

PEACE—MARCHING TO A DIFFERENT DRUMMER

About William H. Ludlow—Citizen

Foreword by Curly Marsh: Our classmate, Bill Ludlow, and I were born next door to each other and only a few months apart. We are first cousins and were pals from age one, right on through until we went away to different prep schools after first year high. At Princeton we came together again as roommates for four more years in the class of '33. As kids we never fought with each other—just with older brothers—and we collaborated on endless youthful projects: tree houses, guinea pigs, football, baseball, etc. at the Madison Academy. Bill was smarter at school than I and helped me around some sharp corners in first year algebra.

After college we still saw a lot of each other and over a beer would philosophize over the prospect of achieving peace in a world bent on developing weapons of ultimate destruction. In the beginning, early in the '30's and before there was any thought of an atomic bomb, Bill felt strongly that the arms race could only lead to a war of universal annihilation, and that the only way to peace was for individuals to refuse to bear arms—seeking instead non-military ways of settling international differences.

This is the story of how Bill has dedicated his life to a strongly held conviction which he felt was the only moral and practical approach to achieving peace, not extinction, for human kind. It is told through excerpts from two newspaper articles about Bill and his commitment to peace. Bear in mind that the quoted articles are from 1986.

From the Ambler Gazette—April 16, 1986

CITIZEN OF THE WEEK

Ideals Spark Wyndmoor Lobbyist to Action
Bridges gap between people, government

By Elizabeth A. Gittings

For William Ludlow, it all began with a few words that have stayed with him for a long time.: "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

Then came 1918 and Ludlow found his childhood peace disrupted. His father, a New York architect, slept with other neighborhood men in tents on top of a water tower to watch for German planes...His father went away to a military camp. The DuPont Powder Works near his New Jersey home blew up in attempt to meet the war demand. Dinner table conversations focused on the failure of the League of Nations.

While vacationing near Cape Canaveral, Ludlow's mother spotted what she thought were lights from German U-boats flashing at the Banana Islands. "I was only 7 years old, but I was old enough to wonder, what could you do about this awful thing—war?" He has tried to answer that question for most of his life. In his Wyndmoor home...there are newspaper clippings... quoting legislators with whom Ludlow talks as a member of the State Governing Board and Nuclear Arms Control Team of Common Cause, a national public interest coalition of 250,000 members...

As a professional city planner and life-long student of history, a subject he began to examine at Princeton during the onset of the Depression, Ludlow looks into the past for lessons.

"First there was my emotional background, then my training in planning, looking back from the present and

seeing how you've gotten where you are, and then looking forward 25 to 30 years."

When the League of Nations failed after World War I with a "no" vote by Congress, Ludlow began to question whether the war had really been fought "to make the world safe for democracy". "Now we realize we're the strongest power on earth. We didn't realize that in 1920. We had to flex our muscles."

During World War II, Ludlow gave up his sturdy Presbyterian roots to become a Quaker and conscientious objector. In 1978 he began to lobby against nuclear weapons as a member of Common Cause. Since his retirement from his position as director for the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, he has spent his time doing exactly what he always wanted to do.

As an idealist with a strategy, who spends time in Washington...Ludlow lobbies against anti-satellite tests, Star Wars and nuclear weapons, and for controls on campaign contributions by Political Action Groups...

... "We've got the best Congress money can buy", says Ludlow wryly... "A Congressman has two telephone calls coming in, one from a contributor, a PAC, and the other from an individual he doesn't know about. Which call does he take? In other words, PAC money gets access."

Ludlow says part of the beauty of his work with Common Cause is the ability to "network" with other groups on major issues. Currently he is a member of SANE, Montgomery Alliance for Nuclear Disarmament, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Nuclear Freeze, and Architects, Designers, Planners for Social Responsibility.



Peace worker Bill Ludlow.

His networking led him to Russia as part of the Volga Peace Cruise about two years ago (1984), he says, citing one unforgettable experience in the Soviet Union. "We were in Kiev and after dinner were strolling along the edge of a park and an attractive middle-aged woman came toward us with a girl about 4 or 5. We smiled at her and pointed to our pins which said 'Turistes Amerikanski', and the Russian word 'mir', which means peace. She looked down at her little girl and tears came into her eyes and she repeated 'mir'.

Ludlow says he has envisioned two possible futures for the world. One would be a militarized world, with all countries, including the Soviet Union, under U.S. domination. Economically we would use the third world as a source of raw materials and cheap labor and to promote our own wealth. That's the kind of world the administration (in 1986—Reagan's) would like us to be, he says, citing U.S. interference in Nicaragua and elsewhere. We need to look at what people do, not what they say. The second world of the future would be one of religious tolerance where different faiths would be looked at for the basic human values they are expressing ...and not at how their culture happened to align them. "We need to be involved in dialogue in order to understand each other and now we have the technology and means to do that."

Ludlow says he imagines a world without weapons where people would not have to agree with one another, but would try to understand each other. "Love your neighbor isn't just a moral dictum, it's the only practical way to live in the world today, particularly when we have nuclear arms."

Ludlow emphasizes the importance of being positive and finding common ground first, a hallmark of successful lobbying. "We always know what we are against, but we have to know what we're for in order to create the basis for a disarmed world. One basis is conflict resolution, a personal strategy which can be extended around the world.

"The basis is understanding those who are in conflict and being aware of the needs of the other person and the other side.

There is no way to peace. Peace is the way."

From the Philadelphia Inquirer November 27, 1986
To the editor:

On October 24, the Inquirer reported that three public policy groups had concluded that the "Star Wars" plan was unrealistic and ineffective...

The groups were the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Council on Economic Priorities and the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies. The Aspen report was written by retired Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, advisor to Presidents Ford and Reagan on nuclear weapons and national security, and William J. Perry, Undersecretary of Defense in the Carter administration. David C. Jones, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1978 to 1982, was a major contributor.

Reports by the three groups said that the Soviets could defeat the Star Wars shield relatively easily, using stepped up ballistic missile development to overwhelm it and bombers and cruise missiles to evade it. The reports were issued days after the Iceland summit collapsed over President Reagan's refusal to limit Star Wars development.

Follow-up talks at the foreign minister level early this month similarly collapsed, further emphasizing that Star Wars is the central arms control issue. President Reagan withdrew from a proposal to eliminate nuclear weapons over a ten-year period when the Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev insisted that the missile defense program be restricted, as provided in the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty.

How to break the deadlock? How to bring each side to understand the confrontation in the larger context of mutual survival? How to replace simplistic notions of a "space defense" with a vision of space devoted solely to peaceful purposes? How to focus opposition to Star Wars on elected public officials?

In August the House of Representatives, but not the Senate, voted to bar underground nuclear tests and to

require adherence to SALT II weapons limits, at least through September 1987. With a Democratic majority in the new Senate, grass roots pressure is the key to a congressional ban on space testing of strategic defense weapons or components, provided the Soviet Union similarly refrains.

Binding congressional action and reduced funds could keep Star Wars on hold while our negotiators seek realistic arms reductions. The people must tell their elected representatives again and again how they feel about Star Wars.

William H. Ludlow

Curly Marsh comment: Although the controversy over Star Wars back in '86 is now 'old hat', it is a reminder that even well-intentioned defense efforts based on arms proliferation can lead to the build-up of sophisticated weaponry capable of mass destruction. Today, chemical and germ warfare. What will it be tomorrow?

Bill Ludlow's lobbying against Star Wars concluded: "The people must tell their elected representatives again and again how they feel about Star Wars." I agreed with Bill and accepted his challenge by sending copies of the following short poem to my local papers and congressmen.

STAR WARS

The experts say Star Wars defense
Makes very, very little sense.
The game, unlike in baseball fun,
Is over when you take "strike one!"
So swing away at every pitch
Your stance is, sure enough, last ditch.
No rules to make a game of war.
No ump to holler, "That's ball four".
"Defend the plate," says coach. "Your bat
Was really only meant for that."
But bats, we find, some people use
To batter, bash and badly bruise.
We say with wide-eyed innocence,
"Why, Star Wars only means defense."
You think we ought to loudly whine
When Gorby doesn't buy that line.
"It's just a bargain chip," we claim,
"To win the Russian Roulette game."
Who ever won who said, "I'll not
Put any ante in the pot?"
If you would vote on STAR WARS nix,
At escalation take your fix.
Please bug the guys you voted in:
Your ever-lovin' congressmen.

A letter from Bill to Curly a few years back tells of his commitment to World Peace.

"Why am I so dedicated to stopping and reversing the arms race, and promoting non-military ways of resolving international conflicts? On a personal level, one response is so that my grandchildren and their grandchildren will inherit a world worth living in. On a wider level, I want to have some small significance in the evolutionary process of the human race. I want to be a whole person capable of playing my role in the unfolding of the God-given human spirit."

In recent years, Bill's peace activities have expanded significantly, particularly through the Peace Committee of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends (Quakers) and the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), a Washington-based Quaker lobbying and educational organization. His major focus has been a Legislative Letter Writing Campaign, which he initiated and nurtured from 1989 to 1997.

In this eight year period, members of the Philadelphia and Baltimore Yearly Meetings have sent over 25,000 letters and handwritten postcards from Friends' Sunday writing sessions to our Senators, Representatives and the President. In addition, several thousand written and phone messages were sent based on materials taken home.

Guided by FCNL, the Campaign focused on important peace and related issues which were the subject of pending legislation.

In 1997, the Philadelphia-Baltimore based Campaign was replaced by sample messages and background information sent out monthly by FCNL to Quaker Meetings and other religious groups nation-wide. Relieved of the responsibility for the lobbying system which he initiated, Bill's peace concerns have widened to nurturing the Quaker Peace Testimony which, renouncing war, attempts to address the economic, social and institutional causes of war. He is involved in religiously discerning effective initiatives seeking to overcome the culture of war with the culture of peace.

Bill lives in a Philadelphia suburb with his daughter and son-in-law, Kit and Bill Foley and their two children Ryan and her younger brother Terry. A son of Bill's, Mark, is unmarried and lives in Alexandria, Va. Bill's wife, Wilma, died in 1981.