

DAVID HARTSOUGH

WAGING PEACE

Waging Peace: Global Adventures of a Lifelong Activist

By David Hartsough, with Joyce Hollyday. 2014 PM Press

Reviewed by SANDI HUCKABY

As the title suggests, David Hartsough has been a lifelong peace activist, not just on the East Coast, but all over the world—and what an adventure it has been! His iron-strong commitment to nonviolence has taken him from Castro's Cuba to the Oval Office in the Kennedy White House. He attended many of Dr. King's sermons at Howard University, and was at the lunch counter sit-ins in the South. He bore nonviolent witness to erecting the Berlin Wall, held an anti-nuclear demonstration in Red Square—and was threatened with 20 years in a Russian prison, he blocked ships heading to Vietnam that were loaded with napalm, faced down death squads in El Salvador, accompanied *campesinos* in Nicaragua, and held S. Brian Wilson in his arms just after his legs had been severed by a train loaded with arms headed to Central America. He reminds me of Forrest Gump popping up everywhere in every famous place throughout the last half-century, except in Hartsough's case, his face was not photo-shopped in all those photos—he was *really* there! Many, many times his life was in danger, and too many times to count he has been arrested for his nonviolent witness.

Throughout the book there are many harrowing stories of how disarming nonviolent tactics can be. For instance, during the Jim Crow era when he was sitting with a row of young African-Americans at a segregated lunch counter, an enraged white man held a knife to Hartsough's chest and was ready to murder him. But Hartsough's response was so gentle, fearless, and disarming that

the attacker retreated in shock and disbelief.

He has not a shred of doubt in his mind that nonviolence is always a superior force to violence, and it leads to a lasting peace. It forges bonds between potential enemies; it recognizes that we are all one human family, and that the life of no human being is worth more than another.

This message of peaceful solutions and reconciliation he carried with him to war zones in Palestine, the Philippines, Iran, Kosovo, Chiapas, etc. He started a group called "World Beyond War," and through it he organizes people in war zones and trains them in nonviolent tactics, which as it turns out, are more effective than militarism for overthrowing dictators and reconciling opposing ethnic or religious groups.

At the end of the book he offers a list of websites, books, DVDs and other resources—ways that the reader can get involved and organize others in her or his own community as well as work for peace on the global level. The list of suggestions range all the way from practicing nonviolence in our own lives, to joining a peace brigade (Peaceworkers) in Jeju Island to nonviolently block bulldozers and cement trucks that are building a new U.S.-sponsored naval base there (Savejejunow.org).

In this time of endless wars, everyone should read this book to be inspired to get involved in making the world a safer and more loving place for all humankind. David Hartsough's lifelong commitment is a sobering reminder that, yes, one person can make a difference, and that nonviolence is not an unrealistic model for resolving conflict, but is indeed a superior force and the only one with any chance of success. ◻

Sandi Huckaby is a former LACW community member and was co-editor of the Agitator.