

MLK+50 Interfaith Freedom Seder: The Third Cup

Contributed by [Shalom Center](#)

Source: Rabbi Arthur Waskow

The Third Cup: Ending Militarism and Moving toward a Worldwide Fellowship

There are three aspects to the growing militarization of America: (A) The military overseas, through great increases in military budgets and the longest war in American history; (B) The militarization of domestic U.S. police forces, especially those intended to deal with Black and Latino communities; and (C) the rising number of deaths by gunfire, including by weapons intended for war. Let us look at each:

“A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death” (MLK, April 4, 1967) (B) At home, Dr. King’s separate triplets of racism and militarism have melted into one. In Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014, local police mobilized tanks and other weapons of war to address protests over a killing by police. (C) And hundreds of “civilians” bearing rifles, hand guns, and semi-automatic de facto machine guns are each year killing spouses, children, and themselves—in numbers unheard of in other affluent countries. Wikipedia reports these figures of firearm-related death rates per 100,000 population in one year: Japan, 0.06; United Kingdom, 0.23; Poland, 0.26; Australia, 0.93; Germany, 1.01; Sweden, 1.47; United States, 10.54.

What do these numbers look like in flesh and blood?

David Hogg, a 17-year-old student journalist who interviewed his classmates during the rampage in Parkland, said he had thought about the possibility of a school shooting long before shots from an AR-15 started to blast through the hallways. As he huddled with fellow students, he stayed calm and decided to try to create a record of their thoughts and views that would live on, even if the worst happened to them.

“I recorded those videos because I didn’t know if I was going to survive,” he said in an interview here. “But I knew that if those videos survived, they would echo on and tell the story. And that story would be one that would change things, I hoped. And that would be my legacy.” (New York Times, February 16, 2018)