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# UNIT 16 PEACE MOVEMENTS

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## 16.1 INTRODUCTION

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**“Peace is indispensable for the very survival of mankind”.**

Maintenance of domestic and international peace is imperative today. The two World Wars have taken the toll of humanity. Ensuring a genuine and stable peace is the major challenge facing the nation states today. However, since the end of the Cold War, efforts to establish a World without Arms and Armed Conflict have in-fact failed. There have been numerous intra-state and inter-state conflicts across states. The most affected being the states in Asia, Latin America and Africa. The long drawn conflict in West Asia, between Israel and the States backing the Palestinian(s); the India-Pakistan conflict have resulted in perennial tension and uncertainty pervading not only within the affected states, region but also the international arena. It is in this light that the establishment of Peace and Peace Movements attain relevance and significance. There have been several Peace Movements in different parts of the world,

yet a world sans conflict is still a far cry. Though the United Nations (UN) has, to an extent, played a major role in fore-stalling another world war the several conflicts waged/still raging in different countries/regions, manifest the lack of a sincere effort by Nations to abjure violence. It is in these circumstances that the role of Peace Movements across nations becomes very important today

### **Aims and Objectives**

This Unit would enable you to

- Comprehend the Concept of Peace Movements
- Trace the history and role of Peace Movements across Nations
- Strengthen the ethos of peace, negating the recourse to violence in both domestic and international milieu.

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## **16.2 WHAT IS A PEACE MOVEMENT?**

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A Peace Movement is a social movement that seeks to achieve ideals such as the ending of a particular war/conflict (or all wars/conflicts), minimise inter-human violence in a particular place or type of situation, often linked to the goal of achieving world peace. The means to achieve these ends include advocacy of pacifism, non-violent resistance, diplomacy, and boycott, moral persuasion, supporting anti-war political candidates, demonstrations and forming / using National Political Lobbying groups to create legislation. The Political Cooperative is an example of an organisation that seeks to merge all Peace Movement organisations and green set ups, which may have some diverse goals, but all of whom have the common goal of peace and human(e) sustainability.

Some refer to the global loose affiliation of activists and political interests as having a shared purpose and this constituting a single movement *the peace movement encompassing the anti-war movement*. Viewed in this light, the two are often indistinguishable and constitute a loose, reactive event-driven collaboration between groups with motivations as diverse as humanism, nationalism, environmentalism, anti-racism, anti-sexism, decentralisation, hospitality, ideology, theology and fear.

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## **16.3 THE DUALITY OF PEACE CONCEPT**

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The concept of peace has two connotations- negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace is defined as not only the absence of organised violence between such major human groups as nations, but also between racial and ethnic groups because of the magnitude that can be reached by internal wars. Positive peace is defined as a pattern of cooperation and integration between major human groups. Absence of violence should not be confused with absence of conflict. Violence may occur without conflict and conflict may be resolved by means of non-violent mechanisms. The distinction between these two types of peace gives to a four fold classification of relations between two nations.

- a) War which is organised group violence;
- b) Negative peace, where there is no violence but no other form of interaction either, and where the best characterisation is peaceful coexistence;
- c) Positive peace where there is some cooperation with occasional outbreaks of violence and unqualified peace;
- d) Unqualified peace, where absence of violence is combined with a pattern of cooperation.

The concept of peace as non-war is neither theoretically nor practically interesting, for example, in describing the relationship that obtains between Norway and Nepal; it can often be explained in terms of a low level of inter-action resulting from geographical distance and thus will hardly be identified by many as ideal relations worth striving for. For peace, like health, has both cognitive and evaluative components; it designates a state of system of Nations, but this state is so highly valued that institutions are built around it to protect and promote it. It is the concept of Positive Peace that is worth exploring, especially since negative peace is a condition, *sin-qua-non*; and the two concepts of peace may be empirically related, even though they are logically independent.

In the absence of solid empirical research and a coherent peace theory, the concept of peace can be explicated by means of examining peace thinking. Just as there is no lack of attention paid to war, so there is no scarcity of peace plans and an extensive typology would be needed to do justice to most of the latter. Peace is a problem of social organisation and the theory of peace and war will hopefully someday, subsumed under the general theory of social organisation.

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## 16.4 DIVERSITY OF IDEALS

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There is much confusion over what *peace* is or should be which results in a plurality of movements seeking diverse ideals of peace. Particularly, *anti-war movements* have often ill-defined goals.

It is often not clear whether a movement or a particular protest is against war in general, as in pacifism, or against one side's participation in a war (but not the others). Indeed some observers feel that this lack of clarity has represented a key part of the propaganda strategy of those seeking victory as in the Vietnam War.

Global protests against the US invasion of Iraq in early 2003 are an example of a more specific short-term and loosely affiliated single-issue *movement* with relatively scattered ideological priorities, ranging from absolutist pacifism to Islamism and anti-Americanism. Nonetheless, some of those who are involved in several such short-term movements and build up trust relationships with others within them do tend to eventually join more global or long-term movements.

In direct contrast, some elements of the global peace movement seek to guarantee health security by ending war and assuring what they see as basic human rights including the right of all people to have access to air, water, food, shelter and health care. Large cadres of activists seek social justice in the form of equal protection under the law and equal opportunity under the law for groups that have previously been disenfranchised.

The movement is primarily characterised by a belief that humans should not wage war on each other or engage in violent ethnic conflicts over language, race or natural resources or ethical conflict over religion or ideology. Long term opponents of war preparations are primarily characterised by a belief that military power is not the equivalent of justice.

The movement tends to oppose the proliferation of dangerous technologies and weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons and biological warfare. Moreover, many object to the export of weapons including hand-held machine guns and grenades by leading economic nations to lesser developed nations. Some like SIPRI, have voiced special concern that artificial intelligence, molecular engineering, genetics and proteomics have even more vast destructive potential. Thus there is not only an inter-section between Peace Movement and

Neo-Luddites or primitivism, but also with the more mainstream technology critics viz as the Green Parties, Green Peace and the Ecology Movement they are part of. It is one of several movements that led to the formation of the Green Party political associations in several democratic countries near the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The Peace Movement has a very strong base in some countries, Green Parties, such as in Germany, perhaps reflecting that country's negative experiences with militarism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

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## **16.5 HISTORY OF PEACE MOVEMENTS BY REGION**

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The history will begin with the countries that suffered during World War II and which effectively began the post-war period in a position of submission and wrote peace into their constitutions. Next will be the English-speaking States of the world and the arguments more familiar to the English speaking reader, which inter-sect with the current events most strongly, and are the current focus of the peace movements world-wide.

### **16.5.1 Germany**

Green Parties and related political associations were formed in many democratic countries near the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The peace movement has a very strong influence in some countries' Green Parties' viz., Germany. These sometimes have exercised decisive influence over policy, during 2002, the German Greens influenced German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder, by their control of the German Foreign Ministry under Joschka Fishher (a green and the single most popular politician in Germany at that time), to limit his involvement in the war on terrorism and eventually to unite with French President Jacques Chirac, whose opposition in the UN Security Council was decisive in limiting support for the US plan to invade Iraq.

### **16.5.2 Israel**

The Israeli-Palestinian and Arab-Israeli conflict have existed since mid-nineteenth century creation of Zionism; however since the 1948 formation of the state of Israel by the Allied Powers led by the US and the UK, the West Asian region has been in turmoil. After the formation of Israel, the non-Jewish population who were living there since a few centuries-post the exodus of the Jews to different parts of the world, have been ejected and rendered homeless. Infact the Palestinians have become refugees living on the periphery of Israel and on the banks of the river Jordan for long. The struggle of the Palestinian people that witnessed decades of violence and suffering has ultimately led to the establishment of the Palestine State. However, the belligerent stance of Israel, its occupation of Palestinian and other Arab lands, its regular establishment of Settlements in occupied Palestine has rendered the region sans stable peace. It is significant to note that not-withstanding this policy of the Israeli state, peace movements and efforts to establish peace in the region have been essayed even by organisations based in Israel. Infact the Palestinian issue is so critical that securing stable peace and the establishment of the Rule of Law, equity and justice for the Palestinians is mandatory for regional/international peace and stability.

#### **16.5.2.1 Peace Now**

The mainstream peace movement in Israel is Peace Now (Shalom Akshav), whose supporters tend to vote for the Labour Party or Mere. Peace Now was founded in the aftermath of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem, when many people felt that the chance for peace might be missed. PM Begin, acknowledged that the Peace Now rally in Tel Aviv at the eve of his departure for the Camp David Summit with Presidents Sadat and Carter- drawing a crowd of 1,00000 the largest peace rally in Israel until then- had a part

in his decision to withdraw from Sinai and dismantle Israeli settlements there. Peace Now supported Begin for a time and hailed him as a peace-maker, but turned against him when withdrawal from Sinai was accompanied by an accelerated campaign of land confiscation and settlement building in the West Bank.

During the war against Lebanon in 1982, Peace Now, under the aegis of the Committee Against the Lebanon War, held large protests, which drew several Peace Now grassroots activists. Also, Peace Now members who had been drafted-for the war- called the movement leadership from the front line, giving eye witness testimonies on the false-hood of government propaganda on the conduct of the war. This resulted in Peace Now changing its position and launching an intensive campaign against the war.

The Sabra and Shatila massacre in September 1982, precipitated an unprecedented week of protest demonstrations throughout Israel, dozens of demonstrators being dispersed with tear gas and hauled to detention in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. It culminated with Peace Now's 4,00000 rally in Tel Aviv, the largest gathering of any kind in Israel's history up to then, which ultimately led to the establishment of the Kahan Judicial Commission of Inquiry whose half a year of deliberations led to the impeachment of Defence Minister Ariel Sharon for indirect responsibility for the massacre.

Peace Now is an advocate for a negotiated peace with the Palestinians. Originally this was worded vaguely; with no definition of *the Palestinians are* who represents them. Peace Now joined the dialogue with the Palestinian Liberation organization (PLO), started by such groups as the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace and the Hadash Communist Party. Only in 1988, did Peace Now accept that the PLO is the body regarded by the Palestinians themselves as their representative.

During the first Intifada, Peace Now held numerous protests and rallies to protest the army's cruelty and call for a negotiated withdrawal from the occupied territories. At that time, Peace Now strongly targeted then Defence Minister Yitzak Rabin for his rigid stance against the Palestinian protesters. However, after Rabin became Prime Minister, he signed the Oslo Agreement, shook hands with Yasser Arafat (Palestinian Leader) on the White House Lawn, Peace Now strongly supported him and mobilised public support for him against the settlers increasing vicious attacks. Peace Now had a central role in the 4<sup>th</sup> November 1995 rally after which Rabin was assassinated by Yigal Amir, an extreme-right wing militant. Since then the annual Rabin memorial rallies, held every year at the beginning of November, have become the main event of the Israeli Peace Movement, drawing crowds in the tens or hundreds of thousands. While officially organised by the Rabin Family Foundation-Peace Now's presence in these annual rallies is always conspicuous.

Now a days, Peace Now is particularly known for its relentless struggle against the expansion of illegal settlement outposts on the West Bank. Dror Etkes, head of Peace Now's Settlement Watch is highly regarded for his meticulous work and on one occasion was invited to testify before a US Congressional Committee at Washington DC.

### **16.5.2.2 Gush Shalom and the Israeli Council for Israeli Palestinian Peace**

Gush Shalom, the Israeli Peace Bloc, is a radical movement to the left of Peace Now. In its present name and structure, Gush Shalom grew out of the Jewish Arab Committee against Deportations, which protested the deportation without trial of 415 Palestinian Islamic activists to Lebanon in December 1992, and erected a protest tent in front of the Prime Minister's Office, for two months until the government consented to let the deportees return. Members

then decided to continue as a general peace movement with a programme strongly opposing the occupation and advocating the creation of an independent Palestine side by side with Israel in its pre-1967 borders (The Green Line) and with an undivided Jerusalem serving as the capital of both states. While existing under the name Gush Shalom only since 1972, this movement is in fact the lineal descendant of various groups, movements and action committees which espoused much the same programme since 1967, and which occupied the same space on the political scene. In particular, Gush Shalom is the descendant of the Israeli Council for Israeli Palestinian Peace (ICIPP) which was founded in 1975. The ICIPP founder included a group of dissidents from the Israeli establishment, among them was Major General Mattiyahu Peled, who was member of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) General Staff during the 1967 Six-Day War and after being discharged from the army in 1969, turned increasingly in the direction of peace.

The major achievement of the ICIPP was the openings of dialogue with the PLO, with the aim of making Israelis understand the need of talking and reaching a peace deal with the *Palestinian Terrorists* and conversely making Palestinians aware of the need to talk to and eventually reach deal with The *Zionist Enemy*. Infact after the signing of the Oslo Agreement in September 1993, meetings with the PLO became not only legal but also official government policy. Members of Gush Shalom (into which the ICIPP merged), who came to meet Yasser Arafat found themselves rubbing shoulders with senior Israeli government officials. Another Gush Shalom campaign involves the boycott of settlement products, with a detailed list of industrial and agricultural products maintained on the Gush Shalom website, with the public in Israel and abroad called upon not to consume such products- since the proceeds go to strengthen the settlements which are the main obstacle to peace in West Asia. Unlike Peace Now, Gush Shalom persistently supports Conscientious Objectors and those who refuse to render military service to the occupation.

At present, Gush Shalom activists are mainly involved in daily struggle at the Palestinian West Bank villages which have their land confiscated by the separation barrier, erected ostensibly to stop suicide bombers and actually to implement the de-facto annexation of large tracts of land to Israel and to make them available for settlement expansion. Gush activists are to be found, together with those of other Israeli movements like Ta'Yush and Anarchists against the Wall, joining the Palestinian villagers of Bil'in in the weekly non-violent protest marches held to protest confiscation of more than half of the village lands.

Although Gush Shalom earned itself respect among peace-seeking Israelis as well as in the US and Europe, it is regarded by mainstream Israelis as a purely pro-Palestinian movement. This is not surprising given the enormous campaign waged against the movement in the Israeli media, with Gush Shalom's own voice hardly being given an opportunity to be heard.

Gush Shalom's position was and remains that all people have the right to self-determination and to oppose foreign rule and occupation, and that the Palestinians have this right no less than Israelis, had it when they launched an uprising against British Colonial rule between 1945-1947, and the Americans exercised it between 1775 and 1781. That in no way gives the right to attack the civilian population of the oppressor nation, and such attacks deserve all condemnation. Both sides to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as long as it has not been resolved, must adhere to that rule, and avoid harming civilians. (It is less known, either in Israel or internationally, that the number of Palestinian children killed in IDF attacks and raids since 2000 are three times the number of Israeli children killed in Palestinian suicide bombings).

### 16.5.3 Canada

Canada has a diverse peace movement, with coalitions and networks in many cities, towns and regions. The largest cross-country umbrella coalition is the Canadian Peace Alliance (CPA) whose 140 member groups include large city-based coalitions, small grassroots groups, national and local unions, faith, environmental, and student groups, with a combined membership over Four Million Canadians. The Canadian Peace Alliance has been a leading voice, along with its member groups opposing the *The War on Terror*. In particular, the CPA opposes Canada's complicity in what it views as misguided and destructive US Foreign Policy. Canada has also been home to a growing movement of Palestinian solidarity, marked by increasing number of grassroots Jewish groups opposed to Israel's policies, in many cases likening them to Apartheid War Crimes, and Ethnic Cleansing. The Canadian Peace Congress (1949-1990) was a leading organiser in the peace movement for many years particularly when it was under the leadership of James Gareth Endicott who was its President until 1971.

### 16.5.4 United Kingdom (UK)

The National Peace Council (NPC) was founded in 1908 after the 17<sup>th</sup> Universal Peace Congress in London (July/August 1908). It brought together representatives of a considerable number of national voluntary organisations with a common interest in peace, disarmament and international and race relations. The primary function of the NPC was to provide opportunities for consultation and joint activities between its affiliated members, to help create an informed public opinion on the issues of the day and to convey to the government of the day the views of the substantial section of British life represented by its affiliated membership. The NPC folded in 2000 to be replaced in 2001 by the Network for Peace, which was set up to continue the networking role of NPC.

Post World War-II, Peace Movement efforts in the UK were initially focused on the dissolution of the British Empire and the rejection of imperialism by the US and the USSR. The anti-nuclear movement sought to opt out of the Cold War and rejected such ideas Britain's *Little Independent Nuclear Deterrent (BLIND)* in part on the grounds that *BLIND* was in contradiction even with Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD).

Anti-nuclear campaigning in the early 1950's was at first focused on the small Direct action Committee (DAC) who organised the first Aldermaston Marches in 1958. The DAC were later to merge into the much larger Committee of 100 (Committee for Nuclear Disarmament-CND). The formation of CND tapped widespread popular fear and opposition to nuclear weapons following the development of the first hydrogen bomb, and in the late 1950s and early 1960s anti-nuclear marches attracted large followings, especially to the annual Aldermaston March at Easter. However as the Committee of 100 had a non-hierarchical structure and no formal membership, many local groups sprang up calling themselves Committee of 100. This helped in the promulgation of civil disobedience but it produced policy confusion and, as the decade progressed, the Committee of 1200 groups engaged in actions on many social issues not directly related to war and peace.

The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC), led by Tariq Ali, mounted several large and violent demonstrations against the Vietnam War in 1967-68 but the first anti-Vietnam demonstration was at the US Embassy at London that took place in 1965.

The peace movement was later associated with the Peace Camp Movement as Labour moved *more to the centre* under Prime Minister Tony Blair. By early 2003, the peace and anti-war movement, mostly grouped together under the banner of *Stop the War Coalition*, was

powerful enough to cause several of Blair's cabinet to resign, and hundreds of Labour Members of Parliament to vote against their government. Blair's motion to support militarily the US plan to invade Iraq continued only due to support from the UK Conservative Party. Protests against the invasion of Iraq were particularly vocal in UK. Polls suggested that without the UN Security Council approval, the UK public was very much opposed to involvement, and over two million people protested in Hyde Park, London.

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## **16.6 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA)**

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Although there was a substantial organised resistance to foreign wars in the US since the nation's origins, this was often simply an outgrowth of non-interventionism or religious pacifism and not in general a coherent mass movement with unified goals until after World War II. These movements were dismissed by most in the US Foreign Policy establishments as impractical as the country entered the Cold War era (1948-1990). Some peace groups viz as the United World Federalists, hoped to secure world peace through integrated world government.

### **16.6.1 The Peace Movement in World War II**

Opposition to World War II was limited in the US but included the War Resisters League, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Catholic Worker Movement.

### **16.6.2 The Cold War: The Forties and Fifties**

With the Cold War tensions rising, the Progressive Party became a home for the peace movement. Like the American Peace Mobilization before the war, they were accused of harbouring communist sympathies. In the election campaign of 1948, the Progressive Party supported appeasement of the Soviet Union and a ban on Nuclear weapons. They opposed the Berlin airlift and the Marshal Plan. They received over one million popular votes but no electoral votes. There was a relatively small amount of domestic protest relevant to the Cold War in the 1950s, which witnessed a large build up of both nuclear and conventional weapons both in the US and the Soviet Union. The lack of protest was in part due to McCarthyism (General MacArthur raised the ante of anti-communism through his rabid stance on the military front and in the field against the Communists and Communism as an ideology per-se) and the general disdain for those who did not view communist expansion as a threat. It was at this time that the Eisenhower administration developed the policy of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). According to this notion, the two super-powers' possession of nuclear weapons was viewed as a deterrent that would prevent any such war from taking place. MAD became a central doctrine to the US Foreign Policy to contain communism. One may reasonably date the open and public resistance to this process to the departing comments of Eisenhower (1960), who warned that the US was in peril of being politically dominated by a military-industrial complex. During the Kennedy era, it was a white knuckled nuclear brinkmanship with the Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962). However, the signing of the Test Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Arms Control talks of the 1960s was a shot in the arm for the pacifists.

### **16.6.3 The Anti Vietnam War Movement: 1962-1975**

The peace movement in the 1960's in the US succeeded in bringing an end to the Vietnam War. Lyndon Johnson, not running for re-election as President, was the direct result of the anti-war protests across the US. Some advocates in this movement advocated unilateral withdrawal of US forces from Vietnam to avoid further bloodshed and ease tension in the region. The opposition to the Vietnam War tended to unite groups opposed to US's anti-communism, imperialism and colonialism and for those involved in the New Left, capitalism



itself, such as the Catholic Worker Movement. Others, as Stephen Spiro opposed the war based on the theory of Just War. Advocates of the US withdrawal were known as *doves* and they called their opponents *hawks*.

High profile opposition to the Vietnam War turned to street protests in an effort to turn the US political opinion against the war. The protests gained momentum from the Civil Rights Movement that had organised to oppose segregation laws, which had laid a foundation of theory and infrastructure, on which the anti-war movement grew. Protests were fueled by a growing network of independently published newspapers (known as under-ground papers) and the timely advent of large venue musical festivals as Woodstock and Grateful Dead Shows, attracting younger people in search of generational togetherness. The Anti-war protests ended with the final withdrawal of troops after the Paris Peace Accord was signed in 1973. Momentum from the protest organisations became a main force for the growth of an environmental movement in the US.

#### **16.6.4 The Eighties and Nineties**

During the 1980s, the US peace activists largely concentrated on slowing the super-power arms race in the hope that it would reduce the possibility of nuclear war between the US and the Soviet Union. As the Reagan administration accelerated military spending and adopted a tough stance vis-s vis the Russians, the peace groups via *Nuclear Freeze and Beyond War* sought to educate the public on what they believed was the inherent risk and cost of such a policy. Outreach to individual citizens in the Soviet Union and mass meetings, using then-new satellite link technology, were part of peace making activities in the 1980s.

The US peace-makers' priorities during the Nineties included seeking a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian impasse, belated efforts at humanitarian assistance to war-torn regions such as Bosnia and Rwanda and mitigating the harm caused by the UN sanction on Iraq. These sanctions upto 2003, led to the deaths of about 500,000 children from fully preventable causes including common infections and malnutrition. The American peace activists brought medicine into Iraq in defiance of US law, in some cases enduring heavy fines and imprisonment in retaliation. Some of the principal groups involved were *Voices in the Wilderness and Fellowship of Reconciliation*.

#### **16.6.5 The Iraq War**

Before, during, and after the War in Iraq began, a concerted protest effort existed in the US. In March 2003, just before the US and British military invasion of Iraq, a protest mobilisation called, *The World Says No to War* led to as many as 5,00,000 protestors in cities across the US. Since the occupation of Iraq, several protest organisations have persisted in the US against the US policies in Iraq. US activist groups including *United for Peace and Justice*, *Women Say No To War (CODE PINK)*, *Military Families For Peace, (MFFP)*, *Military Families Speak Out (MFSO)*, *Not in Our Name*, *Answer Veterans for Peace* and *The World Can't Wait*, continue to protest against the Iraq War. Methods of protest include rallies and marches, impeachment petitions, the staging of a War Crimes Tribunal in New York (to investigate crimes and alleged abuses of power of the Bush administration), bringing Iraqi women to tour the US and tell their side of the story, street theatre and independent film-making, high profile appearances by anti-war activists as Scott Ritter, Dahr Jamail, resisting military recruiting on college campuses, withholding tax payment, letter-writing to legislators and newspapers, blogging, music and guerilla theatre. Independent media producers continue to broadcast pod cast and web host programmes about the movement against the Iraq war.

### **16.6.6 The Threat of Military action against Iran**

Beginning in 2005, opposition to military action against Iran started in the US, the UK and elsewhere, including the creation of the Campaign against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran. By August 2007, fears of an imminent US and /or Israeli attack on Iran had increased to level that several Nobel Prize winners, along with several anti-war groups including the Israeli Committee for a Middle East Free from Atomic and Biological and Chemical Weapons, Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament, CASMII, CODE PINK and many others, warned about what they believed was the imminent risk of a war of an unprecedented scale, this time against Iran, especially expressing concern that an attack on Iran using nuclear weapons had not been ruled out. They called for the dispute about Iran's nuclear programme to be resolved through peaceful means, and a call for Israel, as the only Middle Eastern State suspected of possessing Nuclear Weapons, to join the –Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty.

### **16.6.7 Domestic Peace Movement in the US**

The Peace Movement in the US is perhaps less popular in the media but supported by vast numerous professionals in several areas, viz Gang Violence Prevention, Domestic Abuse Counseling, Violence against Children Awareness, and Character Education in Primary Schools.

Gang violence prevention is primarily a regional effort led by Local Law Enforcement and Special Programmes within Schools. Domestic Abuse Counselling is supported by several non-profit organisations. Violence against Children Awareness, Character Education is a growing programme in American primary school education, recognised as a pillar of strength in the foundation of US society along with strong family support. Character education resources are used broadly to shape young minds.

### **16.6.8 Day of Silence for Peace**

Also known as the Peace Movement the Day of Silence for Peace follows the tradition of rallies that use silence to be noticed. Participants wear a piece of white cloth across their mouths with Peace written on it to symbolise their unity and readiness to change their world. It means they are tired of the status-quo and are willing to challenge it. It hopes to achieve unity and a sense of empowerment for its participants- including the knowledge that they can have an impact without traveling to the far corners of the earth. The first Day of silence was observed on 23rd October, 2003.

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## **16.7 INDIA**

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*The greatest Peace Movement in the World was led by the apostle of Peace M.K. Gandhi to rid India of British Colonial Rule. India attained independence from British rule by a peaceful and non-violent movement of the people. Gandhi's technique of Ahimsa and Satyagraha caught the imagination of mankind and has been and is replicated in several protest movements across the world. Infact the mighty British were forced to grant independence in 1947, due to the power of peaceful protests of the people of India transcending region, caste and religion. Though there were a few aberrations, the non-cooperation and civil disobedience methods adopted by Gandhi were basically peaceful techniques. The British did leave India but left it divided by partitioning it and creating Pakistan. Over the past decades there has been conflict and a trust deficit between the two countries. However, for peace to prevail in the region it is important that the people, civil society and champions for peace compel the governments of both the countries to work out a peaceful solution to all outstanding problems, in the interest of stable peace in the South Asian Region.*

In the domestic milieu, the two regions Kashmir and the North-East have witnessed violent conflict leading to death and destruction over decades. The people of Kashmir and the North-East seem to be hapless victims of history and are caught between the violence of the insurgent/separatist tendencies, as also the counter action by the men in uniform. Several groups and members of the civil society have been yearning and urging both the sides to end the saga of confrontation and work towards a peaceful resolution of all the issues in contention, politically and through dialogue.

In this regard, the efforts of groups in the North-East viz the Naga Mothers Association, Naga HoHo Church Organisations and other Civil Society groups have been responsible for the holding of cease-fire in the state, since 1997. However, a permanent solution to the problem in the North-East is still elusive. Both the insurgent groups-operating in different parts of the North-East- and the government have to seek a peaceful solution to the problems facing them. It is imperative to state that no problem can ever be solved by the recourse to force/arms. The need of the hour today in Kashmir and the North-East is to ensure stable peace and secure the confidence of the people living there. In this direction, it is important for the government to end/ re-orient its policy of using excessive force to suppress dissent. In this direction a re-look at the Armed Forces Special Powers Act 1958, operative in these two regions is merited. It is time that the concerned heed to the call of all right thinking people to do away with the draconian provisions of this Act that has led to several innocent people being subjected to pain and suffering. The peaceful protest/fast in Manipur by *Irom Sharmila*, since 2001(almost a decade), for lifting of this Act has now become the focal point of the peace movement against all kinds of violence and atrocities being perpetuated in the region.

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## 16.8 SUMMARY

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If peace movements do end wars, does that mean protests are futile? Definitely not. Indeed peace movements have shaped history. The list begins with setting limits on war makers. In raising the cry *Never Again* peace organisations played an important role in bringing about the Geneva conventions against the kind of chemical weapons used in the First World War, just as the campaign for nuclear disarmament helped insure there would be no repeat of the slaughter at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Peace activists helped create climate that led to a series of Nuclear Arms Limitation Treaties, beginning with the Atmospheric Test Ban of 1963 and running through the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties of the 1970s.

Peace movements are also important in laying down demands for a just peace. They were especially powerful at the end of the two World Wars, when diplomats were under strong pressure to create a world worthy of wartime sacrifice. Peace movements took seriously the extravagant promises of a *World Safe for Democracy and Deal for a New World* and they demanded redemption of these pledges in *industrial democracy, Full employment and racial equality*. They pressured framers of the UN to prevent future wars by creating international machinery to resolve disputes and by removing the social and economic grievances believed to be the root cause of war.

Peace movements are also important players in the struggle over the distribution of resources. The struggle over resources leads peace movements towards social justice. As Martin Luther King observed *Peace is not the absence of conflict, it is the presence of Justice*. Of course, peace and justice movements are no more effective in ending social injustice than in ending wars, but they can be important weights in the social balance of power.

What are the lessons for today? It seems unlikely that peace movement will stop the Iraq War any time soon, let alone the permanent *war on terror* that started in Afghanistan and Iraq a few years ago and will expand to who knows where? Linkage between peace and economic justice would expand the ranks. At the very least, today's movement can do what peace movements have always done- claim the moral high ground by affirming life over death.

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## 16.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

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1. Define Peace Movement and elucidate its characteristics.
2. Write about the duality of the peace concept.
3. Detail the ideals underlying peace movements.
4. Write in brief the history of the peace movement in:
  - (a) Germany
  - (b) Israel
  - (c) Canada
  - (d) United Kingdom (UK)
  - (e) United States of America (US)
  - (f) India
5. Assess the relevance and importance of peace movements today.

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