Embrace the Fire:
Plant the seeds for a culture of peace
EMBRACE THE FIRE:
PLANT THE SEEDS FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

by

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INTRODUCTION

Soon, the culture of war will crash. How will it happen? Perhaps one too many wars will push the Americans over the cliff of bankruptcy? Perhaps the accumulation of "bubbles" of financial speculation will burst? Or will one of their wars explode into World War III and devastate part or much of the earth? One way or another, the American empire with its vast network of alliances, cannot continue to waste its resources, money and people on endless wars and preparations for war, producing more and more enemies, spawning new antagonistic cultures of war.

Like a gigantic forest fire, it will seem like all is consumed and destroyed. No one will escape the flames. The centuries-old trend towards urbanization will be reversed overnight as billions of people are forced to flee the cities because there is no more food in the supermarkets. They will descend like swarms of locusts into the countryside. But the big farms will no longer be producing food for them because their oil was not delivered and their tractors and other machines cannot run. Like Cuba when the Soviet empire crashed and oil deliveries stopped, they will have to revert to oxen instead of tractors and horses instead of cars and trucks. But that will take time, and in the meantime what will people eat?

And what then? Will new cultures of war arise to fill the void? Like what happened in the Great Depression of the 1930's when the old bourgeois "democracies" crashed and were replaced by the extreme cultures of war that we call fascism.

Or will the seeds for a culture of peace that we have planted be able to grow and create a new kind of culture to replace the culture of war?

I became more optimistic last year after a visit to California where I encountered the giant sequoia trees, some of them as old as 2,000 years. Something struck me as I communicated with them. They were all scarred at the base by forest fires that they endured over the centuries and millennia. And I learned, much to my surprise, that their seeds cannot germinate unless they are burned in a forest fire. It seemed to me that they are trying to teach us something, if we will stop and listen to their wisdom. I have made this message part of the title of this book, "Embrace the Fire."
I dedicate this message to the many people I have encountered over the years who have worked for a global movement for a culture of peace, especially those who have burned out, frustrated and disappointed by the apparent lack of effect of our efforts for peace. Some of them have returned to the struggle after a break to heal their psychological wounds, but many have not returned.

In this work, it is easy to become demoralized. When asked if I am optimistic or pessimistic, my answer has become, "I am optimistic on Mondays and Tuesdays and become pessimistic on Wednesdays and Thursdays." Although we may work for a culture of peace, we continue to live in a world dominated by the culture of war. But if we have the patience and wisdom of the great trees, we can continue to plant the seeds and water the seedlings of a new culture to replace the culture of war when it burns itself up, as it has done regularly in the past through wars and economic/political collapse (during the 20th Century in 1914, 1929, 1941, 1989).

I hope it will not take hundreds of years for the fruits of our labors to mature, but it may not come in our lifetime. In my utopian novella that imagines how we arrive at a culture of peace, I see myself like Moses on the mountain, looking out over the promised land, but unable to arrive there before I die. Maybe this time we will not succeed. But we should think like Lenin after the failure of the attempt at a socialist revolution in 1905. Although we may fail this time around, at least we can learn lessons about what worked and what did not. If we draw enough lessons from this experience, maybe the next time we try, we - or those who come after us - will be able to succeed.

So, let us embrace the fire! As I wrote at the end my my novella, "Peace is a chariot of fire . . . Its heroes fall only to rise again in the arms of others, holding high the torch of nonviolence. . . . Those who would run the course of fire must run in waves that shift their lands from strife to shared endeavor. . . ." I hope you believe with me that a culture of peace would be worth the struggle and the patience that it requires. If so, please come with me on the following journey to see how can we plant and water the seeds of this new culture? Let us begin with the eight components of the culture of peace, as defined by the United Nations in the Declaration and Program of Action adopted for the International Year for the Culture of Peace. We can do this by visiting the thousands of articles we have published in the Culture of Peace News Network (http://cpnn-world.org) over the past few years.
PEACE EDUCATION

The most activity is in the area of peace education, which is of special importance if you believe (as I do) that history is ultimately determined by human consciousness. Peace education, seen from the point of view of culture of peace, has included a wide variety of actors and methods in recent years. A good example from Africa was the recent cultural festival sponsored by the African Union-United Nations Mission (UNAMID), to disseminate the culture of peace to 7,000 people in the war-torn area of Darfur, Sudan. The event, held under the theme "Darfur: talk Peace Now", brought together youth and families from all tribes living in the area and included traditional peace songs, music and dance.

Let's begin with music. Consider the rap for peace concert at the refugee camp of Goma in Eastern Congo in February 2014. 700 volunteers prepared the festival which attracted thousands of young people of different nationalities and ethnic groups who have been at war with each other for many years. Presented with a declaration, they signed en masse, saying: "Our generation has not known peace. This must change. We sing for peace because it is our only hope. North Kivu and our people have never desired it so much. . . Everyone must contribute. . . Together today from across all borders, we call for peace."

Consider also the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra founded by Daniel Barenboim to unite Israeli and Palestinian musicians. For example, in May, 2011, the orchestra conducted a concert in the Gaza Strip that was a celebrated political event. They showed how music is the universal language, a key that opens doors of questioning and discussion.

Here's another example, sent to CPNN. " No matter who, any Jamaican with whom I speak can tell you about the great One Love Peace concert of Bob Marley. I think it was in 1978"
when he brought the two candidates for President, Michael Manley and Edward Seaga, on stage and raised their hands together in the air to signal unity in a campaign marked by many killings. It did not bring about peace immediately, but is still the symbol of peace for all Jamaicans." Many years after his death, Bob Marley continues to inspire people around the world with a message of solidarity and mutual respect across all divides of language, ethnicity or education.

Of course, not all music is positive. As expressed by the Cuban pop singer Rochy Ameneiro, ""Music has become in recent times a transmitter of violent values with a powerful influence in society. Many texts of songs present negative values that incite to violence against women. Many present women as sex symbols, along with a marked tendency to homophobia, among other archaic values. I am convinced that we, as musicians, can reverse this situation..." She tours the country with her project "Everyone in the Counterforce: No to violence in music."

Dance has been used similarly, in Mauritania, where the Assalamelekoum Festival, a 5-day hip-hop event attracts well-known performers from Europe and Africa. The name of the event was specifically chosen to encourage brotherhood and tolerance. "It serves as an annual reminder of the dangers of extremism and terrorism," according the performer, the hip-hop star Monza.

Another hip-hop festival devoted to the culture of peace took place at the other side of the world. The contest of Hip Hop Choreography, named the "Crew Battle: FICU 2012" took place in Lima, Peru, in 2012, where youth groups from participating districts demonstrated their artistic skills.

The collective painting of murals has become another favorite method to teach the culture of peace. The Kids Guernica project - Painting for Peace initiative was born in Japan to raise awareness and spread the culture of peace to children through artistic expression, encouraging them to design and paint peace murals based on that of Guernica by Pablo Picasso. The Art Miles Mural Project was created by Fouad and Joanne Tawfili in 1997 when they decided to do something that would teach children understanding and respect. The project has spread to over 100 countries.
Cinema, and more recently videos, are being used increasingly to pass a culture of peace message. For example, the new documentary film from the Riahi Brothers, Everyday Rebellion, examines contemporary global nonviolence in its diversity and creativity, building on recent academic research showing that nonviolent resistance movements have been twice as effective in the past century in achieving their stated goals compared with violent resistance movements.

Cinema for a culture of peace is supported by many film festivals, for example, the 2014 Taguatinga Film Festival in Brazil is devoted to the diffusion of the culture of peace, through discussion of good social interaction, ecology, humanization of cities and urban and social kindness. Other film festivals with themes from the culture of peace in recent years include those of Human Rights Watch, those of Signis, the World Catholic Organization for Communication and Media for a Culture of Peace, FESPACO in Burkina Faso, and the Bamako Encounters Film (RCB) and the International Festival of Nyamina (FINA) in Mali.

Soap operas are being used for peace education, with some of the best practices being developed by the NGO Search for Common Ground. As of 2011 they were producing multi-episode, soccer-based, TV and radio soap opera series in 17 different countries. Programs had already been aired in Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, and the Palestinian Territories, as well as in Liberia, Nepal, and Sierra Leone. Here is a typical viewer reactions to the Nepalese series, which has become a national sensation: "It has inspired all Nepalese to do something good for our future. It has given us a lesson that everyone is important to each other."

We should not forget that culture of peace can also be taught, explicitly or implicitly, by literature. A case in point is made by the recent book The Culture of Peace in African Literature.

Comic strips are considered in Africa as a true educational medium. This was emphasized at the 2011 conference of the Algerian International Federation of Comic Strips (FIBDA). One of the conference speakers mentioned examples in Senegal, Congo and sub-Saharan
Africa on the themes of inter-religious dialogue, cultural identity, unity as a force for peace in Rwanda and Burundi or consciousness-raising for cultural diversity among ethnic groups such as Tutsi and Hutu, sensibilization about child-soldiers, sexual violence, etc. Graffiti is also used in West Africa as a tool for social change. In Senegal, Sidibe, who goes by the artist name Zienixx, uses street art to promote women’s rights, including equal pay and educational access.

International Conference of Museums for Peace

Museums can also be an effective source of peace education. At the 8th International Conference of Museums for Peace in September 2014, the theme was ‘The Role of Museums for Peace in Preventing War and Promoting Remembrance, Historical Truth and Reconciliation’. Directors and curators from peace and human rights museums from around the world as well as peace educators, activists, and artists presented their work, engaged in discussions, and forged bonds of friendship and collaboration.

Can the culture of peace be taught in the school classroom? This is not a simple question, since most schools are still organized in the classical culture of war tradition, with the students seated like soldiers before a teacher who has more or less the same responsibility to maintain discipline as a military officer.

For a good example of how the classroom can be changed, consider the school for peace inaugurated recently in the Maya world of the Guatemalan highlands by Don Francisco Puac Bixcu. The children in this classroom are seated in a circle, facing each other, not only the teacher. This complements their curriculum which educates children and youth in the Mayan culture, worldview and spirituality, claiming and developing the Mayan identity and making extensive knowledge, legacy, documents and sacred practices to future generations. Its clear intention is to not allow knowledge to be lost in our
society with its increasing globalization, but instead to retrieve the traditional knowledge and extend it to other areas of life and community.

There is no lack of alternative educational models, as described by the educator Antonella Verdiani. As she says, they do not require that children be seated in rows, but give them freedom to express themselves and move by their own will. As she puts it, "Discipline, by itself, is useless; if one is to advance, discipline should be joyful." Nor is competitive testing necessary. Children can evaluate themselves.

The Montessori schools are an important alternative for culture of peace education. There is no competition in this system. No learning of violence. As its founder, Maria Montessori said in a public speech in 1937, "The real defense of humanity cannot be based on guns. If we don't have confidence in education as the best 'gun for peace', then wars will continue after wars."

Peace curricula are being introduced in the schools of West Africa. In February 2014, A guide for peace education for the West African Network for Peacebuilding (Wanep) was launched in Senegal as part of a national consultation focused on promoting the culture of peace and non-violence in schools. The idea is to "develop a peaceful school environment at all levels." This guide is based on experience in seven countries in West Africa as well as the experiences of Wanep. In the Gambia, the Wanep guide for peace education was formally introduced in October 2013 by the permanent secretary at the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education. The Reference Manual for Peace Education, Human Rights and Citizenship for all of the West African countries, sponsored by UNESCO, is available online in 25 local languages. In this case we see how culture of peace transcends national boundaries and applies to the region as a whole, and all of its traditional ethnic groups.

In Kenya at the end of 2012 more than 8,000 Kenyans attended the Malindi Music Festival for Children as part of a larger campaign called "I am a Child of Peace -- Malindi for Peace" that aims to inspire children to embrace the culture of peace and become peace ambassadors in their communities. Forty primary schools in Kenya are participating in the campaign by engaging children with games and educational materials that teach about human rights.
In Latin America, the schools are introducing mediation and conflict resolution in the face of high levels of violence among youth.

In Brazil when introducing the Project for Conflict Mediation at School, the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Peace stated that "The only way to change our culture is through education. What we want is to solve the problem of violence through prevention measures. The school is a strategic environment where a new approach can be developed that can be reproduced in adulthood."

In order to legitimize and expand education initiatives for peace in the 102 municipalities of the state of Alagoas in Brazil, regional seminars were held throughout the state in 2013. The seminars consist of lectures and workshops on education for peace and non-violence and conflict mediation.

In Minas Gerais, another state of Brazil, the State Secretariat of Education brought together representatives of 30 regional superintendents of education in 2012 for training and sensitization to the promotion and development of culture of peace in schools. In all, nearly 2500 educators from state and local networks were involved.

In Mexico at the national level an overarching program to prevent violence has been designed and enacted. It is described by the peace educator Johan Galtung as a bold proposal, grounded in a legitimate peace philosophy - one in which peace is constructed through the satisfaction of basic human needs- and is well equipped in scope and with enough budget and personnel to achieve transcending results by construction of peace infrastructures such as mediation centers, academic degrees in peace for civil servants, etc. This top-down approach is then linked with efforts bottom-up from the ground level in the different regions.

Traditionally, history has been taught as the history of wars. As described by the Nicaraguan writer, José Coronel Urtecho, "History itself began to be lived and conceived as if it were a civil war. We have been dominated by the culture of violence. Consequently, the great challenge we face as Nicaraguans is to replace the culture of violence by a genuine culture of peace. With this in mind, the Martin Luther King Institute of Research and Social Action (IMLK ) of the Polytechnic University of Nicaragua (UPOLI ) became the first entity in
the world to design a curriculum for teaching the culture of peace. It is used not only in Nicaragua, but also in other Central American countries.

The National Union of Education Workers in Mexico is promoting culture of peace independent of the scholastic program. According to a union leader, "We are going to appoint a responsible teacher in each school to be the peace promoter in that school, as well as a parent. They will receive training and updates in a culture of peace, including respect for human rights, respect for diversity, and non-violence."

Along these lines, UNESCO has been promoting the development of a new kind of history book through dialogue among neighboring countries with a history of war and conflict. For example, in Southeast Asia, they have sponsored a forum to enable historians, anthropologists and educational scientists from the sub-region and beyond to identify common intellectual ground for developing shared South-East Asian histories. The recommendations that result are expected to guide the development of a long-term project to produce materials for history education in South-East Asia that promote peace and mutual understanding.

Over the years since the beginning of International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World in 2000, the NGO Women for Development based in Gyumri, Armenia has been implementing a project "Peace and Conflict Resolution Education in the Schools of Armenia." Its strategy includes organizing peace education sessions in schools, teacher training, participation of parents and cooperation with the National Institute of Education of Armenia.
In France The Peillon Act for school reform of the French republic, finally adopted on June 25, 2013, establishes "training in prevention and non-violent conflict resolution" for all initial training of teachers and education personnel as well as continuing education through the Graduate Schools of Teaching and Education. Every year, the Coordination for education for non-violence and peace organizes a forum on "Non-violence in schools."

In Spain a total of 379 schools in the province of Malaga belong to the Andalusian Network: "Space for Peace," established by the Ministry of Education of the Government of Andalusia to promote coexistence through the development of values, attitudes, skills and habits.

In California (U.S.) the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges voted in 2013 to create Peace Studies as a discipline as recognized in the statewide Minimum Qualifications Discipline List. This means that Peace Studies will now be nested within the master list alongside other mainstream disciplines such as Math, Biology, and Anthropology thus increasing the credibility around this field that educates future human rights advocates and peacemakers. The first community college to institute this was San Diego Community College with the following core courses: Introduction to Peace Studies; Nonviolence and Conflict Resolution; Environmental Sustainability, Justice and Ethics; and Field Work in Peace Studies.

Diplomatic initiatives to end international and civil wars need peace education if they are to succeed. "It is not enough to disarm the guns if there is no disarmament of the minds; peace requires the support of the majority and a change of attitudes." This was explained by the representative of the United Nations as he presented a media peace education campaign in that country timed to coincide with the negotiations between the government and FARC to end their many years of armed struggle.

At the same time, the government of Colombia has announced it will reactivate the National Peace Commission, created in the 90s to promote a culture of peace and to support the dialogue between the Government and the guerillas.
The Peace Dialogues between the government of Colombia and the FARC revolutionary forces are supported by peace education initiatives of the civil society as well. According to Hernando Roa Suarez, Advisor to the Rector of the National Pedagogical University, contributions to the peace process are being made by many civil society organizations, including EI CINEP, Arcoiris, IEPRI, ESAP, Viva la Ciudadania, Redepaz, MOE, Plural, and other groups working in the various regions of Colombia.

A similar account could be made of the various peace education initiatives that have supported the process to end the long-time armed struggle in Mindanao, Philippines. As described by Angela Lederach, "In my work as a conflict-resolution specialist on Mindanao, I also met dozens of local 'peace practitioners' whose commitment is crucial to a successful outcome of the peace process. . . They willingly enter the most violent areas, providing relief in the midst and aftermath of violent clashes, help in healing trauma, temporary shelter for displaced people, and grassroots training in nonviolence. Theirs is a holistic approach to creating a culture of peace in Mindanao - from elementary schools to politicians."

Community leaders from Chungui Peace education is also useful in the training of community leaders, especially when they work in violent communities. For example, in Peru the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations and the District Municipality of Chungui have conducted workshops aimed at leaders and authorities and the population affected by political violence of the communities known as "Ear of the Dog."

Across the world, in Senegal, where Cassamance has seen separatist violence for three decades, young people from The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and the Senegal regions of Kolda and Ziguinchor Sedhiou took part in a training workshop on "Prevention and non-violent conflict management" organized in the framework of the project "Dynamics of Peace" by the Boy Scouts.

There are now so many peace education initiatives that the monthly newsletter of the Global Campaign for Peace Education lists up to a hundred of them each month. http://www.peace-ed-campaign.org/
In a recent interview, Federico Mayor, the former Director General of UNESCO which is responsible for education in the UN system compared peace education to "a new vibration pattern, as crossing waves in water" that can change the world. He called for a "reconceptualization of schools and its social function as psychological builders of the citizens of future generations. One of the biggest challenges of the future generations is the process of directing humanity towards new forms of cooperation and democratic social organization, which integrates the cultural diversity as a source of wealth, as well as fair and ecologically sustainable relationships with the environment."

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The states of the world have been more or less unable to advance with regard to sustainable development. This was evident clearly at the Rio+20 summit of the United Nations in 2012 dedicated to sustainable development. As stated by Candido Gryzbowski of the World Social Forum movement, "We say loud and clear that the multifaceted crisis (climate and environmental, financial, food, values...), which engulfs the whole world, also has another component: the crisis of governance." The agenda of history is now in the hands of civil society. According to Darci Frigo, a spokesman for the Peoples Summit of the Civil Society at Rio, "The official summit was a failure". In order to tackle the real problems faced by human kind, the food, environmental and social crises, he believes it is necessary to mobilize, to pressure governments and the UN system in order to further promote the agenda built by the civil society.

Fortunately the civil society movement for sustainable development is well-developed. As predicted by my UNESCO colleague Francisco Lacayo, it serves as a model for global movement for a culture of peace.

At Rio+20 the most effective initiatives were promoted by cities, by youth, and by indigenous peoples. Perhaps the most significant development for future history was the growing mobilization of cities, as seen in the World Conference of Local Governments for Sustainability
(ICLEI) which met immediately prior to the Rio+20 conference. In their evaluation of Rio+20, they posed the question "Do cities have to step in where governments are failing to take effective action?" and responded "Cities are cooperating internationally without borders, without customs, without military forces. They can address the issues of the future without the global power play that we see going on at intergovernmental level."

The new generation is taking a leading role in this new civil society leadership for sustainable development. The message to the Heads of State from the World Youth Congress meeting at the same time in Brazil was "You can work with us or be dragged along by us."

As was the case also in 1992 at the original Rio conference, it was the gathering of indigenous peoples at Rio who expressed the situation most eloquently: "We reaffirm our responsibility to speak for the protection and enhancement of the well-being of Mother Earth, nature and future generations of our Indigenous Peoples and all humanity and life."

In the years since Rio+20, the civil society continues to take the lead for sustainable development. More than 400,000 people turned out for the People's Climate March in New York City just days before many of the world's leaders debated environmental action at the United Nations climate summit in September, 2014. At times, it stretched more than 4 miles as marchers carried banners, signs and entire contraptions depicting everything from Mother Earth herself to the dinosaurs that now make up fossil fuels. More than 1,500 groups filled Central Park West before the march. They represented a variety of interests, including the scientific community and religious organizations. More than 50,000 students were there because they were worried about their future, while grandparents came out of concern for their legacy. "We need to act now ... We only have one atmosphere and we of the Marshall Islands only have one land to call 'home,'" Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, a young mother from the island nation, said before the march.
Numerous island nations in the Pacific and Indian Oceans are in danger of disappearing completely with the rising sea level due to environmental pollution and its consequent global warming. A particularly dramatic mobilization against this is being undertaken by the Pacific Climate Warriors: "From across 13 Pacific Islands, our Pacific Warriors will travel to Australia, carrying with us traditional hand-made canoes decorated with symbols of support from our homelands. We will use these canoes to lay down a challenge to the fossil fuel industry, and to highlight what we will lose if their reckless contribution to climate change continues. This will be a means of telling the industry, the Australian public, their Government, and the global community that climate change is having a real impact and is threatening the culture, health and environment of our Pacific Islands. Following this, our Pacific Warriors will travel the country, bringing our story of struggle directly to the Australian people. This will be a call-to-arms, a request that Australians take up the fight to the fossil fuel industry to save our homelands."

At the People's Climate March, a new network was launched in the United States called Campaign Nonviolence, dedicated to "take a stand against violence and to help build a culture of active nonviolence." By the end of the year there were almost 200 endorsing organizations.

In some cases, business enterprises are working for sustainable development. The largest industry of the world, if we do not consider agriculture and if we include hotels and airlines, is tourism. And it is, by its very nature, an industry of peace. It is the first industry to suffer when there is war or violence, and it has the potential, through the encounters of different cultures, to promote understanding and solidarity. There are so many initiatives for culture of peace through tourism that we can mention only a few of them here.

The Abraham Path shows how tourism can promote understanding and solidarity. By walking the Abraham Path the tourist can explore and experience Palestine's unique landscape, rich history, culture and its hospitable people, who generously offer the walker home stays and home cooked traditional Palestinian meals. It was recently selected by National Geographic Traveler as the world's number one walking trail.
The International Institute for Peace through Tourism recently celebrated its 25th anniversary, promoting a "Culture of Peace through Tourism." IIPT's vision is that travel and tourism should become the world's first global peace industry - an industry that promotes and supports the belief that every traveler is potentially an "Ambassador for Peace." They co-sponsored in February 2015 a high level symposium of tourism for peace, including the Secretary General of the UN World Tourism Organization. Over the years, IIPT has sponsored five conferences in Africa for peace through tourism.

Other types of business enterprises are increasingly concerning themselves with sustainable development. According to the Worldwatch Institute, "Over the last 15 years, the number of businesses of all sizes that choose to self-assess how sustainable their operations are, using widely accepted social and environmental standards, and to publicly disclose their results has been growing rapidly, especially in Europe and Asia." An important contribution to the debate has been made by Riane Eisler in her book "The Real Wealth of Nations" which cites a growing number of examples of private corporations that have found it profitable to provide day-care, flex-time and other arrangements that value the household work of their employees.

A number of civil society organizations are especially active to protect endangered species and preserve the planet's biodiversity. Thanks to pressure by the World Wildlife Fund and other such organizations, the world's governments recently signed onto an initiative to combat poaching and illegal trade of wildlife.

For another example, the Sierra Club branch in the Canadian province of British Columbia recently won a court ruling that the Minister of Environment and Minister of Fisheries and Oceans broke the law by delaying the production of recovery strategies for four at-risk species as mandated by the Canadian Species at Risk Act.
Fundamentally, we need to move from the present global economic system of exploitation and widening inequality to a peaceful economic system based on mutual cooperation and equality. Increasingly we hear voices expressing the urgency of such a transition. One of the most recent voices is that of the new Pope: "Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape. . . the socioeconomic system is unjust at its root," and thus spawns violence. . . Until exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples is reversed, it will be impossible to eliminate violence."

The austerity policies of governments are an economic manifestation of the present system of exploitation which provides the profits for the culture of war. Increasingly, there are political revolts against austerity, led by the Syriza party in Greece, and taken up by political parties in Ireland (AAA), Spain (Podemos), France (Nouvelle Donne), etc. In Germany, there have been demonstrations called “Blockupy”, inspired by the Occupy Wall Street movement a few years ago in the US. As usual, the people of Latin America have been in the lead, having rejected national policies of austerity many years ago.

Small farmers (peasants) are increasingly mobilizing around the world in a movement for "food sovereignty." The Sixth Congress of the Latin American Coordination of Rural Organizations-Via Campesina (CLOC-VC) that took place in Argentina demanded "Food Sovereignty supported by the realization of a Comprehensive and Popular Agrarian Reform (which) gives us back the joy of taking care of Mother Earth and producing the food that our people and humanity needs to ensure its development.” They rejected “the industrial food system and national and
transnational agribusiness corporations, responsible for climate change and biodiversity loss that affects us all”, and they highlighted “peasant and indigenous agriculture as the only way to feed the world while maintaining and increasing biodiversity and halting global warming.”

Each April 17, thousands of men and women of the international peasant movement mobilize worldwide to show their disagreement with transnational corporations and free trade agreements that affect the rural and smallholder agriculture as well as national food sovereignty. Since 1996, it is the International Day of global action by Peasant Struggle.

Of course, the struggle against exploitation, as always, is led by those who are exploited. A recent example is the struggle by women and girls in Southeast Asia against exploitation in the garment industries and as domestic workers.

Emphasizing that militarized economies are not sustainable, there are initiatives to reduce spending for the military spending and use it for human needs instead. Every year, the International Peace Bureau coordinates actions on the Global Day of Action on Military Spending in April coinciding with the release by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute of their annual statistics on global military spending.

Youth are on the front lines with innovative approaches to sustainable development that are often far from what we could have imagined years ago. An example is the use of "time-banks" involving the exchange of goods, services and accommodations without the use of money. The many local time-banks around the world have recently been integrated into a world-wide time-bank called Cronobank. How does it work? Very simple; one hour of any service and/or knowledge is valued equally for everyone and everywhere. Users must open an account in the time-market where demands and offers are published. The main tool is a location map of the other users and a word search engine. After each transaction an assessment of the other's behavior is done, favoring relationships over profits. Another innovative approach is "woofing," a system of exchange of work for housing and food which enables young people to travel and learn about and contribute to organic farming practices.
Youth are also in the leadership of the movement for "fair trade." As one young CPNN reporter from Ohio explains: "Fair Trade is a way to think globally and act locally, by buying items that we know that they were made by workers and farmers that were paid fairly for their work. Fair Trade means that the people who produce the items aren't being held in slave labor and a fair wage gives them the ability to invest in their communities, to rise up out of poverty and secure a better future for their families. As Ohioans, Fair Trade aligns with our values to respect one another and to value the work of ourselves and others."

The environmental movement includes civil society organizations associated primarily with other aspects of the culture of peace. For example, the Nobel Women's Initiative, usually associated with women's equality and traditional peace issues, is also mobilizing women to oppose the "Tar Sands initiative" in Canada which is not only the fastest-growing single source of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada, but which is also destroying the environment directly. So far, mining has damaged over 680 square kilometers of land in the region - and pipeline construction has cut through thousands of kilometers of pristine forest and polluted streams and lakes.

A special role in the defense of the planet is taken by indigenous peoples, who are directly linked to the environment and whose very existence depends upon it. We have already mentioned their role at the 1992 and 2012 Rio conferences on sustainable development. But for them it is a daily struggle. Bolivia, where the President is indigenous, has adopted one of the most radical environmental bills in global history. The "Mother Earth" law. The law was pushed by indigenous and campesino (small-scale farmer) movements and requires the government to transition from non-renewable to renewable energy; to
develop new economic indicators that will assess the ecological impact of all economic activity; to carry out ecological audits of all private and state companies to regulate and reduce greenhouse gas emissions; to develop policies of food and renewable energy sovereignty; to research and invest resources in energy efficiency, ecological practices, and organic agriculture; and to require all companies and individuals to be accountable for environmental contamination with a duty to restore damaged environments. The law will be backed up by a new Ministry of Mother Earth, an inter-Ministry Advisory Council, and an Ombudsman.

Indigenous peoples throughout Latin America have been playing a leading role in defense of the environment.

In Brazil, tribes across the country recently secured a historic nationwide victory, preventing Congress from seizing control of the future of their lands. If passed, the proposed constitutional amendment, known as ‘PEC 215’, would have caused further delays and obstacles to the recognition and protection of the tribes’ ancestral land, on which they depend for their survival. The Association of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB) stated “We indigenous peoples have shown that we will never allow our lands to be recolonized, invaded or destroyed, even if that means sacrificing our own lives.”

In Guatemala, in September 2014 the Congress of Guatemala announced the immediate repeal of Decree 19-2014 or Monsanto Law in response to a mass mobilization by the indigenous people of Sololá. The law would have required all farmers who cultivate corn to purchase their seeds from Monsanto. Anyone caught cultivating corn from their own seeds could be fined and could even face jail time. These new seeds are genetically modified to produce only once and every year farmers would have to buy new seeds in order to produce corn. Congress and its members made a public apology to the people of Guatemala for having made a poor decision.

Meanwhile, Representatives of the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca, Colombia, have toured Europe with the aim of strengthening alliances. They explained “We live in a strategic, resource-rich area, abundant with moorland, lakes and snowy areas. There is great mineral wealth, and for this they want us to get off the ridge so they can strip us of our ancestral
territories. . . [but] sooner or later indigenous peoples will be recognized as the true guardians of nature.

"Education for Sustainable Development requires far-reaching changes in the way education is often practised today," according to the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development. It means including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption. It also requires participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development. Education for Sustainable Development consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way.

Sustainable development is linked to all aspects of the culture of peace. As expressed by the United Nations Human Development Report of 2013: "sustaining development momentum requires enhancing equity, including on the gender dimension; enabling greater voice and participation of citizens, including youth; confronting environmental pressures; and managing demographic change."

Climate justice advocates, community peoples and mass movements' representatives met in Mozambique from 21-23 April 2015 to consider the roots, manifestations and impacts of climate change on Africa and to consider needed responses to the crises. They issued the Maputo Declaration of African Civil Society on Climate Justice, stating that "the long walk to climate justice requires mass education of our populace, as well as our policy makers, on the underpinnings of the climate crisis, the vigorous assertion of our rights and the forging ahead with real alternatives including those of social and political structures and systems."
HUMAN RIGHTS

The state of human rights is a good indicator of the state of a culture of peace. The rights of women, of democratic participation, of sustainable, equitable development, of honest information, all these are essential components of a culture of peace.

Leadership in the defense of human rights is provided by the United Nations and civil society organizations based on the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights. These include agencies such as the Human Rights Council of the UN, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and Survival International.

The 2014 session of the UN Human Rights Council addressed human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Syria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as the death penalty, genocide and sexual violence. It considered the rights of the child and the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as the promotion and protection of civil society activities.

The 2014 report of Human Rights Watch saw some progress over the past year. Two new multinational treaties give hope for some of the world's most marginalized peoples: domestic workers and artisanal miners poisoned by the unregulated use of mercury. The report also gave credit to the UN Human Rights Council by saying that after a slow start it is now becoming effective.

The new treaties respond to some of the needs seen in the Human Rights Watch report of 2013 which called for (1) regulating business operations around the world, especially in an era of globalization, to protect the rights of workers and people negatively affected by company operations, (2) ensuring that the human rights of people in zones impacted by environmental crises are not ignored by governments and others who frequently focus on the harm to nature, and (3) ensuring that arguments of "tradition" and cultural relativism are not used to deny women and minorities human rights that should be universal. The report also emphasizes the need to guarantee human rights in the political changes that are following the "Arab Spring." In particular, they call attention to activists struggling for human rights in Saudi Arabia.
The 2013 report of Amnesty International emphasizes the suffering of refugees and migrants: "Millions of migrants are being driven into abusive situations, including forced labour and sexual abuse, because of anti-immigration policies which means they can be exploited with impunity. Much of this is fueled by populist rhetoric that targets refugees and migrants for governments' domestic difficulties." While at the United Nations, "The excuse that human rights are "internal affairs" has been used to block international action to address rights emergencies such as Syria."

The 2013 report of Survival International celebrates a number of victories by indigenous peoples against encroachment in their lands by mining, logging and other forms of environmental exploitation. These include victories by the Guanari and Awa peoples in Brazil, the bushmen of Botswana and the Dongria Kondh in India. Other recent developments include the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada to bring healing in the wake of the historical oppression of indigenous peoples in that country. The rights of indigenous peoples also involves the right to a sustainable development, as emphasized by Canadian participants in the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

With the signing of a collaboration agreement, the Governor of Chiapas, Mexico, and Nobel Prize Winner Rigoberta Menchú Tum have joined efforts to strengthen and consolidate a just, equitable and inclusive public policy for indigenous peoples and communities of Chiapas. "Chiapas is a rich, prosperous state, and with the signing of this agreement we are making history so that future generations remember us doing and exalting a culture of peace," she said.
The struggle against child labor is not only led by the United Nations International Labor Organization, but also by trade unions of teachers.

In 2013 for the first time the United Nations has adopted a Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. They have established a fund and a Plan of Action which focuses on preventing trafficking, prosecuting offenders and protecting victims - also stresses the importance of obtaining more research, data and analysis about the problem.

Although one often thinks of human rights violations in terms of the poor countries of the world, there are also serious violations in the rich countries. An example is the lack of health care in the richest country, the United States, where people have rallied for health care as a human right. Unfortunately, general reports on human rights sometimes fail to criticize the rich countries and concentrate only on the poor ones. A similar error is committed by organizations that try to rank countries with regard to culture of peace. Inevitably, they claim that the rich countries have a culture of peace whereas the poor ones do not.

A key role for human rights has been played by the Nobel Prize for Peace. It was the Nobel Prize to Amnesty International in 1977 that took the Universal Declaration of Human Rights off the shelf and made it relevant to the struggles of people around the world. And in recent years, one has come to expect leadership for human rights from the winners of the Nobel Peace Prize.

For example, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel (Nobel Prize 1980) reminds us that in addition to addressing the human rights violations that took place under the military dictatorship in Argentina, it is equally important to address the pollution of natural resources and the children dying of hunger, poverty and abuse as well. And Aung San Suu Kyi (Nobel Peace Prize 1991 ) tells us "If I am asked why I am fighting for democracy in Burma, it is because I believe that democratic institutions and practices are necessary for the guarantee of human rights."

Unfortunately, most coverage of human rights issues by the mass media are negative, consisting of accusations of human rights violations, often pointed at the "enemy" as a kind of
propaganda weapon. But even in this case there can be a positive side. For example, at the same time as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and others denounced the Venezuelan government for violating the rights of political protesters, the Venezuelan government announced that it was complying with a demand of the the Foreign Ministers of the Union of South American Nations (Unasur) to establish a National Council for Human Rights. And in the neighboring country of Colombia, long known for its human rights abuses, the government recently launched the Ibero-American Institute of Human Rights Education, sponsored by the Organization of American States.

There is often a great deal of hypocrisy in the international accusations of human rights violations. This dates from the days of the Cold War when Western accusations of human rights violations in the socialist countries of the East were used as a propaganda arm of the culture of war. We see the same thing being done today as the United States, with the help of the commercial media, and (unfortunately) the leading human rights organizations, accuses Venezuela of human rights violations in its handling of the mass political demonstrations. Actually, these demonstrations are being orchestrated by the United States as a means of overthrowing the government that was elected there.

There is a further danger that the U.S. will use the pretext from this propaganda to justify a military intervention, using the so-called "right of humanitarian intervention." as they have done, or threatened to do in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and Ukraine.

Another example of hypocrisy concerns the failure of the Europeans and Americans to defend the people of Palestine in the face of the constant violation of their human rights by the state of Israel. Following the Israel attacks on Israel in July 2014, Amnesty International had the following to say: "Israeli forces have carried out attacks that have killed hundreds of civilians, using precision weaponry such as drone-fired missiles, as well as munitions such as artillery, which cannot be precisely targeted, on very densely populated residential areas, such as Shuja'iyyeh. They have also directly attacked thousands of homes. Israel appears to consider the homes of people associated with Hamas to be legitimate military targets, a stance that does not conform to international humanitarian law."
Calling for disinvestment from Israel, the Nobel Laureate Desmond Tutu explains that "Israel has created an apartheid reality within its borders and through its occupation. The parallels to my own beloved South Africa are painfully stark indeed. Realistic Israeli leaders have acknowledged that Israel will either end its occupation through a one- or two-state solution, or live in an apartheid state in perpetuity. The latter option is unsustainable and an offense to justice. We learned in South Africa that the only way to end apartheid peacefully was to force the powerful to the table through economic pressure."

The use of disinvestment as tool to enforce human rights in Israel and Palestine has continued to gain ground in recent years. The website of the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement lists a number of major divestment decisions in 2014, including those of the Dutch pension fund PGGM, the Luxembourg’s state pension fund FDC, the Irish students’ Union, students at the American universities New Mexico, Wesleyan University in Connecticut, and University of California Riverside, the Bill Gates Foundation, the Presbyterian Church of the USA, the parliament of Chile, the French multinational Veolia and the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. According to a UN report, foreign investment in Israel fell by 50% in 2014.

The rights of women, to democratic participation and the right to free flow of information will be considered in other sections to follow.
EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN

Women's equality is essential to the culture of peace. When we sent the draft Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace from UNESCO to the UN General Assembly in 1998, we made it clear that the linkage is essential between women's equality, development and peace: "Only this . . . can replace the historical inequality between men and women that has always characterized the culture of war and violence." In fact, at the dawn of humanity the monopolization of war and violence by men led to the historical exclusion of women from political and economic power (see my study Why There Are So Few Women Warriors for a scientific explanation). In order to achieve a culture of peace, the inequality must be reversed.

The reversal is well underway: the leadership of women for a culture of peace is more and more recognized, and the equality of women is being increasingly achieved. Let us begin with the women who have won the Nobel Peace Prize and who continue to provide leadership of the global movement for a culture of peace. We have already mentioned in the previous section the leadership for democracy and human rights by Aung San Suu Kyi from Myanmar (Nobel Peace Prize 1991).

Leyman Gbowee won the Nobel Peace Prize 2011 for her work with the Liberian women peace movement that demonstrated to the world that grassroots movements are essential to sustaining peace; that women in leadership positions are effective brokers for peace. She recently led a delegation of women to visit Rwanda and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo to hear from Congolese women who are using innovative and extraordinary strategies to end conflict and sexual violence against women in the region. She summed up their results by saying "They say that the DRČ is the rape capital of the world, but what I see is that it is the capital of strong women and solidarity among women."
Jody Williams from the USA (Nobel Peace Prize 1997) led a fact finding mission to Alberta, Canada, by the Nobel Women's Initiative and met with over 200 women in 13 communities who are directly impacted by expansion of the tar sands mining operation. The women voiced their concerns about a range of economic, health, and social impacts of the tar sands expansions - from homelessness, spiraling inflation, breathing problems, undrinkable water, and increased cancer rates to domestic violence and unequal access to jobs.

Mairead Maguire from Northern Ireland (Nobel Peace Prize 1976) continues to provide leadership for a culture of peace in many initiatives around the world. As she explains in a recent interview, "I hope that we can all work together to abolish armed forces, weapons research, manufacturing and trading of weapons. We can do this by building a culture of love, replacing a culture of violence and death. The great hope lies in the fact that human beings are continually evolving in their thinking, and we can replace military mindsets, with creative ways of conflict prevention, unarmed civilian peacekeeping. We are becoming more enlightened, and as we abolished slavery so too we can abolish armies and base our human security not on force, or threat of force, but on compassion, human rights and international law."

Rigoberta Menchu Tum received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992 for her courageous leadership for justice for her people, the indigenous peoples of Guatemala. She continues that struggle and recently won a major victory when the Former Guatemalan President Efrain Rios Montt was hauled off to prison. It was a historic moment, the first time in history that a former leader of a country was tried for genocide in a national court. More than three decades after he seized power in a coup in Guatemala, unleashing a U.S.-backed campaign of slaughter against his own people, the 86-year-old stood trial, charged with genocide and crimes against humanity. He was given an 80-year prison sentence.

Until her death in 2011, Wangari Maathai from Kenya (Nobel Peace Prize 2004), provided a powerful role model to women around the world for democracy and sustainable development. Her Nobel prize speech conveys her pride in African women's resilience; her emphasis on justice, integrity and trust; the contribution of tree-planting to promoting a culture of peace; the need to preserve both local biodiversity and cultural diversity.
In her Nobel Prize acceptance speech of 2003, Shirin Ebadi from Iran, in addition to championing the rights of women in the Middle East, had the courage to address the hypocrisy of the Great Powers when it comes to human rights issues. "Why is it that some decisions and resolutions of the UN Security Council are binding, while some other resolutions of the council have no binding force? Why is it that in the past 35 years, dozens of UN resolutions concerning the occupation of the Palestinian territories by the state of Israel have not been implemented promptly, yet, in the past 12 years, the state and people of Iraq, once on the recommendation of the Security Council, and the second time, in spite of UN Security Council opposition, were subjected to attack, military assault, economic sanctions, and, ultimately, military occupation?"

In 2014, Malala Yousafzai from Pakistan became the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize at the age of 17. In 2012, after becoming an advocate for girls’ education, she was shot by a Taliban gunman on her way home from school. She survived, and has become an international ambassador for education. Despite reoccurring Taliban threats, Yousafzai remains a staunch advocate for the power of education.

Although she is not yet a Nobel laureate, we should recognize Vandana Shiva from India for having provided leadership to grassroots ecological justice movements in south Asia for over four decades. She reports that "Every movement in which I participated, I noticed that women were the decision-makers - they decided the course of action and even were unrelenting in protecting the land and the sources of their sustenance and livelihoods."
Four Nobel Peace laureates were among the thousand women who celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: Mairead Maguire, Leymah Gbowee, Shirin Ebadi and Jody Williams. The League's purpose remains the same as when it was founded in 1915: "to empower women “to protest against war and to suggest steps which may lead to warfare being an impossibility.”

The leadership of women for a culture of peace was recognized by the United Nations Security Council in its Resolution 1325 adopted in 2000 to demand an important role for women in UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Faced with difficulties in its implementation, the Security Council recently adopted a new resolution 2122 to reinforce its provisions. The new resolution spells out specific measures to protect women's rights, including their right to sexual and reproductive health. It outlines measures so that delegations to peace talks, post-conflict national leaders, peacekeepers, mediators, foreign ministers and their staff, put into action the commitments set out in Security Council resolution.

The leadership of women for a culture of peace has also been recognized by UNESCO which has organized a network entitled "Women for a culture of peace in Africa". The ambition is to bring together African and non-African organizations involved in promoting the central role of African women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

Algeria hosted an International Women's Congress in October 2014, with over 50 speakers and 3,000 delegates from around the world, especially from muslim countries. They discussed 5 thematic areas: Perspectives, Ethics and Education, tradition and modernity, veiling and unveiling, Women and Culture of Peace.

A high point for women's equality comes each year with the meeting at the United Nations of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). In 2015 it was dedicated to analyzing progress and following up the Declaration and Platform of Action adopted by the World Conference on Women in Beijing twenty years previously. Setting a new record, more than 1,100 NGOs and a total of 8,600 representatives registered to participate in the Commission’s work. With regard to peace building, their discussions showed that there is a great po-
potential for progress, although it remains to be realized, since the latest available statistics show that women were only 9 per cent of negotiators at peace tables from 1992 to 2011.

In her closing speech at the CSW, UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka said, “We are all aware that there are no shortcuts to realizing gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls. Based on the road we have travelled, we know that there are more challenges ahead of us. We know we must continue to work, systematically and relentlessly, to bring about transformation in our families, societies, economies, and political and public spaces.”

There is an intrinsic relation between the culture of war and violence against women. It is evident that rape has always been a weapon of war, but that is not all. There is a consistent finding by social scientists, both political scientists and anthropologists, that there is a high correlation between the frequency of warfare of the state or non-state society and the frequency of local violence, including domestic violence, at the lower level. These studies also show that the causal relationship is one-way, that it is the higher level that influences the lower level. This consistent finding is understood to be the result of two factors: (1) that the state or tribe trains young men as warriors to be violent, and (2) that violence by the state or tribe serves as a behavioral model for the family and community.

Hence, the work for a culture of peace must include the struggle to end violence against women. And there is more and more evidence that this struggle is gaining force.

In Argentina, the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo received the 2010 Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize at UNESCO for their work to locate the biological families of children kidnapped during the political repression of the military dictatorship in Argentina. They seek to ensure that such violations never happen again by demanding the prosecution of all those responsible for the tragedy. More recently in Argentina, massive marches have taken place demanding the implementation of the law against Gender Violence, enacted in 2009, but never adequately enforced. They demand the establishment of a National Action Plan for the Prevention, Assistance and Eradication of violence against women.
In recent years CPNN has carried almost 50 articles concerning initiatives to end violence against women, coming from Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan as well as global initiatives by the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the Nobel Women, the Coalition for an International Criminal Court, and the initiative "One Billion Rising". A special case is the struggle against female genital mutilation in Africa.

As of August 2014, a ground-breaking European treaty on violence against women became binding. Countries ratifying the treaty are obligated to protect and support victims of violence. The treaty sets out minimum standards on prevention, protection, prosecution, and services. Countries ratifying must establish services such as hotlines, shelters, medical services, counselling, and legal aid.

Of particular importance, the struggle is gaining the support of men. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where women have suffered as a result of the constant warfare for many years, the "V-men Congo" "reaffirm our commitment to the struggle for gender equality where men will fight hand in hand with women so as to change the current marginalization of women and the limited access to resources... to build peace and a fair and prosperous world where everyone has the right to live in accordance with human dignity."
DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

It is not by accident that the progress in democratic participation is being made at the level of the city and not at the level of the national state.

At the level of the state, there is no progress. Instead, we are going backwards. More and more the American model is being imposed at the level of the state: a two-party system with alternation of electoral victories for the two sides, both of which are controlled by "big money", i.e. the capitalist class. This is accomplished by control of the mass media. Voters are given the "choice" of two capitalist alternatives and are forced to vote for the "lesser of two evils." Electoral candidates at the national level spend millions of dollars and are usually millionaire capitalists themselves. A few exceptions are elected from time to time, but they have only a few votes against hundreds of others that simply represent the interests of the capitalist class. The "American model" has been taken up by many other countries, most recently China where 86 members of the "Peoples Congress" are not millionaires, but billionaires!

In Africa, the national elections are often accompanied by violence, which is being fought by peace initiatives in countries such as Côte D'Ivoire, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

But one should not be surprised by all this. As I have shown in the History of the Culture of War, the state has literally become the culture of war in the course of recent centuries. And it is the capitalist class that continues to profit from the culture of war. Socialism does not survive in the competition of states, because it does not profit as much from the culture of war. We saw this most clearly in the case of the Soviet Union, but we see it today in countries like Cuba and Vietnam.

As a result, the budget of the modern state is largely devoted to preparation for war since military domination is necessary for the success of the capitalist class. Not surprisingly, since it heads up the American empire, the most extreme example in the United States where more than half of the national budget is devoted to the military expenditures, nuclear weapons and interest payments on previous military expenditures. This does not include social security which should be treated as an insurance investment by citizens since they have already paid for it.
At the level of the city there is continuing progress in democratic participation, as illustrated in the many examples of participatory budgeting. This, too, should not be surprising, since cities, over the past few centuries, have lost their previous culture of war. No longer do they have armies or patrol borders or need to pay for military contracts. Unlike the relations of states, the rich cities do not exploit the poor cities. Participatory budgeting, "presupuesto participativo" in Spanish, "orcamento participativo" in Portuguese, is a process by which citizens at a local level are able to decide directly what should be the priorities for expenditures in their neighborhoods.

And it should not be surprising that participatory budgeting began in Latin America and is being practiced there more than anywhere else. As we have seen repeatedly in CPNN, Latin America is the most advanced region of the world in developing a culture of peace.

In participatory budgeting, people improve immediately the quality of life for them and their neighbors. In no case, do we see people voting for war against an "enemy neighborhood." or a city in another region or country. Instead, they vote for simple projects that directly improve their quality of life. In fact, sometimes their decisions are so ordinary that rich people make fun of them. This was the case a few years ago when the New York Times gave space in one of their local pages to a participatory budgeting project in their city by putting it under the headline "The Voters Speak: Yes to Bathrooms."

Here are some examples of participatory budgeting (PB), as described in the CPNN bulletin of August 2014.

In Trenque, Argentina the priorities decided by the people include jogging paths, parks, waste collection for recycling, and workshops or cooperatives for growing fruits and vegetables, sewing and making toys. And in Paraná, Argentina, the priorities are street and road improvement, enhancement of green spaces, street lighting and water or sewer improvement.

In Rosario, Argentina, another city that has long engaged in PB, there is now a separate substantial budget that is decided upon by youth between the ages of 13 and 18, thus guaranteeing that the practice will be passed on to future generations.
Participatory budgeting in Ubatuba, Brazil

Where it has been installed, PB gains the confidence of citizens. For example, in La Serena, Chile, there were over 10 times more people taking part in the diagnostic stage of the process this year as compared to 2013. Information technology is being applied to reach even more citizens, as described in the case of Ubatuba, Brazil.

More and more cities are taking up PB. For example, in Portugal, "for the first time in its history, the Board of Alcoutim is implementing a Participatory Budget for the municipality of Alcoutim, which will take effect in 2015, with an investment of 100 million euros." Citizens in New York City, inspired by what they saw in Brazil, first started PB in four districts of their city in 2011. Now, in 2014, only three years later, 22 districts are using PB, committing at least $25 million to a public vote. Research shows that "the diversity of NYC is being represented in the process and new people are getting engaged: two-thirds of PB voters were women; 60 percent identified as people of color; 49 percent had less than a college degree; nearly half have household incomes less than $50,000; 32 percent were born in another country; 22 percent of ballots were cast in a language other than English; almost 70 percent had never worked with others in their community to solve problems; and 22 percent of PB voters identified barriers that made them ineligible to vote in traditional elections."

Participatory budgeting in Brooklyn, New York

At another level, there has been considerable progress in elected women to parliaments. A recent review by the Inter-Parliamentary Union shows that in the past 20 years the share of women in national parliaments around the world has nearly doubling with all regions making substantial progress towards the goal of 30 per cent women in decision making. Outstanding examples include Rwanda 63.8%, Bolivia 53.1% and Cuba 48.9%. 
The "Arab Spring" appeared at first to be a great advance towards democratic participation in the Middle East and North Africa. And, in fact, Tunisia which was the first of the "Arab Spring revolutions", has made some progress. However, Egypt and other countries have fallen back on military rule in the fact of economic and political contradictions. True enough, the military brings a certain “stability” instead of the preceding chaos. But consider the cost. Whenever the military takes control, it brings the culture of war: authoritarian governance, threat and/or utilization of violence, intolerance and identification of “internal enemies”, control of information, violation of human rights, male supremacy and development by exploitation. This has been the way politics have been conducted by every empire and every state stressed by crisis during the five thousand years since the unification of Egypt by the Pharaoh Narmer through military force. Confirming this analysis, one of the first acts of the new military administration in Egypt was to shut down four television stations.

Culture of peace consciousness has no doubt advanced since the beginning of the Arab Spring, as described in the analyses published in CPNN by Joseph Mayton and Ismail Serageldin, but the institutional frameworks of democratic participation have yet to be constructed. For example, when a new Egyptian constitution was under discussion, I urged my friends in Egypt to push for democracy at the local level in Egypt, so that local mayors and city councils could be elected rather than appointed by the central government. Unfortunately, things have gone in the other direction and power remains in the hands of the state, which, as we have seen, is tied to the culture of war.
INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING, TOLERANCE AND SOLIDARITY

As we said in the initial draft of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace that was sent from UNESCO to the UN General Assembly in 1998, "There has never been a war without an 'enemy', and to abolish war, we must transcend and supersede enemy images with understanding, tolerance and solidarity among all peoples and cultures. Only by celebrating the tapestry of our diversity, the common threads of human aspiration and social solidarity that bind us together, and by ensuring justice and security for everyone who makes up the warp and woof of the cloth, can we truly affirm that we are weaving a culture of peace."

There are innumerable initiatives and actions for international understanding, tolerance and solidarity - most of which are "under the radar" of the mass media and the history books. Here are a few of those what we have featured in CPNN, but it must be said that they are only a small part of what people are doing around the world every day.

Let's begin with youth initiatives. From 2012 to mid-2014, CPNN carried no less than 35 articles about youth solidarity initiatives taking place (ordered by date) in France, Tunisia, Denmark, Iceland, India, Georgia, Portugal, Kosovo, Pakistan, Burundi, Guatemala, Italy, Hungary, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Azerbaijan, Austria, Cape Verde, Palestine and Israel, Argentina, United States, Spain, Yemen and Bosnia Herzegovina. The initiatives included international conferences, youth cultural exchanges, solidarity with AIDS victims, a peace camp (called a "Peace Þing" in Icelandic), international summer schools, an international collection of stories, interfaith encounters, a human chain of youth, training courses and encounters of youth across lines of international conflicts.
The preceding list of youth initiatives is remarkably similar, both in geographic distribution and in variety of organizational forms, to a list that we assembled in 2006 by asking representatives of youth organizations around the world what they would do if they received funding for their work. That report, commissioned by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, became the basis for their Youth Solidarity Fund. Since 2008, the Youth Solidarity Fund has identified and provided funding to scores of youth initiatives, some of which are included in the list of CPNN articles.

The above list of articles provides a clear answer to the CPNN discussion question, "Is there a renewed movement of solidarity by the new generation?" Also in answer to this question, here is the response of a participants in one of the above-listed events: "Inspiration. If I had to define my experience during the week spent in Budapest with 31 young people from all over Europe this would be the word I use. Because inspiration is what we need to keep going, inspiration brings joy and a feeling of being able to do whatever we want. And why not? Human beings are able to do whatever they want, you just have to look around to see. So why not work towards a culture of peace?! Culture of peace was one of the themes we discussed in Budapest, and our main conclusions were that a culture of peace is a process that leads to a better world where human beings can live free in peace and dignity. . . Maybe some of you may laugh while reading this article, because it seems that there is a general tendency to irony and cynicism in our modern society towards peace and human rights matters. But, as Nick Lowe says in his song, ‘What’s So Funny ‘Bout Peace, Love, and Understanding’? For many people in Europe and in the world violence and human rights violations are a sad reality and something to care about. Just to give an example that is quite close to the majority of the readers from Europe I would like to mention the Roma case. In Budapest we met with an expert on Roma issues who introduced the group of young participants to the dreadful human rights violations of which Roma people are victims in Europe. Roma often have to hide the own identity if they want to have access to some basic rights (such as job). They lack access to education, lack access to jobs, lack access to health services, lack access to housing, the places where they live are burned, they are expelled from cities and countries (that signed human rights conventions and declarations), they are not involved in the community life, they are discriminated against... But, is this their problem? Or are they our problem? Or is it a blatant violation of human rights supported and perpetrated by States? Well, it seems too big an issue for you to solve? Maybe, but there are many things that we can do. And this what we learned in Budapest, how we young people can contribute to create a culture of peace by using advocacy tools such as awareness raising, dialogue, empowerment of communities so they can raise their voice and fight for their rights, lobbying, using media in a positive way, petitions, campaigning, mobilisation, among
many other great things. And above all, it is fundamental to share, to get inspired, to meet people, don’t work alone."

A particularly effective method of overcoming enmity and establishing solidarity in recent decades have been the National Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. The model was created in South Africa under the Presidency of Nelson Mandela and under the direction of another Nobel Peace Prize winner, Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Tutu’s account of the TRC in his book "No Future Without Forgiveness" which was reviewed in CPNN is unique in its clear explanation of the theory and practice of restorative justice, which was the method of justice in Africa before it was colonized. The book’s message is wonderfully summed up by a mother who ended up forgiving her daughter’s murderer: "I had finally come to realize that real justice is not punishment but restoration, not necessarily of how things used to be, but how they really should be."

Over the years since the one in South Africa, Truth Commissions have been conducted in something like 30 countries. The most recent one, in Canada, began in 2010 and was still ongoing at the time it was reviewed in CPNN in 2015. It is designed to overcome the genocidal policies carried out from the mid-19th to the 20th century by churches—including the Anglican Church of Canada—that operated 130 schools for more than 150,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit children as part of the Canadian government’s forced assimilation policy. The Canadian TRC events have had the effect of "raising consciousness and healing of all people, especially the survivors," according to the Anglican bishop Mark MacDonald. He adds that there has been a growing understanding among non-indigenous Canadians that healing needs to happen not just among former students and their families but in all of Canada.

Other TRCs reviewed in CPNN in recent years have been those in Rwanda, Cote D'Ivoire, Brazil, Panama, Burundi, Liberia and Peru.
A native Indian walks over pictures of people disappeared during the military dictatorship in Brazil at a protest against the 49 year anniversary of the 1964 military coup, in Rio de Janeiro on April 1, 2013.

In Rwanda, the process is known as the "Gacaca" (pronounced ga-cha-cha). Gacaca courts are set up at the village level, giving citizens, prisoners, and families of victims an opportunity to face each other before a panel of locally elected judges to discuss their roles and experiences during the 100 days of genocide. The judges then issue verdicts. This very "subjective" view of justice is very different from European systems that try to make justice "objective," removing the deliberations to huge marble buildings far from the common people and using professional lawyers whose fees are more affordable by the rich and judges who are considered to be "objective" but who are often appointed on political grounds.

Charles Konan Banny, President of Côte d'Ivoire Commission on Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation:

In Côte D'Ivoire, the TRC came up with a wide range of recommendations in the following categories (note the correspondence with the culture of peace!):
- Strengthening social cohesion and national unity
- Fight against injustice, inequality, tribalism, nepotism, exclusion and hatred in all its forms
- Education for peace, dialogue and peaceful coexistence
- Contribution to the emergence of a national consciousness and the adhesion of everyone to the primacy of the public interest
- The promotion of respect for differences and democratic values

In Brazil, the Truth Commission revealed the torture carried out by the military dictatorship of 1964-1985. The report contains harrowing accounts of the suffering of hundreds of Brazilians detained and tortured by members of the Armed Forces and police, many of whom were never seen again. The dictatorship targeted not only members of armed groups, but also critics, academics, clergy, trade unionists, rural workers, military officers who advocated a return to democracy, and members of minority and vulnerable groups. Among those tor-
tured was the current President of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff. It is hoped that further steps will be taken to bring the perpetrators to justice, and move towards a process of reconciliation.

As of 2015, new Truth Commissions were established in Panama 1966 to investigate the 1989 U.S. invasion of that country, and in Burundi to investigate the mass crimes committed in the country between 1962 and 2008. Another is foreseen for reconciliation in Colombia.

Truth Commissions established in the United States and Israel at the end of 2014 seem unlikely to promote reconciliation. The U.S. Commission 1954 revealed details of torture carried out by that country on prisoners in Guantanamo and elsewhere. Although it was an official commission under direction of the U.S. Senate, it seems unlikely that it will lead to any prosecutions, let alone reconciliation. The Israeli Commission 1950 to investigate the Nakba (the taking of Palestinian land to form the Jewish state of Israel), was initiated by an NGO in the face of strong opposition by the government. It is not surprising that the cases of Israel and the United States are the furthest from reconciliation. Israel is supported by the U.S. and the American empire is the center of the culture of war in the 21st Century, having organized torture not only in Guantanamo, but also in countries around the world, especially in Latin America.

We have already mentioned in this section, the ancient pre-colonial traditions of restorative justice in Africa. This is now being developed especially in Brazil, as described in several CPNN articles by Judge Leoberto Brancher of the AJURIS Magistrate’s School. Restorative justice is now being introduced throughout the world.
Restorative justice practices are spreading rapidly in the United States, which has over two million people in prison, largely people of color. Colorado, by the extensive involvement of volunteers for restorative justice, has greatly reduced repeat criminal offenses, and Vermont has a statute dating from 2000 that affirms restorative justice as state policy.

In the CPNN bulletin of September 2014, we described initiatives in Oakland, Los Angeles and Sonoma County, California. According to the latter, "Restorative Justice is rooted in the practices of indigenous societies, which saw individual actions that harm, hurt and kill as a disease of the culture. They did not perceive of the world as being made up of good guys and bad guys . . . They recognized misbehaviors as either the symptom of a disease or rooted in ignorance. They took on the responsibility to teach and heal the individuals who were reflecting the failures of the culture. Experience has taught us that victims are not healed through revenge, and that people are not rehabilitated through the cruelty of prisons. We are healed when we feel seen, understood and offered whatever rehabilitation is needed to become a contributing member of our community."

In the long term, the practices of dialogue, patience and understanding involved in truth and reconciliation commissions and restorative justice provide an alternative to the military interventions that have been so counter-productive in recent years, especially in the Middle East.

As the Elders Hina Jilani, Jimmy Carter, Mary Robinson and Kofi Annan explain in their response to the question “should military action be taken against Islamic State?": "military operations can never succeed in dealing with these kinds of forces unless and until a good social and political strategy is implemented in the areas where these forces are not active". Such a strategy is proposed in “A Cultural Program to Reject Extremism and Violence” by Ismail Serageldin, the head of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt which provides “seeds of hope” for a Cultural Transformation in the Arab World. What is needed is a policy of nonviolent engagement with the people in the groups that have been labeled as terrorists, rather than a policy of isolation.
FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION

The characteristic that sets our species us apart from all other animals is our ability to communicate with language. With this in mind, one might expect that the free flow of information and sharing of knowledge is our most natural and essential behavior.

However, the free flow of information is opposed by the culture of war, which requires the control of information.

With this in mind we can understand why whistle-blowers such as Julian Assange and Edward Snowden are considered by the state system as its most dangerous enemies. Back in 2004 I wrote the following in CPNN: "Whistle-blowers may be considered as very important actors for a culture of peace. Whistle-blowers break the back of secrecy directly and dramatically.

In making public the Israeli program of nuclear weapons Mordecai Vanunu continues the tradition of Daniel Ellsberg, who made known the Pentagon Papers during the Vietnam War and Karen Silkwood, who exposed nuclear pollution in the United States. Ellsberg was persecuted by President Nixon and Karen Silkwood was murdered, as described some years ago in a very fine film starring Meryl Streep. As the amount of government secrecy continues to increase, we may expect that the number of whistle-blowers will also tend to increase in the years to come."

As I write this ten years later, we find Mordecai Vanunu still imprisoned, Julian Assange still confined in the embassy of Ecuador in London because he risks a death sentence if he leaves and is captured by the Americans. Edward Snowden is in exile in Russia because of the same risk if he leaves the country or makes known his location. And Bradley Manning, who furnished the data to Assange, remains imprisoned in the US, where he has been threatened with the death penalty.
And what are the "crimes" of Assange, Bradley and Snowden? They simply made public the secret US government files - millions and millions of pages of them - far more secrecy than any of us could have imagined. But we should not have been surprised. Consider the following brief article that was published in the International Herald Tribune back in 1997: "Washington - Representative David Skaggs, Democrat of Colorado, was quizzing the head of administrative services at the CIA about classified material a while ago. How much, he asked, did the agency spend each year on classification? Well, the official said, that information is classified. Mr Skaggs persisted:

"Why is that?" he asked. "I'll have to get back to you on that" he recalled the official saying. He's still waiting. In the federal government, there is perhaps nothing so wonderfully Byzantine as a secret. You literally don't know what you don't know. And if you did know what you don't know, you still couldn't know it. That's called the need to know, and unless you have it, you may never know. But what we do know, courtesy of the Information Security Oversight Office of the National Archives, is that the government - except the CIA - spent $5.23 billion on classification last year."

In fact, I have come to the conclusion that in recent centuries the control of information has become the most important activity of the culture of war. Why is this? The main reason is simple, and it should make us very optimistic about the future. The culture of peace has gained so much ground at the level of individual consciousness that, unlike the situation in previous centuries, the average citizen is now opposed to war and the culture of war. And since the policies of governments continue to be based on the culture of war, if they wish to be at all democratic and respond to the desires of their citizens, they must keep their actions secret or risk being defeated in elections. All this should make us more optimistic on several levels. First, that anti-war consciousness has grown to the point that it is almost universal. Second, that the more he governments keep secrets, the more people they must engage in their secrecy, and the greater the likelihood of whistle-blowers. And third, each time a whistle-blower makes public the governments' secrets, the people react by becoming even more anti-war and anti-culture-of-war.
To illustrate the importance of the revelations of Assange, Manning and Snowden, here are examples of how they are seen by leading peace organizations and activists.

"The International Peace Bureau is delighted to announce that this year’s Sean MacBride Peace Prize is to be awarded to Bradley Manning, the US whistleblower whose case has attracted worldwide attention, for his courageous actions in revealing information about US war crimes."

"The aggressive prosecution and harsh sentencing of Manning not only contrasts sharply with the total impunity of former senior US officials for torture and related abuses, but also far exceeds the sentences most democratic countries impose for public leaks of sensitive information,” said Dinah PoKempner, general counsel at Human Rights Watch.

"Assange, Manning and WikiLeaks, by making public in 2010 half a million internal documents from the Pentagon and the State Department, along with the 2007 video of U.S. helicopter pilots nonchalantly gunning down Iraqi civilians, including children, and two Reuters journalists, effectively exposed the empire’s hypocrisy, indiscriminate violence and its use of torture, lies, bribery and crude tactics of intimidation. WikiLeaks shone a spotlight into the inner workings of empire—the most important role of a press—and for this it has become empire’s prey.” - Chris Hedges, writing in Truthdig/

"The eighth Whistleblower Prize ceremony [was] awarded to Snowden . . . by the Federation of German Scientists (VDW), the International Association Of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA) and Transparency International for leaking information about US National Security Agency (NSA) surveillance of Internet and phone traffic as well as other classified data."

On June 4, 2015, despite his continued exile in Russia, Snowden declared victory in an op-ed piece published by the New York Times: "Two years on, the difference is profound. In a single month, the NSA’s invasive call-tracking program was declared unlawful by the courts and disowned by Congress. After a White House-appointed oversight board investigation found that this program had not stopped a single terrorist attack, even the president who once defended its propriety and criticized its disclosure has now ordered it terminated."
Of course, there are many other people who have risked their freedom, and even their lives, to provide truthful information to the public. Each year on World Press Freedom Day (May 3), UNESCO awards the Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. The winner in 2013 was Reeyot Alemu from Ethiopia. She has written critically about political and social issues, focusing on the root causes of poverty, and gender equality. After working for several independent media, in 2010 she founded her own publishing house and a monthly magazine called Change, both of which were subsequently closed. In June 2011, while working as a regular columnist for Feteh, a national weekly newspaper, Ms Alemu was arrested. She is currently serving a five year sentence in Kality prison.

Increasingly, it is recognized that free access to information should be considered as a basic human right. Recently, Brazil adopted an internet bill of rights called the "Marco Civil". The Marco Civil considers the Internet as an essential tool for freedom of expression and it must help the Brazilian to freely communicate and manifest under the Constitution. It makes the point that "the internet is essential to the exercise of citizenship."

Mary Robinson, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights considers that "The internet has given rise to a new space and new tools for human activity, but it does not require a new set of rules. The internationally agreed rights to freedom of opinion and expression, to peaceful assembly and association, and to take part in government are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These covenants should be applied to the online world in exactly the same way that they apply to the ‘offline’ world. In July this year, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution affirming that these rights should be protected on the internet, which was a welcome step in the right direction."
At the end of 2012 the UN held a World Conference on International Telecommunication. The United States, Europe and their allies refused to accept the results of the conference, because, according to the commercial media, they wanted to avert a "takeover" of the Internet by the International Telecommunication Union which is an agency of the United Nations system. However, according to the article in CPNN by Professor Milton Mueller of the Internet Governance Project, this was a false alarm. In fact, the management of the Internet is securely in the hands of a number of private organizations that are indirectly controlled by the richest countries, as described in a CPNN discussion.

The major commercial media continue to serve the culture of war. As I have shown in the History of the Culture of War, over the course of the past few centuries the media have become its most important tool. Its coverage of war is designed to convince people that a culture of war is inevitable and/or necessary and that it should be supported by them. Its coverage of disastrous events like plane crashes is designed to convince people that they are helpless in the face of superior forces and there is no way for them to change the course of history.

Media like CPNN, on the other hand, can be a major tool for the culture of peace, letting people know that a culture of peace is possible, and how they can support it. It can give people confidence that they are the creators of history. As we said in the slogan for the UN International Year for the Culture of Peace, “Peace is in our hands.”

At the present time, there are not enough media sources like CPNN. I have seen a few new internet sites that provide news on a regular basis about the culture of peace, such as the Good News Agency (in English and Italian) and the People’s World Peace Project (English only). I have not found culture of peace news sites in other languages, although CPNN carries some articles in French, Spanish and Portuguese. We need sites in Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Swahili, Urdu, Hindi, etc., as well as in local languages. And we need many more readers and reporters!
The media in Africa are in advance of the rest of the world in their promotion of a culture of peace. According to the Hirondelle Foundation, the media should create positive content. In pursuit of this ideal they have installed Radio Okapi in Kinshasa, Radio Ndeke Luka in Bangui, the Tamani studios in Mali, Mozaïk in Ivory Coast, and Hirondelle in Guinea. Previously CPNN featured articles on the African Journalists’ Network for Peace and Security (NetPeace), culture of peace in the journal Afrique Démocratie, and several national initiatives in Mali, Cameroon and Somalia.

The African Media Initiative (AMI) and United Religions Initiative – Africa (URI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to counter violent extremism, radicalization and terrorism in Africa and to combat hatred, prejudice, intolerance and stereotyping on the basis of religion and culture. The partnership calls for:
- The establishment of Departments of Peace in each African country
- The establishment of the African Editors-in-Chief Forum to promote a culture of peace
- Promotion of peace education in Africa as part of the school curriculum
- Promotion of the African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum

We can expect that as the number of culture of peace news sites increases, and their readership increases, the commercial media will be forced to cover more culture of peace news in order to avoid losing their readership. If and when that time comes, we will be able to say that the tide is turning towards a culture of peace!
On April 2, 2013, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty, an historic first step towards a control of the global arms trade. And by October, it achieved the 50 ratifications needed to trigger a 90-day countdown to entry into force. The Treaty includes a number of rules to stop the flow of weapons to countries when it is known they would be used to commit or facilitate genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or other serious violations of human rights. Five of the top 10 arms exporters – France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK had already ratified the Treaty by October, while the USA had yet to ratify it. There has been resistance to ratification from other major arms producers like China, Canada, Israel and Russia. One of the young people involved in the effort to pass the treaty, Meg Villanueva, explained to CPNN "what it means to a young person like me." And another CPNN article from Amnesty International described the long process that went into its adoption. Much of the world followed this with great interest, but people in the United States were kept in the dark, as it was not covered by their mass media.

As emphasized in all of the articles, the Treaty is only a first step. Further steps require the development of means to implement its provisions. We should not forget it took almost 20 years after the adoption of the historic Declaration on Human Rights before the United Nations Commission could begin to even investigate and produce reports on violations.

Quietly, and without much publicity, the most successful of recent disarmament efforts continues to advance: the banning of landmines and cluster bombs, thanks to the continued leadership by the civil society. The 1997 Mine Ban Treaty and 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions have been highly successful in addressing and reducing the threat to individuals and communities.
ties worldwide from these banned weapons. As of April 2013, there were 161 States Parties and one signatory to the Mine Ban Treaty to date while 111 states have joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions, of which 80 are full States Parties.

If we take only a short-term view of history, it could be said that only took one step forward and one step back with the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the United Nations. We should not expect any real control of the arms trade to be possible as long as the world (and the UN) are run by states.

As we have seen, military power has become essential to states, and they consider that to give it up is to commit suicide. Once again recently, this was stated explicitly by the British government when it warned that if it were to lose its nuclear force in Scotland it would lose its power on the world stage.

Another example was in 2015 when the United Nations Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty failed to come up with any agreement. A proposal for nuclear disarmament in the Middle East was finally abandoned when the United States backed out because of its support for Israel's nuclear weapons program.

Meanwhile armaments continue to proliferate, whether nuclear arms or small arms, despite the treaties. Hence, in the short-term, we may say there is one step back that cancels the one step forward. A recent annual report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute shows that world military spending has decreased a little because of the global economic crisis, but that spending by China and Russia is increasing. The nuclear arms race continues despite efforts by the civil society, and the proliferation of small arms continues to kill. In the United States, despite efforts by activists such as Michael Moore and the teachers' unions, there are mass killings with automatic weapons on a regular basis.
If we take a long-term view of history, we can see that the Arms Trade Treaty provides a second step forward. The Treaty joins other declarations by the United Nations, including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, as documents that can someday be the basis of a universal culture of peace. This will become possible when the United Nations (or its successor) is no longer dominated by states, but by the peoples of the world through another form of representation such as leagues of cities and regions.

With a long-term view, we can see how the efforts of the civil society, working in the context of the United Nations, flawed as it may seem, are laying the basis for a new world. The documents are only the visible portion of the much greater “iceberg” of consciousness of the people of the world that, in the words of the World Social Forum, “a better world is possible.”
THE GEOGRAPHY OF PROGRESS

It should not be surprising that the greatest progress towards a culture of peace is being made in Latin America and Africa, regions that have never had the great empires of the culture of war. There is less progress in Europe, East Asia and North America where the European Union, Russia, the United States and China are still very much engaged in the culture of war.

Latin America is at the leading edge of the global movement for a culture of peace.

The continent was the first to establish city culture of peace commissions, as well as city commissions for components such as human rights in Sao Paulo and sustainable development in Aguascalientes, Mexico. Also the invocation of the culture of peace as the basis for the Union of South American States (UNASUR) was a pioneering development.

Now, we can add to this list of innovations, the development of the culture of peace at a regional level in Brazil, Peru and Mexico. As discussed, this is an important new step since a region can be self-sustaining with regard to its agricultural basis, unlike the city.

In fact, Latin America has always been at the leading edge. The initial concept came in 1986 from an initiative in Peru headed by the Jesuit scholar Felipe MacGregor. The first national project was in El Salvador in 1993, and that experience was the basis for the adoption of the culture of peace programme by the Executive Board and General Conference of UNESCO. The further development of the culture of peace as a social movement came in 1994 from a “Group of Reflection” of Latin American experts in association with UNESCO. It was the representatives from Latin American countries at the United Nations in New York that began in 1995 the annual resolutions which led eventually to the UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. And the initial call for an International Year for
the Culture of Peace came from a meeting of Latin American newspaper editors in Puebla, Mexico, in 1997.

The second and third largest number of signatures on the Manifesto 2000, by which individuals promised to support a culture of peace in their daily lives, came from Brazil (15 million) and Colombia (11 million).

During the International Decade for a Culture of Peace from 2001-2010, the rich countries, including Europe and the United States and their allies, refused to support the culture of peace, including its annual UN resolutions. On the other hand, the countries of Latin America were outstanding in their support. For example, at the midpoint of the Decade, the UN resolution was signed by the following countries of Latin America and the Caribbean: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Granadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Most recently, in 2014, the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) proclaimed their region a "zone of peace" including "the promotion in the region of a culture of peace based, inter alia, on the principles of the United Nations Declaration on a Culture of Peace." Language specifically promoting a culture of Peace has been included in the constitutions of Bolivia and Ecuador.
Latin America has taken the lead in a number of other related initiatives. The Earth Summit that took place in Brazil in 1992 was the turning point in the development of sustainable development. The practice of participatory budgeting which is revolutionizing democratic participation began as an initiative of the Workers Party of Brazil when they were in charge of the city government of Porto Allegre, and it has now spread throughout Brazil as well as Argentina and Chile. Brazil has become the first major country to make restorative justice the model for the entire judicial system.

It has already been mentioned that the indigenous people of Latin America make important contributions to the culture of peace, especially with regard to sustainable development in countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, Brazil and Bolivia. Bolivia is especially remarkable as having the only indigenous chief of state.

I expect that the leadership from Latin America will continue. For this reason, I wrote in my utopian novel, I Have Seen the Promised Land, that the key moment in the transition of the United Nations from control by states to control by city and regional governments would come at a global meeting that takes place in Porto Allegre, Brazil, in the year 2021. I wrote that seven years ago, and now we have only six more years before 2021. But so far, given the continuing leadership from Latin America, I would still make the same prediction.
One can say, from an historical perspective, that the global movement for a culture of peace was born in Africa. The International Congress of UNESCO held in Yamoussoukro (Ivory Coast) in 1989 on the theme "Peace in the minds of men", gave birth in 1989 to the concept of culture of peace. Twenty five years later, UNESCO and the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Foundation for peace research jointly celebrated this anniversary in September 2014. The celebration measured the progress made since 1989 geared towards the implementation of this concept and explored future avenues, in particular, by launching the activities of the Network of foundations and research institutions for the promotion of a culture of peace in Africa, established a year earlier at the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa.

Africa, also, is at the leading edge. A recent edition of the CPNN bulletin emphasizes the contributions of Nelson Mandela, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, and the Gacaca in Rwanda. It describes African networks of mass media, radio and television, devoted to the culture of peace, made available to everyone on a daily basis at a grassroots level (see section on free flow of information).

Educational systems in West Africa have made it a priority to develop and use manuals for culture of peace and human rights written in such a way as to speak directly to local communities, developed as a network that unified the peoples across national boundaries 1924 (see section on peace education).
International networks of youth, women and research institutions for a culture of peace are being developed in Africa with the sponsorship of UNESCO and involving its field offices and national commissions.

Initiatives are underway to ensure that elections are not a contest of winner-take-all power, but rather an opportunity for the people to be listened to and their demands translated into governmental decisions based on the collaboration of all political parties and candidates. Exemplary initiatives include the National Peace Council of Ghana, an initiative by the churches of Zimbabwe, dialogues in Benin, and a UNDP initiative in Lesotho.

We have mentioned earlier the establishment by UNESCO of a Network of "Women for a Culture of Peace in Africa." More recently it has been joined by a Youth Network for Culture of Peace in Africa."

It is not by accident that there is so much news from Africa for a culture of peace. It reflects their cultural history. Like people on other continents, the Africans always had culture of war at a tribal level, but with the exception of the Nile River Valley, they did not use war to create empires until the arrival of the Arabs and the Europeans. And even then the division of Africa into warring states was imposed by the Europeans.

Instead of the authority of empires, pre-colonial Africa was ordered by effective peace-making traditions of dialogue and mediation at the community level, often called the “palabre” (word). They were based on respect for the elders (both men and women) and compromise among the many animist spiritual forces, unlike the supreme authority of monotheism imported by the Arabs and Europeans.

These traditions re-emerged during the freedom struggle in South Africa, both in the Peace Process involving local peace committees and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which was presided over by Bishop Tutu. More recently, we see it re-emerging in the peace
process in Somalia and the Gacaca commission in Rwanda, not to mention the work of the Elders, an initiative that was launched several years ago by Nelson Mandela in the African peace-making tradition. We also see it in CPNN articles on a culture of peace featuring African women, artists, especially musicians, educators and journalists.

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I say that the traditions are “re-emerging” because they were largely suppressed by the Europeans when the conquered Africa. We came face to face with this when I was working at UNESCO and we started working on a National Culture of Peace Program for Burundi. In pre-colonial times, there was a tradition of the Bashingantahe, elders who did mediation and peace-making. But they were systematically assassinated by the colonial power. After all, peace-making is a kind of power since it unites people, and it is difficult to conquer a people that is united. So what we did was to seek out a few Bashingantahe who were still functioning and help them to train a new generation.

I was at UNESCO during the years when the freedom movement of South Africa succeeded in creating a non-racist government, and we wanted to find financing to keep the Peace Process going, since it needed to be independent of the government. Unfortunately, it was not possible to find money and the institutions lapsed. However, the lessons gained at that time are still bearing fruit throughout Africa, and hopefully we will learn from them throughout the world.

In general, we should recognize that the African people, with their unique peace-making traditions, can make a major contribution to the world historical transition to a culture of peace. It remains to be seen how this may take place in the coming tumultuous years. One thing seems certain to me – that it will not take place at the level of state power. We
have seen recently that the African elder, Kofi Annan, was unable to apply African peace-making methods to the situation in Syria. He resigned because his advice was not heeded by the Europeans and Americans who preferred a military “solution.” We have seen this before: 20 years ago Mohamed Sahnoun, the Algerian diplomat worked as the UN representative for the reconstruction of Somalia by involving elders, teachers and religious leaders in a true African peace-making approach. His work was ruined by the American decision to “send in the marines.” Like Kofi Annan, he resigned with a public denunciation of the military “solution.” Once again, we cannot escape seeing that the transition to a culture of peace must involve new democratic structures instead of the states with their “military solutions.”

It is not surprising that in the list of countries with a high proportion of women in parliament, eight of the top twelve are from Africa or Latin America. As mentioned earlier these include Rwanda 63.8%, Bolivia 53.1% and Cuba 48.9%. Others are Senegal 42.7%, South Africa 41.9%, Ecuador 41.6%, Namibia 41.3% and Nicaragua 41.3%.

Although Latin America and Africa are in the leadership, this may be difficult for the North to accept. The transition to a culture of peace requires a complete reversal of the domination and exploitation of poor states of the South by the rich states of the North. It is by means of the culture of war that the North has amassed its wealth. And it is their continuing profit from the culture of war that blocks their movement towards a culture of peace. On the other hand, Africans and Latin Americans have everything to gain by such a complete reversal.

The coming years will also be difficult for the North, because, over time, they will continue to lose not only their power, but also their wealth that has been maintained through the culture of war. There is a great danger, more and more visible in national elections in Europe and North America, that voters will turn to fascist political parties in their desperate search for a solution. But perhaps the most difficult thing for the North will be the psychological aspect of
this historical transition. The people of the North, particularly their intellectuals and political leaders, have developed a racist belief in their superiority. The loss of that illusion may be difficult to swallow, as the leadership of history passes into the hands of the Global South.

Rather than trying to save the rest of the world, progressives in the North should try to save their own societies from racist and chauvinist illusions, and from economies based on exploitation. In this regard they should adopt some of the approaches suggested by Johan Galtung in his analysis of the Fall of the American Empire: to work at the local municipal level instead of trying to change national policies, to organize local cooperatives and local food production instead of importation and agro-business, local banks instead of investment banks, local construction of affordable housing to provide jobs as well as housing.

The transition to a culture of peace needs to be a universal struggle. By working locally for a culture of peace, the people of the North can take their place along with activists of the South in this universal, historical, nonviolent, yet revolutionary struggle. In fact, the movement is truly universal, as we see from the range of regions from which CPNN regularly publishes articles. The only region which seems to lag is East Asia, although this may be an illusion caused by our different terminologies. I recall a personal luncheon with the Ambassador from China to UNESCO at the time when I was director of the International Year for the Culture of Peace. After listening intently to my description of our initiatives for the culture of peace, he said suddenly, “Oh, now I understand. You are talking about social harmony.” The terminology of China was molded in the philosophy of Confucius which is quite different from Western philosophy.

The universality of the culture of peace was ensured by the adoption in 1999 of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace by the UN General Assembly which is the closest we come to a universal forum of humanity. Just as the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights provided universal recognition for human rights, so, too, the 1999 Declaration and Programme of Action has provided, with its 8 action areas, a universal basis for the culture of peace. This was summed up by Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury who shepherded the Declaration and Programme of Action
through the difficult process of adoption. Presenting the document to the General Assembly, the Ambassador said that it brought in subjects that the Assembly had rarely touched in its 50 year history: “I believe that this document is unique in more than one way. It is a universal document in the real sense, transcending boundaries, cultures, societies and nations. Unlike many other General Assembly documents, this document is action-oriented and encourages actions at all levels . . . All people from all walks of life and all sorts of backgrounds can contribute to its implementation.”

As Ambassador Chowdhury correctly stated, one aspect of its universality is its relevance to the everyday actions of people throughout the world.

Another aspect of the universality of the UN declaration was ensured by the manner in which we prepared it. We began by analyzing and forming the alternative to its antithesis which is another universal culture, the culture of war that has dominated the world at least since Neolithic times. It has become, over time, the culture of the state. As I have often remarked, if you placed Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Julius Caesar, Napoleon and General MacArthur in a room with interpreters, they would find themselves in complete accord.

Given the universality of the culture of war, the only way we can arrive at a culture of peace is through a universal transformation of one to the other. In a blog with the title “Can a Culture of Peace be created in only one zone of the world?”, I have answered that it has not been possible, because previous attempts limited in scope have been crushed by the culture of war. For example, governments in Latin America have tried to move towards a culture of peace at times in the past, only to be attacked and prevented from doing so by intervention from the United States. The most extreme examples were Cuba under Fidel Castro in 1961 and Chile under Salvador Allende in 1973. And now even as I write this, there is strong evidence that "state within a state" forces in the United States, perhaps even without the knowledge of...
President Obama, are trying to destabilize Venezuela because its policies do not fit with the American culture of war. Cuba, after the Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961, installed a socialist culture of war in defense. And Chile, after the overthrow of Allende in 1973, established a classic fascist dictatorship under Pinochet. Is Venezuela destined to suffer a similar fate?

**SCENARIO FOR THE FUTURE**

Several years ago I tried to imagine how we could make the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. I wrote it in the form of a utopian novella that takes place in the imaginary world of 2026-2027. I imagine that the system of states is so weakened by a global economic crash that it leaves a space for a brief moment of history in which an alternative system could be constructed. I imagine a radically reformed United Nations where states have been replaced on the Security Council by regional associations of cities whose interest would be the establishment of a culture of peace rather than continuing the culture of war.

The second part of my book explains why I chose that particular scenario. I did not choose to imagine a World War III. Although the scenario might be plausible, it was too horrible for me to imagine, and so I chose not to attempt an illustration of it. In any case, I found it easier to write a scenario about the world that I know, that of Europe and the United States, New York and the United Nations. If I had to imagine a nuclear war involving Europe and the United States, I would have to imagine a world that is, for me at least, unimaginable.

In any case, we face a future of enormous suffering due to the collapse of the American empire and the global economic system. A few years ago, there were only a few people predicting the collapse of the American empire, including Johan Galtung in his 2004 article On the Coming Decline and Fall of the U.S. Empire. One takes Galtung especially seriously because in 1980 he predicted the collapse of the Soviet Empire within 10 years and he was precisely correct. In the year 2000 Galtung predicted that the U.S. Empire would collapse in 2025, but in his 2004 article he says that the ill-conceived actions of President George W. Bush brings the end forward to 2020.
In recent years, there is a growing chorus of voices predicting the collapse of the American empire as the evidence becomes more and more convincing. Exactly when this will occur is impossible to know for sure, but it seems that the date of 2020 is as good as another. In any case, we have little time to prepare an alternative system.

What should an alternative system look like, if we wish to make the transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace? Here is what I proposed in my novella.

1) It must not be dominated by states. The state, as I have shown in my History of the Culture of War has come to be identified irremediably with the culture of war.

2) It should be democratic. It should be managed by representatives elected by all of the people in a transparent fashion. Since national elections are dominated by the state, they are not appropriate. Instead, representatives should be chosen through electoral systems at the level of cities, towns and regions. Although there is often corruption at this level, at least it is not usually part of the culture of war, since cities, towns and regions do not have armies, heavy weapons, military contracts, borders to defend or to limit access.

3) It should take advantage of the United Nations structure. My experience at the United Nations showed that we could promote a culture of peace, but we were thwarted by the management of the Member States. Therefore, managing members of the key UN bodies, especially the Security Council, should come from regional associations based on local rather than national elections so as to be independent of institutions associated with the culture of war. For example, regional associations of cities and towns could name the representative from their region to the Security Council. Other UN bodies such as FAO, UNESCO, etc., could be managed in the same way in order to avoid culture of war domination.

4) Since the United Nations General Assembly issues non-binding opinions rather than actions, it may be composed of representatives from other non-elected actors such as major, international non-governmental organizations, corporations, trade-unions as well as perhaps states through their regional associations.

5) The states, although enfeebled by the crash of the American empire and the associated global economy, would continue to manage the militaries of the world, but rather than being used for war, militaries should be used for humanitarian relief needed as a result of a global economic crisis. Over time, as a culture of peace develops, the militaries should "wither
away" as Marx and Engels once dreamed, along with their military maneuvers, their military contracts and their defense of borders. Other functions now associated with states will be better served by expanding the functions of existing UN agencies that already manage international airline traffic, shipping, communications, etc. States would gradually be reduced to a ceremonial level such as that served today by royal families in many countries.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The people's consciousness that we need to replace the culture of war with a culture of peace has grown rapidly over the past few decades and it continues to grow.

In this book we have seen that consciousness is growing in all eight areas of the culture of peace, from education for peace to disarmament and security. Probably the greatest growth is in the recognition that we need sustainable, equitable development to replace the existing economic system based on exploitation of human workers and environmental resources.

Consciousness is certainly important for historical change. If you believe, as I do, that history is made by human beings, not by external forces, then it may be seen as essential.

Consciousness is being promoted by global media such as the Culture of Peace News Network which provides news of initiatives and media promoting the culture of peace throughout the world. However, the readership of CPNN remains small, as is the case for other similar internet news networks.

There is progress towards media for a culture of peace in Africa, which contributes to a growing consciousness in that continent.

However, I don't believe that consciousness is sufficient. We need institutional transformation of governance as well. At key moments of history there need to be critical actions that transform those cultural institutions that have maintained the injustices of the past. But whereas consciousness can change overnight, the development of governmental institutions is a slower process. If we are to replace the institutions of the culture of war by new institutions for a culture of peace, we need to develop them now so they can be ready to function
when the old system crashes. Otherwise, it is likely that after a brief pause following the crash of the old system, we may revert to the old institutional framework, perhaps even worse than before. That was what happened during the Great Depression of the 1930's. State institutions of governance crashed one after another and were replaced in many cases by fascist regimes that carried the culture of war to its most extreme form.

At the present time, we have not yet developed the new institutions needed for a culture of peace. I believe that is our greatest weakness.

When I worked at UNESCO beginning in 1992 I hoped that we could achieve a culture of peace through actions by the United Nations. The initial resolution adopted by UNESCO that year called for an agreement of UNESCO "with the United Nations Security Council to fund a Culture of Peace Programme with 1 per cent of the peace-keeping budget". And at first I was optimistic, as we developed national culture of peace programs in El Salvador and Mozambique designed to follow up UN peacekeeping operations. But by 1996, it had become evident that the Member States of UNESCO did not want to invest in the culture of peace, and these were the same Member States that control the UN in New York.

As long as Federico Mayor remained at UNESCO it was possible to promote the culture of peace in that part of the UN system since he was personally committed to it. And thanks to his leadership we were able to do a massive mobilization of 75 million people around the Manifesto 2000 and the International Year for the Culture of Peace. We were also able to pass the resolution for a Declaration and Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace at the UN in New York thanks to the able leadership of Anwarul Chowdhury. But the rich and powerful Member States made sure that the resolution could not have any action component, but stripping it of provisions for a voluntary fund, and once Mayor left and the International Year was over, there was no longer any effective support for culture of peace at the UN. All that was left was a symbolic annual resolution and, in recent years, a High Level Forum sponsored by the President of the General Assembly. In the most recent Forum in 2014, however, the GA President did not even bother to show up.
Having concluded that we could not achieve a culture of peace through the state, I have been trying to encourage the development of culture of peace commissions at the level of towns, cities and regions, but this has not been very successful.

Most successful has been the continuing development of the Peace Commission of the city of New Haven, Connecticut (U.S.) where I have lived on and off for 50 years. Each year we make a report of the state of the culture of peace in New Haven, and each year we find that we are making slow but steady progress. We've been in touch with a group in Ashland, Oregon, that is in the process of developing a similar commission.

On the other hand, the network of city peace commissions that were established in Brazil during the International Decade for a Culture of Peace (2001-2010) has more or less collapsed, and other initiatives such as that in Hamilton, Ontario (Canada) have failed to develop as expected. There are a number of networks of "peace cities" but it is not clear that they are developing a durable, democratic institutional framework that can promote a culture of peace.

At one point, several years ago, it seemed that we were on the verge of developing a network of culture of peace institutions in cities and towns around Barcelona in Catalonia, Spain, which could have been linked to the largest global network of cities, but the project fell through.

If instead of institutions that promote the full gamut of the culture of peace, we look for institutional frameworks linked to its components, then we can see more progress:


Sustainable development: While the states and the UN stumble on this question, cities have taken up the leadership. For example, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability is the world’s leading network of over 1,000 cities, towns and metropolises committed to building a
sustainable future. They impact over 20% of the world's urban population with programs for sustainable, low-carbon, resilient, biodiverse, resource-efficient economies.

Human rights: The non-governmental organizations Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, as well as the United Nations Human Rights Council, have been promoting human rights for many years. The Nobel Prize to Amnesty International in 1977 was a breakthrough event that led to an acceleration of consciousness and action for human rights (see graph at right).

Women's equality: There are many small institutional initiatives for women's equality. At CPNN, we have carried many articles from the Nobel Women's Initiative, UN Women, Equality Now, Feminist Majority Foundation, One Billion Rising, etc.

Disarmament: The organization Mayors for Peace, initiated from Hiroshima in 1982, involves over 6,000 member cities in 160 countries & regions to lobby for nuclear disarmament. Also in recent years there have been civil society initiatives that have lobbied successfully for the abolition of landmines and cluster munitions.

Democratic participation: Despite their relationship to states, the various international parliamentary organizations such as the Interparliamentary Union tend to take positions compatible with the culture of peace. The organization Parliamentarians for Global Action lobbies in particular for disarmament.
Free flow of information: There are many international organizations promoting free flow of information and protection of journalists, such as Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF). RSF has had the courage to oppose the state persecution of whistleblowers such as Julian Assange and Edward Snowden. Transparency International concentrates on exposing governmental corruption.

Understanding, tolerance and solidarity: It is not possible to single out a particular institution for international understanding, tolerance and solidarity because almost all international civil society organizations are involved to one extent or another in this aspect of the culture of peace. Most of the thousand international civil society organizations in the 2010 World Report on the Culture of Peace are dedicated to this, as well as most of the 475 youth organizations that we surveyed in the report "Youth for Culture of Peace" (2006) which is available on the same website, decade-culture-of-peace.org.

At any given moment it is difficult to know exactly where we are because history is moving dialectically. Two opposing tendencies exist and interact simultaneously, the culture of war and the culture of peace. At the same time the culture of war advances towards self-destruction, the culture of peace is slowly growing. While the commercial media drowns us with news about the culture of war (Ukraine, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, Israel/Palestine, etc.), they have nothing to say about the growth of the culture of peace. Fortunately, however, as we have emphasized here, we are able to show on CPNN that there is progress in the various domains of the culture of peace.

Just to site a few contemporary examples, the more that Israel carries out terrible attacks on Gaza, the more the calls for peace are mounting, even with Israel itself. Increasingly there are international calls for divestment similar to the campaign that finally led to the end of South African apartheid. The more that NATO provokes Russia in the Ukraine, the more the demand that NATO should be abolished and the more that the West mounts sanctions
against Russia, the more they turn towards other alliances such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

We may expect even more dramatic changes in the near future, if we keep in mind the principles of dialectics that were first developed by the German philosopher Hegel and subsequently elaborated by the major revolutionary figures:

- all aspects of historical events and changes are closely and indissolubly connected

- history moves in spirals, not in a straight line;

- history moves by leaps, catastrophes, and revolutions with breaks in continuity;

- quantitative changes eventually change into qualitative changes, that is to say that small imperceptible changes can accumulate over time to the point that they explode into dramatic changes.

Yes, we may expect dramatic changes, but once again, we return to our perennial question: Is the culture of peace advancing rapidly enough to be in a position to replace the culture of war when it next crashes?

Yes, we may expect dramatic changes, but once again, we return to our perennial question: Is the culture of peace advancing rapidly enough to be in a position to replace the culture of war when it next crashes?
WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

With regard to consciousness-raising, we need a great expansion of information exchange among those who are working for a culture of peace or its components. That means a great expansion of the audience of CPNN, as well as perhaps its function in more languages. And we need many other systems of communication such as CPNN.

Hopefully, as CPNN and other similar information systems begin to capture a larger audience, the commercial media will have to reclaim some of that audience by also carrying information about initiatives for the culture of peace.

A particularly important contribution could be made by the Nobel Peace Prize if it were to be given for the culture of peace, for example, to Federico Mayor and Anwarul Chowdhury who were most responsible for its adoption by the UN system. It would be useful if others joined with the International Peace Bureau that is already placing this demand.

With regard to institution-building, I continue to believe that we need to develop a network of cities and towns with official culture of peace commissions. In my experience, it will be especially useful if they make annual reports on the state of the culture of peace in their community similar to what we do each year in New Haven, and publicize this to the entire community and involve them in actions to follow it up.

I had some correspondence last year with people in several communities who have developed peace commissions without attempting to make them an official part of the city government. I am generally opposed to this approach, because the motivation is usually to avoid having to make the compromises necessary to represent all of the people in their city, including the city government. Such an approach ensures that the culture of peace remains the concern of a small elite. The people involved may feel self-righteous with such an approach, but it does not do much to promote a general historical transition.
Readers may ask themselves the question, "How can I being involved in these initiatives? And are their other approaches where I can be involved which contribute equally to raising consciousness and establishing institutional frameworks for a culture of peace?" In any case, I hope that readers will contact CPNN with news of their initiatives so that we can publicize them and inspire others to act as well.

CULTURE OF PEACE: WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?

What would a culture of peace look like? I imagined this at the end of the monograph for a culture of peace that I wrote for UNESCO in 1995, and I see no reason that it needs to be revised:

"When in the course of history there is an accumulation of changes which make possible a revolutionary transformation in social relations, the mobilization and participation of people on a vast scale, a global movement, becomes possible through the development and sharing of a common vision of a new world. The time is ripe for such a movement and vision for a culture of peace.

"The transformation of society from a culture of war to a culture of peace is perhaps more radical and far reaching than any previous change in human history. Every aspect of social relations - having been shaped for millennia by the dominant culture of war, is open to change - from the relations among nations to those between women and men. Everyone, from the centres of power to the most remote villages, may be engaged and transformed in the process.

"...organizations at all levels are involved and changing in the process. ...The culture of peace is, at the same time, a process and a vision. As people engage in a common process, their values and attitudes and behaviours grow and come to embrace a global solidarity and common vision. This takes place in the development process, as those who share in projects with others who have been enemies come to share a vision of endogenous, sus-
tainable, equitable development. It occurs in the democratic process, as people participate across the lines of conflict in the making decisions for development and peace. It comes about in the struggles for non-violent alternatives to military action and power, for conversion of economies to peaceful production, and for preservation of the environment. And it develops in the movements for equity of women, of indigenous peoples, of all who have been denied their full human rights and take up the struggle for justice.

"In the vision of a culture of peace, the very process of history itself is transformed. Freed from the culture of war, where history has unfolded on the basis of violent change in a cycle of suppression and explosion, it can move forward without violence. Instead of being determined by the few, the course of history can be determined by the participation of the many. Instead of being determined from the top down, it can be determined by changes and methods which come from the bottom up, beginning at a local level which is tied to a global consciousness. Under these conditions, the determining factor in history can become the social consciousness of the people themselves. In the movement for a culture of peace there is a task for everyone."
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Page 55: Article at: http://cpnn-world.org/cgi-bin/read/articlepage.cgi?ViewArticle=1573
Official Photo of CELAC National Coordinators Meeting

Page 56: Article and photo from http://cpnn-world.org/cgi-bin/read/articlepage.cgi?ViewArticle=1786

Page 57a: Article and photo from http://cpnn-world.org/cgi-bin/read/articlepage.cgi?ViewArticle=1836

Page 57b: Article and photo from http://cpnn-world.org/cgi-bin/read/articlepage.cgi?ViewArticle=1518
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Page 60: Photo by the author.

Page 61: Photo from UNESCO News Services.

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Page 63: Article at: http://cpnn-world.org/cgi-bin/read/articlepage.cgi?ViewArticle=1656 Photo from video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkBtOPvfB_k

Page 65: Logo adapted from http://www3.unesco.org/iycp/. Designed for the International Year for the Culture of Peace by Barbara Blickle and Luis Sarda

Page 66: Photo by UNESCO.


Page 71: Image from Wikipedia.