13

Don’t own so much clutter that you will be relieved to see your house on fire.

~ Wendell Berry
What scraps we cling to these days—
giant slim stalk springing from the aloe pot,
upside-down pale orange bells
lasting for months.
Gift from the underworld.

Or Fareed Zakaria
resembling my father when I was young
Gazing into the screen, please tell me
what is going on. Who are these strange people
we live among?

There are no olive trees or mint leaves
in their forest,
only looming bank vaults with locked drawers.
How much do they need?

Someone else will launch a bomb.
Children wake up smiling, to see their mothers killed.
How do they survive?
When I see the politicians faces
gazing stupidly with thin smiles
as if posing
for a shaving cream ad,
I lose my mind.

Find a child to be your leader now.
Follow him through the rooms, notice
his delicate moves, delight in syllables, repeat.
Announcing the swish of every passing bus.
Bow down to his love.
Babies say, Mine, mine, but babies are kind.

The men on the screen, jaws tight,
can’t remember a single thing to do right.

~ Naomi Shihab Nye
Friday, May 15
1958 :: JAPANESE STUDENTS PROTEST PACIFIC TESTING OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

That we have the capacity to deal with the threat of global warming is not entirely clear, but there can be no doubt that the longer the delay, the more extreme the calamity.

~ Noam Chomsky

Saturday, May 16

Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore, we must be saved by love.

~ Reinhold Niebuhr

Sunday, May 17

1954 :: BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION RULING OUTLAWS SCHOOL SEGREGATION
1968 :: CATONSVILLE 9 BURN DRAFT RECORDS IN VIETNAM WAR PROTEST

The only basis for separate schools is an inherent determination that the people who were formerly in slavery shall be kept as near that stage as is possible, and now is the time, we submit, that this Court should make it clear that that is not what our Constitution stands for.

~ Thurgood Marshall, arguing Brown

Monday, May 18
1974 :: INDIA EXPLODES FIRST NUCLEAR WEAPON IN RAJASTHAN DESERT

Who the hell is the prime minister to decide whose finger is on the button that could turn everything we love to ash in an instant?

~ Arundahti Roy

Tuesday, May 19
1925 :: MALCOLM X BORN

If you aren’t careful, newspapers will have you hating the people who are oppressed and loving the ones who are oppressing.

~ Malcolm X

Wednesday, May 20

To grow old is to pass from passion to compassion.

~ Camus
What?
You don’t feel at home in your country
almost overnight?
All the simple things
you cared about, maybe took for granted…
you feel insulted, invisible?
Almost as if you’re not there?
But you’re there
Where before you mingled freely…
appreciated people who weren’t
“just like you”
divisions grow stronger.
That’s what “chosen” and “unchosen” will do.
(Just keep your eyes on your houses and gardens.
Keep your eyes on that tree in bloom.)
Yes, a wall. Ours came later but…
who talks about how sad the land looks,
marked by a massive wall?
That’s not a normal shadow.
It’s something else looming over your lives.

A Palestinian Might Say
~ Naomi Shihab Nye
Friday, May 22
1838 :: TRAIL OF TEARS FORCED MARCH OF CHEROKEES BEGINS; 4,000 WILL DIE

Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years.
People grow old only by deserting their ideals.
~ Douglas MacArthur

Saturday, May 23

There is within your soul a whole world of mysterious and enchanted thoughts; listen to their singing and be silent.
~ Fyodor Tyutchev

Sunday, May 24

The important thing is this: to be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we could become.
~ Charles DuBos

Monday, May 25

You were born an original. Don’t die a copy.
~ John Mason

Tuesday, May 26

Work has to include our deepest values and passions and feelings and commitments, or it’s not work. It’s just a job.
~ Matthew Fox

Wednesday, May 27

Community life can become a real school for growth and love; it reveals differences—differences which irritate or are painful; it reveals the wounds and shadows inside us, the plank in our own eye, our capacity for judging and rejecting others, the difficulty we have in listening to and accepting others. These difficulties can lead people to run away from community or lead them to work on themselves and understand and serve others and their needs better.
~ Jean Vanier
At the 100-year-old National Elk Refuge near Jackson Hole, we might ask,
How long does an elk live?
Who’s an old elk here?

We’d like to spend time
with an elder elk please.
Tell us how to balance our lives
on this hard edge of human mean,
mean temperatures, what we do and don’t want to mean.

Closing the door
to the news will only make you stupid, snapped my friend
who wanted everyone to know as much as she did. I’m hiding in old school books
with information we never used yet.
Before I drove, before I flew,
before the principal went to jail.
Sinking my eyes into tall wooded window sashes, dreaming of light arriving from far reaches,
our teachers as shepherds,
school a vessel of golden hope,
you could lift your daily lesson
in front of your eyes,
stare hard and think,
this will take me somewhere. O histories of India,
geological formations of Australia,
ancient poetries of China, Japan,
someday we will be aligned in a place of wisdom, together.

Red deer, wapiti, running elk rising
above yellow meadows at sundown. 
An elk bows her head. In the company 
of other elk, she feels at home 
And we are lost on the horizon now, 
clumsy humanity, 
deeper into the next century than we 
can even believe, 
and they will not speak to us.

~ Naomi Shihab Nye

Friday, May 29

Often people attempt to live their lives backwards; they try 
to have more things, or more money, in order to do more of what 
they want, so they will be happier. The way it actually works is the 
reverse. You must first be who you really are, then do what you 
need to do, in order to have what you want.

~ Margaret Young

Saturday, May 30

Everything that has a beginning has an ending. Make your 
peace with that and all will be well.

~ attributed to The Buddha

Sunday, May 31

Art is a staple, like bread or wine or a warm coat in 
winter. Our spirits grow hungry for art in the same way our 
stomachs growl for food.

~ Irving Stone
About this booklet

This booklet grows from an intentional exploration of nonviolent community embarked upon by members of the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance. It has since expanded to embrace many members of our peace community.

Our intention is to use the booklet to build spiritual community. Those who are using the book are asked to participate by contributing readings to it.

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

The reflection booklet has been provided free of charge to all who request it. We welcome donations—$20 would cover the cost of paper, printing and mailing for one year—but they aren’t required.

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

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

sources

Readings for this reflection booklet were contributed by Mary Dennis Lentsch and Linda Ewald and drawn from an amazing book of poetry, The Tiny Journalist, by Naomi Shihab Nye.
From start to finish, OREPA’s puppets were once again the hit of Knoxville’s MLK Parade. We suited up on a bitter cold morning, walked through light flurries, and ended up taking it all apart...