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War and Peace

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FORWARD



The events of September 11, 2001, are clearly a turning point in the history of the United States and the world. Many have compared 9/11 with such pivotal dates as December 7, 1941, November 22, 1963, or April 4, 1968. While memories of these events take on a personal meaning for each individual, all Americans along with citizens of a host of other countries have been thrust into a new war, a war on terror. Unlike conventional warfare, the "enemy" in this case is elusive, shadowed in secrecy and plays by an unpredictable rulebook defying traditional political and social boundaries. Given this environment, the current issue of the Iowa Council for the Social Studies Journal focuses on the theme WAR AND PEACE. In this issue, six authors write from the depth of their hearts about the challenges that confront educators in a post-September 11, 2001 era.

Diane McCarty, professor of education at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa, introduces us to a review of literature on the teaching of democratic values following the terrorist events of September 11, 2001. Exploring the historical roots of democratic values, Dr. McCarty identifies the fault lines that lie across the landscape of a modern democracy. Among other important questions, she addresses the degree to which vigorous patriotism diminishes public discourse of issues around which there is little consensus among most Americans.

Michael Vogt, curator at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, explores how textbooks present the military in its myriad roles over the course of American history. Vogt suggests that textbooks alone are not sufficient to communicate effectively the role military organizations have played in times of peace as well as times of war. He highlights the use of community resources such as museums, artifacts, photographs and historical sites as other sources of information to complete the picture of how the military has contributed to the story of democracy.

Carol Brown, Executive Secretary of ICSS and **Noa Davenport**, independent consultant and trainer in conflict resolution, ask how a culture of peace can be created. What would it take to create a climate for constructive dialogue with peoples everywhere that would build an enduring

culture of peace in our time? These important questions are framed in the context of their exploration of ways classroom teachers can contribute to a social climate that builds a lasting peace throughout the world.

Germana Nijim, Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) Volunteer in the Middle East, provides a very personal and graphic picture of her experience while serving in Occupied Palestine during the spring and summer of 2002. This eloquent narrative describes the great difficulties faced by the many Palestinians whose lives have been disrupted by war, displacement and a climate of retaliation. She not only identifies a number of groups, both Israeli and Palestinian, who work under the ideals of lasting peace through negotiation but she also enumerates the steps they must take to reach that lasting peace.

Edna Aphek, professor at the David Yellin's College of Education in Jerusalem, expresses her hope for peace in the face of what often appears to be a hopeless situation. Describing an activity used with fourth graders at Alon Elementary School, she explores how elementary children can guide the quest to "beat their swords into plowshares." Drawing upon creative thinking and problem solving, students propose ways to transform the machines of war into artifacts of peace.

Placed under one cover, these five articles address a theoretical basis for teaching democratic values in a post 9/11 era; they provide practical classroom ideas teachers can apply immediately in the classroom; and most importantly, they provide unique, complimentary and contrasting images of war from the peace-seeking perspectives of two persons who have experienced the violence of the war in the Middle East most intimately and personally.

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