A Review of *Working for Peace: A Handbook of Practical Psychology And Other Tools*

by Psychologists for Social Responsibility (Author), Arun Gandhi (Foreword), Rachel M. Macnair (Editor)
Atascadero, California: Impact Publishers, 2006.
x + 300 pp (www.impactpublishers.com, and http://www.amazon.com/Working-Peace-Handbook-Practical-Psychology/dp/1886230722)

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This is a timely addition to the ever-growing literature on Peace Studies, especially psychological aspects thereof. A two page foreword by Arun Gandhi (Director, M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence) is followed by an eight page Introduction: The Choir's Gotta Know How to Sing, by Rachel M. Macnair, with Neil Wollman. In that eminently practical introductory text, readers are told how *Working for Peace* can help them by looking at sets of chapters categorized in terms of improving personal effectiveness, helping local groups work better, looking for ideas on how to make a greater impact, looking for ideas in conflict resolution and/or nonviolent action, communicating one's message effectively, reaching the next generation.

The volume is organized in five Parts:

I – Peace Workers: Getting yourselves together (10 chapters, 72 pp)
II – Peace Groups: Getting organized (6 chapters, 56 pp)
III – Peacemaking: Transforming conflict into creativity (7 chapters, 44 pp)
IV – Peace Work: Getting the message out (5 chapters, 60 pp)
V – Peaceful persuasion: Changing attitudes (6 chapters, 41 pp).

There follows a three page Epilogue by Anne Anderson, a six page section About the Authors, two pages of Resources for Peace Work (4 Programs and 3 Peace Psychology organizations) and an eight page index.

The book's 34 chapters vary in length from 3 to 16 pages. Informationally, 16 chapters provide both references and suggested readings, 11 chapters feature references only, 3 chapters offer suggested readings only, and 3 chapters provide neither.

Commendably, epigraph-like statements are quoted from inspiring voices: Bhagavad Gita, Mother Teresa, Hillel, Rabbi Harold S. Kuchner, E.B. White, Jane Adams, Mary Parker Follett, Paul Loeb, Isaiah, Micah and Maria Montessori.

Given the volume's focus on practical suggestions, one of its commendable features is the abundance of guidelines, lists, strategies, techniques and typologies. Examples:

A 101-item list of social actions (pp. 10 –14), 5 types of Meditation (pp. 19 –20) ,
7 suggestions on how to overcome anger and anxiety (pp. 28 – 30)
5 practical steps for dealing with social activism (p. 76)
6 guidelines for good communication (pp. 90 –91)

5 techniques for decision-making (pp. 93 –95)
4 keys to better dialogue (pp. 141- 146)
3 third Side skills (pp. 159 – 160)
10 third Size roles (pp.160 – 164)
20 media communication tips (pp. 183 – 194)
5 getting published tips (pp. 186 – 187)
10 international harmony and equity values (p. 209)
4 ways for being more sensitive in using language (p.246)
12 principles for changing attitudes (pp. 248 – 254)

Since a book´s index mirrors its conceptual-terminological comprehensiveness, how does the handbook fare in this respect? There are two conspicuous commissions of key-concepts dealt with/mentioned in the book: antagonizers (245), dignity (209).

In the suggested readings, sources published in 2005 /2006 are found so the second edition of Morton Deutsch et al *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: From Theory to Practice* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2006) could have been included.

The book's treatment of communication challenges and issues is appropriate but the inclusion of the core-concept of communicative peace could have enhanced its practical relevance. On that dimension, see this reviewer's chapter *Using Peaceful language: From Principles to Practices* in the UNESCO - sponsored Eolss – online encyclopedia of life-support systems, 2005 (www.eolss.net).

There are many memorable, inspiring statements throughout the book. Here are three of my favorites:

"To work for peace is to work for a world of compassion, free of all forms of violence" (Arun Gandhi, p. ix)

"Creating a peaceful world requires developing peaceful people. Therefore, peace education is an essential part of working for peace" (Linden L Nelson, p. 207)

"We need you working together, laughing together, healthy, energized, thinking strategically, using every psychological tool to promote the many varieties of cultures of peace around the world" (closing statement by Anne Anderson)

Much more could be said about this highly *in*formative handbook. Its 43 authors and its editor are to be commended for this impressive updating and expansion of "a classic book from 1985" as it is fondly described. In short, a creatively crafted book to impact constructively on the challenging, humanizing mission of English-language-using peace workers.