

## AT ODDS WITH PACIFISM

[The following article, by former USPP sponsor and member Peter Gregonis, obviously is an embarrassment to me. I'm printing it unedited, except for a few grammatical and typographical corrections, in the USPP Report, because doing so seems the most consistent with the USPP's democratic principles. The article makes two assertions that I believe inaccurate, and raises several points of political theory that merit comment.

The first inaccuracy is the inference that I raised the question of the appropriateness of Peter's membership in and sponsorship of the USPP simply because he began to promote Jesse Jackson's campaign. Other USPP members are promoting the Jackson campaign. What most disturbed me was Peter's strong opposition to the perspective and approach of the USPP. I believed that under these circumstances, having him listed as a sponsor of the USPP in the USPP's letterhead, and in the Report, created false impressions. When I discussed this inconsistency with Peter, he recognized it, and withdrew from the Party.

The second inaccuracy is in regard to the "Planetary Citizen" badge that Peter sometimes wears. The badge was never a subject of our conversation. The USPP supports democratic world government, and the principle of world citizenship. Therefore, I did not, and would not, object to any USPP member wearing a "Planetary Citizen" badge.

In regard to the questions of theory, Peter's position is an excellent example of that taken by many pacifists in the past, which draws a distinction between personal pacifism, which has a moral foundation, and "practical politics", which is directed toward achieving "results" in the "real world." Peter believes that pacifism is an excellent personal moral code, but is irrelevant to politics. He believes that pacifists refuse to become involved in "mainstream" political activities merely because they fear becoming morally corrupted.

Central to the USPP position is rejection of this dichotomy. Pacifism is the most realistic political policy. It's the most realistic because military violence tends to fatally flaw all political positions. This flawing is perhaps most strik-

ingly demonstrated by mathematical probability analysis, which shows that military deterrence, which breeds antagonistic military institutions, leads ineluctably to war. Conventional deterrence leads to conventional war. Nuclear deterrence, which is an extension of conventional deterrence, leads to nuclear war, and, very likely, the annihilation of the human species. All political perspectives that compromise with military violence eventually are drawn into generating and supporting war.

I favor coalitions, and believe that effective humanitarian politics must involve building coalitions with oppressed and exploited groups. However, I also believe that this coalition building is best carried out on a pacifist basis. I doubt the wisdom of giving up the categorical rejection of military force in order to quickly increase the number of people involved in enterprises whose purposes are to secure peace and lasting social justice. Rather, it's better if pacifists strive to make their arguments so cogent, and provide such a quality of organization, that non-pacifists will become pacifists and join in pacifist coalitions. Jesse Jackson doesn't take the pacifist political position. In the "Rainbow Coalition", pacifists are treated simply as another minority constituency. Therefore, I doubt that the Rainbow Coalition can generate effective opposition to the drift toward nuclear war, or substantially and permanently improve social conditions.

In regard to Peter's thoughts about pacifism and vegetarianism, I don't regard vegetarianism as a necessary element of pacifism. Vegetarianism often involves the belief that killing animals for the purpose of eating them is "bad", while pacifism is the belief that military violence is morally "wrong", and always tends to produce more harm than good. However, Peter is right that no person can completely disassociate him or herself from the violence in major social institutions. This doesn't mean, however, that attempts to disassociate oneself as much as possible are irrational. The USPP supports resistance to the military draft and war taxes, eminently reasonable movements that express both the desire not to perform acts which are morally wrong, and to generate as much resist-

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