

SHALOM

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Close-up of section of the Arch of Titus in Rome, depicting triumphant Roman soldiers marching with a menorah taken from the Second Temple. The Arch was constructed in the first century CE.

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Stefan Merken

La Menora

THIS PAST SPRING MY WIFE Betty and I were in Rome and made our way to the Jewish section along the Tiber River where the old Jewish Ghetto used to be. Located in this same area is a marvelous synagogue with a Jewish museum (*Museo Ebraico*) filled with artifacts of the history of Rome and its Jewish community.

While we were there a special feature at the museum was offered: *The Menorah: Cult, History, and Myth*. Part of it was on display at the Museo Ebraico, and the second part at the Museum of the Vatican (*Musei Vaticani*) -- a rarity that the Vatican and the Jewish Museum would take part in a presentation together.

The menorah, a seven-branched

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Examples of the menorah, a seven-branched candelabrum whose shape was prescribed by God to Moses. The museum features examples from antiquity to present day of the menorah including those carved into stone and woven into tapestries as well as many made from precious metals.

candelabrum whose shape was prescribed by God to Moses as revealed in Exodus has stood alone as a symbol of Judaism, a symbol older than the Catholic cross. The form of the menorah on the banner announcing the show at the Vatican was taken from a representation of the Temple menorah depicted in the spoils of the Judean War taken as booty by Titus from the destroyed Second Temple in 70 C.E. These artifacts were taken when the Temple was destroyed as was the gold menorah and was said to have been carried back to Rome but has never been seen again.

The show is overpowering, educational and emotional about the history of the menorah from antiquity to present day and its significance in Jewish history and in synagogues dating back centuries. A show about our past well worth the time and energy to see if one has the chance.✧

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Murray Polner

Blacklists: Can They Happen Again?

I REMEMBER MY OLDER, absolutely apolitical, sister telling the family that her favorite high school typing-steno teacher had been fired. Why, she didn't know.

Years later I learned that the fired teacher's Marine son had been killed on Guadalcanal during WWII. In the same high school, the comedian Sam Levinson, who taught Spanish, had named his son in honor of the typing-steno teacher's dead Marine's son. Levinson was a moonlighter and because he wrote a humor column for a left-wing newspaper he came close to being "exposed" by one of the for-profit rags that earned its keep by outing Communists and left-leaning liberals. I heard allegations that he had taken the smart way out and paid them off so he could be "cleared" and allowed to continue teaching, writing and of course telling jokes.

Yet another of our teachers—whose name I've forgotten—was kicked out for his political views, which, incidentally, I never heard him express in my social studies classroom. I did hear rumors, though, that after he lost his job he became a milkman to support his family.

All this—and much, much more—happened because of the Cold War and another of our regular paranoid Red Scares, which arrived soon after Nazi Germany surrendered and the Soviets almost immediately became the enemy. Suddenly, we were in an officially-endorsed 1000% anti-Red crusade, setting off yet another era of fear, settling of scores and liars like Joe McCarthy.

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The NYC Board of Education caved before unrelenting pressure brought by extreme rightists, groveling politicians and some local newspapers and in the face of a diminishing number of civil libertarians willing to defend civil liberties. Firing leftist teachers was their specialty.

There were, of course, many other targets. I recently ran across a brief *NY Times* obituary: "Samuel Pines, noted mathematician and physicist, a victim of the McCarthy blacklist, whose name and reputation was cleared by the defense department after a precedent-setting legal struggle in 1955."

I had never heard of Samuel Pines but his relentless effort to save himself and his reputation is a reminder for those who have neither memory nor knowledge of the blacklists egged on by Hoover's FBI, HUAC and its copycats—e.g., the Johns Committee in Florida whose witch hunts led to the firing of many teachers and gays. "One of the saddest aspects of the



MURRAY POLNER is *SHALOM's* co-editor.

Sen. Joseph McCarthy (R - WI) in 1954 at a House In-American Activities Committee hearing. Photo by SIPA.

Not many public figures found the courage to defend the victims.

Bromberg's son, Conrad, remembered, "You didn't know who was for you or against you." Philip Loeb, Molly Goldberg's blacklisted TV husband, committed suicide after he too was named.

Johns Committee affair was that most state university administrators refused to stand up for the rights of their embattled colleagues," wrote Raymond Arsenault in the *Tampa Bay Times* in 2015. Arsenault, John Hope Franklin Professor of Southern History at the University of South Florida, noted that his "favorite English teacher, Carolyn Phanstiel, was let go because she was too liberal and too controversial."

In California, the Tenney Committee demanded college faculty members sign loyalty oaths. Elsewhere, a small army of FBI-subsidized ex-Communists desperate for money, favorable publicity and revenge were recruited to carry on the battle.

People like Harvey Matusow, a former Communist turned FBI informer, who did fairly well financially after naming more than 200 people as Reds or sympathizers in the early 1950s only to recant and later admit he lied, or Martin Berkeley, an actor on Broadway and later a screenwriter, a former Communist Party member, who presented HUAC with more than one hundred names.

"In Hollywood during the HUAC days, friend became afraid of friend," wrote Victor Navasky in his seminal 1980 book *Naming Names*. "The free-floating guilt that was in the air visited the innocent-Communist and non-Communist alike." Navasky memorably cited a *NY Times* piece by reporter Warren Hoge about the apolitical actress Mildred Dunnock, who played Willie Loman's wife in *Death of a Salesman*. She couldn't find additional work because *Red Channels*, mentioned her alongside Lillian Hellman, Arthur Miller and Elia Kazan. "It gave me an emotional understanding of being accused," said Dunnock. "I felt contaminated. I felt I had leprosy. I felt I had incriminated my husband, a conventional man."

She was not alone. After he was named, J. Edward Bromberg, a blacklisted character actor, died of a heart attack at age 47.

Hollywood agent who wrote *Going Away*, one of the more memorable and striking memoirs of that ugly era. Sigal's agency's clients included Humphrey Bogart, Rod Steiger, Barbara Stanwyck and Peter Lorre. His latest sharp-eyed book, *Black Sunset: Hollywood Sex, Lies, Glamour, Betrayal, and Raging Egos*, asks: "In this vast cosmology of informers there are exquisite ranks, grades, reason, excuses. Do they voluntarily engage in the destruction of their friends or are they dragged unwillingly.... Do they take pleasure or pain from betraying?"

Not many public figures found the courage to defend the victims. It was far easier to passively accept the judgment of remote, powerful people who can do you great harm. I still remember watching a man and two women in the late 1940s asking passersby near the entrance to the East NY Savings Bank on Pitkin Avenue in Brooklyn to sign their names to a petition in favor of the Bill of Rights. My friend and I and one elderly woman were the only ones who signed.

But that was understandable given that those were the years of the Cold War Consensus. Yes, there certainly were plenty of Russian spies as there were no doubt plenty of American spooks too. But, I asked then, and now, what criminal acts had Bromberg, Loeb, my high school teachers, and Clancy Sigal, et.al. committed? At most, many of the Communists and leftists were guilty of moral complicity for ignoring Stalin's crimes, or daring to belong to New Dealish left and labor groups, or signing petitions, or voting for Henry Wallace in 1948. Or even worse, as John Gregory Dunne, the great stylist and cynic who covered Hollywood for years,

wrote about the Hollywood Ten who, he said, often produced-surprise! -mediocre films. But crimes and prison?

The unforgivable silence was not broken until the '60s but not before countless numbers of frightened and very famous people rushed to swear allegiance to HUAC and Hoover's dogmatic versions of The Land of The Free and The Home of the Brave. Some liberal senators even co-sponsored the "Emergency Detention Act" which was aimed at sending "subversives" to internment camps during alleged national emergencies.

So what's next? I can't predict but are there new McCarthys out there waiting to spring into action? And if so, how many of us will defend the rights of the victimized? ♣



Clancy Sigal, blacklisted Hollywood agent and author of *Going Away*, a brilliant memoir of the era.



Victor Navasky, author of *Naming Names*, a seminal study of an ugly era.

Elaine Durbach

Fighting the Flawed Logic of Jewish Identity

RABBI GEORGE NUDELL IS AN Orthodox Jew who presided for many tranquil decades over a Conservative congregation in Scotch Plains, NJ. As a journalist who covered many events at his synagogue, I know how deeply he was loved and revered. So it came as a shock to everyone who'd dealt with him when the Chief Rabbinate of Israel recently named him as one of the American rabbis whose conversions it had declared unacceptable.

For me, it threw into sharp relief the whole debate about Jewish identity, and who decides its parameters.

Nudell, a fervent Zionist who had just retired after 35 years in the pulpit, was bemused but not shaken about his blacklisting. "Some of my friends are jealous that they're not on the list," he joked.

But the underlying issues did not amuse him. "Being who I am, I believe that rules do matter in Judaism," he told me, "but I don't respect the authority of the people who decided this." While he adheres to the principle of matrilineal descent and the centrality of mothers in conversion, in his own congregation he welcomed people "who walked the walk" even if they hadn't converted. "I'd rather have a congregation full of people like that than those who're Jewish by birth but don't follow any of the practices."

Judaism, he pointed out, has always been practiced in many different ways. Clearly, those who judged him didn't take that approach. They simply noticed the Conservative synagogue named in the paperwork regarding the aliya by a woman whose conversion he supervised, and that was enough for them to decide it wasn't kosher. Within Talmudic rules, he would prefer to see Israel respect our age-old diversity.

For the first time in decades, I'm finding my own identity becoming an issue, and not because of the paranoia stirred by the Trump presidency. My immigration status as a green-card-holding South African should be secure. Rather, I'm disturbed by this question of "Who is a Jew?"

My 23-year-old son, an American by birth, has brought it to the fore. Filled with the cynicism of youth, and a disgust heightened by the political conflicts of this past year, he has mentioned moving to a different country. The one place where

he could assume a welcome is Israel, as the child of two Jewish parents. But what if the authorities question his beginnings?

He wouldn't face the problems those who have undergone conversion might, but there is another risk. If the fundamentalist forces gain ground, he—and huge numbers of those who have always taken their Jewishness for granted—could be in the same boat, on the wrong side of the halakhic fence.

Way back, living in Cape Town, I got engaged to a Jewish American. We had a civil ceremony in South Africa, and had a religious wedding planned in New York. But before that could happen, I had to bring proof that I was Jewish. I grew up in small towns in various parts of Southern

For the first time in decades, I'm finding my own identity becoming an issue, and not because of the paranoia stirred by the Trump presidency.

Africa, and none of the rabbis who'd served those communities and knew my family was still around, except for one man presiding over a congregation in Cape Town.

He was someone whose moral standards left much to be desired; I wasn't prepared to have him vouch for anything about me. Fortunately, the official dealing with the matter in Cape Town understood the situation, and she found a rabbi who knew my third cousin to sign my certificate.

Now comes a different situation. My second husband and I both come from families regarded as Jewish as far back as anyone has traced. I assumed that pedigree would be accepted for our son. But at a panel discussion I attended a while back at the YM-YWHA in Union, NJ, I discovered that might not be the case.

We had married in a civil ceremony and had the religious service some time later, after I received a *get* from my

ELAINE DURBACH is a writer of articles and novels, living in New Jersey with her husband and son.

Every now and then, an anomaly would emerge in an otherwise white or black family, a baby that was different than everyone else, proving the presence of unsuspected miscegenation buried in the past.

first husband. There was no problem obtaining the *get*, or getting married under a *huppa*, though by then I was very clearly pregnant. But what about our baby? Apparently, being conceived out of religious wedlock would not make him a *mamzer*, but it would if his start preceded the *get*.

How on earth do the rabbis presume to decide a matter like that? Our son was born one month before his due date. Would I have to get certification from my obstetrician that he was premature?—or hire someone to do a forensic investigation to prove when he was conceived? When I asked one of the panelists if the rabbis dive under blankets with a flashlight, he shrugged, hands up in the air, and said, “These things get worked out.”

For my son, in the U.S., this might not be too serious an issue, given that if he marries a Jewish girl, his wife will ensure that his children are Jewish, but what if this were a daughter? And what if he or she wanted to settle in Israel? According to lawyers working for the religious court system, even if you do nothing to invite scrutiny, the rabbinic court can summon you to query your Jewish status.

Are we willing to call into question the kosher Jewishness of everyone who might stem from such questionable beginnings, and all their offspring down through the generations?

I would welcome proof that I have the wrong impression, but it seems to me that the whole process of defining who is and who isn’t a Jew has the same inherently unfeasible logic as the defunct apartheid system of race classification in my old home country. Usually, references to apartheid in Israel refer to the treatment of Arab Israelis. My concern here is about classification inside the Jewish tent.

In South Africa these days things have improved in many ways, but when I lived there the State took something like the Nazi approach. For blacks and whites, if one of your four grandparents was of a different race—even partially, then you were “Colored,” and part of the mixed-race group, no matter how pale or dark your skin. No matter that thousands of people, in a country with many immigrants, couldn’t be quite sure of their grandparents’

racial background. Predictably, it caused bizarre problems.

Every now and then, an anomaly would emerge in an otherwise white or black family, a baby that was different than everyone else, proving the presence of unsuspected miscegenation buried in the past. That nonsense made for some pretty peculiar family encounters, with those who lived all their lives on one side of the line facing relatives many shades different than them. At worst, it caused suicides. More often, it led to ostracizing, and—given the legalized inequality—terrible economic and social hardship.

On a lighter note, the situation worked to my benefit one night in the “Colored” suburb of Athlone. In the course of doing

research for a book on the mixed-race community, I was invited to attend a nightclub, the kind of smart, sophisticated place whites had no idea existed on the other side of the color bar.

It was illegal for me to be there, and I was very nervous, but my companion brushed aside my concern. “People around here come in so many col-

ors, they won’t blink an eye,” he said.

In fact, one of the managers did come over to query my presence. Jacob just snapped back at him, “Ach, man, she’s my cousin!” The guy peered at me, shrugged and walked away. It was as simple as that, as long as the police weren’t called and no one was asked to produce identity documents. I felt so cool, being able to pass as “non-White.”

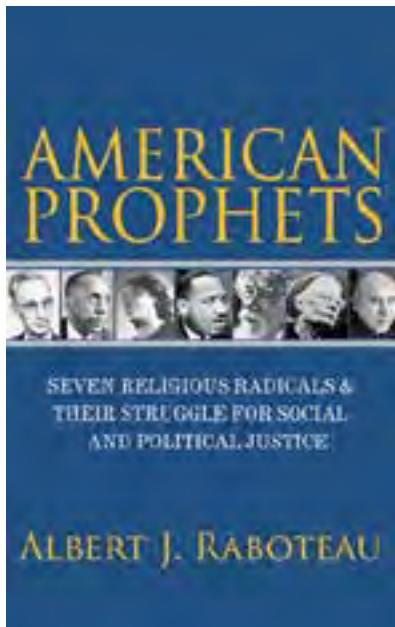
If the extremists hold sway in Israel, “passing” won’t work there, not when it comes to the legitimacy of marriage and children. We Jews pride ourselves on the intellectual rigor of our religion, but we also know how much suffering has been caused by the human interpretations of its teachings. And now we have a State with citizenship based on these endlessly complex and debatable definitions, wide open to the power struggles of competing factions.

In these times when “defenders” of identity are being emboldened, we who champion logic and mutual respect need to stand our ground in whatever way we can. If we don’t, the whole concept of belonging to the Jewish People, in Israel or anywhere else, will wither and shrink.✡

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Richard Middleton-Kaplan

How Biblical Prophets Inspired Seven 20th-Century American Prophets



Albert J. Raboteau,
American Prophets:
Seven Religious
Radicals & Their
Struggles for Social
and Political Justice.
Princeton University
Press, 2016

Antebellum South; A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African-American Religious History; and Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans. He is an emeritus professor of religion at Princeton University, and *American Prophets* grew out of the “Religious Radicals” seminars he taught there.

Raboteau derives his title *American Prophets* from a passage in Heschel’s *The Prophets*:

“An analysis of prophetic utterances shows that the fundamental experience of the prophet is a fellowship with the feelings of God, sympathy with the divine pathos, a communion with the divine consciousness which comes about through the prophet’s reflection of, or participation in, the divine pathos.... The prophet hears God’s voice and feels His heart. He tries to impart the pathos of the message...As an imparter his soul overflows, speaking as he does out of the fullness of his sympathy.”

Through speech-making and writing and demonstrating, inspired by the biblical prophets, the seven people portrayed became “twentieth-century exemplars of prophecy...[and] mobilized some of their fellow citizens to commit themselves to movements for social change.”

In each chapter, the author presents a chronological account that intertwines each thinker’s formative religious influences and development of their own prophetic voice for justice. For lesser known figures such as Muste (pronounced MUSS-tee), Thurman, and Hamer, the biographical facts

Albert J. Raboteau’s *American Prophets* weaves a tapestry that depicts how seven twentieth-century Americans were inspired by biblical prophets to become social activists who proclaimed their country’s moral failures, led nonviolent opposition to racism and war, and became inspired, inspiring voices for moral, social, political, and economic justice. They each drew from their own religious tradition, yet they set forth an interfaith vision of humanity that insisted on the dignity, equality, and “unity of all created being.”

The figures portrayed are Abraham Joshua Heschel, A. J. Muste, Dorothy Day, Howard Thurman, Thomas Merton, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Fannie Lou Hamer.

Raboteau approaches the topic with deeply grounded expertise in U.S. racial conflict and civil rights. His previous books include *Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the*

In 1965, Martin Luther King wrote to 80-year old A. J. Muste, “Throughout the world you are honored as our most effective exponent of pacifism.”

RICHARD MIDDLETON-KAPLAN is co-editor of *Shalom*.

alone leave the reader dismayed at their relative obscurity. Muste was a leading pacifist and Quaker from World War I through the Vietnam War who directed the Fellowship of Reconciliation and used nonviolent direct action in leading textile workers' strikes in 1919 and anti-nuclear weapons protests in 1959. Thurman was a leading African American preacher whose vision of interreligious and interracial community reached millions through books and tapes and through the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples that he co-founded.

Each biography contains startling details. For example: Ⓚ During World War II, because of Day's pacifism, "J. Edgar Hoover confidentially recommended placing her in custodial detention in the event of a national emergency."

Ⓚ Thurman and his wife were the first African Americans to meet Gandhi.

Ⓚ On the Sunday in 1963 when the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham was bombed, the Sunday School lesson was "The Love That Forgives." The bombed-out stained glass window was replaced two years later with a new window, donated by the people of Wales, featuring the image of a black Christ with one hand raised in protest and the other extended in reconciliation.

When Fannie Lou Hamer voted for the second U.S. congressional district seat in Mississippi in 1964, she "cast the first vote of her life. And it was for herself."

As Raboteau skillfully weaves the chapters, connections continually emerge that illustrate the interfaith cooperation of these modern-day prophets. Others might have fit the author's paradigm—such as Philip and Daniel Berrigan or César Chavez, who are mentioned—but the seven chosen allow him to construct a subtle argument. In addition to being inspired by the divine pathos to have compassion for all people, Raboteau characterizes the seven united by:

Ⓚ Nonviolent opposition to the "evil triplets" of racism, militarism, and materialism.

Ⓚ Movement from contemplative thinker to social activist.

Ⓚ Seeing *kairos*—providentially opportune historical moments—in labor struggles, the Civil Rights movement, and the Vietnam War, when the nation faced moral reckonings and when prophetically inspired activism was necessary.

Ⓚ A view of the prophet as one who "does not stand apart as some mighty spectator but is in the process and the facts, ever shaping them." Raboteau calls this "religiously inflected activism."

Ⓚ How much they and the people they led suffered for their activism. A major theme is that unmerited suffering is redemptive because it transforms the oppressed and the oppressor.

The sufferings of Fannie Lou Hamer, recounted in the final and longest chapter, are harrowing. What she endured makes one blanch with horror and shame. Yet she rose to deliver riveting nationally televised testimony at the 1964 Democratic National Convention. Her suffering did not silence her "voice that drew...on the biblical stories and prophetic texts that anointed her 'to speak deliverance to those held in bondage' by racism in this nation..."

One cannot read about what Hamer suffered for the right to vote without drawing a line to present-day voter restriction initiatives. The author makes an explicit connection to the present in his "Afterword," which he wrote just after the racist murder of nine black people at a Charleston AME Church in 2015. Has this nation progressed since the 1963 Birmingham church bombing? "Can the prophets depicted in this book act...as exemplary figures for us today?," he asks.

While we listen for the next American prophetic voice, this essential book reveals how they can. ☆



Albert J. Raboteau, author of *American Prophets*.

SHALOM

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Lawrence Wittner

Nuclear Negotiations at the UN

THIS SPRING, THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD were treated to yet another display of the kind of nuclear insanity that has broken out periodically ever since 1945 and the dawn of the nuclear age.

On April 11, 2017, Donald Trump, irked by North Korea's continued tests of nuclear weapons and missiles, tweeted that "North Korea is looking for trouble." If China does not "help," then "we will solve the problem without them." North Korean leader Kim Jong Un responded by announcing that, in the event of a U.S. military attack, his country would not scruple at launching a nuclear strike at U.S. forces. In turn, Trump declared: "We are sending an armada, very powerful. We have submarines, very powerful, far more powerful than the aircraft carrier. We have the best military people on earth."

During the following days, the governments of both nuclear-armed nations escalated their threats. Dispatched to South Korea, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence declared that "the era of strategic patience is over," and warned: "All options are on the table." Not to be outdone, North

Bad habits die hard. Relying on military might is one of the oldest, most destructive habits in human history.

Korea's deputy representative to the United Nations told a press conference that "thermonuclear war may break out at any moment." Any missile or nuclear strike by the United States would be responded to "in kind." Several days later, the North Korean government warned of a "super-mighty preemptive strike" that would reduce U.S. military forces in South Korea and on the U.S. mainland "to ashes."

Since then, both governments have continued their deadly game of nuclear threat and bluster.

Unfortunately, for as long as nations have existed, they have clung to the illusion that their military might guarantees their security.

The problem with this kind of thinking is that the military power that one nation considers vital to its security fosters other nations' sense of insecurity. In this climate of suspicion, an arms race ensues, often culminating in mili-

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Signing ceremony of the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968. Photo: Frank Aiken.

Moral Teachings

“May there strengthen in the spirit of the elect of all nations the recognition that the length of the days of people is dependent on the rule of moral teachings of Judaism—in the form that our prophets gave to it—which made the people of Israel, the eternal people. When the righteous of the nations of the world grow in number then there will come to the world the hour of a spiritual revolution.”

—*The concluding passage of a speech in Lev Tolstoy’s memory, given by the Jewish historian, Simon Dubnow, soon after Tolstoy’s death in November, 1911.*

tary conflict. Also, sometimes the very military strength that a nation intended for protection ends up emboldening it to engage in reckless, aggressive behavior, leading to war.

By the twentieth century, the devastation caused by wars among nations had grown so great that the general public and even many government officials began to recognize that a world left to the mercies of national military power was a dangerous world, indeed. As a result, they created the League of Nations and, later, the United Nations, to guarantee international security.

Nevertheless, bad habits die hard, and relying on military might is one of the oldest and most destructive habits in human history. Therefore, even as they paid lip service to the United Nations and its efforts for peace, many nations slipped back into the familiar pattern of building up their armed forces and weaponry. This included nuclear weapons, the most effective instruments of mass slaughter yet devised.

In line with the traditional reliance on military might,



United States Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley outside the General Assembly at U.N. headquarters, March 27, 2017. Photo credit: VOA News

the nine nuclear-armed nations (the United States, Russia, Britain, France, China, India, Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea) have ignored the obligation under the 1968 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to divest themselves of nuclear weapons. Recently, in fact, they embarked on a new round in the nuclear arms race. The U.S. government, for example, has begun a massive, 30-year program, at an estimated cost of \$1 trillion, to build a new generation of U.S. nuclear weapons and nuclear production facilities to last the United States well into the second half of this century.

However, as the nuclear powers renew their race to catastrophe, the non-nuclear powers are beginning to revolt. Constituting most nations of the world, they have considerable clout in the UN General Assembly. In late 2016, they brought to this body a resolution to launch negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. Critics maintained that such a treaty was ridiculous, for, ultimately, only the nine nuclear powers could negotiate their disarmament. But supporters of the resolution argued that, if the overwhelming majority of nations voted to ban nuclear weapons, thus making them illegal under international law, this would put substantial pressure on the nuclear powers to comply with the demands of the world community.

To avoid this embarrassment, the nuclear powers and their allies fought back vigorously against passage of the UN resolution. But, in December 2016, the resolution sailed through the UN General Assembly by an overwhelming vote: 113 nations in favor and 35 opposed, with 13 abstentions.

Consequently, on March 27, 2017, a diplomatic conference convened at the UN headquarters in New York City with the goal of crafting what the UN called a “legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.” Some 130 countries participated in the first round of these negotiations that included discussions with leaders of peace and disarmament groups and a range of experts on nuclear weapons. But the nuclear powers and most of their allies boycotted the gathering. In fact, at a press conference conducted as the conclave began, Nikki Haley, the U.S. representative to the United Nations, and representatives of other nuclear powers denounced the proceedings.

Perhaps because of the boycott by the nuclear powers, the UN negotiations went forward smoothly. On May 22, Ambassador Elayne Whyte of Costa Rica, president of the conference, released a first draft of the UN treaty for comment and revision. Finally, on July 7, in a historic move, the conference approved a treaty to prohibit nations from developing, producing, manufacturing, possessing, or stockpiling nuclear weapons by a vote of 122 to 1, with 1 abstention. In response, the U.S., British, and French governments issued a statement declaring: “We do not intend to sign, ratify, or ever become party to it.” The treaty will be open for signatures by UN member states this September.

It’s now up to the people of the world to press their governments to cast off national militarist illusions and accept their international responsibilities.✧