



Bulletin

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Special points of interest:

- *Faith in Action is the witness and advocacy program of the UUCCSM*
- *The FIA Bulletin publishes essays and letters expressing the personal opinions of UUCCSM members and FIA Speakers*
- *Faith in Action speaks for the church only when the congregation has voted resoundingly to take an official position on an issue related to peace, civil liberties or social justice*

The FIA Bulletin speaks TO, not FOR, the congregation

Shortly after publication of the first issue of the Faith in Action Bulletin in March 2003, our country attacked Iraq without seeking final approval from the United Nations. The regime of Saddam Hussein was quickly destroyed and, as this issue is being prepared, we are witnessing the aftermath of that war.

A major theme of the first issue was our church's Statement of Conscience opposing unilateral preventive war in Iraq. Because of our congregational vote endorsing that Statement of Conscience, Faith in Action was able to speak **for** the church on the issue of unilateral preventive war. We tried to make the Statement of Conscience widely known, and we promoted that perspective in the press and with our congressional representatives.

Now that war has been waged and ostensibly won, the peace movement must face a variety of complex questions. What should we do now to foster peace? How should we respond to the short-term success of the Bush Doctrine? How should our society protect itself against terrorism while preserving our essential civil liberties? What role, if any, should Faith in Action play in helping our congregation deal with

these questions? To what extent can Faith in Action continue to speak for the congregation on the issues raised by our Statement of Conscience?

This issue of the Bulletin is devoted to articles expressing **personal** opinions of UUCCSM members and Faith in Action Speakers on a variety of peace, civil liberties and social justice issues. None of these articles should be interpreted as an attempt by our Faith in Action program to speak for the church. These articles "speak **to** the congregation" and should be considered a manifestation of our commitment to the pursuit of truth.

We hope these articles will stimulate discussion and debate. They are intended to be provocative and should not be construed as official position statements of the UUCCSM.

Members of our congregation who would like to comment on these or related issues may do so in one of two ways. Send a Letter to the Editor or write your own analytical essay on one of the great issues of our day for potential publication in a future issue of the Bulletin. Debate is healthy—won't you join us?

Charles M. Haskell, Editor

Personal Opinion: Bush's Mein Kampf



By S. J. Guidotti

In the final week of May, events took place which served as portents for the future. Nine members of the U.S. military were killed and twenty-five wounded in guerilla attacks against the forces in Iraq. Fundamentalists in Iraq continue to press for an Islamic state, but basic services, notably electricity and water, remain unfulfilled promises. Restoration of Iraq's civilian government was put on indefinite hold, and the military announced it could not suppress the continuing lawlessness without greatly expanding the numbers of troops.

What was the reaction of our leaders to these ominous developments? They continued to laud our lightening victory while restating their belief in the AWOL weapons of mass destruction. The President restated his belief that there were many places we still had to look, thus ignoring that virtually everyone who had anything to do with them is now in our custody. The Secretary of Defense said he thought they had been exiled to Syria or perhaps Iran; and a rationale too absurd to have a name attached to it said that they'd all been destroyed, presumably without leaving a trace, just days before our invasion. But these utterances were only given in response to direct ques-

tions. In general, Iraq was ignored and deemed to be old news in favor of another tax cut geared to people too rich to need one, an Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative that almost no one believes will succeed, and that new ominous threat to mom, apple pie, and the right to drive gas guzzling SUV's, the Iranians.

First, they're accused of fomenting fundamentalism in Iraq. Remember when southern politicians used to accuse Martin Luther King of being an outside agitator? Next, we're told that the Iranians are developing the bomb and that this is illegal, despite the fact that dating back to the Palavis, Iran refused to sign all non-proliferation pacts, initially with our approval when it was the Shah who wasn't signing. Lastly is that frequently used canard that they are harboring Al Qaeda. Remember when that one was hurled at Saddam? In both cases, they were made toward regimes openly hostile to Al Qaeda and made with no corroborating evidence.

Accompanying these charges is the larger debate that is said to be taking place within the administration. Should the U.S. act to destabilize the regime in Tehran? Hasn't our nation been down this path before? Think back to the summer of 2002. Similar stories were oozing out of Washington about the debate on Iraq. Of course, as we now know, the decision to move against Saddam had been made almost a year earlier following the events of 9/11. Leaks of a debate were the window dressing designed to move a reluctant citizenry to war in small bites.

Remember when the President's chief of staff made the gaff that new initiatives, like Madison Avenue trying to sell new toothpaste, are never launched until after Labor Day. Well, the holiday rolled around and sure enough, the push toward war began.

All right, let's take stock of where we've been and see if we can figure out where we're going. A year ago, we had a sagging economy, an unfinished war against Al Qaeda, and a President who was becoming concerned about slipping approval numbers. This year, we have a sagging economy, an unfinished war against Al Qaeda, an occupation of Iraq that's showing signs of going bad, and a President who's becoming concerned about slipping approval numbers. What's the solution? Have another war to bump up Presidential approval. As far fetched as this scenario seems, isn't the Bush administration following the same path of a year ago? And hasn't the Bush administration, like Hitler and Mein Kampf, left an early paper trail as to their long range plans? Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz has been quite explicit in viewing Iraq as only a first step along a road that goes through Syria and Iran.

What will we have following the conquest of Iran? Complete control over the world's known petroleum reserves. Quite a coup for a couple of oil sharpies, even if they happen to be the President and Vice President of the United States.

Personal Opinion: March a New Voter to the Polls



By **Arvid Knudsen**

The 2004 presidential election campaign is already at full force. Nine Democrats are vying for the job as President Bush has filed for his re-election. Democrats have not forgotten the agony suffered when the Supreme Court of the land awarded the presidency to George Bush rather than permitting the high court of Florida's decision to stand. This augers a furious contest ahead.

The values and liberal advocacies of the Democratic Party have been downtrodden by the arch conservative agenda guiding President Bush's administration. At every turn the most reactionary policies, programs and decisions dominate the executive and congressional branches. Every progressive achievement of the past is at stake and high risk of reversal.

Sadly, the Democratic Party appears to have died since the 2000 election. Vice-President Gore, the titular winner, has disappeared from the scene. The Democratic

leadership in the Senate and House of Representatives seem to serve as lapdogs to administration wishes, especially in granting war powers it desired. Democratic party initiatives have been shut out of any important consideration by the administration. They almost appear irrelevant against the relentless conservative strategies and victories. Hopes of defeating the Republicans and President Bush in 2004 under present circumstances are dim.

What needs to be done if the direction of the country is to be reversed? A peek at who votes and who doesn't reveals a possible answer. The better educated middle class votes. The poor don't. Seniors citizens vote. The 18 to 25 year olds don't. Recently naturalized citizens reflecting all nationalities and ethnic groups do not vote in their potential numbers. The African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans do not vote in the numbers they should. Only 54% of all eligible registered voters went to the polls in 2000.

"Transforming the non-voting population into voters seems the obvious solution."

Transforming the non-voting population into voters seems the obvious solution. Convincing them that Democratic candidates are better choices is an imperative. But how can we convince the resisters and non-believers that their individual votes can make a significant difference? Ask them to think about how a handful more Democratic votes in a number of states would have elected Gore. Think Florida. Think the Supreme Court.

It is a national disgrace that the majority of students graduating from high schools and colleges demonstrate so little responsibility for citizenship. We can fault the educational system for this. For the cynical, it seems as if a plot to keep the reactionaries in power is at work.

Those millions who took to the streets in defiance of war in Iraq have the likely answer. Within organizations like MoveOn, etc., lies the answer. March to the voting booths! If all of us brought just one new voter each to the booths in 2004 we could fire the present administration. With a determined effort at voter recruitment; with a finely tuned focus on actually voting, the Democratic Party could be resurrected and brought back into office. Each of us must find that new voter now!

Book Review: *The Unconquerable World* by Jonathan Schell



Reviewed by Florence Chaggier

Turning the first pages of *The Unconquerable World* is a little like taking a hike on the Santa Monica Mountains with a wise man. Once at the top, instead of the shimmering Pacific, one has a sweeping view of the way war and violence have shaped the life of our planet. Jonathan Schell questions whether the cycle of bloodshed and violence of the 20th century condemns us in the 21st to further bloodshed and ultimate doom through the spread of nuclear arms and the unappeased demons of fanaticism and ethnicity. He provides a contrary view based on a new path of wisdom. Although he is not a pacifist, he wholly bows to the promises of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., "the flecks of gold" that we must "sift and put to use."

The book is split in three parts, Violence, Nonviolence, and The Civil State. A fourth part follows which is rather a lengthy conclusion dealing with possible options to save us from extinction. Clausewitz is under scrutiny in the first part. Interestingly Schell concludes that Clausewitz, who was a militarist, might have been one of the best warning minds against militarism."

The art of war will shrivel into prudence" says Clausewitz. We wish. After standard warfare declines, Schell takes us through the rise of the nuclear age. In his eloquent style he gives us a brilliant account of Krushchev's personal dilemma with his own military staff. Schell then describes the development of what he calls the "People's war." The People's war emerges as brutal politicization happens, as exquisitely described in the chapter entitled "Clausewitz and Mao."

Gandhi and Satyagraha open the part on Nonviolence. For the first time in the history of revolution, radical change happens through nonviolence. After Gandhi, we go through a detour visiting William of Orange, John Adams, then roll forward to the mass minority movement within Russia. Schell then moves to a brilliant study of Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, which sheds light on the power of nonviolence. We see clearly through Schell's words how Gandhi's stand changed forever the power-relationships between government and the people.

Part three, The Civil State, is both exciting, as we see the liberal democratic revival, and depressing, as the myth of national sovereignty breaks it up. He describes how access to liberalism brings contention, then conscious nonviolent resolution to civil life problems. Until national sovereignty reappears and the heart warming idea that the creation of a universal state might eradicate war is

pegged as a perennial dream.

The book ends with part four, The Shape of Things to come. We unhappily delve into the sharp turn of United States towards force, withdrawing from international treaties, and the articulation of an imperial policy of unilateral right to overthrow government. Schell has us looking at the different options. Violence as the solution to violence, bringing an end to balance while creating an empire. Alternatively, the "Logic of Peace" concluding on the necessary choice of cooperation for survival: "To choose democracy over imperialism once and for all."

What is absolutely thrilling throughout this *Unconquerable World* is to follow that silken thread of the inner knowledge we all have that freedom is unforfeitable. That nothing arises without its contrary, and nonviolence will rise as the firm double of its obscene opposite. It's a thrilling book because it's like sitting on the beach, toes touching the dying wave on the sand and nothing can stop that incessant soft wave to come. The desire for peace and good will incessantly returns.

Jonathan Schell: *The Unconquerable World—Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People.* New York, Metropolitan Books, 434 pp, 2003

Personal Opinion: Civilized, Like Us



By Max Epstein

President Bush, in his September 2002 document “The National Security Strategy of the United States” (which has come to be called the “Bush Doctrine”) said: “Today our enemies have seen the results of what civilized nations can, and will do against regimes that harbor, support, and use terrorism...”

To what does the President refer when he speaks of “civilized”? The closer one looks at that word, the more clear it becomes—it means “like us.”

An examination of five dictionaries revealed great consistency in how they define “civilize.” After all, one of the most important uses of dictionaries is to provide us with agreement on the meaning of words—an essential component of communication. In the case of “civilize,” however, the dictionaries do more to distort the word than to define it consistent with its actual usage.

The dictionaries were Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 1936; the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 1956 (shorter in this case being 2315 pages); Webster’s New World Dictionary, 1979; Random House Dictionary, 1980; and the American Heritage Dictionary, 1992. With minor variations, they all rest their definitions on two basic concepts. The first has to do with raising up from or coming out of savagery or barbarism. The second has to do with enlightenment, education or training in cultural refinement, the arts, science and statecraft. Random House includes polish and sophistication.

The distortion inherent in these definitions lies in their apparent assumption that there is agreement on what constitutes “savagery” as well as what constitutes “refinement,” “enlightenment” or “polish.”

Since 1936, when the oldest of these dictionaries was published, much has been learned about the folly of assuming we agree on what such terms mean. Many countries have considered themselves to be civilized, and others to be barbaric. The ancient Greeks divided the entire world into Greeks and barbarians. The Chinese long held similar views, as did the Japanese, the British, the Egyptians, at least with respect to other Arabs, the French, and the list goes on. In fact, one could probably demonstrate that to a greater or lesser degree, most cultures have had this

view of themselves versus others.

In seeking to decide who is more civilized, do we give a higher rating to those who value the individual above society, or the reverse? How about crime rates? Does use of the death penalty count? How about the history of war versus peace? University education versus traditional tribal education? Picasso or tribal masks? Eating dogs, snakes, pigs or horses? The mere fact that different, sometimes opposite, values could all be considered civilized among those who hold those values should be enough to cast suspicion on the way dictionaries define that word. The only constant seems to be that “civilized” means to be like us. Our own notions of “barbaric” and “enlightened” become the standard for judgment. If we want a more objective version of “civilized,” perhaps we should define it as the degree to which cultures live up to their stated values.

Apart from the linguistic poverty and cultural arrogance of the standard definitions, there is a more serious problem. ***The notion that to be civilized is good, and describes us, as opposed to others, leads us in the wrong direction. It is the opposite of respect for the diversity among cultures of the world and it is the opposite of what it will take to make the world more peaceful.***

FIA Speakers Presented in April, May & June 2003

G. Wayne Glass, Ph.D.: "The Bush Doctrine"

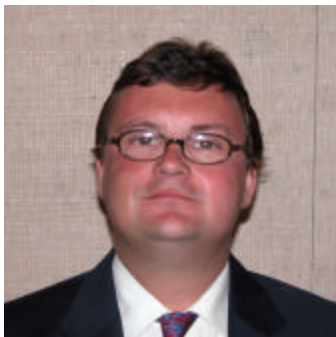


Wayne Glass was educated at Princeton (B.A.) and the University of Denver (Ph.D.). He was a defense analyst for the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Congressional Budget Office, and the principal legislative advisor for defense and foreign policy for Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico. He teaches at Pepperdine and the University of Southern California. He is a Senior Advisor for the Center for Defense Information .

"Armed with today's tools—chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological weapons—nations feeling endangered themselves endanger the planet, perhaps more than ever before."

G. Wayne Glass, Ph.D.
April 25, 2003

Olivier Plançon: "What is the role of the United Nations in times of crisis?"



Olivier Plançon is a law school graduate and holds a master's degree in public law. A career diplomat, he joined the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1994. He has served his country in Islamabad, Pakistan, and currently serves as Deputy Consul General in the French Consulate of Los Angeles.

"France and the United States can and must work together to solve problems in the Middle East."

Olivier Plançon
May 30, 2003

Ambassador A. Engin Ansay: "Can the United States Impose Democracy on the Middle East?"



Ambassador A. Engin Ansay was educated in International Law at Cambridge and is a member of the Faculty of Law of Ankara University. He is currently the Consul General for Turkey in Los Angeles. He has served as Ambassador to the United Nations and was a member of the Sharm El-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee headed by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell.

"Democracy is feasible in a Muslim country as long as the government is secular and there is a clear separation of church and state."

A. Engin Ansay
June 13, 2003

Letters to the Editor

The response of the congregation to the first issue of the FIA Bulletin was heartwarming. Although very few written comments were received, numerous people expressed their support of this initial effort.

One letter opposing the FIA Bulletin was received from a church member who joined the church in 1958. He and his family experienced the disruptive effect of politics on congregational life during the Vietnam War. He asked that his name be removed from the FIA Bulletin mailing list because he felt that it violated the separation of church and state. He went on to say that the church has become less of a place of worship than a house of radical politics. He declined having his letter published.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I'd like to thank all of you who shared your suggestions for improvement. These ranged from suggestions for specific articles or features to comments on format and layout.

We are uncertain how viable an electronic publication will be for our congregation. This concern is being addressed by a questionnaire on how our congregation uses the Newsletter and other church publications. I urge the readers of the Bulletin to respond to the questionnaire so we can determine how best to serve you.

I would also urge our readers to contribute letters, essays or other material suitable for publication in the Bulletin. Instructions for prospective authors are provided on this page.

Charles M. Haskell, Editor

A Letter of Appreciation

To the Editor:

I just wanted to express my appreciation for the Faith in Action Bulletin. I found it to be informative and important reading and I hope you'll continue to publish it, if only in e-mail format.

I'll certainly take the time to read it and act where I can.

Thanks.

Jacki Weber

Instructions for Authors

The goal of the FIA Bulletin is to publish original stories, essays, letters, poems, photographs, and related material created by church members in support of the witness and advocacy program of the UCCSM.

Send original material for possible publication to Charles M. Haskell, Editor, care of Faith in Action at the UCCSM, or by e-mail to <chaskell@ucla.edu>.

Essays, letters, poems, photographs, and other original documents expressing the personal opinions of church members will be considered on a space available basis. Letters and other written material may be edited for purposes of space or clarity.

Submissions should be typed on a single page and submitted by e-mail if at all possible. Alternatively, documents may be placed in the Faith in Action box in the church office.

Statements published in the FIA Bulletin reflect the views of the author or authors and not necessarily those of the UCCSM, unless so identified.

Charles M. Haskell, Editor



Peace Committee

Hunger Task Force
(Interim Logo)

Interweave &
Welcoming Congregation

Unitarian Universalist Community
Church of Santa Monica
A Dedicated Peace Site

1260 Eighteenth Street
Santa Monica, CA 90404-1296

Phone: 310-829-5436
Fax: 310-998-9181
Email: office@uusm.org



Civil Liberties
Study Group
(Interim Logo)



Charles M. Haskell, Editor
<chaskell@ucla.edu>

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The FIA Bulletin is published to stimulate debate and discussion about issues of peace, civil liberties and social justice. The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual authors. Articles should not be construed as official position statements of the UUCCSM unless clearly identified as such.

The FIA Bulletin is published quarterly as an electronic document in the Faith in Action section of the UUCCSM web site (www.uusm.org). It is also available as an e-mail subscription by contacting the editor at <chaskell@ucla.edu>. Interested readers may also subscribe to one or more of our mail groups:

uusm-peace-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

uusm-liberty-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

uusm-hunger-subscribe@yahoogroups.com