

DISARMING THE TOY STORE AND RELOADING THE
SHOPPING CART: RESISTANCE TO VIOLENT
CONSUMER CULTURE

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This article examines the trajectory of North American-based peace groups that mobilized to critique a set of nationalistic symbols, including military and war-related toys and games and their commodification for children. Beginning in the immediate post-World War I period and continuing through the twentieth century, a constellation of peace organizations developed advocacy campaigns aimed at changing consumers' behavior. Activists tailored their efforts to fit their shorter and long-term goals, access to resources, and immediate historical contexts. Over time, peace groups' protests against violent toys and games gained some traction, although the multibillion dollar toy and game industries in the United States continued to market violent entertainment geared toward children. By the turn of the twenty-first century, antiviolence activists were effectively broadening their appeal to North American consumers by linking their concerns to public health campaigns focused on children's safety.

Following World War I, public concern about children's engagement with toy weapons evolved into a century-long protest movement in the United States, sustained by members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and others committed to socializing children to nonviolence. Campaigns against war toys reached their peak influence during the Vietnam War years, and subsequently, the War Resisters League (WRL) and other pacifist organizations incorporated nonviolent toy campaigns into their broader efforts at peace education. By the 1980s and 1990s, debates over children's play had moved to a larger stage with new media at the center, driven by the rise in home computers and the corresponding market in video software and computer games. Concerns that had once been the purview of a relatively small segment of the population—religious and secular peace groups advocating responsibility in the marketplace as

well as the home—broke into the consciousness of millions of Americans at least nominally troubled by companies designing, distributing, and profiting from graphic violence aimed at young consumers.

At various times during the twentieth century, the WILPF, WRL, Women Strike for Peace (WSP), Voices of Women (VOW), Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), and other groups made violent toy protest a focus of their activism. The long struggle of North American peace activists to curtail the manufacture, advertising, and sale of violent toys offers an example of citizen activism on behalf of children, framed in the language of "moral obligation" and directed toward parents, manufacturers, and retailers, and sometimes even incorporating children as advocates of nonviolence. These groups all offered broad antimilitarist critiques and engaged in wide-ranging peace advocacy programs, of which toy-related campaigns were only a small part. Yet historians of these organizations, while documenting their social and political acumen around multiple peace issues, have paid little attention to their involvement with violent toy activism.¹ One reason may be that the groups' anti-nuclear marches or civil rights demonstrations seemed more significant—or even more successful—than toy-related activism. Further, some of these organizations' toy campaigns were episodic and short lived, often emerging in response to national spikes in war toy sales connected to specific international conflicts. Finally, limited resources stretched only so far and advocates made strategic choices about which causes deserved priority.²

Beginning with women's peace groups such as WILPF in the 1920s and continuing through subsequent decades, advocates for nonviolent children's play sought to achieve their goals by changing consumer culture. They used a variety of framing strategies to attract public attention and to gain the support of parents, educators, and manufacturers. In provocative uses of imagery and humor, advocates for nonviolent children's play offered consumers a language of disarmament—"Disarm the nursery!" "Disarm the toy store!" Peace and antiviolence organizations championed a reloading of consumers' shopping carts with nonviolent toys and games.³

Engaging in innovative forms of social protest, activists within WILPF, WRL, and other peace organizations sponsored consumer-oriented campaigns to pressure manufacturers and retailers to shift product lines to nonviolent toys. By the turn of the twenty-first century, peace groups engaged in toy campaigns were becoming adept at marketing their stance to a wider, intergenerational public, not unlike

the toy manufacturers who had long engaged in market research to aid in product design and development.⁴ Rather than couching their activism solely in the language of morality, peace and antiviolen- ce organizations increasingly emphasized children's health and safety.

Continuities in strategy, as well as flexibility, provided stamina for this social movement, as a constellation of peace groups carried messages and rationales to new audiences.⁵ The elusive definition of "war toys" is a case in point. Peace groups that engaged in demonstra- tions at retail stores in the 1990s, for example, often left the term itself undefined, a strategy of elasticity that permitted them to target a range of products. Yet at the same time, Canadian physicians and antiviolen- ce advocates Darlene Hammell and Joanna Santa Barbara offered an expansive definition of war toys, characterizing them as "any toy whose fantasied purpose is to kill or wound.... [including] toy weapons, figurines who largely interact through weapons and vio- lence, vehicles equipped prominently with weapons, and video, board, or fantasy games based on killing or disabling."⁶

By the end of the twentieth century, the phrase "war toys" had given way to the more expansive term "violent toys," reflecting peace groups' broader concerns about urban gunplay and domestic violence in addition to state-sanctioned militarism. Conversations about chil- dren's encounters with violence in households and neighborhoods had become mainstream. Two Hollywood films, *Toys*, appearing in 1992 and starring Robin Williams, and *Small Soldiers*, released in 1998 by DreamWorks and Universal Pictures, exhibited how competing visions for children's innocence versus the co-opting of children as purveyors of violence were permeating American culture.⁷ *Toys* centered on a fictitious toy factory with a sinister secret—it was a place where chil- dren trained to wage war through video games—while *Small Soldiers* depicted a toy company producing toy soldiers that came to life. In an early dialogue sequence from *Small Soldiers*, the company's chief execu- tive rebuked a hesitant designer:

Don't call it violence, call it action. Kids love action. It sells.

Besides, what are you worried about? They're only toys.⁸

In this frame, the images of "action toys" versus "violent toys" appear juxtaposed, a backdoor nod to peace activists who for decades had engaged in public advocacy directed at industry leaders and consumers, charging that innocuous terms like "action toys" masked

the militaristic values conveyed by popular figures like "G.I. Joe" and accessories.⁹ Implicit in the toy executive's assertion that "they're only toys" was the subtext that they're *much more* than toys.

That insight, of course, had long been the point of war toy pro- tests, as well as the conclusion of interdisciplinary research. For dec- ades, scholars interested in the history of children's culture had regarded toys as a barometer of social values. The political scientist Patrick Regan, analyzing twentieth-century figures for sales of war toys and the distribution of war-related films, found that peak occur- rences correlated with broader trends of militarization, measured by labor figures and federal expenditures.¹⁰ Similarly, Wendy Varney, surveying changes in toy production and marketing over the twentieth century, emphasized national interests in inculcating children (espe- cially boys as potential armed forces recruits) to militarism, "to make it seem logical, necessary, 'natural' and even fun."¹¹ This process, Var- ney argued, was mediated through television programming, films, patriotic celebrations, games, and toys.

In their extensive study *Toys in America*, Inez and Marshall McClintock noted the relationship between playthings' content and society's concerns. In the United States, patents for toy guns had been established as early as 1859, with thirty-four patents for toy weapons issued in the following decade. "The more we learned," the McClin- tocks wrote in 1961, "the more clearly we saw that toys and games were indeed accurate mirrors of the adult world.... Real wars always brought a deluge of war toys."¹² More recently, the historian Kenneth D. Brown has studied boys' play with toy soldiers in Edwardian Eng- land, suggesting that on the eve of the Great War, children's access to such toys helped to stimulate the climate of militarism that young male Britons embraced in 1914.¹³ The psychologist Jeffrey H. Gold- stein, who has written extensively about media violence, underscores these historical lessons, arguing that war toys—which may encourage children to behave aggressively and competitively—"are ancient; they are certainly not a product of the modern age. Even though they may be regarded as universal, the popularity of war toys and aggressive play themes changes with changing circumstances."¹⁴

Contextual shifts in toy manufacturing and consumer response are richly demonstrated in Bryan Ganaway's recent history, *Toys, Con- sumption, and Middle-class Childhood in Imperial Germany, 1871– 1918*.¹⁵ Ganaway probes the allure of toys in pre-World War I German society and interprets the history of toy manufacturing in the

context of debates surrounding the rise of German nationalism and modern consumer culture. He argues that German industrialists, seeking to maximize profits, designed products geared to please not only children but also their parents. Adults' acquisition of toys for their daughters and sons served as markers of political identity and, ultimately, middle class reform. In Ganaway's narrative, German reformers altered consumer behavior by focusing on children's welfare and drawing sharp contrasts between middle class children's play with the horrific conditions endured by young workers in toy factories. As reformers gradually influenced German middle class parents to be concerned about workers' rights, toy producers grudgingly altered their practices, improving conditions for women and child laborers. Ganaway concludes that consumer culture represents an interplay of power wielded by both manufacturers and concerned citizens, including artists and social critics, because "consumer culture both permits and then absorbs subversive discourses into the mainstream."¹⁶ In this reading, the rise of consumer culture served the purposes of political reformers.

Likewise, twentieth-century peace activists in North America, concerned about militarism and rising societal violence, navigated an evolving landscape of consumer awareness and public health advocacy. Although peace-related groups involved in toy protests varied in terms of specific tactics, they shared the common strategy of combining moral suasion with economic pressure. As the historian Lizabeth Cohen illustrates in her work *A Consumers' Republic*, cultural rebels of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s honed identities based on rejecting dominant cultural expressions built on mass consumption; indeed, she notes, "cultural rebels shared ... [others'] obsession with mass consumption, even as they defined themselves as countercultural by denouncing its values and practices."¹⁷ Seizing on play and material culture as potent forms of peace education, activists regarded children's toys as powerful tools for changing consumer behavior, not least because toys and games tapped into adult values. Over the course of the twentieth century, while the United States' multibillion dollar toy industry stepped up its marketing of violent entertainment for children, nonviolence advocates applied counterpressure through publicity campaigns disseminated via print and electronic media.¹⁸ By marking toy-and-game culture in North American life as a vector of violence, and in engaging fellow citizens, young and old, in resistance, activists leveraged consumer behavior.

POST-WORLD WAR I ROOTS OF TOY PROTESTS

In the immediate post-World War I period, American progressive reformers who challenged nationalistic values found their views about child-rearing and children's play at odds with a rising consumer culture that prized competition, self-sufficiency, skill mastery, and personal freedom. They also encountered a growing toy industry that was an entrepreneurial tour de force, having established its own lobbying enterprise by 1916 to persuade citizens to buy American products. While imported toys still accounted for half of the nation's toy market during World War I, by 1939, ninety-five percent of all toys sold in the United States were being produced in American factories and workshops.¹⁹ In short, making toys for children was an exceedingly profitable undertaking. Business opportunities would remain high for the remainder of the century, even as the made-in-America surge eventually gave way to conglomerates dependent on Asian labor but controlled by U.S. stockholders for a global economy.²⁰ Through all these changes, convincing American toymakers to produce only nonviolent toys would prove a vexing challenge for small peace organizations, whose leaders and members had myriad causes to pursue in addition to children's nonviolent play.

Both the U.S. section of WILPF and the New York-based Women's Peace Society, beginning in the 1920s, included nonviolent toy campaigns as part of their antimilitarist stance. As American progressives, they were deeply concerned about community influences that shaped the attitudes of boys and men called to war, and they were equally interested in promoting attitudes favorable to diplomacy.²¹ WILPF's literature in the immediate postwar era included a 1920 broadside featuring an illustration of parents at odds over their young son's toys. "Why don't you give him something else to play with?" the mother asks her husband, an amputee from the Great War, whose dangling, empty sleeve is a graphic reminder of the battlefield. At their feet, the child plays with a toy cannon, aiming it at a soldier figurine.²²

In 1921, antimilitarist women led by the American pacifist Jane Addams gathered at WILPF's convention in Vienna to seek demilitarization across national boundaries, and delegates issued a clarion call to women everywhere to "disarm the nursery."²³ A postcard translated from German to English that circulated in several countries by WILPF just before Christmas 1921 declared that "war is not a

pleasant game” and exhorted parents and teachers to “Refuse to give playthings and presents that recall the devastating war with its great slaughter. Refuse to let the children dress up in war clothes and have war weapons. Refuse to give books that glorify war, awaken the war spirit, and praise the deeds of war.”²⁴ WILPF members in the United States, a small but determined group whose membership rose to 5,000 by 1923, wrote to American toy companies, urging them to make creative, nonviolent products for children. Meanwhile, the pacifist Women’s Peace Society printed pledges for its members who entered toy stores in New York City and elsewhere, promising to continuously boycott toy weapons and urging stores to carry constructive (rather than destructive) goods for children.²⁵

These actions, apparently perceived by some U.S. officials as disloyal, proved controversial in the post-1919 Red Scare climate. The Military Intelligence Division of the War Department kept WILPF leaders under surveillance through much of the decade, collected the organization’s printed materials, and tried to discredit Jane Addams and other leaders as leftist radicals.²⁶ While the women’s organizations labored to convince consumers that American boys would be better off without rifles, cap guns, and play artillery—claiming the higher morality of toys disassociated from regimentation and war—allegations of antipatriotism against WILPF had a chilling effect, and during the 1930s and 1940s, the organization struggled to attract new members.²⁷

Meanwhile, sales of pint-sized weapons and related toys remained strong. Action figures such as Buck Gordon and Superman became increasingly popular, appealing to boys’ (more than girls’) imaginations, a development in toy design that, the historian Gary Cross notes, “vented aggression and prized ingenuity rather than attempt to teach military tactics as did the older toy soldiers sets.”²⁸ For their part, nonviolent toy advocates in the interwar years were less concerned with the emerging superheroes than with the continued marketing of war-glorifying toys that they regarded as promoting militarization among children. Citing Alexander Pope’s couplet “As the twig is bent, the tree’s inclin’d,” notable educators and authors from Dorothy Canfield Fisher to Eleanor Roosevelt lent their support to peace advocates opposed to the mass consumption of war toys.²⁹

Over the next three decades, just as savvy toy designers adapted to consumers’ changing sensibilities and preferences, peace groups concerned about children’s engagement with toy weapons would learn to

tailor their appeals to a toy-buying public. But WILPF activists in the United States, resolute in writing letters and generating publicity, had a tough sell naysaying toys and games that their neighbors viewed as harmless and fun. It would take several decades for WILPF and other organizations to offer more palatable, positive messages to adult consumers and the children they increasingly sought to please.

Meanwhile, WILPF sought support from early childhood experts sympathetic to their cause. The Italian-born educator Maria Montessori spoke publicly about peace education and its potential for helping to prevent international conflict and war among future generations.³⁰ By the 1940s, prominent male voices from the emerging field of mental health were adding to the women’s arguments. Arthur L. Rautman, a psychologist who wrote advice literature for parents of young children on the American home front, asserted that children do not “need more war games and realistic war-play objects to make their neurotic dramatizations more vivid.”³¹ Karl Menninger, the noted psychiatrist and director of the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas, cautioned parents against allowing their children to engage in violent play mimicking wartime news because such activities encouraged aggressive behavior.³² Many of Menninger’s professional peers, however, disagreed with his assessment, and despite World War II era discussions about war play in popular American magazines, public concerns about children’s war play receded in the postwar years. The journalist Tom Engelhardt, writing about early Cold War culture, has concluded that in many American families, “War play as a developmental activity with its ‘violent’ acts made so little impression because it generally took place ... in a patriotic context so familiar as to be assumed harmless by adults.”³³

Still, some postwar mental health researchers were offering new reasons for parents to be concerned about the use of violent toys and media. During the 1950s, the social critic Albert E. Kahn warned that war-glorifying comics with titles like *G.I. Joe*, *War Battles*, and *Atomic War* “immunize a whole generation against pity and against recognition of cruelty and violence.”³⁴ Others were more sanguine, but recognized that children’s engagement with violent-themed popular culture had implications beyond the toy box. The American writer D. G. Green, who grew up in the Eisenhower-Kennedy years, recalling playing with toy soldiers as a boy. “Obviously, we didn’t create our styles of play in a vacuum,” he later wrote. “They were drawn from the culture around us, from movies, TV, and comic books. One of the

ways a culture reproduces itself is by preparing its young men for war, and in a sense our culture was doing that for us."³⁵

THE LANGUAGE OF MORAL OBLIGATION

In 1964, Carol Rich Andreas, a sociology graduate student in Detroit, crafted an open letter to seven leading toy manufacturers, urging them to stop marketing violent toys. Andreas began her appeal as a concerned parent with a cross-cultural perspective and then moved to a sharp critique of profiteering at the expense of children:

Four months ago we returned to the United States after having lived abroad [in Pakistan for a U.S.A.I.D. assignment] for five years. We have had many adjustments to make in our lives, but the most disturbing has been the full-scale war mania that our two boys, ages six and seven, have been exposed to in playing with their friends. Within one week after our arrival in Detroit, our boys were given guns and helmets and were beginning to collect small plastic "war men." When we made a trip to buy toys for them, we were horrified to see the prominent displays of realistic war toys and the absence of other types of toys interesting to boys of this age.

We know from having lived with our boys in other countries that there are constructive activities which are equally appealing and that children do not inevitably play war games as a natural stage in their development.

You are not required, as an entrepreneur, to refrain from manufacturing toys which have a damaging effect on our society.... But I am asking you to assume a moral obligation, quite apart from your business interests.³⁶

Andreas closed her letter with a list of suggestions for creative playthings that the toymakers might produce and together with her husband drew up a petition stating, "We join in urging that war toys be replaced by toys which may inspire children to nobler causes." After obtaining signatures from more than a hundred residents of Detroit's Lafayette Park neighborhood, Andreas carried the letters and petition to area toy stores, asserting that the documents represented a "99% endorsement by the community."³⁷ Several store managers

agreed to stop carrying toys associated with militarism or violence. Buoyed by this success, Andreas and other members of WILPF, still the nation's preeminent feminist peace organization, wrote to advertisers and contacted local newspapers and television stations.

During the 1960s, Carol Andreas' grassroots feminism, carrying the imprimatur of WILPF, exemplified the American toy protest movement with its activist strategies of information-gathering, letter-writing, collecting signatures, and grooming media contacts, all framed by maternalist appeals to peacemaking. Andreas hoped that war toy protests would snowball, with friends of friends and press coverage carrying suggestions of a nationwide boycott of companies that persisted in designing and marketing toys associated with militarism.³⁸ This activist work—together with Andreas' doctoral research in sociology—fused the personal and political, combining parental and professional commitments to antiviolence work in Detroit and beyond. Her social science scholarship lent credibility to ongoing nonviolent toy campaigns. In 1969, she published a respected academic study noting that the marketing of war toys in the United States was trending downward because the Vietnam War's unpopularity had tempered the appeal of military-related consumer goods.³⁹

The Detroit area efforts generated favorable publicity in national periodicals including *Pageant* magazine, accompanied by articles from Dr. Benjamin Spock and other child-guidance experts cautioning parents about war toys.⁴⁰ In the mid-1960s, Spock, America's best-known pediatrician, told media sources that despite his usually permissive approach to children's activities, he had had a recent change of heart regarding war play. Psychological studies were showing that "mock violence can lower a child's standards of behavior" and that watching brutality, in person or on television, stimulates "at least temporary cruelty" in children. Spock had been disturbed by reports in November 1963 that some school age children had cheered President Kennedy's assassination, and since then, he had pondered the connections between coarse popular culture and real, gratuitous violence.⁴¹

STAUNCH LITTLE NONCONFORMISTS

The impulses that led to public discourse in the mid-twentieth century over whether or not children should be playing with war toys derived from historically rooted concerns about peace education, as well as from contemporary anxieties over developments like the war

in Vietnam and increasing urban violence. The advent of television and emerging apprehension about the potential impact of violent images on young viewers added urgency to long-standing debates about children's exposure to war play, toy weapons, and new media forms.⁴² Many parents, as well as a growing cadre of professionals focused on children's well-being, including educators, psychologists, and physicians, sought alternatives to child-sized weapons, even as America's toy and entertainment industries were fully engaged in marketing games, comic books, television and movie programming, much with violent content, to young consumers.

What peace activists termed the "war toy debate" in the 1960s took place in newspaper editorials, coffee klatches, synagogues, and churches, as existing peace groups gained new strength and others emerged through community organizing and networks of friends. Some families, increasingly concerned about children's war-related play, enlisted their own children in bucking social mores. In Detroit, neighborhood children participated in an informal "toy exchange," turning in toy weapons and selecting alternatives such as construction sets, models, and adventure figures. Including children in war toy opposition was a new strategy for the time, and Carol Andreas thought it worked well. "It is such a good way for them to learn early that they can be staunch little nonconformists," she said, "and their friends even admire and envy them a bit for it."⁴³

Public recoil over violence across American cities lent support to this view. After the high-profile deaths of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy less than three months apart, major retailers Sears, Bloomingdale's, and Stern Brothers took toy guns off their shelves. *Time* magazine reported that in Maine, citizens' groups were joining forces with sympathetic toy distributors including Payson Sawyer, who announced in 1968 that his inventory of toy guns was slated for a big bonfire. Children willing to surrender their toy weapons could take part in the event, receiving buttons saying "I turned mine in."⁴⁴ In a decade characterized by weapons' proliferation, some families and communities were making a symbolic stand for demilitarization, starting with their own children.

As the historian Harriet Hyman Alonso has noted, appeals to family values and virtuous motherhood have been common themes in feminist peace movements throughout the twentieth century. Maternal identity "provided women a societally acceptable cover for their highly political work" as well as an organizational device by which

women rallied and articulated their concerns to men in power.⁴⁵ In Newton, Massachusetts, a group of professional women and mothers, whose peace activism focused on nuclear disarmament, contributed to the antiwar toy movement by publicly linking children's upbringing with militarization. Calling themselves "Voices of Women" after the anti-nuclear Canadian movement of the same name, the Newton group discussed how they might broaden their sphere of concern into the community. One of the participants later recalled: "We asked: 'How do people sustain war?' And we thought, 'It starts with little children—they play with toys.' So we got a campaign going that this Christmas, we would not have any war toys. We had billboards that we put up on all the [Boston-area] subways and trolleys."⁴⁶

Throughout the 1960s, women associated with VOW, the anti-nuclear organization Women Strike for Peace, and WILPF marched with placards at New York City's annual toy industry show, generating media coverage and raising awareness of passersby. By April 1966, *Toys and Novelties*, one of the industry's venerable trade publications, responded with an editorial that took a conciliatory tack:

The marching mothers were at Toy Fair again this year and a number of toy manufacturing firms adopted or continued campaigns against belligerent-type toys.... A real and vital issue is raised here, one that we would do ourselves a great disservice to ignore.... [We] suggest to toy manufacturers and retailers, individually and collectively, that what is required is that much deeper and much more searching consideration be given to the values inherent in the toys they produce and sell. These values may well differ from those of the marching mothers. But the underlying concern these mothers have for their children should be the toy industry's, too.⁴⁷

Rarely would toy activists see a clearer indication that their insistence on moral responsibility, coupled with consumer pressure, was touching a chord with industry executives. But then, it was 1966, and both the Kingston Trio and the Brothers Four had scored hits singing "Little Play Soldiers," with the lyrics

Two little soldiers,
their games are such fun,
each with his helmet and little toy gun.

Little play soldiers
if only you knew
what kind of battles are waiting for you.⁴⁸

Social protest was in full swing, and peace activists concerned about violence in children's entertainment had been working toward this momentum for decades.

A GOOD NONVIOLENT ACTION IS LIKE A GREAT WORK OF ART

In the second half of the twentieth century, edgy protests characterized public violent toy demonstrations, including flamboyant actions designed to draw media coverage. Spectacles led by full-time activists who challenged "no trespassing" laws at retail store locations, for example, bordered on civil disobedience. (One such pacifist leader active in toy campaigns in the late twentieth century, Gene Stoltzfus, liked to say that "a good nonviolent action is like a great work of art."⁴⁹) He may have been thinking of the giant sand castle structures built annually as part of the "No War Toys" campaign in the mid-1960s along the beaches of Santa Monica, Vancouver, and Miami, with folksinger Joan Baez and thousands of onlookers lending support.⁵⁰ Or perhaps, he was recalling that when President Johnson announced that U.S. Air Force pilots were dropping some 9,000 packets of toys over North Vietnam in commemoration of the annual Vietnamese harvest festival and Children's Day, a group of satirists in San Francisco collected barrels of used war toys (toy soldiers, tanks, artillery, and the like) that they planned to drop by helicopter on the Pentagon. They regarded as absurd that military officials overseeing the aerial distribution of millions of psychological warfare leaflets over a four-month period in 1965, substituting toys for leaflets on one night, September 10. As counterpoint, the California-based activists assembled their miniature arsenal for transport by bus, ultimately delivering their goods to the Pentagon by land rather than by air. Along the way, they garnered antiwar publicity and critiqued the specter of children's toys as military propaganda.⁵¹

Convinced that enlisting consumers as allies would yield better results than simply criticizing producers and marketers, activists associated violent toys with threats to public health and launched publicity blitzes emphasizing children's nonviolent play as a healthy alternative. Toward the end of the Vietnam War, a nonviolence advocacy group

known as Parents for Responsibility in the Toy Industry made the case that children's socialization with war toys sometimes presaged real-life violence:

The problem with war toys is that they grow up and become violence toys
In the street, an alley, a living room, a bar, a plane....
They'll stop making war toys when we stop buying them.
*Make love not war toys.*⁵²

The poster carrying this message highlighted an antiviolence theme that would take on increasing significance as concerns about urban and domestic violence resonated with North American consumers. Gun culture and its linkages to social disorder provided a focus for antiviolence advocates during the last third of the twentieth century, with heightened concerns about "look-alike" toy guns that appeared so real that their threat to public safety was palpable. For example, a tragic 1994 incident in New York in which police shot to death a thirteen-year-old boy in a stairwell after mistaking his toy gun for a real one, prompted major toy store chains to stop selling look-alike toys.⁵³ In this climate, the leading pacifist organization WRL picked up the campaign for nonviolent toys. At the same time, a constellation of religiously oriented organizations, including CPT, the Lion and Lamb Project, and the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, took up the mantle. Like others before them, they challenged what they viewed as an unholy trinity of militarism, consumerism, and crass violence targeted toward children.⁵⁴

Often these groups used familiar strategies, including appeals linked to mothers' roles as moral guardians. But at other times, they employed what the sociologist Lisa Leitz has termed "oppositional identities," as when CPT, a faith-based organization, focused on nonviolent direct action, invoked the Hollywood actor Sylvester Stallone in their violent toy protests. (A decade earlier, Stallone's portrayal of the fictional Vietnam vet John Rambo in the 1982 film *First Blood* had set off a spate of lucrative toys and spin-off products, and the "Rambo" character had become symbolic of 1980s violent toy protests.) As Leitz has shown in her study of Iraq War era "support the troops" iconography, peace organizations that employ oppositional associations—that is, using surprising or seemingly counterintuitive messengers to spread the word—can potentially reach new audi-

ences.⁵⁵ In the 1990s, CPT activists who were demonstrating against violent toys at Toys “R” Us and other big-box stores around the country quoted the film star Stallone as saying: “I couldn’t control it. I tried to stop it but I don’t own the licensing rights to the toys. It’s not for kids. The movie was not supposed to be for little kids and I wouldn’t let my own children play with those toys.”⁵⁶ Stallone was an unlikely ally, but CPT activists, looking for as wide an audience as possible, appreciated the irony.

Buoyed by its earlier successes in raising public awareness of nonviolent, alternative toys, CPT launched a binational toy campaign, *Violence is Not Child’s Play*. Noting that the United Nations General Assembly was declaring an “International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World,” CPT staffers and volunteers emphasized the public health aspects of their work as they targeted retailers with marches and demonstrations. Speaking to journalists covering CPT’s protests at Wal-Mart and Toys “R” Us stores, organizer Marilyn Houser Hamm told a Winnipeg journalist: “It’s a consumer-driven market. We are realizing we do have an active role in this process. This is why there is bottled water everywhere or why drink machines now have fruit juice in them.”⁵⁷ Increasingly, anti-violence advocates like Hamm were making explicit the argument that if customers could get beverage companies to provide healthier alternatives, why shouldn’t consumers demand the same of manufacturers who profited from the toys and games that children played with daily?

Public health initiatives also highlighted the creativity and fun of alternatives, such as fairs promoting and merchandising nonviolent toys and games. Toy weapon buybacks at locally owned toy stores and even a “swords into ploughshares” art event, in which a sculptor fashioned used war toys into imaginative forms, got media attention.⁵⁸ Bringing children and adults together in public spaces—whether through street theater, music, art, or festivals—was emerging as a new strategy for promoting nonviolent toys as child-centered choices.

CONTESTED VIEWS OF CHILD’S PLAY IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Over time, the movement for nonviolent toys made modest inroads. Episodic public campaigns stretching back to the early 1920s had had the effect of familiarizing millions of American consumers—parents, grandparents, and even children themselves—with cautions against toy weapons. While some Americans remained nostalgic about

the cap guns or air rifles of their youth, by the late twentieth century, peace organizations and public health advocates were citing alarming changes in the form and content of children’s manufactured products. Newer games arriving on store shelves appeared more violent than ever. The American journalist Bill Barol described the phenomenon: “War toys [now] are a different breed. Most are set in a dark, steamy fantasy world that may or may not be postnuclear.... And by any measure the cartoons that promote the toys are extraordinarily violent.”⁵⁹ Meanwhile, play researchers in Europe as well as in North America were registering concerns that the time children spent with video and computer games—often designed with canned storylines—was effectively narrowing the children’s capacity for imaginative play.⁶⁰ As nonviolent toy advocates shifted strategies to address new media forms, they found allies in professional organizations including the American Medical Association, the American Association of Pediatrics, the American Psychological Association, and international advocacy groups, all concerned about media-based consumption of violence by children.⁶¹

While peace groups’ protests against war toys garnered national attention, at least in short bursts of press coverage, their triumphs were generally modest—netting neighborhood victories with local store policies, for example, rather than reversing corporate priorities. Nor did toy activists usually manage to push through legislative changes in consumer labeling or toy-weapon access. Occasionally, concerns about violent toys rose to the level of debate in state legislatures, as in 1993, when Hawaiian legislators narrowly defeated a bill that would have required retailers to post warnings that some toys and video games “increase anger and violence in children.”⁶² Roy Takumi, the state representative who sponsored the failed legislation, noted that his bill would have served to educate consumers without banning the products outright, but the industry lobby strongly opposed cautionary labeling.

Clearly, the logic of the marketplace, borne by manufacturers, advertisers, and retailers, represented a formidable challenge to the growing assortment of organizations enlisting consumers in the struggle against children’s access to violent popular culture. Roger Sweet, a designer for American toy companies in the 1980s and 1990s, acknowledged the lure of violent toys’ revenue stream: “I gravitated to designing male action figures,” he noted, “[because] male action lines can be extremely lucrative. When one hits, it sells in vast oceanic num-

bers.... So why would I bother designing a dork preschool toy that, at best, would sell in middling numbers when I could design a gutsy male action toy?"⁶³ Some toymakers were more circumspect about the potential effects of toys and play associated with violence. Alan Hasenfeld, the former corporate leader of Hasbro, Inc., whose G.I. Joe line had long been a target of critics, publicly acknowledged uncertainty about the implications of media studies focusing on children and violence. Still, Hasbro maintained a steady course of production.⁶⁴

Historically, the narrative of American peace groups' activism around war toy charts a storyline that ebbs and flows, often with spurts in activity and new forms of protest emerging in times of war and heightened militarization. In countering cultural and economic pressures for violence in children's entertainment, an important thread of continuity was the linking of toy protest actions to current military events, whether in the post-World War I period or in the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. U.S. engagement in the 1991 Gulf War heralded the production of Desert Storm-themed dolls and toys, with tie-ins ranging from lunch boxes to computer games. As with earlier armed conflicts, the WRL and other antimilitarist organizations ratcheted up protests, this time tailoring responses to late twentieth century, high-tech warfare. Kate Donnelly, a longtime WRL activist, urged concerned parents in local communities to challenge the "selling of patriotism to kids" using time-honored strategies of letter writing, demonstrating at stores, and encouraging friends, families, and neighbors to stop buying war-themed products. In 1991, WRL filmed a teach-in for its "No More War Toys" campaign, featuring Gulf War era demonstrations in cities from San Diego and Seattle to Columbus and New York, and distributed the hour-long program for cable television audiences.⁶⁵ During the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, an antimilitarist, secular group of senior activists known as the Granny Peace Brigade employed street theater and flamboyant toy store protests to pressure manufacturers, advertisers, and store managers to sell nonviolent products. The "grannies" timed their escapades around Hanukkah, Christmas, New Year's, and Valentine's Day and sometimes employed tactics of civil disobedience by refusing to leave store premises when asked to leave. Still, they risked little chance of arrest. What toy store owner, they cheerfully reasoned, would press charges? What law enforcement officers would haul them off with television cameras rolling?⁶⁶

In their promotional literature, the WRL, CPT, and other groups drew frequently on the humor of editorial cartoonists and syndicated comic strip artists whose mocking perspectives on violent toy consumerism made the daily papers. The feminist cartoonist Genny Guracar, for example, penned a tongue-in-cheek encounter between two young girls and a hapless clerk in a toy store, as they told him: "We want a Bella Abzug, a Helen Caldicott, and a Bishop Tutu doll."⁶⁷ Among the cartoonists whose thematic portrayals of children and violent/non-violent toys appear in peace groups' publications are George Lichty (*Grin and Bear It*), Jim Berry (*Berry's World*), Johnny Hart (*B.C.*), Al Capp (*Li'l Abner*), Bill Waterson (*Calvin & Hobbes*), and Charles Schulz. In one of Schulz's later *Peanuts* strips, a pensive Charlie Brown sits at a writing desk, an open cereal box at his elbow.

Dear Snicker Snack Cereal Company,

I appreciate your offer of one hundred Revolutionary War soldiers for fifteen cents.

However, being against violence, I am not sure I want them.

Instead, could I please have a set of peace-time civilians?⁶⁸

In these comic strip settings, consumers' choices have clear political implications, and invariably, children have the last word.

The appearance in peace education literature of popular cartoons, virtually all of which portray consumers as power brokers, suggests that there is more cachet in witty, provocative representations than in pontification. Increasingly, peace groups employed satire to catch the attention and imagination of consumers. In 2007, for example, CPT staged a street-theater demonstration—complete with costumes and props—at a downtown Chicago Toys "R" Us store, charging that certain video games sold there desensitized children and teens and employed the same mechanisms by which U.S. military training techniques were preparing soldiers to kill.⁶⁹ Referencing the work of military psychologist David Grossman, whose description of operant conditioning involves games "in which you actually hold a weapon in your hand and fire at human-shaped targets on the screen," the activists likened toy store employees selling such games to U.S. military recruiters.⁷⁰

In recent years, some toy activists have pushed for campaigns centering on product liability. David Grossman argues that organizations wanting to build on the momentum of anti-violence activism can learn from the playbook of successful public health initiatives:

Like the campaign to convince Americans to “buckle up,” or the campaign to warn us against the dangers of drunk driving, there must be an educational campaign, on the TV, in ads, in print media, everywhere, to inform parents of the potential harm associated with exposing kids to media violence.... Even the tobacco and alcohol industries accept the need for warning labels on their products, and it is time for the TV, movie, and video game industries to rise up at least to this moral standard....⁷¹

By embracing strategies linked to public health advocacy, antiviolence activists found new allies. Present-day debates over children’s access to violent video games—showcased recently in a 7–2 U.S. Supreme Court decision striking down a California law prohibiting sales to minors—suggest that competing perspectives about the place of violent play and its implications persist, complicated by evolving media forms and shifting cultural contexts. Stephen Breyer, one of the two dissenting justices in the 2011 case, *Brown, Governor of California, et al. vs. Entertainment Merchants Association et al.*, took issue with the accessibility of violent video games to minors. Although his colleagues in the majority viewed the case as one protecting free speech, in his dissent Justice Breyer cited concerns shared by peace organizations and other advocacy groups regarding potentially harmful effects of violent games and play on children. But here, as in legislative bodies and courtrooms elsewhere, “free market” and “free speech” arguments won the day.⁷²

Historically, North American critics of violent toys advanced their agendas through a combination of moral suasion and consumer-oriented campaigns. Peace-focused organizations, often led and supported by pacifist women concerned about their children and their communities’ children, played a leading role in this movement, though in fits and starts, and at the price of earning reputations as radicals and crusaders.⁷³ Violent toy campaigns differed in tactics and rhetoric depending on whether activists were operating in times of war or in times of relative peace; whether they were focusing seasonally at year-end gift giving holidays or embarking on year-round campaigns; and whether their targets were low-tech toys and board games or high-end media-based games.

But the violent toy critics’ most effective strategy—still unfolding—is to frame violent play as a public health issue and to emphasize scientific evidence as more research data mounts. Disquietude about

the implications of children’s play is in the public domain, more than at any time over the past century. If the recent successes of antismoking and seat-belt campaigns have any instructive value, it is that public health movements have the potential to cut across ideological lines in the interest of children’s well-being.

NOTES

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1. The Swarthmore College Peace Collection (SCPC) in Swarthmore, Pa., houses the primary-source collections relating to toy campaigns of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, the War Resisters League, and a half-dozen other peace organizations. The Archives of the Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., is the repository for Christian Peacemaker Teams. For organizational histories, cf. Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace as a Women’s Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women’s Rights* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), and Carrie A. Foster, *The Women and the Warriors: The U.S. Section of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915–1946* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995). See also Scott H. Bennett, *Radical Pacifism: The War Resisters League and Gandhian Nonviolence in America, 1915–1963* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003); Amy Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Janis Alton, “We’ve Come a Long Way: Engendering Peace-Building and the New Diplomacy,” in *Canadian Women’s Studies* 22 (2003): 72–77; and Kathleen Kern, *In Harm’s Way: A History of Christian Peacemaker Teams* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009).

2. Historically, many peace and nonviolence organizations in the United States have *not* addressed violence in children’s games and media; see Patricia Appelbaum, *Kingdom to Commune: Protestant Pacifist Culture Between World War I and the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 212.

3. References to “disarming” the nursery and the toy store appear beginning in the 1920s in WILPF literature and continue into the Vietnam War era. See, for example, the cartoon by Len Norris, editorial cartoonist for *The Vancouver Sun*, 16 November 1951, reprinted in “Let’s Train Them for Peace: A Study and Action Kit on Toys of Violence Prepared for the Childhood Education Committee of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom by the South Suburban-Minneapolis Branch,” January 1967, DG 043: WILPF, Series A, 5: Literature: Arranged by Subject, “Literature Re: Teaching Peace to Children/War Toys Ca. 1960–1980,” Box 14, SCPC.

4. On market research, cf. Roger Sweet and David Wecker, *Mastering the Universe: He-Man and the Rise and Fall of a Billion-Dollar Idea* (Cincinnati: Emmis Books, 2005), 95; Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2003), 320; and

Elise Boulding, "Toys of War and Projects of Peace," memo to WILPF Branch and Childhood Education Chairs, April 1965, in "Children and War and Peace, 1950-1969" subject file, SCPC.

5. Michael S. Foley and Wendy E. Chmielewski have identified multiple paths by which peace activists have accessed traditional as well as alternative forms of political power, in "The Politics of Peace Movements," in *Peace & Change* 26 (July 2001): 278.

6. Darlene Hammell and Joanna Santa Barbara, "War Toys," in *The PSR Quarterly* 3, n. 1 (June 1993): 91.

7. The War Resisters League touted the film *Toys* in its "Stop War Toys" campaign in 1992 and 1993, with activists handing out leaflets and petitions to moviegoers at theaters. John M. Miller, letter to WRL members, 12 December 1992, in Toy Action files, Christian Peacemaker Teams office, Chicago.

8. Dialogue from the film *Small Soldiers* (1998) quoted in John Naisbitt, *High Tech, High Touch: Technology and Our Accelerated Search for Meaning* (London: Nicholas Brealey Ltd., 2001), 22-23.

9. "G.I. Joe: 'An American Hero?'" 1987, paper in "Toy Action" files, Christian Peacemaker Teams office, Chicago; Gary Cross, *The Cute and the Cool: Wondrous Innocence and Modern American Children's Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 157.

10. Patrick M. Regan, "War Toys, War Movies, and the Militarization of the United States, 1900-1985," in *Journal of Peace Research* 31 (1994): 45-58.

11. Wendy Varney, "Playing with 'War Fare,'" in *Peace Review*, 12 (September 2000): 385.

12. Inez and Marshall McClintock, *Toys in America* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1961), 5, 21.

13. Kenneth D. Brown, "Modelling for War? Toy Soldiers in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain," in *Journal of Social History* 24 (1990): 237-54.

14. Jeffrey H. Goldstein, "Immortal Kombat: War Toys and Violent Video Games," in Jeffrey H. Goldstein, ed., *Why We Watch: The Attractions of Violent Entertainment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 67. Ron Tanner makes a similar argument about toys as a reflection of national values in "Toy Robots in America, 1955-1975: How Japan Really Won the War," in *Journal of Popular Culture* 28 (Winter 1994): 153.

15. Bryan Ganaway, *Toys, Consumption, and Middle-class Childhood in Imperial Germany, 1871-1918* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 11; 29.

16. *Ibid.*, 112-15; quotation from 155.

17. Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*, 11.

18. The sociologist Manuel Castells has described how the symbolic power of authorities traditionally associated with religion, morality, and political ideology are weakened by the rise of electronic-based communication systems, "unless they recode themselves in the new system, where their power becomes multiplied...." Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 374-75.

19. Gary Cross, *Kids' Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 29, 32.

20. Eric Clark, *The Real Toy Story: Inside the Ruthless Battle for America's Youngest Consumers* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 194-96.

21. Nel Noddings, "War, Critical Thinking, and Self-Understanding," in *Phi Delta Kappan* 85 (March 2004): 491-92.

22. WILPF illustration with caption, 1920, in "Children and War and Peace, Undated" subject file, SCPC.

23. "Disarm the Nursery," *Friends Intelligencer*, 30 December 1922, in "Children and War and Peace, 1894-1929" subject file, SCPC.

24. *Ibid.*; "Mothers, Teachers, Friends of Children!" Women's International League pamphlet, 1921, in "Children and War and Peace, 1894-1929" subject file, SCPC.

25. *Newsletter, Women's Peace Society Supplement*, February 1929, in "Children and War and Peace, 1894-1929" subject file, SCPC. By 1933, the Women's Peace Society had collapsed, but the U.S. Section of the Women's League for Peace and Freedom continued to pursue antimilitarist initiatives. Foster, *The Women and the Warriors*, 45.

26. Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue*, 110-12.

27. *Ibid.*, 124.

28. Cross, *Kids' Stuff*, 116.

29. "Some Opinions on Education Through Toys," in *Progress to Peace Through Toys*, 1941 WILPF pamphlet, "Subject File: Children and War and Peace," 1940-1949, SCPC. Henry J. Berquist, a Democratic leader in Wisconsin, cited Pope's eighteenth-century quotation as part of a series on peace education.

30. Sonja Levens, "Gender and Militarism in Child Upbringing," in *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*, ed. Nigel J. Young (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), Vol. 2, 215-18.

31. Rautman, "Children's Play in War Time," *Mental Hygiene* 27 (October 1943), 551, and "Children Should not Be Encouraged in War Games," *Science News Letter* 45 (12 February 1944), 104, quoted in William M. Tuttle, Jr., *Daddy's Gone to War: The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 137.

32. Robert William Kirk, *Earning Their Stripes: The Mobilization of American Children in the Second World War* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 24.

33. Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 83.

34. The quotation is from psychiatrist Fredric Wertham, cited by Albert E. Kahn in *The Game of Death: Effects of the Cold War on Our Children* (New York: Cameron & Kahn, 1953), 103. Concerned about societal violence and adults' obligations to shield children from potential psychological harm, Wertham was an early critic of mass media. For a discussion of Wertham's controversial views that 1950s-era comics were likely to harm children and had little merit, see Bart Beaty, *Fredric Wertham and the Critique Of Mass Culture* (Oxford: University Press of Mississippi, 2005).

35. D.G. Green, "Toy Soldiers and War Games," *Dissent* 32 (Winter 1985): 115. See also Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture*, 9.

36. Carol Andreas, open letter to American toy manufacturers, May 1964, in the author's possession.

37. Carl and Carol Andreas, letter to Bernice Esau, c. 1964, in the author's possession.

38. Ibid.

39. Carol Andreas, "War Toys and the Peace Movement," in *Journal of Social Issues* 25 (1969): 98.

40. Hal Higdon, "A Mother Opens Fire on War Toys," in *Pageant Magazine* 21 (January 1966).

41. Benjamin Spock, "Playing with Toy Guns," *Redbook*, November 1964; for a discussion of Spock's influence, see Gary Cross, "Toys," in *Boyhood in America: An Encyclopedia*, eds. Priscilla Ferguson Clement and Jacqueline S. Reinier (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2001): 707. On Spock's political and legal involvements during the decade, see Michael S. Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

42. Meredith M. Kimball and Lesley A. Joy, "Television Violence: Does it Promote Aggressive Behavior?" in *Children and Television: A Challenge for Education*, eds. Michael E. Manley-Casimir and Carmen Luke (New York: Praeger, 1987), 49-75.

43. Carol Andreas quoted in Rosemary Moyer and Hulda Rich, "War Toys and Children of Peace," in *Our Family Worship* (October-December 1965), 11.

44. "Toys," *Time*, 6 September 1968.

45. Alonso, 11-12.

46. *The Voice of Women: Thirty Years Later*, video recording, 1992, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. VOW chapters in the United States, focusing especially on nuclear testing and the arms race, were active throughout the 1960s, and VOW in Canada recently celebrated fifty years of peace activism. See Alonso, 202.

47. *Toys and Novelties* editorial quoted in Andreas, "War Toys and the Peace Movement," 92.

48. Martin Cooper wrote the lyrics for "Little Play Soldiers."

49. Stoltzfus quotation from Christian Peacemaker Teams' Public Witness Checklist, www.cpt.org/files/PW%20-%20Check%20List.pdf.

50. "Super Sand Castle Built in Venice," in *The No Death Toy Newsletter* 5 (Winter 1966/1967): 1. The organization "No War Toys" was a Venice, California-based organization founded in 1965 by Richard Register, devoted to critiquing violent toys and promoting alternatives. For several years, "No War Toys" disseminated a newsletter that kept community activists apprised of demonstrations across the U.S. and Canada. See "Richard Register," www.ecocitybuilders.org/richard-register/.

51. Jacob Vanstaaveren, *Gradual Failure: The Air War Over North Vietnam, 1965-1966* (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2002), 210; Andreas, 94.

52. Poster issued by Parents for Responsibility in the Toy Industry, "Public Action Coalition on Toys (CDGA), Box 1, 1966-1973, SCPC.

53. Brendan Schurr, "Major Toy Stores Will Stop Selling Real-Looking Guns," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Oct. 15, 1994; Joseph Pereira and Barbara Carton, "Toys 'R' Us to Banish Some 'Realistic' Toy Guns," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 14, 1994, B-1. Urban violence, with its emphasis on the use of force, has historical

roots in Western frontier mythology; see Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992).

54. These groups' websites provide mission statements and historical context. See www.cpt.org, www.lionlamb.org, www.iccr.org, and www.grannypeacebrigade.org.

55. Lisa Leitz, "Oppositional Identities: The Military Peace Movement's Challenge to Pro-Iraq War Frames," in *Social Problems* 58 (May 2011): 235-56.

56. Kryss Chupp, compiler, *Sing Out Against Violent Toys*, Christian Peacemaker Teams, n.d., http://www.cpt.org/resources/witness/past_actions/violent_toys.

57. Brenda Suderman, "Local Campaign Challenges How Violence is Marketed to Children," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 5 November 2000, B3. On Christian Peacemaker Teams' two-decades-long campaign to promote alternatives to violent toys, see Rachel Waltner Goossen, "Like Entering an Armed Camp': Christian Peacemaker Teams and the Language of Violent-Toy Protests" in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 86 (January 2012): 49-74.

58. Paul Levy, "Kidstuff Joins YWCA for Toy Gun Buy-Back," *Minneapolis-St. Paul Star Tribune*, 17 October 1995; Peace Factory files, Peace Connection Collection, V. 94, Box 1, Mennonite Library and Archives, N. Newton, Kans.; Peace Factory and Peace Fair file, Christian Peacemaker Teams Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.; Vancouver World Peace Forum (Code Pink), <http://www.codepinkalert.org/article.php?id=922>.

59. Barol cited a National Coalition on Television Violence study that reported eighty-three violent acts per hour in *The Transformers*, a television program popular in the 1980s. Bill Barol et al., "War Toys on the March," *Newsweek*, 1 July 1985, 54.

60. Gisela Wegener-Spohring, "War Toys in the World of Fourth Graders: 1985 and 2002," in *Toys, Games, and Media*, ed. Jeffrey Goldstein, David Buckingham, and Gilles Brougere (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004), 19-35.

61. Craig A. Anderson, "Violent Video Games: Myths, Facts, and Unanswered Questions," American Psychological Association Science Directorate, October 2003, www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2003/10/anderson.aspx. For a discussion of how researchers examining data about potential psychological harms yield differing interpretations, see Shankar Vedantam, "It's a Duel: How Do Violent Video Games Affect Kids?" *NPR Morning Edition*, 7 July 2011, <http://www.npr.org/2011/07/07/137660609/its-a-duel-how-do-violent-video-games-affect-kids>. On physicians' opportunities to contribute to peace and anti-violence initiatives, see Graeme MacQueen, Richard McCutcheon, and Joanna Santa Barbara, "The Use of Health Initiatives as Peace Initiatives," in *Peace & Change* 22 (April 1997): 192.

62. Denise Gellene, "Toy Makers Going Easier on Violence," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 6 July 1993, 8D; Jay Mathews et al., "The Soaking of America: Boston Calls for a Ban on Summer's Hottest Toy," *Newsweek*, 22 June 1992. Whereas American government officials rarely engaged in such debates, Canadian and European politicians were more willing to consider banning toys associated with violence, especially look-alike guns. See Richard Brennan, "Tories Eye New Curbs on Sale of Toy Guns," *Toronto Star*, 27 September 2000, A-1.

63. Sweet and Wecker, *Mastering the Universe*, 193.

64. G. Wayne Miller, *Toy Wars: The Epic Struggle Between G.I. Joe, Barbie, and the Companies That Make Them* (New York: Random House, 1998), 228–29.

65. Kate Donnelly, Selling Patriotism to Kids,” *The Nonviolent Activist*, 1991; *No More War Toys*, film produced by Kate Donnelly, Laura Booth, and Amy Melnick, Deep Dish TV, 12 November 1991.

66. Eva-Lee Baird, “Peace Toys Not War Toys,” Granny Peace Brigade blog, Dec. 15, 2010, <http://www.grannypeacebrigade.org/wordpress/category/toys-and-games>. For a discussion of risking arrest in toy campaigns, see Goossen, “Like Entering an Armed Camp,” 59–60. On the uses of theatrical comedy in nonviolent resistance, see Margaret Cavin, “Glenn Smiley Was a Fool: The Use of the Comic as a Strategy of Nonviolence,” in *Peace & Change* 26 (April 2001): 228; 241.

67. Guracar uses the pen name “Bulbul.” This cartoon, dated Aug. 30, 1985, appeared in “Peace on Earth: Sing Out Against Violent Toys,” undated, in Toy Action files, Christian Peacemaker Teams office, Chicago.

68. Quotation from *Peanuts*, clipping in Toy Action files, Christian Peacemaker Teams office, Chicago. Collections of cartoons related to war-toy activism appear in “Let’s Train Them for Peace,” 1967, DG 043: WILPF, Series A, 5, Box 14, SPCPC.

69. “CPT Choir Sings Against Violent Toys, *The Mennonite*, 16 January 2007.

70. David Grossman, *On Killing* (New York: Little, Brown, 1995), 315. As American engagement in the war in Afghanistan reached its ten-year anniversary mark, antimilitary counter-recruiters were engaging educators and policymakers in discussions about ending military recruiting in high schools as a matter of child protection and public health. Amy Hagopian and Kathy Barker, “Should We End Military Recruiting in High Schools as a Matter of Child Protection and Public Health?,” in *American Journal of Public Health* 101 (2011): 19–23.

71. Quotation from David Grossman and Gloria DeGaetano, *Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill: A Call to Action Against TV, Movie and Video Game Violence* (New York: Crown, 1999), 106. For a discussion of children and product-safety concerns in the context of market segmentation, see Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic*, 350.

72. Adam Liptak, “Justices Reject Ban on Violent Video Games for Children,” in *New York Times* 27 June 2011. Parents who oppose restrictions to children’s access to violent games and toys often cite free speech and personal choice. See Rick Marin, “Don’t Take Away My Kids’ Toy Guns,” *Salon*, February 8, 2011, www.salon.com/2011/02/09/boys_and_their_guns/.

73. Cross, *The Cute and The Cool*, 204.