

War and peace? An agenda for peace research and practice in geography[☆]

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ABSTRACT

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In 1885, Kropotkin called for geography to be 'a means of dissipating [hostile] prejudices' between nations that make conflicts more likely, and 'creating other feelings more worthy of humanity'. As a body of scholars, we have risen far more ably to the negative task of 'dissipating' than to the positive charge of 'creating': Geography is better at researching war than peace. To redress that imbalance, we need both to *conceptualise* more clearly what we mean by peace, and make a *commitment* to researching and practising it. These arguments are made with reference to the broader literature and research along the Danish/German, Israeli/Palestinian and Kyrgyz/Uzbek interfaces.

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Introduction

Geography is better at studying war than peace. This contribution proposes an agenda for how geography in general, and political geography in particular, can think more clearly about peace.

The title of this paper is a reference to a Derek Gregory's plenary lecture at the Royal Geographical Society – Institute of British Geographers 2008 conference, 'War and peace' (Gregory, 2010). That paper neatly illustrates the state of human geography's engagement with these topics. On war, it is authoritative and informed, eloquent, theoretical, and interdisciplinary: a compelling and thought-provoking critique of cultures and practices of warfare. Conversely, peace is little more than gestured it, and soon disappears from the paper. The argument here is simple: for our discipline to play a serious role in addressing the problems wracking twenty-first century humanity, it is imperative that this imbalance be redressed.

There is a long and patchy history of geographical engagement with peace. In this paper I do not seek to review this literature, but to engage with certain aspects of it in order to make two propositions: geography must firstly *conceptualise* what it actually means by peace, and secondly clearly *commit* itself (through the intersection of academic research and activism with normative agendas) to peace. I suggest that, in so doing, geography can, as Gregory desires, reposition itself as one of the 'arts of peace' (Gregory, 2010: 181).

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Conceptualising peace

When discussed by politicians, journalists, academics, and even activists, it is frequently assumed that everyone knows what 'peace' is, and thus the word is commonly left undefined. Therefore it is vital, at the outset, to problematise peace and ask what 'it' is. To begin with, I will consider three disciplines that have pondered the matter more deeply than geography: peace studies, Biblical studies, and International Relations theory. The purpose of these excursions into other fields is not to attempt to summarise their numerous debates and achievements, but rather to demonstrate the rich and varied ways in which 'peace' can be conceptualised. This will provide pointers to begin exploring how the term has been used within the geographical tradition.

Peace studies

In a famous editorial that launched the *Journal of Peace Research* in 1964, Johan Galtung described the 'absence of violence, absence of war' as 'negative peace', counterposed to positive peace as 'the integration of human society' (Galtung, 1964: 1). The limitations of negative peace are seen by political scientist Julie George's recent analysis of the politics of ethnic separatism in Russia and Georgia. Saakashvili's 2003 Rose Revolution inaugurated a period of territorial centralisation, economic reform, anticorruption programmes, state-building, and war. This "destabilised the tenuous peace of the Shevardnadze era ... [which] relied on a weakened Georgian state with individualised benefits and informal institutions surrounding economic enrichment and political power" (George, 2009: 67). This 'peace' was an uneasy and untrusting truce between the corrupt leaders of an unjust society divided into warring regions.

Saakashvili's 2008 war with Russia was ruinous, but the 'peace' that the republic enjoyed – or endured – beforehand was hardly Edenic. That is why Galtung was clear that 'negative peace' – preventing, stopping or de-escalating armed combat – is obviously a good, but believed that peace research should aim at understanding the processes whereby positive peace could be built and sustained. Indeed, for Galtung the definitional purpose of peace research is 'research into the conditions... of realising peace' (Galtung, 1969: 183).

Biblical studies

An expansive definition of positive peace has been offered by the discipline of Biblical studies. The word generally translated into English as 'peace' in the Hebrew Bible, 'shalom', appears 200 times and, Swartley argues, the base denominator of its many meanings is 'well-being, wholeness, completeness' (Swartley, 2006: 27). Mennonite scholar of Old Testament studies, Perry Yoder, has studied the meaning of these occurrences. He begins his book on the topic with the words, 'Peace is a middle-class luxury, perhaps even a Western middle-class luxury' (Yoder, 1989: 3). This was his conclusion after working in 1980s Philippines. He means that Western peace activism, essentially opposing the use of lethal violence including revolutionary violence, maintains the structures of an unjust society and thus this type of peace seemed to Filipinos as 'the rhetoric of those who have it.' He gives an example of Guthrie, a British palm oil processing plant that was raided by the New People's Army while he was there (Yoder, 1989: 4–5). Guthrie was said to have hired mercenaries to help the company 'persuade' peasant farmers to sell their land to make into a plantation, depriving them of their livelihoods. The farmers tried to organise and sabotage, but the military used harsh measures to protect the company so the NPA entered one night, tied up the guards and took them away, and destroyed the plant. For western peace activists to call on the peasants to desist from violence, when not pressuring the company and British and Philippine governments to act justly, he came to conclude, was perverse, with western peace activists (including himself) espousing a concept of peace that maintained the status quo for the comfort of the wealthy. Everyone says they are 'for peace', those building ICMBs and those opposing them: the need, therefore, is to ask, 'what kind of peace?', and 'for what kind of peace ought we to work?' (Yoder, 1989: 10).

His experience of working with and talking to Filipinos led him to a close re-reading of the idea of shalom in the Bible. He concluded that 'shalom is a vision of what ought to be and a call to transform society' (Yoder, 1989: 5) – 'a far cry from seeing peace as the passive avoidance of deadly violence'. He identified three 'shades of meaning'. The first, and most common, refers to material, physical well-being; in certain dialogues in the Biblical text, one individual checked on another's 'shalom', their okayness, their all-rightness. This is shalom 'marked by the presence of physical well-being and by the absence of physical threats like war, disease and famine' (Yoder, 1989: 13). The second is just social relationships between people – the absence of war or poverty, for sure, but more than that, 'the presence of positive and good relations as marked by justice' (Yoder, 1989: 15). As an example he cites a prophecy in the book of Isaiah, about God's restoration of the land:

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
and righteousness abide in the fruitful place
And the effect of righteousness will be peace,
and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust
forever (Bible, Isaiah 32: 16–17).

Yoder identifies a third cluster of uses around shalom: a moral or ethical meaning of 'straightforwardness', acting with integrity and honesty rather than deceit, blame or guilt. Together, he argues,

these three shades of meaning have a continuity: 'shalom defines how things should be' – a way in Israelite society of referring to material world, relationships and character as all right, as okay. Peace is 'okayness' (Yoder, 1989: 15–16).

Yoder argues that the New Testament idea of 'eirene', the Greek word usually translated as 'peace', is used in much the same way, with one distinction: it is used theologically to talk about God (as 'the God of peace', Bible, Hebrews 13:20) and the good news of God for all humankind ('the gospel of peace', Bible, Ephesians 6:15). In particular, Jesus' death and resurrection is said to bring peace between God and humanity, peace between people (Jew and Gentile united in Christ), and even ecological balance. Thus Christ's death and resurrection has transforming power, setting things right between old enemies (Yoder, 1989: 21).

Swartley extends the analysis of peace in the New Testament. He reads the Biblical text as suggesting that peace is achieved not through power and violence, but through repentance transforming enmity into friendship, pursued non-violently through actions such as blessing and loving one's enemies (Swartley, 2006: 1–26). Swartley would doubtless concur with Yoder that Biblical peace is:

the result of things being okay... things being as they should be; when things are not that way, no amount of security, no amount of peacekeeping in the sense of law and order and public tranquility will make for peace... only a transformation of society so that things really are all right will make for Biblical peace' (1989: 22).

This is a vision of 'positive peace' as general well-being and just social relationships that is poles apart from a 'negative peace' as an uneasy and untrusting truce which, by suppressing opposition to injustice, can work to the advantage of the powerful.

International relations theory

This summary of the richness and multiplicity of the conceptualisation of peace within Biblical studies is offered to show that 'peace' is far broader than the antonym of war. For political geography, however, arguably a more useful relevant debate to follow about the meaning of peace is that within International Relations theory (IR), a body of scholarship that emerged after World War 1 explicitly to understand the inter-state system in order to chart a pathway to peace. This is particularly relevant for our discipline, both because many geographers likewise seek to understand violence in the international system, and because we often engage with IR literature. Here, I lean particularly on the work of Oliver Richmond. His two recent books, *The Transformation of Peace*, and *Peace in International Relations*, are claimed to be the first attempt to thoroughly trace the development of the concept of peace within a discipline that too often assumes it.

Richmond's basic contention is that peace 'is rarely conceptualised, even by those who often allude to it' (2005: 2). The theorisation of peace that does occur is generally hidden away in discussions of war, but peace is usually discussed in ways that disguise that it is essentially contested (2005: 5). For Richmond, this is problematic for a number of reasons: it is ironic in a discipline whose *raison d'être* is to understand the obstacles to peace; it may be that peace discourses are a form of 'orientalism', actors who know peace creating it for people who do not; and because '[c]oncepts of peace may also be used as a tool of war, used to justify, legitimate, and motivate a recourse to war' (2005: 13). Therefore he seeks to problematise the concept: 'to take note of who describes peace, and how, as well as who construct is, and why' (2005: 7).

Richmond analyses and summarises the meaning of 'peace' in the major theoretical strands of IR. For idealism, generally associated with the early decades of the discipline before World War 2, peace meant a future world of complete social, political and

economic harmony: desirable but effectively unobtainable (Richmond, 2008: 14). Its main rival, realism, posited an anarchic world in which peace was not possible, but where war could be held off through the maintenance of order by a powerful hegemon or international system. Peace was thus confined to 'a limited temporal and geographically bounded order' (Richmond, 2008: 14). As such realism 'offered an important set of tools to understand security frameworks for states', insights which 'are an important part of any discussion of peace' (Richmond, 2008: 56), but because it was unable to move beyond the politics of fear it had little else to offer for the positive development of peace.

By 1940 realism had displaced idealism, which was undone by the Second World War. The main challenge to realism became liberalism: the hope that a well-managed, inter-state system could obviate armed conflict. Marxism emerged as an important challenge to both realism and liberalism, seeing peace as achievable with social justice and equality between states following massive social upheaval (Richmond, 2008: chap. 3). Critical theory posited an emancipatory peace, emphasising justice for marginalised actors achievable through ideal forms of democracy, an approach developed through post-structural theorisation that critiques the universalising of critical theory and is more sensitive to the ways in which discourses and institutions of peace can perpetuate exclusion and injustice (Richmond, 2008: chaps. 6 & 7).

Richmond concentrates upon analysis of what he describes as 'the liberal peace': that likeminded states co-exist in an order of democracy, market capitalism, human rights, development, and civil society, maintained by states through force. This empowers an epistemic community legitimately able to transfer knowledge of this peace to those who don't have it (Richmond, 2008: 209). It is a form of victors' peace, reliant on dominant states and the hegemony of the state system, but makes strong claims to be emancipatory. It is peace-as-governance, universal and obtainable if the correct methods are applied by a plethora of actors working on an agreed peacebuilding consensus (Richmond, 2008: 183).

The liberal peace, Richmond argues, is hybrid, drawing on varied strands of theory and practice: realist, liberal, and emancipatory, and has different elements. Some are conservative: unilateralist and top-down, such as the interventions in Somalia, Iraq, and Afghanistan; more orthodox elements, represented by bodies such as the UN, stress sensitivity to local culture; while emancipatory elements, often pursued by NGOs, valorise bottom-up development, and closer and more equal relationships with local actors, and may be more critical of the coercion and conditionality of the first two (Richmond, 2008: 214–215). These different actors and different elements may reinforce or contradict each other, but the project has become powerful and pervasive. It has effectively displaced (at least in policy circles) earlier realist models that saw no hope for democratic peace outside of a few besieged countries, and utopianism that espoused a desirable but unobtainable general peace, and classic liberalism that saw limited peace as possible for some territorially-bound units. The liberal peace is the most ambitious form: a hegemonic discourse and practice created by a peacebuilding consensus that creates multiple levels and institutions of governance by external actors (Richmond, 2008: 223).

Richmond's work is not without its flaws. He concludes with a call for IR engagement in peacemaking where local decision-making processes determine the political and social processes and norms to be institutionalised; the aim should be to install indigenous peace that includes a version of human rights, the rule of law, and representative political process. In other words: local peace as long as at its heart it enshrines Western concepts of human rights and democracy. Furthermore, he adds that there should be international support and guidance on technical aspects of governance and institution-building that does not introduce hegemony,

inequality, dependency or conditionality (Richmond, 2008: 164). This is extremely hard to envisage.

Nonetheless, peace studies, IR and Biblical studies force us to ask continually '[w]hat is peace, why, who creates and promotes it, for what interests, and who is peace for?' (Richmond, 2008: 16). That is to say, they emphasise that *power* is crucial to both defining and generating a lasting and just peace as a continuously negotiated social condition. They point to rich positive conceptions of peace, and can thereby alert us to how concepts of peace have been deployed within geography. An exhaustive study of the topic is beyond the scope of this paper, so instead two indicative 'snapshots' of how peace has been discussed in the literature will be viewed: geographical reflection on the aftermath of World War 2, and recent edited collections on 'geography and peace'.

Conceptualising peace in geography: two snapshots

Snapshot 1: World War 2

The Second World War occasioned an outpouring of geographical reflections on 'peace'. This section will consider how a number of these reflected very different concepts of peace. The agendas within political geography in the first half of the twentieth century were set by imperialism and European great-power competition. Conceptions of peace within the discipline were variously marked by an acceptance of the rules of this game, or attempts to transcend them.

Peace was a key problem for classical Anglophone geopolitical thought. A clear example of working with a realist conception of peace is provided by the Dutch-American geographer, Nicholas Spykman. He began a 1942 essay with the words, "There will be peace after the war in which we are now engaged" (Spykman, 1942: 436). The banality of this expert geopolitical prediction notwithstanding, it reflects a negative view of peace as simply the absence or cessation of armed combat. Spykman was concerned to deduce how geopolitical knowledge could ensure that a post-World War 2 USA got the better of 'The Geography of the Peace' (Spykman, 1944). With fellow realist Halford Mackinder, peace was a resource that could be 'won' in a zero-sum competition with others (Mackinder, 1943). Spykman's was not the type of 'peace' that would be envisaged by Europeans seeking to radically rewrite the rules of the game by tying France and Germany together in a political and economic union to make future conflict unthinkable (Luttwak, 1994). Rather, it meant the accrual and deployment of military power in strategic alliances to prevent rival states challenging the hegemonic position of the USA. Dismissive of the potential of idealistic approaches to 'peaceful change', he argued that alliances to ensure a balance of power were more realistic: '[t]he first step from anarchy to order is not the disappearance of force, but its use by the community instead of by individual members' (Spykman, 2007 [1942]: 463). Peace would be temporary and fragile, and did not involve justice between states. Indeed, Spykman's belief that "Because of [the] absence of a supreme government, international society remains a dynamic system in which states engage in a struggle for power unrestrained by higher authority" (Spykman, 1942: 436) is as clear a statement of classical realism as can be found in the geographical literature.

Although the agendas of political geographers at this time were set by imperial competition, they did not all follow realists like Spykman and Mackinder by ending there. Other geographers asked not 'how can we understand the rules of the game to create a fragile peace that maintains our position?', but rather, 'how can we rewrite those rules to create a more enduring peace?' These drew on a mixture of idealist, liberal and socialist conceptions of peace.

In the conclusion to his 1934 Association of American Geographers' presidential address, Wallace Atwood declared that the 'supreme responsibility' of geography was to help stamp out 'the damnable practices of war' and foster a 'world wide enthusiasm for peace' as a 'binding cement making war absolutely impossible' (Atwood, 1935: 15–16). This was classic 1930s idealism: war would end if the countries of the world would only understand each other better, and geography is a subject that can contribute towards this like no other.

Another contribution is Griffith Taylor's 1946 book, *Our Evolving Civilisation: An Introduction to Geopacifism: Geographical Aspects of the Path Toward World Peace*. His final chapter advocates the division of Europe into four parts, each with sufficient timber, fuel, food and iron to survive (Fig. 1). Here, idealism like Wallace's has been shattered by the war, and replaced by a liberal concept of peace: peace by separation, creating a new framework of states that get on with their own business and cautiously engage each other through peaceful diplomatic relations (Taylor, 1946: chap. 13). His proposal to solve the geographical problems of peace by dividing war-mongering Europe up into autarkic units was both naïve and myopic: naïve, in that it did not take proper account of the ideologies of nationalism, and myopic, in overlooking the role of other world powers, such as his own USA, in imperial competition.

In his 1943 *Outline of Political Geography* in the 'Plebs Outlines' series for the National Council of Labour Colleges, Frank Horrabin provides a more cogent critique of imperialism from a Socialist perspective. A Labour member of parliament, he used political geography to understand and critique imperialism and to convey his ideas to public audiences. His *Outline* is arguably one of the great political geography texts. Horrabin traces the geography of the development of civilisation from isolated 'hearths' to the whole earth, by the development of sea travel, and eventually mass production capitalism propped by the uneven expropriation of resources, leading to the imperial acquisition of territories. He observed that whilst in his day economic interdependence was striking compared to other ages, this has not been matched by political interdependence. Indeed, as rampant nationalism, climaxing in the world war shows, the opposite is the case. But nationalist ideologies are only invented to mask the greed of Nazi gangsters, or Wall St or City of London plutocrats, after a share of the Great Scramble (Horrabin, 1943: 117). Britain, the USA and Germany alike are imperial powers exploiting the world for greed.

His concluding chapter is entitled 'World plan – or world chaos'. Capitalist imperialism has squandered many of the world's resources whilst leaving others underdeveloped: the geography of capitalism is essentially a geography of chaos, and this chaos leads, inevitably, to war. 'The only solution of the problems of a New Order is the Socialist solution' (Horrabin, 1943: 120) – but socialists must learn to think within wider terms than the capture of power in their own frontiers. They must return to an internationalism informed by political geography: national sovereignty must go – just as tribalism in Africa did. All empires must go, and instead proper planning is needed to reorganise the world into a federation based on geographical realities (Fig. 2). Against the pessimism of Taylor's mistrustful, isolationist autarkies, Horrabin's socialist concept of peace is of one that will only be secured with a just reorganisation and redistribution of the world's resources into a unified (federated) world community.

Thus, the period of classical geopolitical thought saw geographers debate how the discipline might make a genuine contribution to 'winning the peace'. But interrogating their use of peace in the way that Richmond does for IR theory uncovers an array of very different conceptualisations – realist, idealist, liberal and socialist. Each writer advocated 'peace', but their varying concepts could result in meanings of 'peace' as far removed from each other as Spykman's hyper-militarisation and Wallace's disarmament.

Snapshot 2: recent collections

The previous section demonstrated how geographical thinking about World War 2 conceptualised peace. In this second snapshot, I will consider how three important modern publications have handled 'peace'.

Firstly, Pepper and Jenkins' groundbreaking 1985 book, *The Geography of War and Peace*, demonstrates how the threat of nuclear annihilation with the 'Second Cold War' galvanised geographers to do something about 'the dearth of geographical studies... concerning the problems of peace and the threat of war' (Pepper, 1985: 1). The emphasis is, as they acknowledge, largely on war (Pepper, 1985: 3). The contributors barely conceptualise peace: it is simply the opposite of superpower war – projections of the

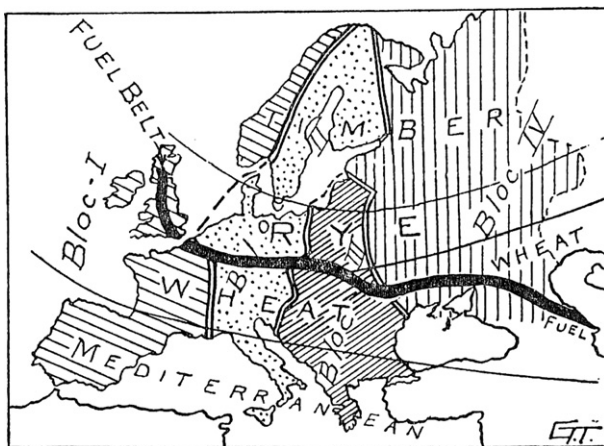


Fig. 1. Griffith Taylor's proposed quartering of post-War Europe. OUP Material: Fig. 91, p. 232, 'a tentative division of Europe into four power blocs' from "Our Evolving Civilisation: An Introduction to Geopacifism: Geographical Aspects of the Path Toward World Peace" by Taylor Griffith (1946). By permission of Oxford University Press (URL www.oup.com).



Fig. 2. Frank Horrabin's 'New Europe'. Reproduced with kind permission of the TUC.

damage done by nuclear attacks, the spaces and places where war is denounced and nuclear weapons banned, and the like.

Secondly, Flint's (2005b) edited collection on *The Geography of War and Peace*, likewise maintains the emphasis firmly on war: only four of the nineteen substantive chapters fall in the section, 'Geographies of peace' (Flint, 2005a, 2005b). But there is more of an attempt to think about the meaning of peace. Flint, following Galtung, observes in his introduction that peace is, 'not only the absence of war, but also the possibility of maximising human potential' (Flint, 2005a: 7). Herb has an excellent section explaining that peace scholars and activists see peace as 'more than the absence of war', embracing 'the conditions necessary to bring about a nonviolent and just society at all levels of human activity' (Herb, 2005: 348–350). But this is an exception: in an impressive historical overview of literatures in which Mamadouh suggests that geography is now widely seen as 'a science for peace' (Mamadouh, 2005: 41), there is no attempt to explain what peace is.

Most recently, in 2009, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* produced a special issue on 'Geographies of peace and armed conflict' (Kobayashi, 2009). That this leading journal chose this topic to launch the format of an annual special issue is encouraging, as is the placing of 'peace' first in the title. There are a number of important contributions, some of which I will refer to later, but in most cases 'peace' is left undefined, implying simply the absence of armed conflict. The type of peace assumed is a liberal version, of the absence of armed conflict and the development of good diplomatic relations between states in an inter-state system. Surprisingly, the editorial introduction itself leaves 'peace' undefined, which is indicative of the general shortcomings of geographers' engagement with the topic.

Conceptualising peace

As the disciplines of peace studies, IR, and Biblical studies demonstrate, peace may be conceptualised in a variety of different ways, each of which does very different political work for very different visions of the good life. The two snapshots offered here of geographical work on the aftermath of World War 2, and recent edited collections on peace, show not only a continued emphasis on war as opposed to peace but, as Williams and McConnell argue of the *Annals* special issue (Williams & McConnell, in press), a general failure to think conceptually about peace. I contend that the first step in repositioning geography as a subject for peace is to think critically on what we have meant and continue to mean by the word.

Commitment to Peace

If peace is, following Yoder, 'okayness' – that is, if it is about sustainable and just relationships – then it is not merely an abstract concept to be discussed: it is something that is essential to the good life for all humanity. Therefore, secondly, I argue that the way to develop a political geography of peace is not simply to conceptualise it, but also to make a *commitment* to it. In the remainder of this paper I will highlight eight ways in which I think geography is committed to peace, and suggest how these could be developed further.

Engaging the liberal peace

As the ongoing travails of the US and its allies in Iraq and particularly Afghanistan remind us, 'reconstruction' remains as pressing an issue for geographers today as it was for Mackinder in his classic studies on 'reconstruction' (Mackinder, 1917, 1919). Geography is methodologically and theoretically well-placed to

engage critically with the liberal peace (see above). Indeed, a great deal of contemporary research in human geography does just that. Stokke (2009) sets this explicitly as his goal in his work on international attempts to craft peace in Sri Lanka, although his own concept of peace remains opaque. Heathershaw (2009) uses geographical theorisation in his powerful critique of the illusions of liberal peacebuilding in Tajikistan. In his work on NATO expansion, Oas (2005) argues that the language of defending democracies has been used as a geopolitical tool to extend the hegemony of the USA. He looks at Hungary's entrance into the organisation and how its incorporation into this 'zone of peace' has involved its support of the US invasion of Iraq, for example using its bases to train Iraqi military units.

There is a great deal of work in geography that, although it does not frame itself explicitly as an engagement with 'the liberal peace', can effectively be read as doing so. For example, Jeffrey's work on international intervention in Brčko, Bosnia, shows that the post-war reconstruction effort has not produced genuine independence but entrenched external neo-liberal management through discourses of 'good governance' (Jeffrey 2007). His findings lead him to challenge 'the claims of UK and US foreign policies that intervention in the affairs of sovereign states represents necessary stewardship' as 'misguided or, at worst, malevolent' (Jeffrey, 2007: 447). Loyd draws on feminist and peace studies perspectives to examine the failure of US reconstruction in Iraq to prevent a cholera outbreak in 2007. She uses this study call for a 'critical geography of violence', critiquing US pro-military imaginations of a world divided between war-torn and diseased poorer countries and spaces of health, wealth, democracy and peace (Loyd, 2009: 864–865).

An important contribution of geographers here is to understand how the liberal peace is constructed and legitimated and implemented, how it gains consent, and how its actors learn. The research cited here pushes the meaning of 'peace' beyond the 'security' dimensions of ending battlefield conflict, shoring up the borders of a state, or 'pacifying' internal opposition. It insists, mirroring Biblical and critical definitions, that peace is inseparable from questions of social justice: the structures of inter-ethnic group arrangement, the ability of citizens to determine their own futures, the health risks of vulnerable children, and the rights of women.

Territorial/boundary disputes

The story is told of a 1990 telephone conversation between Michail Gorbachev and Professor Vytautas Landsbergis, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania. Gorbachev said, 'Look, you are agitating to leave the Soviet Union. That's not going to happen. I have lots of headaches: renegotiating relations with NATO and COMECON, sorting out wars in the Caucasus, rehabilitating political victims, attempting to restructure the economy, liberalising political life, fighting alcoholism in the workplace – and the last thing I need is your tiny republic causing all this trouble. Let's talk man-to-man about it, just tell me, what can I give you to sort this out quickly?' Landsbergis replied, 'Independence for five minutes!' 'What, just five minutes?' 'Yes, that's all we want'. 'Okay, it's a deal', replied Gorbachev. So that night, at five minutes to midnight, the Soviet Union recognised the independence of Lithuania. At four minutes to midnight Lithuania declared war on the USA, and at one minute to midnight announced total surrender and accepted the occupation of Lithuania by US forces!

One of the strengths of political geographical enquiry is its determination to seek out imaginative solutions to conflict. This includes traditional topics such as Waterman's (1984) writings on partition, and the work of Durham's International Boundaries Research Unit scholars such as Blake (2000) and Pratt (2006) on

managing and resolving boundary disputes. Beyond an interest in the lines themselves, it extends to practical exploration of how the management of transboundary areas produces shared activism amongst environmentalists from the 'hostile' parties (Schoenfeld, 2010), and to more theoretically rich discussions such as Steinberg (2001: chap. 6) and Cohen and Frank's (2009) musings on examples of ocean and river management that allow us to rethink terrestrial sovereignty.

Within this vein I discuss below the nineteenth and twentieth century conflicts between the Danish kingdom and various German states over Schleswig–Holstein, leaning particularly on the authoritative account of Lorenz Rerup (1982). This is not without risk: the nineteenth-century British Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, is widely quoted as saying:

The Schleswig-Holstein question is so complicated, only three men in Europe have ever understood it. One was Prince Albert, who is dead. The second was a German professor who became mad. I am the third and I have forgotten all about it.

Historically, the King of Denmark was also both Duke of Schleswig and Count (later Duke) of Holstein (Fig. 3). The nineteenth-century rise of German and Danish nationalism, and the 1848 crafting of a liberal constitution in Denmark, politicised the question of nationhood and belonging, leading to two wars, Prussia and Austria eventually defeating Denmark in 1864. In the ensuing Treaty of Vienna, Denmark ceded the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein to Austria and Prussia. This was not a solution: the loss of

Schleswig, in particular, inflamed Danish nationalism, and the newly-stranded Danish-minded minority in Schleswig suffered discrimination.

Following World War 1 a plebiscite split Schleswig into two: Northern Schleswig was 'reunited' to Denmark and Southern Schleswig attached to Germany (Fig. 4). This was the first time in modern history that a territorial dispute was resolved by asking citizens where they actually wanted to live. But again, this was not a solution. When Bowman wrote in *The New World* that 'this marks the end of [the] dispute' (Bowman, 1921: 258), he was using a very negative, liberal concept of peace as the cessation of formal conflict between two states. Rather, there were now two dissatisfied stranded minorities and two ardent homeland nationalisms. A concerted Danish nationalist movement developed, and in 1920 the first 'Årsmødet' (annual meeting) was held: thousands of people meeting to assert and celebrate their Danishness.

The aftermath of World War Two exacerbated the situation further. Germany was in chaos and faced severe food shortages, so Denmark sent food packages to members of the Danish minority in Germany. Suddenly, tens of thousands of Germans began to identify formally with the minority, and the Danish association (SSF) expanded its membership from 3000 to 75,000 between 1945 and 1948 (Thaler, 2009: 91). The minority political party, SSW, agitated the occupying British forces for a boundary change. Goodness knows what Palmerston would have made of this!

Two processes served to reverse the sudden Danish ascendancy. The first was the influx of some 1 million German refugees to Schleswig-Holstein, escaping the Soviet advance (Klatt, 2001). The second was that as the situation normalised and food became available, many of the recently-identified Danes simply returned to being German again. Furthermore, despite internal debate,



Fig. 3. The Kingdom of Denmark and the Duchies of Slesvig and Holstein, 1848.

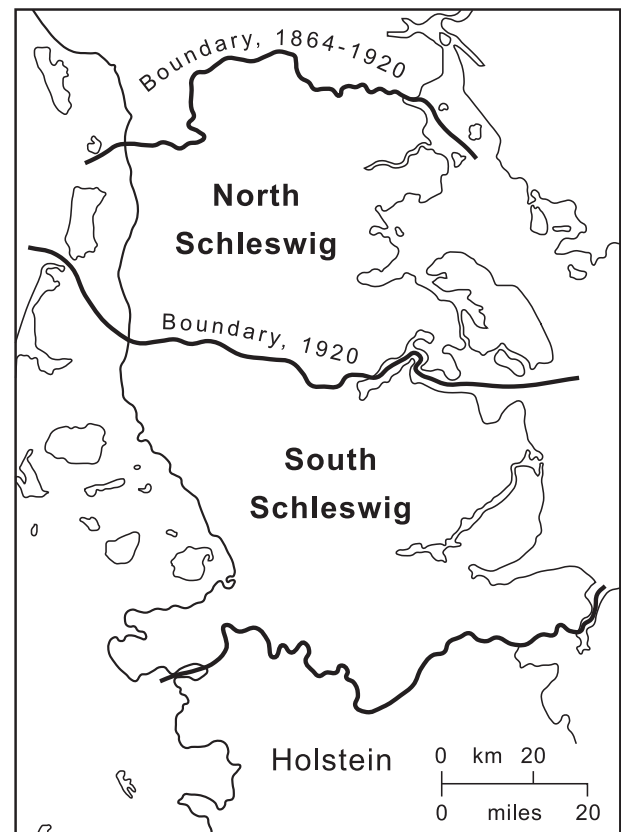


Fig. 4. The division of Slesvig into two, 1920.

Denmark proved unwilling to contemplate annexation of South Schleswig, so the status-quo was maintained.

This period left a legacy of great bitterness: anger on the part of Danes who felt they had been cynically used by German neighbours, and mistrust of Danes by the German majority who were suspicious of their resurgent irredentism.

Subsequently, Denmark and Germany took a number of steps to protect minority rights, such as the 1949 Kiel Declaration and the 1955 Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations. These occurred both as reaction to the politics of nationalism that had proved so ruinous to the region, and in the context of the emergence of a new Cold War order that pitted the former adversaries against a new common threat, the Soviet Union. Territorial claims were disavowed, and rights guaranteed to minorities either side: education, church worship, cultural activities and the like could be conducted in the chosen tongue. In the state of Schleswig–Holstein the ceiling of 5% of votes needed to secure a seat was waived for SSW to help Danes gain representation in local political structures. Minorities were able to pursue higher education in either state. Such agreements were quite innovative. Nonetheless the minority leadership still professed the desire for territorial transfer and maintained a hostile stance towards Germany and Germanness.

This began to change in the 1960s and 1970s. A younger generation of Danes became active in the minority organisations: Danes who had come of age under the new arrangements and in the new Europe. The Danes in South Schleswig began to conclude that they could maintain a viable Danish life in German territory. In time, they came increasingly to acknowledge the hybridity of their identity (Vollersten, 1993: especially 19–20, 28–29). The SSW changed its position from being an irredentist party to being one that celebrates regional hybridity and touts itself as ‘the regional alternative’ (Fig. 5). Thus for example it claims to have fought successfully on local environmental issues and for the opening of a university in the town.¹ From the early 1990s to the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, SSW increased its number of representatives in the regional Kiel parliament from 1 to 4 – a remarkable achievement, due in part to changes in the voting system, but also indicating that Germans are now voting for them. Likewise, the Årsmødet (Fig. 6) has become a celebration of Danishness that the German majority no longer sees as threatening: local German politicians turn out to give warm speeches, and local German residents wave Danish flags at the procession as it winds through the streets of the city. As Henrik Becker-Christiansen, a scholar of the region, and also the Danish General Consul in Flensburg, put it to me, ‘relations have moved from being against each other, to being alongside each other... doing our own thing and not having contact, to actually being with each other in co-operation.’²

What we see in South Schleswig, therefore, is a former irredentist party transforming itself into a movement that represents a minority whilst celebrating hybridity and championing the good



Fig. 6. Årsmødet, Flensburg, May 2010 (photograph: Nick Megoran).

of all in the region, and thereby attracting the votes of the ethnic majority whose rule it once bitterly opposed. It is a movement from violent conflict that epitomised the travails of Europe in the age of nationalism to a peace marked by co-operation and co-existence. Practically, it demonstrates how the political will of two states to guarantee minority rights, working within new geopolitical frameworks, can create a context in which minorities can (in time) radically rethink their relationship to the host and kin states. I think that this is one of the most exciting and extraordinary political geographical stories of post-war Europe, and must surely yield many scholarly and practical lessons. Yet, apart from a summary piece (Berdichevsky, 1999), I am not aware of any political geographical research on it. Bowman (see above), Fleure (1921: 39–40) et al. wrote about it, but it apparently slipped from our radars when the drama of violence ended. A geography of peace should seek to uncover such remarkable stories and learn their lessons, rather than always be drawn to the latest global hotspots.

Everyday peace

This argument points more broadly to an emerging and very promising area of research on what might be called ‘conviviality’ or ‘everyday peace’. It turns on their heads the common political geographical questions of ‘why was there violence here?’, ‘what form did it take?’, and ‘how was it politicised/represented?’ – instead it asks, ‘why *wasn’t* there violence here?’

An important example in this regard is Darling’s work on Sheffield as a ‘city of sanctuary’: it explores how local clergy and other activists sought to weave a politics of hospitality towards asylum seekers and refugees into the fabric of the city, re-imagining it as a space of refuge and welcome (Darling, 2010). A truly fine overseas example is Williams’ work on Hindu–Muslim relations in the city of Varanasi, India. In March 2006, suspected Muslim terrorists bombed a temple and other sites in the city of Varanasi. In other similar cases in India such attacks have led to communal retaliatory violence, but that did not occur here, in spite of both local and national precedents and the attempts of some extremists to make political capital from the attacks. Williams’ fieldwork carefully explored why not. She uncovered a story of the crucial role played by local Hindu and Muslim leaders, the decisive action of central government building on a recent history of conciliatory moves to Muslims, a good tradition of communal relations, and associational ties in networks such as the silk industry. Her insistence on the importance of ‘understanding the persistence of



Fig. 5. SSW campaign leaflet, 1994. Reproduced with kind permission of SSW.

everyday communal harmony' (Williams, 2007: 154) allows her to rethink peace as an everyday process with specific mechanisms, and enables her to critique the emphasis in the literature on Hindu–Muslim relations in India as being characterised by tension.

Williams' thinking on everyday peace as process can be extended with an addenda to my somewhat celebratory section above on South Schleswig. In May 2010, the Kiel government proposed as part of its austerity budget that it would redesignate Danish schools as 'private' rather than 'public', thus cutting their subsidy relative to German schools. This might effectively force many rural Danish schools to close and threaten the long-term survival of the minority outside major urban areas. This cack-handed piece of creative accounting was interpreted by many as 'a direct attack on the minority' (Krueger, 2010: 1), and has soured minority–majority relations. Peace is not an end-point, but a fragile process that is subject to the vagaries of unequal power relations and needs constant political and scholarly attention.

Active peacemaking

Another valuable direction for geographical peace research is that of peace movements and activism. Herb advocates the uncovering of a 'geohistory' of peace movements, analysing why and how they arose in particular ways (Herb, 2005). Miller does this well in his study of anti-nuclear activism in the USA's Boston area, analysing the movement's successes and failures in different places at different scales (Miller, 2000). Conventional accounts of the history of peace movements are generally weak on the historical geographical spread and transformation of ideas, tactics and organisations, and geographers can provide a useful corrective here. A recent exciting departure in the study of active peacemaking is Koopman's research on protective accompaniment in Colombia. As she frames this as a form of geopolitics, it will be considered in the next section.

Pacific geopolitics

As recent special issues on critical geopolitics have demonstrated, this vibrant stream of political geographical enquiry remains impressive in its theoretical innovation and the proliferation of its subject matter (Jones & Sage, 2010; Power & Campbell, 2010). I am sympathetic to Dalby's argument that the primary task of critical geopolitical analysis remains exposing 'militarist mappings of global space' and challenging 'how contexts are constructed to justify violence' (Dalby, 2010: 281). Nonetheless, this is critical geopolitics as 'negative peace': a vital component of peace research but, as we saw earlier, one that nonetheless needs complementing with the exploration of 'positive peace'. It is here that critical geopolitics has traditionally been weak.

As one path to begin rectifying this, elsewhere I proposed the notion of 'pacific geopolitics' (Megoran, 2010a). This incorporates many of the concerns of Dalby's (1991) 'anti-geopolitics' work on European Nuclear Disarmament in the late Cold War, Hyndman's (2003) 'feminist geopolitics', and Kearns' (2009) amorphous 'progressive geopolitics', but spotlights the geopolitical element of pacific alternative in all of these discussions and conceptualises it in a way to frame a future research agenda within critical geopolitical thought. Pacific geopolitics is defined as the study of how ways of thinking geographically about world politics can promote peaceful and mutually enriching human coexistence.

The most exciting work I am aware of in this area is Koopman's ongoing doctoral research on the international accompaniment movement in Colombia: how US Fellowship of Reconciliation activists shield the lives of local activists in the San José peace

colony from attack. It seems to work, although raises lots of troubling questions about how race and citizenship mark certain bodies as more or less valuable in the eyes of the military, guerrillas, and governments (Koopman, Forthcoming).

Another example of pacific geopolitics is the 'Tent of Nations', a project in a Palestinian farm in the hills south of Bethlehem. I visited in June 2010 while conducting research on 'The Journey of Understanding', a Christian tour of Israel/Palestine that foregrounds reconciliation and peacemaking rather than being militantly pro-Israeli, as many evangelical tours tend to be (Feldman, 2007), or pro-Palestinian. The Tent of Nations is currently farmed by Daoud, a Palestinian Christian, who has the Ottoman ownership documents issued to his grandfather when he bought it in 1916. It is ringed by five expanding Israeli settlements, built on land stolen from local farmers like Daoud, and the separation wall is planned to encroach in the area and cut the farm off from schools and other services in Bethlehem. The Israelis have been trying to seize this land, too. Daoud claims that in 1991 the Israeli authorities declared it 'state land', and a legal battle began which has so far cost them \$150,000, and has been supported by various foreign governments and agencies. Daoud alleges that three times armed settlers came at night and tried to build a road over his land and thereby steal it, but were stopped, and in revenge uprooted 250 olive trees. The Israeli military have forbidden them from having running water, installing mains electricity, bringing in construction materials, or building structures, and settlers have blocked the main access road. 'The idea is to make it hard for us to exist here' so that his family is forced to leave, he claimed.

Daoud explained that his family has refused to take the options Palestinians commonly choose: emigration, resignation, or violent resistance: 'we chose to stay, not to be victims – it is very important for us not to be victims'. They have developed the Tent of Nations project, seeking to make their land a place of understanding, reconciliation and peace. To this end they organise tree planting ceremonies, getting Palestinians, foreigners, and sympathetic Israelis to undertake the work together. In seeking to make the land productive, this is nonviolent resistance to an occupation that wants to drive them out. In doing it with Israelis and foreigners, it is also reconciliation and peacemaking. They teach farming, in summer camps and at other times: according to Daoud, Palestinians are getting increasingly walled up in settlements, and forget the skills of farming. Therefore they teach self-sufficiency, motivate others to follow their example, and find markets for products. They also run summer camps for young people and for women: the 2009 women's camp was called 'transforming pain into constructive power'.

Daoud's family has sought to build understanding with the settlers, inviting groups of them to visit – many have never properly met a Palestinian before. Daoud reported that one recently observed, 'you have no running water, but we have swimming pools – he saw our reality as people'. At the entrance to the farm is a stone with the words, 'we refuse to be enemies' (Fig. 7): words that, Daoud claims, so enraged the Israeli soldiers that they tore the stone down. This project, literally surrounded by hostile enemies, is an attempt to use a specific place to live out a Christian vision of peace as the nonviolent pursuit of economic well-being and justice that seeks to reach out in love to enemies to try and liberate them from the enmity that deforms the oppressor.

Peace communities like San José and the Tent of Nations show that apparently weak people facing violent military regimes can rewrite the rules of the geopolitical game being imposed upon them by living differently: what Koopman calls 'alter-geopolitics.' They can carve 'spaces for peace' out of the most unlikely political geographical rock faces. But beyond this, Koopman's work challenges us to consider what it means to not just conduct scholarship on peace, but to conduct it with and for peacemakers.



Fig. 7. 'We refuse to be enemies': Tent of Nations, Palestine (picture: Nick Megoran).

Collective public engagement

Conducting research with and for peacemakers in this way is an aspect of public engagement. Here I refer neither to the 'impact factor' agenda in the auditing structures that British universities currently face (which encourages *individual* engagement), nor to work in advocacy, activism, consultancy, and the like, which again tends to be *individual* academics doing non-academic work related to their research. Rather, I am thinking about *collective* engagement. The Right is very good at this: think of an idea, name an institute after it, set up a media-friendly web-page, and establish a public presence far out of proportion to the value of the idea or the strength of its support.

In the past two years I have taken part in the impressive annual 'peace studies' day at Comberton Village College, Cambridgeshire, using my research to encourage the pupils to reflect on the role of apologies in peacemaking. A fellow participant worked for a charity that seeks to correct stereotypes of Arabs in the media, and told me he often did three talks a week in schools around the country. I propose, within given geographical areas, that geographers committed to peace could create peace education and intervention networks. Academic members would offer to do a certain number of school visits a year, and a coordinator could match availability to visit schools with invitations. Resources could be created and shared to help with such visits. Through a website, members could make themselves available for media comment on issues of war and peace in current affairs – from writing letters to newspapers, to giving media interviews. Such a network could establish an effective place in public life. Is there interest in setting up such work?

This type of engagement is urgently needed. In 2007–2008 the British Army spent 50% more on marketing and recruitment than it did in 2001–2002. In the 2008–2009 academic year, 40% of state schools in London were visited by military recruiters (Sangster, 2010). We have taken the study of militarism seriously (Cowen & Gilbert, 2008; Woodward, 2005), and I suggest that the more we understand it, the greater the responsibility upon us to act towards demilitarisation.

Education

For most of us, the biggest impact we will make is through our teaching. Whereas Mackinder wanted geography taught 'from an imperial point of view' (Mackinder, 1911), Cons wrote that Geography is probably the best equipped subject for training the young in 'world citizenship' and internationalism (Cons, 1932).

What does it mean to teach the geography of peace? Geography teachers have been particularly engaged with this question at two periods of modern history: the 1930s, when education was seen as an important path to internationalism, and in the 1980s when the

teaching of peace in schools became highly politicised and was eventually curtailed by the 1988 Education Reform Act (Marsden, 2000). For Jenkins writing in the midst of this second period, the task is twofold: to insert peace themes into the human and physical geography curricula, but also to teach in ways that are not authoritarian (Jenkins, 1985). This topic could profitably be revisited, asking too how field trips can contribute to peace education. Unfortunately, as the conspicuous absence of peace or nonviolence in this journal's recent multiple-author piece on 'teaching political geography in the USA' (Raento et al., 2010) shows, there has been limited progress here since Jenkins' intervention.

Jenkins writes too about the intended outcome of peace education: is it transformative, is it seeking to engage students in activism, and how are we to negotiate our own positions and beliefs without abusing our authority in a classroom environment? This leads to the final topic I would like to discuss: the bases for, and nature of, our personal commitment to peace.

Nonviolence

In a 2008 article on ethics and normativity in critical geopolitics, I claimed that critical geopolitics is vocal in its denunciation of US–UK military violence, yet is generally unclear about its own commitments. I finished with a sentence that I personally was committed to a Christian version of nonviolence and called for a wholehearted commitment to nonviolence on the part of the sub-discipline (Megoran, 2008).

I did not elaborate, but will do so briefly here. I recognise that there are multiple readings of peace in Christian theology and Biblical studies, but I advocate nonviolence because I find it a compelling interpretation of the teachings of Jesus Christ, whom I love and worship and follow: that violence is to be confronted through love, that evil was ultimately defeated not by the emotionally satisfying righteous violence that concludes so many popular films, but by the sacrificial love of Christ on the cross. I find the Biblical narrative the most convincing story that is told of the brokenness and blessedness of life as I experience it, of the depravity and generosity of the social worlds and political dramas I study. This is also the source of the hope that I think is necessary if you devote your work to the often grim subject matter of political geography. Because, in Christian theology, Jesus died and rose again, opening the way for all to live, the final word in human history is not death or war or violence or conflict, but 'okayness': the universe is ultimately on the side of peace and justice. We can therefore work towards that in our own little contexts and in our own humble, faltering, erring ways: indeed, we have to – in Christian thought, the intellectual assent to theological propositions is of little value if detached from the practical commitment to endeavour to work them through in praxis.

That is where I begin personally, but obviously most political geographers are not followers of Jesus, so how can I advocate nonviolence for others? There are two grounds. Firstly, I consider that it is the logical extrapolation of two decades of critical geopolitical analysis. As Kearns (2009) has so ably shown, classical and neoclassical geopolitical analysis has been about making the warfare of imperial Britain or neoconservative America look natural and inevitable. To advocate some form of the just war would seem to negate the whole achievement of the project, whereas nonviolence would be its logical culmination.

Secondly, nonviolence in the first place refers to 'a set of techniques' for achieving political change without using violence (Boudling, 2000: 67). By its very nature, therefore, it appeals to thinkers and activists from a range of theologies, philosophies and theories. Thus Tolstoy, arguably the most influential thinker on the topic, was a Christian anarchist; he influenced Abdul Ghaffar Khan

and Mohandas Gandhi who developed Muslim and Hindu approaches in their campaign against British rule in India; Martin Luther King Jr, an American liberal protestant, drew on all these. Gene Sharp, who codified the practice of nonviolence, was scathing about the contribution of religion to peace, and instead theorised power as being vulnerable due to its dependence upon consent that can be withdrawn. Elise Boulding emphasises nonviolence in her work on 'feminist peacemaking', uncovering the 'extraordinary creativity' that women have shown in creating public spaces for peaceful interaction in the midst of violence (Boulding, 2000: chap. 5). Likewise, nonviolence figures (in passing) in Jennifer Hyndman's outline of a feminist geopolitics 'that eschews violence as a legitimate means to political ends' (Hyndman, 2003: 3). This very pluriformity commends it as a platform for a progressive political geography of peace.

My article elicited a response in this journal from Edward Holland (2011). He described my call as 'admirable', but said such a commitment would lead us 'toward advocacy and away from the independent, unbiased perspective which is the foundation of the academy'. I welcome this debate, and would answer Holland's twofold charge that advocating nonviolence is (a) contrary to the principles of academic neutrality, and (b) naïve.

On the first point, I do believe that academic scholarly analysis should aim at objectivity, if that means seeking to speak as truthfully and cogently as humanly possible about the nature of things in a way that leaves us open to question our own presuppositions in the light of what we find. But I do not believe we should or can stand outside of commitments. The inconsistency in Holland's own argument amply demonstrates that. He opines that 'violence is something that occurs in the world', and political geographers should join Reinhold Niebuhr and President Obama in recognising that 'force may sometimes be necessary.' It is inconsistent that supporting nonviolence can be seen as 'advocacy', whereas following Niebuhr's realism and advocating the violence of the just war is simply 'unbiased' and a 'recognition of history'.

The second point, that nonviolence is naïve because in reality 'violence occurs in the world', shows a fundamental misunderstanding of nonviolence. Of course violence occurs in the world: that is the point of nonviolence! Nonviolence argues that it is better, for whatever reason, to resist violence by breaking the cycle of retaliation that mars so much of our world. In countering critiques that his radical pacifist interpretation of Christ's teaching was unrealistic, Tolstoy retorted 'It is as though drunkards when advised how they could become sober, were to reply that the advice was unsuitable to their alcoholic condition' (Tolstoy, 1905: 57)!

Niebuhr used the example of Hitlerism (Niebuhr, 1940): so let us consider that as a counter example. On February 27, 1943, Berlin's remaining 1500–2000 Jewish husbands of German wives were rounded up and brought to a holding centre at Rosenstrasse 2–4. By the early hours of the next day their wives and other relatives had discovered their location and began to congregate at the gate of the detention centre to protest. Over the next fortnight the family and other supporters swelled the number to 6000. The SS and police tried unsuccessfully to disperse them (Stoltzfus, 1996; for a rejection of the interpretation of these events as a protest, see Evans, 2009: 271–272).

By firing on the crowd the authorities could swiftly have cleared the women away and ended their protest. But fearing the impact on support for Germany's faltering foreign wars, the regime calculated that this was too risky a step to take, and on March 6th Goebbels ordered their release. As Heinz Ullstein, one of the arrested men, was later to put it, 'Scared by an incident which had no equal in the history of the Third Reich, headquarters consented to negotiate', and the prisoners were released (Sharp, 1973: 88–90): the 25 already dispatched to Auschwitz were released.

Such an example is hopeful, instructive, but also tragic. It is hopeful and instructive in that it shows how, through concerted action, the regime that has become the mythical touchstone against which all rational action be measured suffered tactical defeats against nonviolent actions. It is tragic in that it is exceptional. If the mass of Berlin's women had decamped outside Hitler's prison's to protest the arrest of *all* Jewish men, Nazism could never have perpetrated the crimes that it did.

But it is scarcely fair to berate the German people for that. Nonviolence, like violence, is taught. Successful nonviolence is a tactic that demands training, instruction, and practice. It requires strategic and tactical understanding, theorisation, leadership, vision, organisation, materials, and hard work, over the long run and preferably in 'peacetime'. Here, we are at a disadvantage. Most countries on earth have one or more military academies to teach people how to resolve their problems through violence. Militaries are well-financed, legitimised through myriad performances of close relationships with the state, and glamourised in popular culture. There exist in comparison pitiful resources to train people in nonviolence. In our research, our teaching, our public engagement, we as geographers could do a little to begin redressing that imbalance, to contribute towards building cultures of peace and practices of nonviolence, and in so doing reposition geography as 'a discipline for peace' (Dalby, 2010: 285).

Conclusion: for peace

In June 2010, the beautiful Kyrgyzstani city of Osh was shattered by horrific inter-communal violence that cleaved the city between Uzbek and Kyrgyz residents and neighbourhoods. It was the latest chapter in a many-decade long story of struggle for control of urban spaces that lie on the interface between two ethnic groups (Megoran 2010b). As in so many violent conflicts around the world, geography is part of the problem. It must therefore also be part of the solution.

Our first task is to better *conceptualise* peace. What have different geographers meant by it at different times? The consideration of *power* is crucial here: who are definitions of peace for? What do they do? This naturally will engage with much material outside the traditional disciplinary ambits of political geography, in social and economic geography. There is much scope for a fuller historical review of this literature, and here Richmond's work in international relations theory could serve as the model for a geography PhD or monograph. A more difficult question to answer is to what extent a generic concept of positive peace is possible or necessary to frame a research agenda that is both political and intellectual. In this paper I have elided that question by arguing that the unifying focus should be the *praxis* of nonviolence: but the question nonetheless demands fuller consideration than has been possible here.

Likewise, in order to conceptualise peace, it will be necessary to map its multiple relationships to *violence*. As many of the examples cited herein demonstrate, the two conceptual fields are closely linked. I do not argue that we should not study war, militarism, and other forms of violence: rather, that peace should be identified as the goal of all such research, and that it would be the beneficiary of the same empirical rigour, intellectual sophistication and critical reflection.

Secondly, our goal ought not simply to be to understand peace, but to make a commitment to it. This is a commitment to *researching* peace: understanding the geographical conditions whereby peace in its fullest senses is lived, created, sustained, and struggled for. Part of the challenge – and this is particularly the challenge in masculinist political geography – is that this isn't glamorous. As Yi-Fu Tuan lamented, 'War, with its rich cast of heroes and villains,

politicians and generals, is exciting, whereas peace – the daily life of nameless folks – is boring' (Tuan, 2002: 124).

But it is also a commitment to *building* peace, or at least helping build cultures of understanding in which peace can be heard and can flourish. We can do this through our critical involvement with movements we study, in teaching, and by public engagement. This will involve reflecting on the nature of our own commitments, and the possibilities for collective engagement.

This argument is intended to initiate debate as to what an agenda for peace in geography might include: it does not claim to be an exhaustive overview. Rather, it has presented selective historical snapshots and identified corners of the discipline where peace debates are – or ought to be – vibrant. Clearly, it has many lacunae: a peace agenda could profitably engage literatures within geography on themes such as cosmopolitanism (Harvey, 2009) and care (Cloe, May, & Johnsen, 2010), as well as more obvious topics including diplomacy (Henrikson, 2005) and UN Peacekeeping (Grundty-Warr, 1994). Beyond our discipline, literatures such as that within political science on democratic/capitalist peace (Mousseau, 2009), or peace traditions within other religions such as Judaism (Greenberg, 2004) or Islam (Huda, 2010), are also clearly relevant. The question of praxis needs pushing much further than it has been here, too. For example, in the ugly competition for resources, the ungainly push for promotion, and the macho performance in defending research findings or attacking the views of others, geography departments, conferences and journals can become spaces of pride, aggression and intimidation. What would a more peaceable practice of the geographical profession look like? It is hoped that this paper's many omissions, as well as its inclusions, will be productive of further debate.

In his classic 1885 intervention on 'what geography ought to be', Kropotkin wrote:

In our time of wars, of national self-conceit, of national jealousies and hatreds ably nourished by people who pursue their own egotistic, personal or class interests, geography must be – in so far as the school may do anything to counterbalance hostile influences – a means of dissipating these prejudices and of creating other feelings more worthy of humanity (Kropotkin, 1885: 956)

As a body of scholars, we have risen far more ably to the negative task of 'dissipating' than to the positive charge of 'creating': we are better at researching war than peace. For our discipline to play a serious role in addressing the problems wracking twenty-first century humanity, it is imperative that this imbalance be redressed.

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Endnotes

¹ Interview, Gerhard Jessen, Kommunalpolitischer Sekretär SSW, Flensburg, 27/05/2010.

² Interview, Henrik Becker-Christiansen, Danish General Consul, Flensburg, 28/05/2010.

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