

Michigan Peace Team

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MPT VISION:

To pursue peace through active nonviolence in places of conflict

MPT seeks a peaceful, just, sustainable Earth Community grounded in nonviolence and respect for the sacred interconnectedness of all life.

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Imagination, Vision, Energy, Action - MPT Doing TPNI

by Liz Walters

These days I've been thinking a lot about the power of imagination, and the importance of aligning vision, energy, and action. Also I've been thinking about the direction MPT takes and what a good fit it is for so many of us.

Power of Imagination

Our ability to imagine affects our future both individually and collectively. For example, if we are in a violent or unjust situation and cannot imagine getting out of it, we probably won't. Conversely, when we're able to imagine that change is possible, it's easier for us to become creative problem solvers in the service of hopes and dreams.

At the personal level, I like to imagine peace teams working in the fields, as Earth is greening in peace. This image energizes my spirit and moves me to action. At a communal level Michigan Peace Team is grounded in the vision that

peace with justice is possible in homes, neighborhoods, and on Earth. Activated by this vision MPT provides peacemaking tools, training, and skill building. At the global level, experts tell us that the vast majority of Earth's population is longing for peace. Inspired by these longings, seeds of peace are being planted everywhere.

Vision, Energy, Action

Seeking to align vision, energy, and action, MPT, is learning and practicing "TPNI" - Third Party Nonviolent Intervention." This is one name given to a growing field of work that is also known as "Nonviolent Conflict Intervention," or "Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping," or "Proactive Presence." Our MPT peace teams bring the tools of TPNI to situations of armed conflict and to situations of potential violence.

Unlike more traditional forms of intervention such as a United Nations' peacekeeping force, TPNI relies on nonviolent means. Also, peace teams doing TPNI respect the fact that people in local and societal settings find their own path to peace.



Liz Walters

Peace with justice cannot be imposed from the outside.

The immediate TPNI goal is reduce violence and keep people out of harms way. Another important TPNI goal is to create the safe space that local or societal nonviolent social change movements need for imagination, for creative problem solving, and for taking action in the direction of their hopes and dreams.

Needless to say, Michigan Peace Team prepares well for the TPNI work we undertake. Rigorous research and extensive nonviolent training is critical to our work. Community building and preparing to work as a team is essential to who we are and what we do. Growing in self knowledge and self care is indispensable for those participating in peace teams.

Some TPNI Tools ...

There are a large number of tools within the work of TPNI.

Continued on page 2



Future Palestinian leaders sharing hopes and dreams

Imagination, Vision, Energy, Action continued



Earth is greening with peace!

“... when we’re able to imagine that change is possible, it’s easier for us to become creative problem solvers in the service of hopes and dreams”

“Our MPT peace teams bring the tools of TPNI to situations of armed conflict and to situations of potential violence.”

In this article I select four of these tools to illustrate how TPNI might work:

Presence – To be attentive to the situation, and to be a public sign of nonviolent action ... Depending on the country and government, the presence of internationals can be a major deterrent to violence.

Protective Accompaniment – To escort people who are in danger of attack

Observation/Monitoring – To be keenly aware, and to document what we see and experience ... The “TPNI equipment” that we carry and use are cell phones, digital cameras, video cameras, voice recorders, notebooks and pens. Making this equipment visible conveys the notion that “the whole world is watching.” During times of extreme violence our peace teams connect with human rights groups and use a formal documentation process to report human rights violations.

Interposition – To intervene physically by standing between the threat of violence and the targeted person.

Sharing an Experience
Sharing an experience may help to illustrate how the above tools work:

Our MPT peace team was invited by residents of a Palestinian town located in the northern part of the West Bank near the City of Nablus to be an international **presence** and to **accompany** participants during a nonviolent march and rally that their town and two other neighboring towns were organizing. The purpose of the march was to draw public attention to the fact that a nearby Israeli settlement was dumping raw sewage into streams and ground water on Palestinian land.

The march went beautifully, however, as marchers gathered at the common meeting site, three Israeli jeeps, two tanks, a personnel carrier and 53 Israeli soldiers appeared and encircled the crowd. That encirclement lasted over eight hours with plenty of dicey moments interspersed between soldiers and Israeli peacemakers and between soldiers and Palestinians. Working in affinity groups, our peace team circulated in the crowd throughout the hours of captivity. During this time we were able to do lots of **observation/monitoring** and take copious notes.

On occasion, when a soldier would point his gun at someone, a peace team member would step in between the soldier’s gun and the targeted per-

son. This is **interposition**.

Under the Olive Tree

As the hours wore on, an elder from the town urged me to join a group of Palestinian women who were taking a break from long ordeal and hot sun by sitting under an olive tree. When I protested and said that I didn’t need to rest, he responded, “The struggle for freedom is long; the sun is very hot; come, sit under the olive tree. I thanked him and sat down with the women. They were sharing stories about the hopes they have for their children, and about past local efforts on behalf of freedom and justice. As I reflected on their sharing I marveled.

... It was under that olive tree that I began to imagine an Earth Community Peace Team enriched with the diversity of cultures, wisdom, and abundant love ... What a powerful source of peace that would be!



Meet MPT’s 2009 Summer Intern



Kassy Fineout, a native of East Lansing, is a junior at Michigan State University studying Arts and Humanities along with International Development. She began her internship with MPT in May and has enjoyed her time spent there. In her spare time Kassy is fond of attending Spartan basketball games, playing the cello, and cuddling with her dog, Corky. In the future Kassy plans on studying abroad in Ecuador and graduating. She also hopes to continue to be a part of MPT.

Say Yes to Creating a Culture of Nonviolence

by Peter Dougherty

Nonviolence, in theory and practice, embraces the best of philosophies, spiritualities and religions. It is not just a mental construct, but is a committed way of life for the transformation of ourselves and the world around us.

In the face of violence we can feel rage, helplessness, fear, insecurity, and much more. How are we to take back our power as human beings when we and others suffer abuse? Good people are taught to turn to violence.

In our cultures, we glorify violence and grant it a power and goodness it doesn't innately have. We tend to believe our myths that it "works." Tell that to the army that lost the war, or the guy who lost the fistfight. It's hard to pull your pistol out when a robber's pistol is already aimed at your head.

Our loved ones who go into battle end up killing men, women and children and destroying the earth – no matter how "clean" a war they intended to fight. Over 200,000 Iraqi children died during the Gulf War, either during the bombing raids or during attacks the following months.

What makes Nonviolence stand out is the conviction that *we are not to do harm to others and the earth*. No just war theories. No violent self-defense. No treating the "enemy" like a thing. I like the saying: "When Jesus said love your enemies, I think he probably meant don't kill them."

I believe Nonviolence is more powerful than violence in most situations. Here are some examples. A young man held up a woman at gunpoint, demanding a certain amount of money. All she had was a bill larger than he had demanded. She insisted on asking why he hadn't just asked her for the money- did he think she was mean and selfish? He was so taken aback that he offered to get change and bring back the amount beyond what he had asked for. She said no, offering it all to him as a gift.

Two police officers sent to a home encountered a distraught wife with a butcher knife in her hands



Peter Dougherty

telling them to stay away or she will kill them. The seasoned officer aimed his gun at her and told her to put down the knife. His rookie partner gently put his hand on his buddy's gun, slowing moving it downward. He then proceeded to talk softly, compassionately to the distraught woman, who calmed down and then handed him the knife.

We have to create a **Culture of Nonviolence**. If we say it cannot be done, we have already abandoned the vision of Nonviolence. Nonviolence is not just the goal, but it is the Way, the Path. The acorn never sees the tree that it produces.

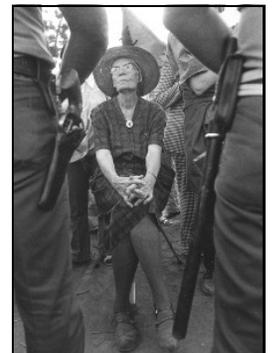
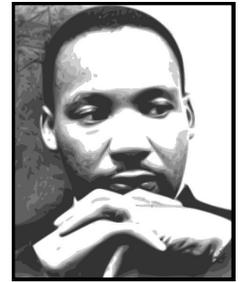
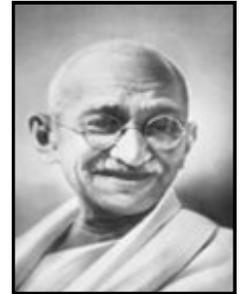
Nonviolence chooses to be open to the possibility of people coming to their senses, even as we employ nonviolent persuasion. Mitch Snyder of the Community for Creative Nonviolence requested the D.C. city hall to give an abandoned city building to the organization so they could house the homeless of D.C. They refused repeated requests, so he announced that he would very publicly commence living in a cardboard box on the city hall lawn the very next week, in the middle of winter, until they would give them the building. The very next day city hall granted the request.

Nonviolence never gives up. It is relentless persistence.

I encourage you to be an ongoing part of Michigan Peace Team's effort to transform our human community into a Culture of Nonviolence.



Peace Team at the 2008 Republican National Convention



We have to create a Culture of Nonviolence.

Nonviolence is not just the goal, but it is the Way, the Path.

Peacemaking: The Work of Heart, Hands, and Head

by Kim Redigan

“... we need to become scholar-activists who use our heads as well as our hearts and hands ...”



Kim Redigan

Most of us would probably agree that our work for peace springs from some place within ourselves, some crevice in our souls, some deep corner of our

hearts, that recognizes injustice and harbors an insistent desire to set things right. Most of us feel deeply and are graced with a passion for peace that makes this work both heartbreaking and joyful.

At the same time, I think that most of us engage our hands in this struggle, our physical selves in this work, at times almost unconsciously. Our feet find their way to the streets, our hands carry signs, roll away rocks, and embrace the other, our wrists know the pinch of handcuffs, our shoulders adjust to heavy backpacks. As a way of centering, many of us wield paint brushes, knit scarves, and plant cucumbers. Our hands, like our hearts, seem to throw themselves into this work with abandon, almost as a matter of course.

While the world needs all the heart and physical effort we can muster, it also needs us to use our heads in this work. I know that this is probably the teacher in me making this plea, but I fear that our hard work sometimes

suffers from a lack of scholarship that dilutes our efforts to reach out to more people. While it is important to place our feet in the street, it seems it is equally important to plant our butts in the study. How much better our work is when we know the geography, the history, the literature of the places where we serve on peace teams.

Without wanting to sound elitist, I think it is fair to say that most people in the peace and justice community are better informed and more widely read than many of our fellow citizens. It is our understanding of history and current events, after all, that compels many of us to speak out and get involved. That said, we need to delve more deeply into the scholarship that informs our work and continue to study the complexities and nuances of the issues and places that we are committed to. To become scholar-activists who use our heads as well as our hearts and hands.

In our world of Orwellian doublespeak, euphemism, and spin, language itself has been compromised to the extent that truth is obscured and people are easily manipulated. If our scholarship results in nothing more than a restoration of clear speech it will have accomplished a great deal for peace. When our research allows us to show that violence dismissed as mere *collateral damage* is, in fact, the killing of a particular family with particular names living in a particular village, we are helping to humanize the world by exposing the chilling

abuse of language. Far from elitism, this kind of scholarship helps pull us away from abstraction and the technical jargon so typical of the military-industrial-educational complex and back into the world of the concrete, the blessed world of flesh-and-blood people with names and stories.

While our scholarship can help us cut through the obfuscation and spin by simply calling things by their rightful names, it can also give us the tools we need to make better presentations when we are called upon to speak. The ability to read maps, recall basic history, and offer the insights of scholars in the field related to our topic go a long way in helping us better communicate the urgency of peacemaking and in avoiding presentations that are superficial or sentimental. In fact, I would argue that keeping up on reading via books, Internet, journals, magazines, and films is as integral a part of serving on a peace team as nonviolence training. Otherwise, our work becomes stunted and fails to bear the full fruit of our commitment to peace. While, of course, our primary work is third-party nonviolent intervention in places of conflict, there is another side to the work that entails study and public sharing. Frequently, people in the West Bank would tell our team, “We are so grateful for what you do here, but your most important work is going home and sharing what you’ve seen here.” While the personal stories we share are central, how much better it is when we can buttress those stories with empirical data, historical



“My hope is that we commit ourselves to intellectual growth in our work for peace and that we embrace scholarship as an integral part of the work.”

facts, maps, and scholarly analysis from a variety of sources.

Another area of study that is too often overlooked in peacemaking is the study of art, literature, culture, and language. Historically, poets, artists, and musicians have been the visionaries of peace and justice – the keepers of hope, the light in the distance that draws us to a different place. The ones who keep movements humane

and flexible. Our work is enriched by knowing the poems, the paintings, the voices of those with whom we stand in solidarity. By knowing the words and phrases with which others cry, celebrate, and pray we enter the holy place where we become more than our small selves.

Life is all about balance, and as peacemakers it is probably good practice to reflect on the balance

of heart, hands, and head in our work. Peacemaking without heart becomes sterile and bitter. Without hands it becomes theoretical and abstract. Without the head it becomes truncated, undisciplined, and so much less than it could be. My hope is that we commit ourselves to intellectual growth in our work for peace and that we embrace scholarship as an integral part of the work.



**Peacemaking
The work of
the
Heart
Hands
and
Head**



“... become scholar activists...”



“Our feet find their way to the streets ...”

With gratitude

MPT’s Michael Moore event on May 2, 2009 was a great success thanks to the marvelous work of the planning committee. We are most grateful for the commitment of time and energy given by these wonderful organizers:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Annette Thomas | Lourdes Fonseca-Nearon |
| Apryl Mitchell | Mary Ellen Jeffreys |
| Carol Lane | Maureen Aman |
| Cheryl Bukoff | Paula Marie Deubel |
| Gloria C. Henry | Peter Dougherty |
| Jennifer Craven | Rita Carey |
| Karen Donahue | Sheri Muzher |
| Kati Garrison | Mary Ann Ford |
| Kim Redigan | Star Rothe |
| Liz Walters | Terry Futvoye-Micus |

Bill Meyer ... musician for the Reception.
Star Rothe and Michael Ciavone ... musicians and singers during the Dinner and Program

**With
appreciation
to
Michael
Moore**

You attracted a crowd of 500! We are most grateful. Thank you for your commitment to scholarship, and for the courage of your message. You and your message are an inspiration to us. Thank you too, for all that you do on behalf of peace with justice.

**Special
thanks!**

To Amy Lange
We are most grateful for your work as emcee at the MPT Michael Moore event on May 2nd

To Tony Gallucci
Thank you for filming the event. Your work means a great deal to us.

To Ron Garrison
Thank you for bringing the superb sound and media system, and for coordinating the media experience

Book Review: Revolution of the Spirit

Laure Arjakovsky (Ed.), Photographs by Petro Didula, Hryhoriy Prystay, and the Staff at Ukrainian Catholic University. Lviv: Institute for Ecumenical Studies, Ukrainian Catholic University, 2005.

Review by Gail M. Presbey, University of Detroit Mercy

“... it was rather about the people of Ukraine coming together and acting together to reshape their world ...”



Gail Presbey at a recent peace gathering in Detroit

On my recent travels to Ukraine and visit to Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) in Lviv, I came across a book that I might otherwise not have seen. It is a collection of photographs by the participants in the Orange Revolution that took place in Ukraine in 2004. These photographs are accompanied by commentary by photographer Petro Didula in three languages (English, French, and Ukrainian), and includes prefaces by noted academics from UCU: Myroslav Marynovych (who had spent years in jail under the earlier Soviet regime), and Jeffrey Wills (former Vice-Rector of UCU), as well as French Cultural Ambassador to Ukraine, Patrick Donabedian. I already knew that UCU staff and students had participated in this nonviolent political action, because the Rector of UCU, Father Borys Gudziak, had addressed a large crowd of Ukrainian-Americans here in Warren, Michigan two years ago. At the time I heard his talk I was impressed. His description sounded much like our small Pax Christi and interfaith nonviolent vigils we have here in the Detroit area on occasion. And yet the scale and duration of their vigil, in the harsh winter conditions that surely match our winters here, was mind boggling to me. The pictures convey this togetherness,

facing the harshness of the elements as well as the masked and uniformed police blockades with an openness to change. Young and old, musicians and cooks, crowds sometimes swelling up to 500,000 people pooled together their resources to live gracefully amidst the snow on the *majdan* (Independence Square) in Kyiv for 17 days. As Marynovych explains, “the human spirit is above all reflected in the face,” and in this way he invites us to look at the faces captured in these crucial moments by the photographers.

As Donabedian explains in his preface, this book focuses not on the political but the spiritual dimension of the people’s vigil. Not just about a disputed election, it was rather about the people of Ukraine coming together and acting together to reshape their world, “to break off with a past considered to be shameful; the aspiration to the re-establishing of justice, honesty and truth.” The moment took time, there was a ripeness to it, as Wills explains. While independence came to Ukraine in 1990, it took until 2004 for Ukrainians to come together in the streets and define themselves. Ukrainians of diverse religious backgrounds had experiences of pilgrimage, and drew on these experiences to come together in peace and with a prayerful focus. Marynovich said that Western television crews cut out scenes of the Square when people were at prayer, hiding a crucial dimension of the action. But the book shows us those moments. Didula describes the vigil as a moment of unity for Ukraine, where the slogan “East and West together!” was not only shouted but also enacted. While having a small circulation, **this book can be found on amazon.com**

Special Tribute to Amy Lange

Amy Lange is a Metro Detroit investigative TV reporter. She is also friend of many us at MPT. Amy has been honored for her work by the Society of Professional Journalists, the Michigan Association of Broadcasters and the Associated Press. She has been nominated for several Emmy awards and won in 2006 in the Societal Concerns News Feature category for “Heart Gallery,” and the Best Investigative Reporter award. In her life and work Amy is deeply committed to social justice. Amy was the emcee at MPT’s Michael Moore event. At the event Amy’s Mother gave a contribution to Michigan Peace Team in honor of her daughter, saying, “I am very proud of my daughter, Amy, and I want to honor her life and work!”

Mas-Ha: Thriving Town Taken by the Wall in MPT's New Home District

Written by the MPT 2009 Summer Team
Edited by Nicole Rohrkemper

On 7 July 2009, three members of MPT visited Mas-ha, a village of 2,500 people thirty minutes southwest of Nablus. [Ed note: Mas-ha is in MPT's new home area further north. Our teams continue to work and build relationships in the local area, as well as remaining a mobile presence and responsive to need throughout the West Bank.. MPT was invited to visit the village by a friend who currently lives in the United States and is originally from Mas-ha.



Mas-ha from the top of the town mosque minaret

Mas-ha is a village surrounded on three sides by Israeli settlements/the Separation Wall and on one side by an Israeli-only road. Before the second intifada, Mas-ha was a thriving market town with a direct road into Tel Aviv, where Israelis and Palestinians coexisted and conducted daily business with one another. Today Mas-ha has an extremely high rate.

Three settlements border Mas-ha, El Kana, Ezz Efraim and Sha'ari Tekva. These were erected on land confiscated from local Mas-ha residents and neighboring villagers. The road Israel has built to connect these two settlements is not a direct route but rather snakes around two large hills composed of Mas-ha olive groves. Furthermore, Israel usually grants only the oldest men in a family the permission to pick olives in those groves in controversial areas – groves near the Wall or settlements. While MPT was there, construction workers were mining in one of the large hills, presumably for future settlement expansion in the area.

Concrete in some areas and an electrified fence in others, this Separation wall is under 24 hour surveillance by the Israeli military. If anyone approaches the Separation Barrier, sensors alert the military who immediately come to the scene. During MPT's tour we observed a large tractor that sweeps the dirt near the Separation Barrier daily so that the military can see any new footprints.

The final leg of our tour involved visiting on Palestinian family's home that is completely surrounded by the Separation Wall (isolated in 2003). To the left of the house is the Elqana settlement and to the right is a series of four gates that separate Mas-ha from the house. The children are not able to play in their own front yard because of the daily footprint sweeps conducted by the military, and because of the electric fence/Separation Barrier around their home. The family has been offered large amounts of money for their land from the Israeli government, but nonviolently resist the occupation by remaining in their home.

See the team reports at www.MPTinPalestine.Blogspot.com.

Olive Oil



Message from Darryl Haynes

Michigan Peace Team purchases olive oil from Holy Land Olive Oil. The goal of this company is to develop into a sustainable commercial enterprise and make a substantive difference in the lives of the farmers in Palestine. The olive oil comes from the northern region of the West Bank. This olive oil is organic, fair trade, and delicious

Palestine Olive Oil, both 16.9 oz and 25.4 oz bottles are still available for \$15 and \$20.

Fall shipment is on order and expected approximately October 1, 2009. . We expect a price increase at that time.

To order olive oil, contact MPT at by phone, 517 484-3178, or email MPT at michigan-peace@peaceteam.org.

Mark attention Darryl Haynes in the subject line

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Dear Friends of MPT,

We are grateful for your continued support of Michigan Peace Team. Your commitment, your involvement, your gifts of time, energy, talents, your financial contributions, and most of all your friendship are deeply appreciated.

Gratefully,

MPT Core Members

Peter Dougherty
Mary Pat Dewey
Sr. Mary Ann Ford
Mary Ellen Gondeck
Jasiu Milanowski
Paul Pratt
Sheri Wander

MPT Staff

Peter Dougherty
Mary Hanna
Martha Larsen
Nicole Rohrkemper
Liz Walters

MPT SUSTAINER'S CIRCLE

You can make a tax deductible contribution to MPT on a monthly basis through your credit card. Even \$10 a month or more would help us continue the mission. Just let us know how much you would like to donate each month, and send us your information below. We will deduct the specified amount from your credit card each month and you will receive a monthly notice. It's a wonderful way to keep MPT going, with little hassle for you.

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If you would prefer to have your MPT newsletters sent via email, please check the box, detach this section, and mail to MPT.

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