



Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

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GOIN' BROKE PAYING FOR WAR Annual Conference Speaker Details Iraq War Costs

by Hank van den Berg
UNL Professor of Economics

Along with the reckless tax giveaways to the rich and the meltdown in the mortgage lending system, the War in Iraq deserves its share of the blame for triggering the biggest economic crisis in America since the Great Depression. For five-and-a-half years, the authentic cost of this economic, social and political fiasco has been obscured by everything from claims that Iraqi oil revenues would pay for the war to accounting ploys that kept war appropriations off the federal budget. But at the 2008 Annual Peace Conference on October 18 in Lincoln, University of New Mexico Associate Professor Michelle Chwastiak clearly laid out the fiscal damage in a no-holds-barred talk entitled, "The True and Actual Cost of the War in Iraq (*minus the Accounting Tricks*)."

In her keynote address at the conference sponsored by Nebraskans for Peace and the University of Nebraska-Omaha School of Social Work, Chwastiak outlined three major elements to the war's sobering price tag. Two of these perspectives are familiar to the readers of the *Nebraska Report*, or to those who have read the work of Nancy Bilmes and the Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz. Chwastiak provided further insight and support for Bilmes and Stiglitz's *three trillion-dollar* estimate



2008 Keynote Speaker

Professor Michele Chwastiak

(\$3,000,000,000,000) for the full economic and social cost of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Second, she presented the Iraqi component of the war and her examples suggesting that the cost to Iraq is, at the very minimum, of a similar order of magnitude as the cost to the U.S.

Then, Chwastiak covered new ground by outlining a third, hitherto undisclosed

and undiscussed cost of our invasion of Iraq: namely that the previously estimated war costs are only the beginning of the actual financial burden that has been quietly built into our economic and political system through the *privatization of war*.

Professor Chwastiak elaborated on this third component in her afternoon workshop at the conference. In her well-researched paper, "War, Incorporated: Private, Unaccountable and Profitable," she notes that the invasion and occupation of Iraq by the U.S. has depended to an unprecedented extent on outside contractors. For example, *in the first Gulf War in 1991, the ratio of U.S. military personnel to 'private military contractors' (PMCs) was more than 50 to 1. During the current occupation of Iraq, however, the ratio is about 1 to 1!*

Today, the employees of PMCs under contract to the U.S. military (or, increasingly, employees of firms subcontracted by those PMCs) perform most of the routine support tasks formerly performed by the military itself. In effect, rather than the 150,000 or so U.S. troops stationed in Iraq, we effectively have at least doubled that number in the country. But, because these are people who work for PMCs, they are completely off the radar screen. Over 1,200 employees of PMCs are known to have been killed in Iraq, even though they are routinely described as pro-

viding only support services and not directly involved in military actions.

However, Chwastiak shows that, in fact, PMCs increasingly perform actual military actions in Iraq—such as guarding facilities, protecting key personnel and training foreign military personnel. Among the private firms operating in Iraq, she points out that *DynCorp* trains Iraqi police forces, *Vinnell* trains the Iraqi Army, *MPRI* advises the Iraq Defense Ministry in strategic planning and budgeting, *Blackwater* guards U.S. diplomats and assorted U.S. government officials in Iraq, *CACI* provides interrogation and intelligence services, *Erinys* guards Iraqi oil pipelines, and *Aegis* oversees the security of U.S. contractors engaged in Iraqi reconstruction projects.

This privatization of war is justified by standard business management theory. Since Chwastiak teaches in the Anderson School of Management at the University of New Mexico, she well understands the business case for outsourcing. Here at the College of Business Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, we similarly teach our students to embrace the concept of outsourcing: firms should 'internalize' only their 'core competencies' (specializations) and they should 'outsource' all the other tasks and services that can be per-

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GOIN' BROKE PAYING FOR WAR, conclusion

formed more cheaply by other firms.

The U.S. military embraced this concept some 25 years ago during the Reagan Administration, when the U.S. Army established the "Logistics Civil Augmentation Program." This program authorized the U.S. military to actively establish relationships with private contractors who could provide logistical support beyond what the all-volunteer Army could provide with its active and reserve forces. In 1992, Dick Cheney, then the Secretary of Defense under the first President Bush, authorized a classified study by a Halliburton subsidiary on outsourcing of core military activities. Not surprisingly, the study concluded that outsourcing was a good idea, although at that time it was still qualified as an option of last resort to be used only when active and reserve units could not perform a task.

That changed with the current Bush Administration. Chwastiak pointed to a speech by Donald Rumsfeld on, ironically, September 10, 2001, as the turning point when privatization went from being an option of last resort and became standard operating procedure. Rumsfeld said:

Like the private sector's best-in-class companies, DOD [Department of Defense] should aim for excellence in func-

tions that are either directly related to war fighting or must be performed by the Department. But in all other cases, we should seek suppliers who can provide these non-core activities efficiently and effectively.

The events of the day after Rumsfeld's speech provided the Bush/Cheney Administration with the opportunity to quickly put this new business case for the privatization of the military into practice.

There are clearly many disturbing issues surrounding the privatization of military services. For instance, the privatization of war keeps the costs of war off the front page and out of Congressional debate. The subcontracting of military services to PMCs (and the further subcontracting by the PMCs to other U.S. and foreign firms) is now under the complete control of the executive branch of the government. There is, literally, no Congressional oversight. Furthermore, the PMCs, as private firms, are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act, contracts under \$50 million need not be bid competitively, and many of the private firms demand their employees sign agreements under which they are prohibited from discussing their jobs with outsiders.

In short, while the U.S. military is open

to some scrutiny, the PMCs are effectively under the full control and secrecy of the White House. The contractors do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Iraqi government either, because of an exemption pushed through early during the U.S. occupation of

The privatization of military services keeps the costs of war off the front page and out of Congressional debate.

Iraq. The U.S. insists on similar arrangements for PMCs in other countries as well. Chwastiak brought up many horror stories of how the PMCs operate in Iraq, each of which provides justification to bring this process of privatization under tight Congressional control.

However, the numerous deaths and

huge waste of taxpayer money are small compared to the most disturbing implication of the privatization of war: permanent war. Because the outsourcing of war services has become standard operating procedure, providing such services has now become a huge business for what have become huge war corporations. These corporations are different from the traditional "Military-Industrial Complex" that President Eisenhower warned us about nearly 50 years ago. Those firms provided mostly equipment, and purchases were politically justified even when the U.S. was not at war.

The war services currently provided by the PMCs, however, are only needed when a war is actively being carried out. In short, through the 'privatization' of war, we now face a huge, well-positioned industry that, according to Chwastiak, has "a vested interest in keeping conflicts going." This privatization of war is the third cost of the Iraq invasion and occupation. The potential cost of an endless 'hot war,' engineered by the privatized war services industry and its lobbyists in Washington, could easily dwarf even the estimated \$3 trillion cost of the Iraq invasion and occupation. All of which means that, as a nation, we are permanently on our way to 'Goin' Broke Paying for War.'



Twilight War Author Warns Omaha about the Folly of U.S. Space Dominance

Mike Moore, former editor of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, brought his plea for the 'Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space' to Omaha last month, even as StratCom and the military aerospace industry were contriving to militarize the heavens even further at their annual "Strategic Space and Defense" gala. Between October 6-8, Moore spoke at three college campuses, had an op-ed published in the Omaha World-Herald, and even merited a separate article about his 'missionary work' to keep space for peace in the state's largest newspaper. With our nation about to choose a new commander in chief, Moore's appeal for U.S. support of the U.N.'s PAROS resolution couldn't be more timely or important. We are accordingly reprinting his election-themed op-ed from the October 6, 2008 Omaha World-Herald, which was originally published under the title, "Risk in U.S. pursuit of weapons in space."

One of the unasked questions of the presidential campaign is: Do you favor developing and deploying space-related weapons?

Whoa! Where did that come from?

According to international law, space is supposed to be the "property of all mankind" and must be used for "peaceful purposes." President Dwight D. Eisenhower led

the world 50 years ago to the idea that the heavens should be a conflict-free sanctuary, unlike land, sea and air.

Ancient history. The United States has been working on space-related weapons for many years. Consider this passage from the U.S. Air Force Space Command's "Strategic Master Plan FY06 and Beyond": "Non-nuclear prompt global strike from and through space can transform the war

A space dominance policy would be regarded by other nations as an unacceptable threat.

fighter's role in the future. Most notably, a non-nuclear strike capability, possibly in the form of a Common Aero Vehicle (CAV) launched by a ballistic missile, air launch system or a SOV (Space Operations Vehicle), could provide the President and the Secretary of Defense with a range of space power options.

"These options are for deterrence and flexible response when time is absolutely

critical, risks associated with other options are too high or when no other courses of action are available."

Translation: Space weapons could give the United States the upper hand in a future conflict—or, as they say at the Pentagon, "full spectrum dominance."

The "requirement" for space dominance has popped up in dozens of public documents and think-tank reports since the mid-1990s. We're not talking about missile defense, a hot topic for more than three decades. We are talking about ground-, sea-, air- and space-based weapons that could destroy the satellites of other nations, as well as space-based weapons that could pulverize earthly targets.

Space dominance has not yet been adopted as official U.S. policy, but we are moving toward it. A space-dominance policy would be regarded by other nations as an unacceptable violation of global norms—and a threat to their sovereignty.

"He who controls space, controls the Earth" is a widely believed assertion. During the 51 years of the Space Age, no nation has deployed weapons in space. Today, the United States is the only nation that says it may do so. If push ever comes to shove, it would be the U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base that would fire such weapons.

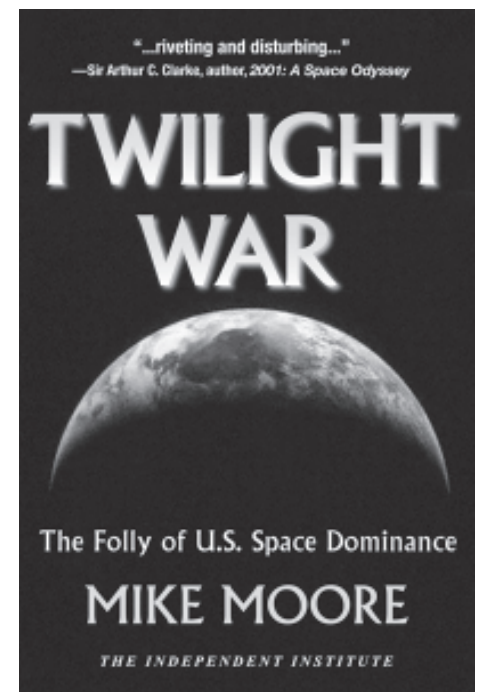
A mind experiment: What would we do if we thought another nation was about to place weapons in space? We would go nuts—and rightly so.

One can almost hear a president telling the nation: "This violation of international law and custom, this threat to peace and freedom, this tyranny of the heavens, shall not stand." We would build our own space-related weapons. Why would we expect any other spacefaring nation to act differently?

The choice is ours. If the United States continues on the space-weapons path, there will be an outrageously expensive global arms race. Military dominance of space, rather than peaceful space exploration, would be the goal.

The nations of the world need to cooperate to solve or at least mitigate a host of cross-border problems—from global warming to deadly runaway pathogens. How much real cooperation will there be if there's a race for dominance of space?

If the United States continues to pursue space dominance, it will do so with the best of intentions. We would say we would



Mike Moore's new book, *Twilight War:*

The Folly of U.S. Space Dominance (2008), chronicles the U.S.'s 50-year-long pursuit of supremacy in space. Acclaimed by critics and experts alike, Moore's account reads like a novel and was described by the late Sir Arthur C. Clarke, of 2001: A Space Odyssey fame, as "...riveting and disturbing..."

never deny access to space to another country except during conflict. But what nation could afford to rely solely on the benign intentions of another—in this case, the global "hyperpower"?

Since 1981, spacefaring nations have gone on record, year after year, at the United Nations as favoring a treaty to prevent a space-related arms race. Year after year, the United States uses its veto power in Geneva to prevent such talks.

It has been an equal-opportunity veto spanning the administrations of Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and now George W. Bush.

Rather than risk extending earthly conflict into space, the United States should renounce the "weaponization" of space and lead the world toward a tough and cheat-proof treaty. We should continue to honor Eisenhower's vision—"space for peaceful purposes."

Mr. or Ms. Candidate: Will you fight for a space treaty—or will you court a new arms race?



Nebraskans for Peace and the Des Moines and Omaha Catholic Workers once again organized protests outside the "Strategic Space and Defense Conference" annually held on behalf of StratCom at the Qwest Center in downtown Omaha. While 2,000 military and aerospace industry representatives were plotting U.S. domination of space, the protestors were spotlighting the fact that the U.S. is the only country on Earth opposing a treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space.



The Crow Butte Resources mine near Crawford, Nebraska is the second-largest uranium mining operation in the United States.

Federal Judges Hold Hearing on License Renewal of Nebraska Uranium Mine

A four-judge panel of the Atomic Safety & Licensing Board heard from local petitioners seeking to intervene in the license renewal request for the Crow Butte Resources uranium mining operation near Crawford, Nebraska at a special hearing September 30-October 2. Cameco, Inc., the Saskatchewan, Canada-based corporation that owns and operates the Crow Butte mine, has applied for a ten-year license renewal from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to continue its in situ leach mining process at what is the second-largest uranium mine in the United States.

In situ leach uranium mining involves dissolving uranium from sandstone particles at the bottom of the aquifer, massive pumping and filtering of the water and returning “geo-chemically changed,” contaminated water back into the aquifer where it can flow into other aquifers used for drinking water through known faults and fractures.

Thirteen individuals and groups filed suit on July 28, 2008, following a similar case that has been going for the past year related to the proposed “North Trend Expansion” of the Crow Butte mine. The petition to intervene was filed by individuals from Nebraska, South Dakota and the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, as well as the Oglala Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Delegation of the Black Hills Sioux Nation Treaty Council. A Lakota cultural group, Owe Aku (Bring Back the Way), and the Western Nebraska Resources Council are also listed on the petition.

The plaintiffs in the petition oppose Cameco’s license to continue operating its Crow Butte in situ leach (ISL) uranium mine,

because of the potential for the mine to contaminate drinking water sources from the mixing of the mined water with the community groundwater. Further threats are presented by spills and leaks into The White River, which flows from the Crow Butte mine toward Chadron and the Pine Ridge Reservation and cuts through the land of several of the petitioners on the reservation. Threats to public health and safety, the plaintiffs assert, stem both from the faults and fractures that link the mined and drinking aquifers and from evidence that the company suppressed data about the fractures and faults in order to keep mining. The petitioners also claim that the license application is missing key information, such as the fact that the Crow Butte mine is owned by a foreign corporation.

Through their conduct, both Cameco and the NRC, the plaintiffs maintain, have violated the rights held by members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, including federal water rights to clean water under the “Winters doctrine,” the federal trust responsibility, and the Fort Laramie Treaties of 1851 and 1868. A recently discovered cluster of pancreatic cancer and a new Johns Hopkins University study link diabetes with inorganic arsenic in the water, such as that being released as from the Crow Butte ISL mining operation. “We are concerned about the releases of the contaminants into our drinking water. These contaminants are going to remain in our water system, coming out of our kitchen sinks, for decades. We are concerned not just for ourselves, but for our children, and our children’s children,” says Debra White Plume, one of the plaintiffs from Pine Ridge.

White Plume helped lead a tour of the affected areas on the reservation for the four judges after the Crow Butte hearing in Chadron.

ISL mines owned by Cameco, Inc. in Nebraska, Wyoming and Canada have all had spills and leaks from the start and were recently fined by state regulators for permit violations (\$1.4 million in Wyoming and \$100,000 in Nebraska). Cameco also polluted Lake Ontario from its plant in Port Hope, Ontario, which has been discharging the toxic cocktail of uranium, arsenic and radium into the lake.

“Environmental and public health reasons require full disclosure of the data and ownership information so people in the community can make an informed decision. Currently, there isn’t a need for the uranium from this mine because there’s already a 70-year supply of uranium. This license should be denied and the people at the mine should spend the next 20 years simply restoring the water. Crawford, Nebraska has become a ‘raw materials colony’ for Canada’s nuclear industry—they take the profits and leave the pollution in our water,” said Dave Frankel, an attorney for the plaintiffs who is affiliated with “Aligning for Responsible Mining,” the indigenous-led, non-profit organization that is spearheading the petition.

In addition to the license renewal request and the proposed “North Trend Expansion” of the Crow Butte mine, the petitioners expect Cameco to soon file for license amendments to open two more mines around Crawford, known as the “Three Crow” and “Marsland” expansions.

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What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

Greenland's Icemelt Speeding Up

Greenland is home to ten percent of the world's ice. Climate is changing swiftly there, especially along the coasts, with important implications for many millions of people at lower latitudes who live on or near the oceans. Warming ocean water has been melting polar ice at least as quickly as rising air temperatures in Greenland and the Antarctic.

Greenland's coastal ice has been melting with a boost from warm water upwelling from offshore, baring land that has been locked in ice for millennia. "Changes in the ocean eat the ice sheet from underneath," Sarah Das, a glaciologist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts told Stephan Faris of the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*. "Warmer water causes the glaciers to calve and melt back more quickly." Cod have been harvested in abundance in these warming waters, and local groceries offer Greenland-grown potatoes and broccoli for the first time. Prospectors are finding zinc and lead in the newly accessible coastal areas, and other prospectors seek gold and diamonds. Alcoa is preparing to build a smelter.

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that waters off Greenland's northeastern coast may contain as much as 31 billion barrels of oil and gas. More oil may be found on the west coast, enough to tempt Exxon Mobil, Chevron, Canada's Husky Energy and Cairn Energy, and Sweden's PA Resources. Greenlanders in November, 2008 probably will approve a self-rule charter that directs mineral royalties to national development. The idea is to leverage the

fruits of global warming to wean Greenland off its annual \$680 million subsidy from Denmark. If carbon dioxide had a sense of irony, it might appreciate the fact that melting ice is opening the way to produce even more fossil fuels.

Speed of Polar Climate Change

Polar climate can change very quickly in geologic time. Using pollen records from marine sediment off southwest Greenland, scientists (including Anne de Vernal and Claude Hillaire-Marcel) have deduced that much of the Greenland ice sheet has melted relatively quickly during periods of sharp natural warming of the Earth's climate—some as recent as 400,000 years ago, when carbon-dioxide levels in the atmosphere were lower than today.

During these spells, boreal coniferous forest covered much of Greenland. These spells of abrupt warming (abrupt, that is, in geologic time) reduced the ice sheet to about one-quarter of its present size, and by itself raised world sea levels 4 to 6 meters.

From 2003 through 2007, Greenland lost two to three times as much ice in summer melt as it regained during winter snows. The Greenland ice sheet actually is a relic of the last ice age, "stranded out of time," according to Alexandra Witze, writing in *Nature*.

Even without human-induced global warming, Greenland's glaciers would not re-form under present conditions. Ice loss is accelerating irregularly year by year, as well. During the 2007 melting season, with temperatures 4 to 6 degrees C. higher than the previ-

ous 30 years' average, 500 billion tons of ice melted—30 percent more than the previous year, and 4 percent more than the previous record, in 2005, according to Witze's work.

"Like Minnesota, Except White"

By the summer of 2007, the Greenland ice cap was studded by more than 1,000 shallow melt-water lakes, some as wide as five kilometers, "like Minnesota, except white," said Witze. Tens of millions of cubic meters of water swirl from

ied by several scientists led by Joughin and Sarah Das of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

Greenland's Jakobshavn glacier, which probably provided the iceberg that sank the Titanic, is "flowing" into the ocean at higher speeds, having accelerated from 5.7 kilometers per year in 1992 to 12.6 kilometers in 2003, Witze wrote.

"For years people have said that the increasing length and intensity of the melt season in Greenland could yield an increase

submerging islands near Shanghai, and raising the level of the Thames estuary in London, England. By that time, given the century or two lag-time in ocean warming, it will be too late to reclaim the Greenland ice cap, or many of the world's coastal urban areas. Generations to come may wonder what we were doing when we still had a chance.

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Warming ocean water has been melting polar ice at least as quickly as rising air temperatures in Greenland and the Antarctic.

these lakes to the base of the ice sheet in a matter of days, opening huge waterfalls where none had previously existed. "It has been only in the last five years that we have realized that—hey—the ice sheet is falling apart," said Ian M. Howat, a research scientist in Earth Sciences at Ohio State University.

Greenland's ice is only a fraction of Antarctica's, but it is melting more rapidly, partly because summers are warmer, allowing for more rapid runoff. Scientists have been studying the melting dynamics of glacial lakes in Greenland. Observers watched as one such lake was sucked through a crack in the ice with a force equaling Niagara Falls. This event was stud-

in ice discharge," said Joughin. "Greater melt in future summers would cause ice to flow faster toward the coast and draw down more of the ice sheet." This study found that water from the violent draining of surface lakes is quickly distributed to the ice sheet's base, which accelerates the glaciers' movement toward the sea.

The melting of Greenland's ice that has been accelerated by human emissions of greenhouse gases has been taking place much more rapidly than past natural changes. Within a few decades, this melting ice (along with water from other sources, including Western Antarctica) may be pushing the oceans up beaches in Florida, into subway tunnels in New York City,

RACISM

After eight years, term-limited Senator Lowen Kruse of Omaha will be retiring from the state legislature. Throughout his legislative career, this long-time Nebraskans for Peace member has regularly written reports and reflections about the state and national political scene entitled, "Krusing the Capitol." Printed below is his most recent meditation on an age-old problem with which Americans—and Nebraskans—are still reluctant to come to terms.

Racism—weighing the values of a person by color of skin or other physical characteristics—is a fact of our time, and of every time.

Each of us assumes and assigns selected values and attitudes to other persons according to their appearance. Skin color, hair, height, weight, attractiveness—and so much more—stimulate assumptions in our minds. A fat person lacks self discipline. A tall person is a natural leader. A cute, perky woman would be a fun friend. There is no way to avoid mental connections between this stranger and experiences with someone who appears to be similar.

Racism is not that simple. Recent research shows that 75 percent of the U.S. public would have some degree of preference for a president who has white skin. We know that every day Senator Obama's life is under threat from persons who hate his skin color. We call them nuts, but they can be driven to action by bloggers who would not physically attack someone, but who create flaming rhetoric, anonymously.

So there you have it: preference, twisted opinion and violent hate, all driven by reactions to skin color. Reactions are formed through a complex mix of relationships with family, friends, associates, competitors, neighbors, faces on TV and stories in the news. We are not good at sorting and discarding.

It is not that simple, of course. Attitudes toward one's self include racial association, a sense of being outcast or included, and personal value and potential for life. My Mother was a Dane who married and moved into a German community. She lived there 60 years, until her death, and never felt accepted. Was she accepted or was it her? Did she resist changing to the culture of persons who became her lifelong friends, or did they resist hers? I am quite sure that, aside from exchanging recipes and desperate advice on a sick child, they had little or

no interest in the Danish culture and heritage.

Mother's low-lying anger was real, so I have experienced first hand some of the feelings of a minority person. That includes the deep frustration of living in an environment you may affect a bit, but which you did not create and you are powerless to change. The majority will smile and nod at you, but laugh when you step away. The condescending smiles made her furious.



Senator Lowen Kruse

However, it is not that simple. Self attitude includes the mix within the racial or ethnic group. There are dark Blacks, light Blacks, and those who 'pass.' Whites hardly think about it, but persons of African ancestry are very conscious of shades of color and wonder about all the reasons for it. Some carry attitudes about it.

Jewish persons are quite conscious of their 'groupness,' however diverse they may be, but are happy to confuse the rest of us. Omaha confined the Blacks and Jews to basically North 24th Street for the first century of our history. However, in the 1950s Jews could 'pass' since the important Jewish identifier was surname. A Jewish family would ask a friend, Swanson, to buy a house west of 42nd Street and then quickly resell it to them. A barrier broken. Blacks had to wait for agitation, riots and the North Freeway to pass into the larger community. Their barriers were not actually broken. If your skin shows color, some persons will show their distrust of you.

It is not that simple. What will it take to

reduce racial antagonisms and provide the setting for cooperation, growth, development—a true, exciting, vibrant community?

First, it requires appreciation for persons we have come to know in a close way. That takes a while, but most of us have friends who help us unknowingly break barriers. I no longer am aware of the skin color of several minority friends.

One of the great gifts of Senator Obama (not as a leader but simply as a person) is that he appears to live unconscious of race. I assume this is a gift from Hawaii, to him and to us. That isolated set of islands contains such a pervasive mix of race that those who are raised there have a wonderful, freeing blessing. Race is not where it is. Get over it.

Obama still has to deal with it. If it had been his teenage daughter who became pregnant instead of a white vice-presidential candidate's daughter, there would have been hell to pay. Every negative attitude toward current Black family culture would have come out of the woodwork and we would be hammered by it.

Ironic, isn't it? Black family structure has not been able to recover from what the White society structure caused: the selling of husbands, wives, children and the breeding by owners—the forced slavery breakdown of a powerful sense of family and community brought to the U.S. by these African immigrants.

Second, we must cultivate a genuine appreciation for each other's culture. Schools are doing good work here and schools are where it will happen.

Third, we must confront blatant racism, calmly but firmly calling to account those who hate. There is much in the mix I described earlier that does no harm. More of it that is downright interesting and fun. Ruth and I owe so much of who we are to minority friends. We have been changed and I would not ever go back. But hatred? The movie *South Pacific* had it right. We must be carefully taught to hate.

Fourth and in summary, we can receive each other's gifts. Gifts of music, stories, laughter, art, genius, creativity, energy, faith, commitment.

Side note: We have a ballot initiative in Nebraska to outlaw Affirmative Action. The out-of-state promoters, who intend to get rich on this, say it is to ban discrimination.

Wrong. It is to enforce discrimination. Keep low-income kids in low-pay jobs. We are not into quotas. We are into recruiting young adults to learn more. Kids who are NOT on a level playing field and never thought about more schooling—we go directly to them to urge them to go to a college where all who qualify are welcome. What is so bad about that?

Racism is not simple and solutions are not that easy. Ruth and I are the white family in our blocks. Because I know the likely quick conclusions of good-hearted readers, I feel I must add that every family except one is a two-parent family, every adult is working or retired, every home is well-kept. We are safer here than when we lived in West Omaha.

That is the setting for our story. I asked our nearest neighbor to come help me move furniture. He brought along his 6-foot-2-inch, 20-year-old son, a welcome addition! Ruth has been a community family advocate for 30 years in this integrated neighborhood and she cannot change. At break time she looked into the eyes of the shy young man. "Are you employed? (No.) Would you like to be? (I have tried.) I have a job for you. I have researched it and you can start Monday. It pays \$8.50, which is not a lot, but it will get you some work history." He studied her face.

"It is in West Omaha." You could see his eyes backing up. Whitey land. His Dad noted he did not have a car and would not have one until he had money to buy one. Ruth: "He does not need a car. The bus is at the end of our block. Takes one hour and fifteen minutes. Only one transfer. Tickets cost \$13 per week. Do you have \$13? (Dad nodded vigorously that he had \$13.) They are ready for you and they need you."

Will he? He is shy, has been hassled racially. Police study him and women at the mall clutch their purses when they see him. Is he prepared for that first lonely step? What would his friends say?

Racism is so frustrating because it pulls us all down. There it is, wrapped around and through the young man next door. Hesitant, even fearful. Hopeful. But if the 'Ruths' of the world cannot get to him, we have a mess on our hands, politically and economically. Plus we have one more man who could have been. It is that simple.

Looking Backward

A History of Nebraska Peacemaking before NFP

by Paul A. Olson

It is more than forty years since “Rural Nebraskans for Peace” and “Nebraskans for Peace in Vietnam” were founded in 1967 and became a force in state politics from 1968-70. Each of these organizations, however, was only a latter-day formalization of a peace movement in Nebraska that had roots dating back nearly a century.

The Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries up to World War II: Nineteenth-century Nebraska had significant settlements of Quakers and Mennonites whose whole tradition was that of a people of peace. The 1890s-1910 Populist Party, which elected many public officials in Nebraska, had a powerful anti-war strand as well. And although the party’s members for the most part supported the Spanish-American War, the anti-war sentiments of the Populist tradition may well have inspired Nebraska’s legislators to label the successive Philippine-American War of the early twentieth century a colonial enterprise. Despite the fact that another Nebraskan, General John J. Pershing, established his military and colonialist credentials in that war, there existed during this period a seed bed of anti-war sentiment in the state, embodied in the political careers of William Jennings Bryan and George Norris. Bryan’s pacifism and Norris’s trust in international law became the two philosophical pillars influencing most peace movements, and certainly that of NFP.

By 1903, Bryan had proclaimed himself a Tolstoyan pacifist and went to go visit the renowned Russian writer and theorist before Mohandas Gandhi began his own correspondence with Tolstoy. Bryan ran for president in 1908 and served as Secretary of State in the first Wilson administration as a Tolstoyan pacifist—the only American pacifist to act in those roles. He had a huge following both in Nebraska and in the nation, with his paper, *The Commoner*, counting a circulation in the hundreds of thousands at its height. The Bryan influence in Nebraska was to continue on up through 1931-35 during his brother Charles’ terms as governor.

Norris on the other hand was committed to international law and a strong world and federalist legal regime (not Woodrow Wilson’s

token League of Nations) as peacemaking tools. He accurately foresaw the unwholesome power of the Military-Industrial Complex in his 1917 speech opposing U.S. entry into World War I and maintained his philosophical opposition to militarism until the late 1930s.

As the winds of oncoming war began to be felt across the nation in the latter part of the Thirties, a coalition of 22 peace organizations called the Nebraska Peace Council was formed in the state with an R.B. Elrod as the head. The Council was, in turn, a member of the National Peace Conference led by Walter W. Van Kirk, later of the National Council of Churches. The Nebraska Peace Council not only opposed war between Germany and Britain but also resisted all forms of colonialism, war profiteering and economic exploitation, and supported a federalist international order. The organization claimed to have 300 members and to have reached out to 10,000 people in 1939.

World War II to Vietnam: World War II and the undeniable horror of Nazism and Japanese and Italian Fascism destroyed the peacemaking tradition in the state. The naiveté of some would-be peace people in the face of Nazi negotiating efforts at Munich did not help. Only the state’s peace churches and the conscientious objectors that relied on them stood out during that period. Indeed, the peace movement as a public political effort had little in the way of influence outside the peace churches themselves until Dwight Dell of the Church of the Brethren (with help from the Methodist minister Harold Massie) ran for the U.S. Senate in 1952 as a peace candidate opposed to the Korean War.

Later Herbert Jehle, the Quaker physicist, other Friends from Lincoln and the long-time pacifist activist, Rev. Abraham Muste, participated in the “Omaha Action” anti-nuclear weapon protest at the Atlas Missile silo site near Mead, Nebraska in 1959. This was historic—one of the first demonstrations against ICBMs in the U.S. Jehle also corresponded with Albert Einstein about a plan for world peace and Einstein wrote that he agreed totally with Jehle’s ideas. But iconic occurrences of this nature were few in the inclement political environment of 1950s Nebraska.

The Vietnam War up until 1970 and a little after: Even as the Eisenhower and the early Kennedy years seemed to pass by peacefully for the majority of Americans, these administrations were making deep commitments to propping up, and later fabricating, client administrations in South Vietnam. War had begun. So had the great move toward civil rights. The Civil Rights movement began to blossom with *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954, the Montgomery Bus boycott in 1955-56, the Selma to Montgomery march in 1962, and the succeeding march on Washington in 1963 that led to the passage of the 1964 U.S. Civil Rights Act. The Civil Rights movement taught the peace movement of the ‘60s and ‘70s its organizing tactics.

William Jennings Bryan’s pacifism and Senator George Norris’ trust in international law became the two philosophical pillars influencing most peace movements, and certainly that of NFP.

In Nebraska, the ‘60s Civil Rights movement had great leaders in Ernie Chambers, Hughes and Lela Shanks, Leola Bullock, Reuben Snake, Louis LaRose, Leonard Springer, Raymond Perez, Sam Franco and others. Most of these leaders also opposed the war in Vietnam, and Hughes and Lela Shanks were early members of NFP. They had been converted to pacifism and joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation while leading Civil Rights efforts in Kansas City, Denver and Lincoln. Clearly, as in the Shanks’ case, one cannot separate the Nebraska peace movement from various forms of civil rights protest.

At the same time as we escalated the number of our troops in Vietnam—first under Kennedy and then, after the Gulf of Tonkin, under Johnson—three streams of peace activism, as Central City farmer and Friends member Don Reeves notes, began to spring

up again in this state: a church stream, a campus and faculty stream, and a rural Nebraskans stream. The streams flowed together in 1970 to make the river of Nebraskans for Peace.

First, Church Groups: Quaker, Brethren, some Mennonites, and Methodists (especially Methodist clergy) were part of this teaching effort against the War in Vietnam.

One of the earliest town-gown groups, loosely connected with the Quakers and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, called itself *Nebraskans for Peace in Vietnam* (NFPV). Its history has yet to be thoroughly traced, because as activist Dan Schlitt had reminded me, “that was the 60s and we didn’t do anything according to protocol.” From the few records available, we do know that NFPV raised money, held vigils in Lincoln, counseled students about the draft and, during the “Vietnam Summer” period in 1967, sent information to public officials and packets to history and social studies teachers to raise their awareness. Among its leaders were Friends Marge and Dan Schlitt (who continued to volunteer for NFP after its founding in 1970) and Dick and Jean Gilbert, and others like Kandra Hahn, Victor Lane, and Bill Campbell. Lela Shanks has recounted that her husband Hughes, Hudson Phillips and Bruce McSpadden worked with students at this time through NFPV. This organization may have begun as early as 1966, when the *Daily Nebraskan* says it started, or as late as 1967. It was clearly alive in 1967 when it solicited money locally and received support from the national 1967 “Vietnam Summer” efforts to organize students, faculty and townspeople against the war. Its press was an old offset thing located in faculty member Bud Narveson’s basement, the group’s “Xerox” and “email” combined, from which flowed thousands of flyers and political analyses.

Second, Student Groups Largely Based at UNL: As NFP’s first state coordinator Mike Shonsey has noted, no one has a complete record of all of the student groups that opposed the Vietnam War, but they included NFPV students, Yippies, SDSers (Students for a Democratic Society), independent kids, kids facing the draft, and students who had a base in

Peacemakers of the Year

Lela Shanks

Essential to the history of Nebraskans for Peace is its motto, "There is no Peace without Justice."

Lela Knox Shanks like her late husband, Hughes, lived that rule, and she now lives it. Beginning in Oklahoma in the '20s, she experienced the most severe kind of segregation. She knew the price that Depression- and Dust Bowl-poverty exacted from African-American and Caucasian alike in Oklahoma, and she has never forgotten about the wretched of the earth, white or black or brown or red, gay or straight. When she went to college in Jefferson City, Missouri, she heard the myths about "the land of the free and the home of the brave" uttered by her professors as she lived in a fully segregated, caste society. She and her husband, Hughes, trained as a lawyer, married in 1947 and



stayed in St. Louis, hoping to avoid Oklahoma's racism. But, in St. Louis, they met Missouri's racism when Hughes applied for professional-level jobs, "We do not give those applications to Negroes,"

Eventually, the family moved to Denver where Hughes worked for the Social Security Administration and was told he would never receive a promotion because white women would be afraid of him when he came to the door. Then on to Kansas City in the pilgrimage for justice.

In Kansas City, the Shanks family settled in an integrated neighborhood, but was told that their children had to attend a black school. There the teacher-pupil ratio in some classrooms was 45-1 while white schools had a 20-1 ratio. During this struggle, Hughes and Lela turned to the local chapter of the Congress for Racial Equality for help and adopted the philosophy of nonviolence.

Pursuing nonviolent direct action tactics, they pulled their children out of the public schools, formed a protest school in their own home for their children and six other students where Lela was the main teacher. She picketed the federal government and the school board calling for desegregation under the Brown vs. Board of Education. Hughes picketed downtown stores demanding the hiring of African Americans. For trying to uphold the law of the land, they experienced arrest, tapped phones and death threats.

When Hughes went to the March on Washington August 28, 1963, Lela had to appear before a federal grand jury that very day to answer for having peacefully picketed the Federal Building in Kansas City, and she stated, "I did what my husband is doing right now in Washington, D.C.—marching for my freedom." The union between nonviolence and civil rights had fully flowered.

When the Shanks's moved to Lincoln in the mid-'60s, they again took up the struggle by forming a friendship with Tom Rehorn, one of the founders of Rural Nebraskans for Peace, supporting and working on his campaign for Congress. Rehorn ran in opposition to the Vietnam War and for justice for oppressed people of color. Later that decade, Hughes and Lela began the campaign for better and more pluralistic education in the Lincoln Public Schools. In this role, they shaped national educational policy through a committee that they selected composed of Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans, poor whites and Asians, a group that demanded justice and respect for poor children and children of color. Their committee served as the model for the creation of similar parent committees all across the

conclusion on page 11

Senator Don Preister

Senator Don Preister, who for years has been one of the environment's foremost champions in the Legislature, is being forced out by term limits. However, Senator Preister is much more than just a policymaker; he is a man of character, a man of peace and a true supporter and defender of nature and living things.

When I started thinking about what I wanted to say, there were many thoughts that came to mind and I could have written pages about him and his legislative career. I decided though that there were certain characteristics about Don Preister that provide a much better definition of the kind of person he is.

The first characteristic is courage. Don Preister has never backed away from an issue because it was

unpopular. Don stands up against some of the most powerful political and financial interests in the state of Nebraska and advocates for the issues he believes in regardless of the power and the tactics that are used against him. Don also speaks for the powerless and vulnerable in the world, whether it is on behalf of children or fragile places in nature. His repeated introduction of bills seeking the address the tragedy at Whiteclay is a case in point.

The second characteristic is persistence. Many of Don's bills were lampooned by business lobbyists and unceremoniously killed by the Legislature. Many people in that position would have given up or compromised their principles. Don would return the next year with a revised version of the same concept using each opportunity to educate doubters about the benefits of protecting the environment.

The third characteristic is vision. Now everyone is talking about renewable energy and energy efficiency. Utilities, business people, even oil companies talk about renewable energy like it's the greatest thing since sliced bread, and like they have been supporting it all along. Even Governor Heinemann has suddenly discovered wind energy. But I remember not so long ago, when Don Preister and the Sierra Club were the only ones advocating sustainable energy policies in Nebraska. Don has the vision to see the need for policies that sustain the planet when others have only sought short-term profits.

The fourth characteristic is graciousness. The political process is sometimes vicious and dirty. But even when there were mean-spirited comments directed toward him or efforts he supported, Don Preister has always been gracious. A perfect example is his way of beginning every floor speech by referring to his colleagues as "friends all" even when they were doing very unfriendly things.

The final characteristic is commitment. Don lives his values. One example of his commitment to his values is the fact that he walked all the way across the United States as part of the Great Peace March for Nuclear Disarmament in 1986. You see it in every aspect of the way he lives his life, from the foods that he eats, to the words he uses and the way that he treats people with dignity and respect.

I am saddened that Don will no longer be our champion in the Legislature. But I am certain that Don Preister will continue to be a voice for peace and justice, a supporter and defender of the environment, a protector of the planet and its people.

— Ken Winston, Nebraska Sierra Club lobbyist



Looking Backward, continued

one or another of the peace churches. By 1966, UNL students were beginning to come alive because of the draft and because of the draft-counseling efforts of NFPV.

Former State Senator Steve Fowler remembers a teach-in at Love Library from about 1966, and in the next few years, anti-draft rallies and other demonstrations regularly took place on or near the UNL campus. Some of these activities grew out of NFPV's draft counseling effort in the basement of the old United Ministries in Higher Education facility and from UMHE's anti-war religious teachings issuing from Alan Pickering and later from Rev. Larry Doerr. Mike Shonsey actually lived at UMHE at the time. The influence of Carl Davidson, a Philosophy graduate student and founding member of SDS, also should not be ignored. UMHE was the main site of planning for the events surrounding the October 15, 1969 teach-ins and demonstrations accompanying the nationwide "Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam." In 1969, Larry Zink (later a state coordinator of NFP) burned his draft card in a Hyde Park-like forum at the Nebraska Union, which proved to be a watershed event for its symbolism. UMHE was also the site of the student meetings that led to the May 1970 demonstrations after the invasion of Cambodia and the National Guard shootings at Kent State. (No one has yet constructed a full account of the activities in Omaha during this period, though it is known that Fr. John Krejci, Fr. John McCaslin and Vince McAndrews began protests at the Omaha courthouse in 1966, and other Catholics and religious leaders later demonstrated against the war.)

Third, Rural Anti-war Groups: Rural Nebraskans for Peace has a clearer history than do the church and student movements because we have records.

A document in the Nebraska Historical Society (apparently from 1970) lists the following Board of Directors for Rural Nebraskans for Peace: Gideon Bratten, **Arlo Hoppe**, Maxine Schroeder, Mrs. Henry Schutz, **Rev. Tom Rehorn**, Wilfred Wortman, **Merle Hansen**, Mrs. Arlo Hoppe, **Fred Schroeder**, **Ted Reeves**, Warren Messner, Ken Messner, Henry Schutz, Rev. Cook, **Mike Shonsey**, and **John Hansen**. The names in bold later became leaders in NFP. (Rev. Tom Rehorn speaks in 1970 of a group for which he has raised money composed of eight families—surely the center of the RNFP group listed in the board roster). The document includes a note that Don Reeves and Jack Stout had just been elected to the Nebraskans for Peace board, NFP having been founded by that time. Don became the first president of Nebraskans for Peace, and Reeves and Stout must have been the transitional figures between the NFP and RNFP boards. Similarly, the placing of Mike

Shonsey and John Hansen on the RNFP board must have served to make them, in somebody's mind, bridges from RNFP to the student movement. The group was formally organized in May of 1967, developing a notable public presence between 1968-70.

Rural Nebraskans for Peace was a genuine Nebraskan and rural organization. One of its leaders, Tom Rehorn, was a Methodist clergy member who, in his application for the Methodist ministry, spoke of having "applied the gospel to social issues" and been fired "often" for so doing. Like many of the first RNFP people, Rehorn was an incredibly eloquent speaker and grassroots organizer.

This account should not close without some mention of the price that our early forebears paid for standing for something: the ministers who were fired, the farmers who amassed huge FBI files, the wives who lost their marriages for standing up against the war, the students who went to prison for burning their draft cards, the farmers whose had their cattle herds threatened with poisoning, the rural members who were ostracized by their communities.

One source document attributed the origin of Rural Nebraskans for Peace to Schuyler, Nebraska farmer Arlo (Dutch) Hoppe, who was motivated to act upon hearing that Rehorn had been "fired" from his job at Wesley House in North Omaha in '65 or '66 for his peace and civil rights activities. (Rehorn was subsequently reassigned to Fullerton, Nebraska, at a loss of \$1900 in salary—one quarter of his previous pay.) Hoppe, according to this account, is said to have told his wife, Marilyn, "Let's drive over to Fullerton and see that guy," and, around Tom Rehorn's kitchen table, the two families birthed the idea for a rural anti-war and civil rights organization.

The actual story is probably a little more complicated. As Dutch Hoppe's son, Jim (a teenager active in RNFP at the time) remembers things, he doesn't know how his father knew of Tom Rehorn. Dutch, however, who was a WWII veteran, despised the idea of people killing people, and it is true that once he got wind of Rehorn's dismissal for opposing the war, the Hoppe family started going to Rehorn's church in Fullerton, about 40 miles from Schuyler. From the two families did indeed end up having Sunday dinner together after church from time to time, and after several gatherings talking about everything in the world, decided to do something about the Vietnam War and racial injustice. (Rehorn had been a fundamentalist Baptist from Southern Missouri, before the social implications of the gospels attracted him, and as a Missourian, he liked eating muskrat. Arlo's son would catch muskrat for the Rehorns' table.)

This tiny group invited Merle Hansen, a farmer from Newman Grove and John Hansen's father, into the mix and began to buy space in a local paper where they published editorial-style pieces and quotes from ministers and scholars who opposed the war. Dutch and Merle next recruited another farmer, Fred Schroeder of Shelton, who was to often serve as the spokesperson for RNFP. Eventually, Ted Reeves, Don Reeves' father, came on board, and Ted would take up little collections at the RNFP meetings in order to pay the \$200-\$300 for Columbus-area radio programs that broadcast moderate anti-war talks—mostly from a religious and nonviolent perspective.

With the money, Fred Schroeder was able to organize a 15-minute anti-war radio program on a Columbus station once a week (Grand Island's KMMJ wouldn't have them). The group's commercial outreach effort was to prove short-lived, however. In an obvious censorship move, the Columbus station eventually pushed RNFP off the air in favor of extending a Presbyterian broadcast for another 15 minutes each Sunday. Thwarted but undaunted, the RNFP members continued to travel to rural forums wherever they could get a hearing, spoke at the University of Nebraska as the student anti-war movement coalesced, and wrote many letters to the editor.

RNFP though was not simply an antiwar group. It respected Ernie Chambers' struggle against prejudice and oppression in North Omaha and arranged for exchanges between North Omaha's kids and farm kids. Jim Hoppe recalls the irony of Arlo's taking his farm's watermelons to North Omaha on the grounds that "everybody likes watermelons." When the Civil Rights parades led by Ernie Chambers and other local leaders took place in North Omaha, RNFP was represented, with Jim Hoppe and John Hansen riding horses and tractors down the North Omaha streets. In a 1970 paper for UNL's "Tri-University" project, Rehorn speaks of the witness of the RNFP group as being equally for "racial brotherhood" and for withdrawal from Vietnam.




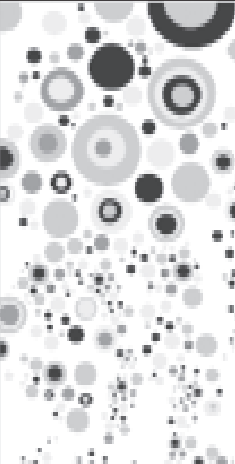
The Birth of NFP: According to Mike Shonsey, the big push to create a single, state peace organization "came with the Moratorium marches" in 1969. At about that same time, Don Gall, a local UCC minister, had just

returned from a national Clergy and Laity Concerned meeting with an offer to pay \$200 a month to have a peace organization and organizer on the ground in Nebraska. (Rev. Dave and Gwen Powell of Trinity Methodist may also have had a role in these early plans.) Gall brought Fred Schroeder from Rural Nebraskans for Peace and Shonsey from the various Lincoln anti-war groups together to discuss the CALC proposal. What we now know as "Nebraskans for Peace" essentially emerged from a fusion of Rural Nebraskans for Peace and Nebraskans for Peace in Vietnam, with all of the other church, student, and secular groups opposing the war throwing in their bits. As Shonsey recounts it, "Fred Schroeder and I basically put together the first board; I basically got names from Omaha and Lincoln and Fred got the names from out state." Mike chose the NFP name for the group, and Don Reeves led the fight for the inclusion of justice and equality issues in its mandate that have been a hallmark from the beginning. NFP's close connection with Clergy and Laity Concerned, whose initial offer had gotten things rolling, strongly influenced the fledgling organization and continued into the early 1980s. The title of NFP's newspaper, for example, *The Nebraska Report*, was inspired by CALC's national publication, *The American Report*.

Aside from the names I have mentioned, one should not forget the crucial roles in the early days of Larry Zink, Nye Bond, Kay Young, Loyal and Mary Alice Park, Nick Meinhardt, and many, many others—many of whom are now deceased.

This account should not close without some mention of the price that our early forebears paid for standing for something: the ministers who were fired, the farmers who amassed huge FBI files, the wives who lost their marriages for standing up against the war, the students who went to prison for burning their draft cards, the farmers whose had their cattle herds threatened with poisoning, the rural members who were ostracized by their communities and forbidden access to conventional media expression by newspapers and radio stations. (Democracy cannot survive where censorship reigns, and today with the corporate monopoly of the media NFP is again experiencing the squeeze). If, as the modern cliché goes, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, then the suffering of the peace-makers germinates the seed of peace.

After 1970 and the founding of NFP came the legislative hearing on Vietnam that Sen. Ernie Chambers and possibly John DeCamp sponsored; Sen. Terry Carpenter's 1972 legislative journal statement on Vietnam that was drafted by Nebraskans for Peace and the ongoing struggle for withdrawal; the effort to achieve a recognition of Indian treaty rights after the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation; the fight

			COMING SOON
			11.7 - 11.26 RACHEL GETTING MARRIED
			11.14 - 11.20 SECRECY
			11.21 - 12.4 A GIRL CUT IN TWO
			
			
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Looking Backward, conclusion

for retrocession for the Winnebago nation; the Nuclear Weapons Freeze and NO MX missile campaigns; NFP's opposition to the wars in Central America to stop U.S. aid to the murderous regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala and to support the Nicaraguan Sandanistas against Reagan's Contra warriors. We worked for détente with the Soviet Union and—after the end of the Cold War—the "Peace Dividend." We opposed American military intervention in the Middle East long before it became fashionable and supported state divestment from South Africa and the preservation of the Nebraska Indian, Mexican-American and Women's commissions. We championed universal health care, Fair not 'Free Trade,' Gay and Lesbian human rights, and initiated the legislative campaign to prevent bullying in our schools. Besides opposing both wars against Iraq and the war in Afghanistan, we have also done what we could to alert the public about Whiteclay and the threat the even more

dangerous StratCom poses to the world.

As Nebraskans for Peace approaches its 40th anniversary, it is our hope that we are worthy descendants of the peacemaking and justice-working tradition from which we arose. For without the vision, generosity and courage of those advocates, Nebraskans for Peace would never have survived to become what is now 'the oldest statewide Peace & Justice organization in the entire country.'

(Drawn from materials given by Bud Narveson, Marge and Dan Schlitt, Kathy Cook, Jim Hoppe, Steve Fowler, Jay Schmidt, John Krejci, Kandra Hahn, Mike Shonsey, Don Reeves, Marilyn McNabb, John Hansen, Lela Shanks, notes and articles by Betty Olson, and documents in the Nebraska State Historical Society and in the Methodist archives at Nebraska Wesleyan. This history is not complete or fully researched, and the author welcomes all corrections and input that might improve later versions.)

Lela Shanks, conclusion

country in the national "Training Teachers of Teachers" educational project. This creation, in turn, modeled the birth of 'multiculturalism' in schools in the United States.

In Lincoln, Hughes and Lela also worked to oppose the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's threats to force African-American and poor folks in the Whittier School area to sell their homes at below replacement value. In similar actions over the next 20 years, the Shanks remained at the forefront in their advocacy for civil rights and peace.

But this story should not be seen as all struggle and gloom. Lela's efforts to obtain a decent education for her children paid off: her oldest daughter becoming a playwright and artist; her oldest son, a law enforcement officer who's now retired; her second daughter, a lawyer; and her youngest son, a student now seeking a Ph.D. in Political Science. And her struggle for civil rights and the pursuit of peace is by no means over—over 80, she is sought all over the state as a speaker on these topics.

One final note: in 1984, Lela's husband Hughes was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. For the next 14 years Lela cared for him as he declined and learned what it takes to give love and care to someone suffering from the disease. In her University of Nebraska Press book distributed worldwide, *Your Name is Hughes Hannibal Shanks*, she documents the progress of his disability and how, despite it, she cared for him. If you wish to learn what love and nonviolence and care for the most vulnerable among us is, read that book. Lela Shanks, through her example, through her courage, through her sense of what prayer is and through her integrity, has taught me more about "true religion and undefiled," in St. James' phrase, than almost anyone I can remember. She has lived the story, "There is no Peace without Justice." **Lela Shanks, Peacemaker of the Year.**

— Paul Olson, NFP President


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Speaking Our Peace

One of my colleagues in the UNL English Department invested himself heavily in Holocaust literature. He used to tell the story of a Jewish man at Auschwitz who asked his guard, "Why do you degrade us so when you could just kill us outright?" The guard answered, "If we didn't degrade you, we **couldn't** kill you." The Jew had become an 'other,' constructed for destruction.

I have been watching with increasing consternation the construction of Barack Obama as an 'other' in order to destroy his political viability. He's alternately a 'Socialist,' 'anti-American,' a Muslim who pals around with terrorists, an elitist, an Ivy League egghead and a foreigner—all things that **real Americans** are not. One hears at McCain-Palin events the cries of, "Socialist! Communist! Terrorist! Kill him! Tear his head off!" And the leaders of the rallies mostly say nothing.

As a species, we human beings seem to need to degrade the 'other.' The structure of our fragile egos, filled with the vacuity of our inner selves, would collapse on itself if we did not have an 'other' above whom we could imagine ourselves: "I may be a miserable creature, but at least I am not a _____." The blank can be anything 'other': American Indian, African American, Hispanic, Gay, Lesbian, single parent, Muslim, fundamentalist, pagan, refugee, woman, fat or skinny man, dwarf or giant. Advertising manipulates these categories to create the sense that **we can escape** our miserable stereotypic selves through the right product. Bullying manipulates these categories to tell victims that **they cannot escape** their miserable selves and must suffer for who they are—their suffering being the prime satisfaction both of the bully and the approving bystander.

The protection of the fragile makeup

of our egos powers the construction of those we would see as 'monsters.' 'They' do not deserve respectful treatment. Consider the use of whiskey in the fur traders' negotiations with Plains Indians and in the U.S. treaty negotiations with Plains tribes. Even today, though the Standing Bear trial established that an Indian is a human being in the full meaning of the law, our leaders do not yet believe it. In our own state, Whiteclay is the product of systematic and willfully degrading social systems tolerated by authority, even condoned by it: a combination of Indian vulnerability, governmental incompetence and malice, bootlegger connivance, Whiteclay dealer shamelessness, and public and ecclesiastical indifference. The shadows of human beings that haunt Whiteclay, amid the mud and the urine and the bloody violence, were constructed out of our malice, our belief that they lack full humanity.

The protection of our fragile egos powers the construction of our enslaved classes. **We, Christians**, were superior to Africans who needed to be enslaved because they had no souls. We could therefore make them beasts of burden, breeders without permanent family, chattel property denied all education, skills or rights. The famous literary movement, the "Fugitives," argued as writers and critics for the superior culture and civilization of the ante-bellum South and its successors up into the Thirties. The South had a 'classical' culture, not mere capitalism. With few exceptions, the avatars of high culture did not recognize that what passed for manor house greatness was greed.

Douglas Blackmon's *Slavery By Another Name* shows how shameless was that greed, especially during the reinvention of slavery after the Civil War. Consider the story of Green Cottenham:

Green Cottenham... arrested in

Socialist! Communist! Terrorist! Kill Him!

by Paul Olson, NFP President

Columbiana, Alabama, outside the train... where initially it's claimed that he broke one minor law, and then later it's claimed that he broke a different minor law... The judge, to settle the confusion... declares him guilty of... vagrancy. On the basis of that, he's fined, \$10... a fee to the sheriff, a fee to the deputy who actually arrested him, some of the costs of his being jailed for three days, fees for the witnesses who testified against him, even though... there were no witnesses. All of these things added up to effectively about a year's wages for an African American farm laborer... an amount that... Green Cottenham, an impoverished, largely illiterate African American man in 1908, could not have paid.

[I]n order to pay those fines off as part of the [neo-slavery] system, [Green] is leased to U.S. Steel Corporation... forced to go to work in a coal mine on the outskirts of Birmingham, Alabama, with about a thousand other Black forced laborers... deep in the mines in standing water... forced to stay in that water and consume that water for lack of any other fresh water, even though it was putrid and polluted by their own waste... Any man who failed to extract at least eight tons of coal from the mine every day would be whipped at the end of the day, and if he repeatedly failed to get his quota of coal out, he would be whipped at the beginning of the day as well.

The men entered the mine before daylight. They exited the mine after sunset... They had little medical care... subject to waves of dysentery and tuberculosis and other illnesses... [U]ltimately one of those epidemics... caused Green Cottenham to die five months after he arrived at the jail, in August of 1908.

Blackmon shows how hundreds of thousands of black men from 1870-1941

were Green Cottenhams, arrested for vagrancy if they strayed from sharecropper fields or other humiliating white employment systems. Subjected to fake trials, fined and sentenced to servitude when they could not pay, the South sold or leased them to corporations where they experienced manacled, twelve or more hours per day work, whippings, and eventual death. Complicit in the system were Southern sheriffs, police, courts, and large corporations who got cheap labor. Co-conspirators were the Southern Democrats, Northerners in general, and, beginning with Teddy Roosevelt, the presidency itself.

Neo-slavery, piled on the semi-slave sharecropper system, created the South's industrial wealth and aggrandized the agrarian part of its system. The 1870-1940 slavery, Blackmon argues, was harsher than anti-bellum bondage. While plantations tried to preserve slaves as property, beasts of burden and breeders, neo-slavery easily replaced its deceased slaves with new arrestees.

World War II, fear of our vulnerability to Japan and FDR's Attorney General, Francis Biddle, ended the outward expression of this oppressive system, but not the psychological need inside us to construct 'others' and oppress them.

The shouts of "**Socialist! Communist! Terrorist! Kill him!**" at McCain-Palin rallies show just how close to the surface is the impulse. At the prospect of 'change' and the rise of the 'other' from the debased statuses we have constructed, the self-righteous anger from the status quo erupts.

For real human rights and real liberation ever to prevail in this country, we will need more than international conventions and universal declarations, valuable as they are. We must change—down in the foul rag and bone shops of our hate-filled hearts.



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