Transition to a Culture of Peace
World history as it is happening

The times call for radical action !

posted on May 1, 2018

War and threats of war. Resurgence of fascism. Indicators forewarning a global economic crash. Acceleration of global warming. Wherever you turn, there are signs of dramatic, radical, dangerous change.

What is to be done? Where is the lever that can move history forward? We need radical action, but which action should we put first?

Personally, I've been active in all the relevant movements: socialism, ecology, peace, democracy, and each one has its proposals. What should be the priority? Let's look at the probable sequence, keeping in mind what happened 30 years to the Soviet empire.

Johan Galtung predicted the crash of the Soviet empire within one year, and he predicts the end of the American empire within the next two years. If he is correct, the crash of the global economy is likely to come before the threatened wars, before the full development of fascism, and before the full effects of global warming. And if he is correct, it will provide us with a window of opportunity in the next two years to refound the global political system.

The most effective change would be the refounding of the United Nations to be under the direction of the People, not the State. The State is inextricably bound to the culture of war, while the People are increasingly conscious of the need for a culture of peace.

With that in mind, I return to the proposal that I made two years ago for the establishment and effective functioning of an Alternative Security Council. At the time, the proposal fell on deaf ears, but perhaps the time was not yet ripe for it. After all, it is often the case that radical proposals require a certain moment of history to be put into motion.

Here is what I proposed:

"I propose the establishment of an "Alternative Security Council" (ASC) composed of mayors or parliamentary representatives from all the regions of the world. This ASC would regularly consider the issues faced by the actual UN Security Council and publicize its "decisions" in order to provide an alternative vision of how the issues of war and peace could be managed at a global level.

One can imagine that their decisions would be radically different concerning, for example, nuclear disarmament, approaches to the disasters in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya, etc. This would be a powerful force for consciousness-raising in the general public, and it could provide a model for an eventual radical reform of the UN."

Along with the proposal two years ago I put forward the need for an institutional host, an agreement for membership, a small secretariat, a means for media dissemination and a small budget.

Have we arrived at a moment of history that is ripe for this action? There are some reasons to think so:

1) the consciousness of the people continues to grow that we need to replace the culture of war by a culture of peace;

2) it becomes more evident every day that the American Empire is crashing, which will provide a window of opportunity for radical change;

3) international organizations of cities are holding high-level meetings devoted to peace.

So far, I have not been able to put the ASC proposal onto the agenda of the meetings of cities, but I will keep trying.

If you are a reader of this blog and you wish to help out with this project, please contact me, either by putting a comment below on this blog or by sending me an email.

Towards a global movement against all violence

Posted on April 1, 2018

The growing mobilizations by teenagers in the US and Palestine, cited in this month's CPNN bulletin, remind me of the mobilizations by youth against the War in Vietnam in the 1960's and by youth against Apartheid in the 1970's.

If we learn from those mobilizations, now 50 years ago, there is a possibility that they can be expanded into a global movement against all violence.

Both began as localized movements and rapidly spread around the world, especially through the engagement of young people.

I had been active in the anti-Vietnam movement in the mid-60's in the US and spent a year in Italy in 1968. The students in Italy joined the movement with enthusiasm and enlarged the agenda to include a general demand for education reform. 25 years later, working with the UNESCO team for a National Culture of Peace Program in El Salvador, we discovered that each of us had been radicalized in the movement of the 60's and active in more than one country (USA/Italy, Nicaragua/France, Ecuador/France, etc.).

The student-led movement against Apartheid in South Africa was picked up by students around the world, including those at my university in the United States which became the first American university to divest its portfolio from companies doing business with the Apartheid regime. I was proud to be their advisor.

At that time there were still active movements of Communist Parties around the world that provided strategic and tactical support to the youth movements, helping them to achieve global networks and inspiration.

The Communists also helped broaden the agendas of action against all sorts of violence. Our actions in the USA against the Vietnam War were linked by the Left to the actions of the Civil Rights movement against the violence of racism. For example, with the help of the Left, a civil rights activist from the South who had been threatened with death in the South came north to help with our political campaign in Connecticut which gained the greatest number of votes of any anti-war candidate in 1966. And in April 1967 Martin Luther King united the civil rights movement with the anti-war movement in two dramatic speeches, one of which he delivered to an anti-war march to the United Nations. Accused of being pro-communist by FBI director J.Edgar Hoover, he was assassinated one year later.

In the 1960's, It was Communist veterans from the 1930's who taught us to recognize the agents provocateurs of COINTELPRO, the government agents who tried to infiltrate our ranks

with guns and dynamite in order to give the government an excuse to crush our movement with violence.

The movement against the violence of Apartheid produced political leadership of people like Bishop Tutu and Nelson Mandela whose inspiration reached far beyond South Africa, inspiring us all towards a global movement against all kinds of violence and oppression.

Those of us who are veterans of the 60's and 70's need to assume the role played by veterans of the 30's in those years and provide strategic and tactical support to the new generation. We need to help them broaden their agenda to protest all forms of violence and broaden their scope to become a truly global movement.

The time is short. Johan Galtung has repeated his prediction, first made in 2004, that the American Empire cannot be sustained beyond the year 2020. The window of opportunity is soon arriving when the culture of war and violence can be transformed into a culture of peace and nonviolence. The strength is in the hands of the new generation, but the support and advice of the older generation is still needed.

Towards a World without Walls

Posted on March 1, 2018

Walls and frontiers are in the news these days - constructed by states in order to keep people out. At the same tim, as we see in this month's CPNN bulletin, it seems that movements of activists opposed to these walls are continuing to grow.

In France, activists continue to aid migrants trying to escape from the wars and poverty of Africa and the Middle East and trying to enter France despite prosecution by the French authorities. As stated by Amnesty International, "These people are not traffickers or delinquents; they are worried, intimidated, pursued, defending human rights first and foremost."

In the United States, activists continue to gather momentum in their movement to stop the deportation of undocumented immigrants by the Trump administration. This month the mayor of New Haven proclaims "We're the resistance", while Trump continues to insist on the construction of a wall between the United States and Mexico to stop further immigration.

A similar wall already exists, constructed by the state of Israel to keep people from entering from Palestine. But movements of solidarity continue to grow in opposition, such as the International Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement newly nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

It will soon be 30 years since the historic destruction of the wall the separated East from West Berlin and East from West Germany. But another similar wall still exists, the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea. Can the Korean wall be removed? There is a glimmer of hope for this in the actions around the Olympic games in Korea, where the top organizer said in his message to the closing ceremony: "The seed of peace you have planted here in PyeongChang will grow as a big tree, . . . a cornerstone of the unification of the Korean Peninsula."

The Olympic Games can be seen as a foretaste of a world without walls. As stated by the UN Secretary-General, ""The Olympic spirit allows people to be together, from all over the world, to respect each other, to assert the values of tolerance, of mutual understanding that are the basic elements for peace to be possible." The vision of thousands of athletes marching and mingling together at the opening and closing of this year's Korean games provided viewers with a concrete image of this spirit.

In Africa, the actions for a culture of peace supported by UNESCO are designed not only to promote a lasting peace and endogenous development, but also Pan-Africanism, in other words, an Africa without walls, as was the dream a century ago of activists like W.E.B. Dubois.

The new generation can be seen as force towards a world without walls. The winners of the Youth Solidarity Fund of the United Nations Alliance of Civilization are young people acting in

solidarity both within and across national frontiers. They are from a generation that travels and exchanges ideas more than ever before in history, a generation that resists visas and that crosses borders.

The construction of walls, the defense of borders and the demand for visas are among the very few functions of the state that cannot be done better by local authorities, on the one hand, and by a renewed United Nations and regional organizations, on the other hand. Walls, borders and visas go along with the most intensive function of the state which is war and war preparations, along with the taxation that supports them. Other than these, we could do without the state. Management of justice, agriculture, commerce, education, energy, labor, healthcare, transportation and communication which extend beyond the local level can already, for the most part, be managed by the various agencies of the United Nations and regional organizations such as the European Union, African Union, etc.

Of course, for a world without walls, we need a world without the injustices of war and exploitation that are producing the terrible waves of migration from south to north.

With this in mind, we can consider those who work for a world without walls are working for the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace.

PS (added 5 March): In listing the functions of the state, I neglected to mention the establishment and enforcement of tariffs. This has taken on special importance in recent days with the announcement by President Trump that he will impose tariffs on imported metals. The announcement has been met by complaints of the business media that these actions risk to launch "trade wars." Note the relationship to the state's monopoly on the culture of war! In fact, according to the classical sociologist Max Weber, the state can be defined as the organization that has a "monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory."

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Vers un monde sans murs

Les murs et les frontières sont dans les infos ces jours-ci - construits par les Etats afin d'empêcher les gens d'entrer. En même temps, comme nous le voyons dans le bulletin du CPNN de ce mois-ci, il semble que le nombre de mouvements et de militants opposés à ces murs ne cesse d'augmenter.

En France, malgré les poursuites engagées par les autorités, les activistes continuent d'aider les migrants qui tentent d'échapper aux guerres et à la pauvreté de l'Afrique et du Moyen-Orient. Comme l'a déclaré Amnesty International, «ces personnes ne sont ni des trafiquants ni des délinquants, elles sont inquiètes, intimidées, poursuivies et défendent avant tout les droits de l'Homme».

Aux États-Unis, les militants continuent à prendre de l'ampleur dans leur mouvement contre la déportation des migrants sans papiers par l'administration Trump. Ce mois-ci, le maire de New Haven proclame «Nous sommes la résistance», tandis que Trump continue d'insister sur la construction d'un mur entre les États-Unis et le Mexique pour arrêter l'immigration !!

Un mur similaire existe déjà, construit par l'Etat d'Israël afin d'empêcher les gens venant de Palestine. Mais les mouvements de solidarité continuent de grandir dans l'opposition, comme

The Role of Media for a Culture of Peace

Posted February 1, 2018

Over the past century the control of information, especially through the mass media, has become the most important characteristic of the culture of war.   Why?

It is because there has been such an advance over the past century in democratic participation that the modern state is forced to justify its culture of war.   Since people in general do not want war, the state and its military-industrial complex must convince them that military preparations are necessary in the face of external enemies.   This is a major change from earlier history when the state was not subject to election by the people and it could pursue its policies regardless of their attitudes.

In fact, we see that the mass media in countries with the most powerful military forces, such as the United States, are pro-military and continually publish propaganda against external enemies and give priority to news about unavoidable violence and disaster. They do not give place to peace initiatives.

One is not usually aware of this, but I came face to face with it during the campaign for the Manifesto 2000 during the International Year for the Culture of Peace. We obtained millions of signatures in India, Brazil, Colombia, Japan, Korea, Kenya, Nepal and many hundreds of thousands in Algeria, Italy, Azerbaijan, Morocco and the Philippines. But in the United States, despite signed agreements for its distribution with the American Association of Retired Persons and the National Council of Churches, each with something like 50 million members, not to mention another 69 organizational partners and over 100 events and projects (more than in other countries!), the Manifesto obtained only 46,000 signatures. I don't believe that this was because Americans do not want peace. Instead, it was due to the fact that there was a total blackout in the mass media.

In view of this, it is especially important when the mass media begin to promote a culture of peace instead of a culture of war. This is the case in Mexico, Colombia and in much of Sub-Saharan Africa as described in this month's CPNN bulletin.

Perhaps it is not by chance that these are regions of the world where people have suffered especially from violence and where the state with its culture of war has been weakened. In Mexico, corrupted by the narco traffic, one speaks of a "failed state." And Colombia is just putting into practice the peace accords that ended decades of war. Africa has been weakened by colonialism and neo-colonialism (which are culture of of war) to such an extent that it is now victimized by extremist violence as well which adds to their suffering. As a result, the people have a special thirst for a culture of peace.

In the Global North the mass media have become monopolized by huge multinational companies that are part of a military-industrial-media complex closely linked to the political

parties and the government. As an illustration of this, consider the money paid to the mass media by the political campaigns in the United States. The last Presidential election in the United States cost over one billion dollars, much of it spent for media advertising. And candidates for Congress pay enormous sums as well.

Fortunately, we have the Internet, where it is possible to create media that promote a culture of peace for a very small price. The annual budget of CPNN is in the hundreds (not thousands!) of dollars, even though we publish in three languages and at least one article per day. Hopefully, the Internet will remain a space that is free and available, although there is always the risk that the culture of war will try to restrict it. And hopefully, CPNN will be joined by more and more such internet initiatives for peace.
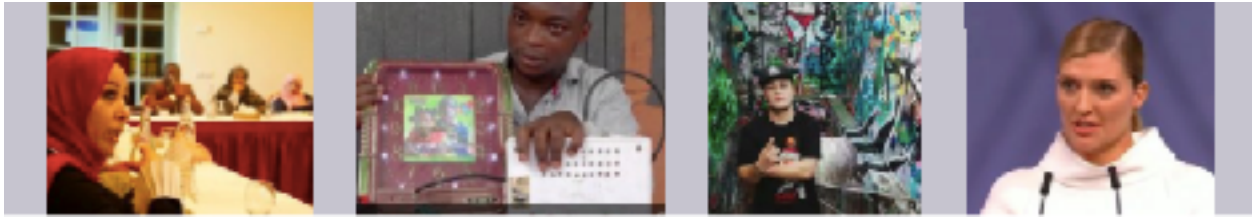
Given that the control of information has become a key function of the culture of war, it is urgent that we continue to develop media for a culture of peace throughout the world, hoping that someday it will obtain an audience as great as that for the culture of war. When that day arrives, we will have made a great advance towards the historical transition from culture of war to culture of peace.

control of information: http://culture-of-peace.info/books/history/information.html
history link: http://culture-of-peace.info/history/page31.html
new bulletin link: http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=11838

The culture of war is hiding in plain sight: it is the state

Posted on January 1, 2018

We see articles almost every day criticizing the Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and blaming her for not stopping the terrible genocide in Myanmar against the Rohingya people.

It is true that she is now the President of Myanmar, but the power of the state continues to be held by the military, which she has referred to as "my father's army."

In fact, Myanmar is not exceptional. The state devotes its resources and is more or less controlled, overtly or covertly, by the military throughout the world. This is not new but has been true throughout history.

Let us begin with the Great Powers. The United States, which we may more appropriately refer to as the "American empire" devotes more than half of its national budget to the military and now maintains hundreds of military bases throughout the world. Countries without an American military base are exceptional. Now we learn that almost every African country has one. Another Nobel laureate, Barak Obama, aided in this expansion.

Where is the ultimate power in China if it is not with the Red Army?

Not one of the world's nuclear powers, the U.S., Britain, France, China, Russia, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea, took part in the negotiations at the United Nations for nuclear disarmament.

Should we have been surprised when the Arab Spring was cut short by a military coup in Egypt?

The question of state power is where I part company with those who would follow the advice of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. They believed that peace could be obtained by converting the state from capitalism to socialism. And indeed, in the 20th Century, we saw many examples where capitalist states were indeed overthrown by socialist revolutions. But what ensued was not peace. What ensured was a socialist culture of war instead of a capitalist culture of war.

And we can see why socialism has failed. A socialist culture of war will alway lose in competition with a capitalist culture of war. Socialists tend to share wealth with their client states, while capitalists exploit their client states. In the long run, it is the capitalist states that win the economic competition. The socialist states must either submit (as was the case of the USSR) or become capitalist (as in the case of China).

If socialism is to succeed it cannot be based on the state.

If peace is to be obtained, it cannot be based on the state.

Can the state be replaced? Yes. The next time the state system collapses (this time with the collapse of the American empire), we need to have an alternative systm of governance to replace it! To prepare for this we need both a strong consciousness of the people of the world that a culture of peace is necessary and possible, and we need to start developing an institutional framework to replace the state. Consciousness continues to grow as we see in our review of 2017 in the CPNN bulletin. But a new institutional framework is lacking.

Transition to a Culture of Peace

World history as it is happening

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The struggle to eliminate violence against women is essential to the culture of peace

Posted on **December 1, 2017**

The advance this year of the struggle to eilmininate violence against women is an important step forward for the global movement for a culture of peace. Here's why.

First of all, violence against women has always been an intrinsic component of war. This goes back to prehistory when women were excluded from war due to the fact the practice of patrilocal exogamous marriage (husband remains in his native village and marries a wife from outside) ensured that wars were conducted between the husband of a woman on one side and her father and brothers on the other side. As a result, since warriors were exclusively men, they were free to capture and rape the women they found when vanquishing another community.

The male domination of the culture of war has characterized all human societies since the beginning of history. The male rulers of the first empires were not only the military commanders but also the heads of the state religion. Female heads of state and religion were so rare that they are considered to be curiosities of history: for example the pharaoh Hatshepsut in ancient Egypt, and the (mythical?) female Catholic Pope in the Middle Ages.

The male domination of the culture of war has come down to our present world system transformed by previous changes in economic systems, from slavery to colonialism to neo-colonialism, but all of these systems remain essentially sexist.

Huge economic industries, part of the culture of war, are essentially sexist. Of course, female

prostitution goes back to the beginning of recorded history. But what about modern advertising the use of scarcely clad female models to sell automobiles, beauty products, etc. etc.? In capitalist economies, women are often considered as a commodity to be bought and sold. Seen in this context, rape can be considered in many cases as the forceful theft of the female commodity.

Apart from physical violence the exploitation of women in the modern economy is a form of structural violence. Women are not paid for their essential work in the bearing and raising of children. And in the workplace they continue to be paid substantially less than men in the equivalent occupation.

Political leaders often echo the sexism. The current US President is an example as reported on many occasions (for a list see the this article in The Guardian). Fortunately, we find more political leaders speaking out against sexism, such as the Presidents of France, Turkey and Canada as described in this month's CPNN bulletin.

Second, violence against women diminishes their capacity to play their essential role as leaders in the transition to a culture of peace. Their role is essential as a result of their exclusion and suffering from war and the culture of war which gives them special reason to take action. In fact, we find women in leadership wherever there are campaigns for a culture of peace, but it would be even greater if all women were free from the threat of violence.

Third, the struggle for any one of the eight program areas of the culture of peace is a struggle for the others as well, because the movement for a culture of peace is an integral and synergistic struggle. For example, the rights of women are an important component of human rights in general. Similarly, sustainable and equitable economic development and democratic participation require the economic and political equality of women. Education for peace requires that girls have the same access to education as boys. In fact, as UN Secretary-General António Guterres has said, unless the international community tackles the problem of violence against women, the world will not eradicate poverty or reach any of its other goals.

In general, we should not make the mistake of thinking that the struggle to eliminate violence against women is just a struggle of the women themselves. It has to be the struggle of everyone, men as well as women, if we are to advance towards a culture of peace.

Posted in **global movement**, **human rights**, **sustainable development**, **women's equality**

Transition to a Culture of Peace

World history as it is happening

Catalunya: Culture of war or culture of peace?

Posted on **November 1, 2017**

It seems that the people of Catalunya will vote in December whether to declare independence from Spain, i.e. to form a separate state.

If someone were to ask my advice about this election, I would say that it risks becoming a decision to move Catalunya towards the culture of war.

Here's why I say this.

Over the course of history, the state has come to monopolize the culture of war. Those who seek to take over the state (revolutionaries) and those who seek to declare independence (separatists, nationalists) may have the best intentions for a culture of peace, but inevitably, once they arrive at state power, they take on the qualities of the state which include the culture of war.

Perhaps the most spectacular example is the Russian Revolution exactly one century ago. The revolution was carried out with the slogan of bread, peace and land, but once power was in the hands of the Bolsheviks, they were forced to make it a culture of war in order to defend against the invasions from the Europeans and Americans.

So, today, the people of Catalunya, if they declare independence, will be forced to form an army to defend against being invaded by Spain and its NATO allies, who, of course, are characterized by a culture of war.

Let us look at other examples of independence movements in our time. The independence of Bosnia/Herzogovina was marked by a bloody war with Serbia over the control of Sarajevo. For the first few years after the independence of the Ukraine from Russia, there was no war, but in the past

few years, the secession of eastern provinces from the Ukraine has been marked by warfare, and each side remains armed and at the risk of further conflict, exacerbated by alliances with other states.

On the other hand, the independence movement of Quebec did not get to the point of establishing a separate country, and so the Quebecois and the rest of Canada never got to the point of military confrontation.

And coming to the present time, there are those who foresee the secession of California, Oregon and Washington State from Trump America, and a recent poll by Foreign Policy magazine foresees a real possibility of civil war in the United States. But we should not forget that the American Civil War caused by the secession of the South in 1860 was the bloodiest war ever fought by Americans.

There are good alternatives for Catalunya, apart from secession.

Granted that Spain is not in good shape, neither economically nor politically. But instead of bailing out, Catalunya could help in its reform. Wouldn't it be great if the people of Catalunya could persuade all of Spain to renounce its culture of war and seek through dialogue to establish a culture of peace with all of its citizens and its neighboring countries! A good start would be to withdraw from NATO!

This entry was posted in **dialectics of history**, **disarmament** by **David Adams**. Bookmark the **permalink [http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/blog/?p=587]** .

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Transition to a Culture of Peace

World history as it is happening

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Here's the question. Where's the answer?

Posted on **October 3, 2017**

At the end of this month's CPNN bulletin, having remarked that youth and children took the lead in this year's global celebration of the International Day of Peace, we concluded that "Thanks to the new generation, yes, there is a global movement for a culture of peace."

That leads to a question. Can this global movement continue to grow to the point that it can promote the transition from our current culture of war to a new culture, a culture of peace? And if so, how?

I don't have the answer to this question.

As I look for an answer, I recall three global peace movements in which I have participated over the years, and I wonder if we can take lessons from the history of those examples.

1) The global movements against the war in Vietnam in the 1960's, for a nuclear freeze in the 1989's and against the war in Iraq in 2003.
2) The peace movement associated with communist parties, both East and West, during the 1970's and 1980's.
3) The Manifesto 2000 associated with the United Nations International Year for the Culture of Peace in the year 2000.

Trying to understand the accomplishments, failures and potentials of the movements of the 60's and 80's I wrote The American Peace Movements in 1985. Both movements showed the potential for spontaneous, rapid and massive mobilizations when the historical conditions are ripe. But like the movement in 2003 against the war in Iraq, they ended just as quickly because they were reactions

against a particular threat and disappeared once the threat subsided.

Lesson 1: We need a global peace movement that is stable and growing over time.

At that point in the 1980's I turned to the communist peace movements since they seemed (at the time) to be more stable and able to grow over the long term. I still have a copy of the book from the remarkable "International Meeting of Communist and Worker's Parties" that took place in Moscow in 1969 with representatives speaking from 75 countries. Of course, they supported the Vietnamese, but they called for peace; they did not advocate war against the United States.

At that time I often went to the Soviet Union and even worked there as a scientist at a few points. But in the end I was disappointed. Later on, after analyzing the History ot the Culture of War, I came to realize that like all states and empires, they were a culture of war, which led inexorably to their collapse (like what I see now happening to the American empire).

Despite the collapse of its dreams of state power, the communist peace movement left important traces for peace. Last week, we saw this in the school mobilizations for the International Day of Peace in the ex-Soviet republics and in the extensive mobilization of celebrations throughout France by the Mouvement de la Paix and the French Communist Party.

Lesson 2: The movement must be independent of the state because the state is intrinsically the culture of war. This is where I disagree with the communists, as they persist in seeking state power.

Finally, there was my experience as director of the United Nations International Year for the Culture of Peace when we mobilized 75 million people to sign the Manifesto 2000, promising to promote a culture of peace in their daily life, family, work, community, country and region. Its strength came from the fact that it was a well-coordinated campaign, involving all the organizations of the UN, the UNESCO Commissions in the Member States, and the major international NGOs. We even sent letters of invitations to thousands of universities and mayors. And the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace that we sent from Paris to New York which called for "a global movement for a culture of peace."

But the UN coordination was also its weakness, because the coordination was in one place (UNESCO, Paris) and its head was cut off by the United States and its allies who control the UN, and who halted the UNESCO culture of peace program in 2001.

Again the same lesson: The movement must be independent of the state because the state is intrinsically the culture of war.

I still believe in the potential of the United Nations to promote a global movement for a culture of peace, if it could be made independent of the state by passing its control to regional parliaments or regional organizations of mayors. But progress towards that goal is painfully slow.

As I said in the beginning, I don't have an answer to the question: Can this global movement continue to grow to the point that it can promote the transition from our current culture of war to a new culture, a culture of peace? And if so, how?

But, as always, history does not allow us to formulate an answer until after we have clearly formulated the question. And so, posing the question is a step forward. And who knows? Perhaps you readers, especially those of you from the new generation, can take us further and begin to provide an answer.

Posted in **global movement**, **reform of United Nations**

Transition to a Culture of Peace

World history as it is happening

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Imagining peace: Latin America

Posted on **September 2, 2017**

In 2007, I tried to imagine how the world would make a transition to a culture of peace in the year 2027 and I started to write a novella, I have seen the promised land.

In making the scenario, I imagined that the most important point in the transition would occur in Porto Alegre, Brazil, at a world-wide meeting of peace cities.

Now 10 years later, returning from visits to Brazil and Mexico, I pose the question: if today I were to imagine the transition to a culture of peace, would I still consider that Latin America, and Brazil in particular would play a central role?

If we look only at national governments, it would seem doubtful. Leaders who might have shown some sympathy with a culture of peace are gone, Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Lula in Brazil and Fidel in Cuba, and their countries are moving to the right. This trend is not limited to Latin America. We have Trump, Putin, Duterte, Erdogan, rise of right-wing, even fascist parties in Europe, loss of the leadership of Mandela and Mbeki in South Africa, fading hopes that were raised by the Arab spring, and lack of any movement in Asia towards a culture of peace. Some might say it is the end of democracy, although I see it more limited as the loss of bourgeois democracy. After all, national elections are now almost solely determined by big money, and big money corrupts. To find progress towards true democracy it is necessary to look at a more local level.

As readers of this blog know, I believe that we cannot achieve a culture of peace through the system of nation-states, so the loss of bourgeois democracy at the national level is not necessarily a negative development. In fact, I interpret it as another sign that the American empire and the global system of states devoted to the culture of war is beginning to collapse.

But are we developing at a local level a new system of global governance to replace the present system when it collapses?

My recent visits to Mexico and Brazil, along with a visit a year ago to Colombia, give me some cause for optimism. Audiences in these countries, especially students, were enthusiastic to hear a message quoting the World Social Forum that "another world is possible" and emphasizing the old slogan of "think global, act local." And, as described in this month's CPNN bulletin, I found many local inititives underway that contribute to a culture of peace, including participative budgeting, restorative justice, struggle against the violence against women, and the development of city peace commissions.

I hope to return to Latin America next year and hope to find that these initiatives are continuing to develop. If so, may they serve as a model for other parts of the world.

If I were writing a utopian novella today, would I still imagine the culture of peace being born in Latin America. The answer is "Yes!"

Posted in **Latin America**

Transition to a Culture of Peace

World history as it is happening

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Towards a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly

Posted on **August 2, 2017**

A frequent theme of this blog has been the need for a profound reform of the United Nations so that it is managed more directly by the peoples of the world – through cities or parliaments instead of the present Member States that are inextricably linked to the culture of war.

A significant first step towards such a reform would be the proposed parliamentary assembly of the United Nations (UNPA). As this month's bulletin of CPNN documents, there are increasing calls for such an assembly, including proposals from the European Parliament, the Pan-African Parliament and an international conference of around 300 chief justices, judges, legal experts and ambassadors from nearly 60 countries predominantly from the Global South.

Such an Assembly would be an important step forward for a number of reasons.

1) A UNPA could make the United Nations more democratic. As stated by the European Parliament, it could increase "the democratic profile and internal democratic process of the organisation and . . . allow world civil society to be directly associated in the decision-making process."

2) Parliamentarians are often closer to the people than their national goverments. For example, we have seen recently that many parliamentarians and some parliamentary associations support the nuclear ban treaty even when their governments have boycotted the UN negotiations, and we note other parliamentary initiatives towards a culture of peace. Hence a UNPA would be a force within the UN system to move towards a culture of peace.

3) There has been talk of UN reform for many years, but no action, because of resistance by the

Member States. A UNPA would set a precedent for change.

4) There has been an erosion of confidence among the peoples of the world that the UN can provide a way forward to escape from the damages caused by the culture of war. A UNPA could begin to restore confidence and inspire further change.

5) If the thesis of this blog is correct that we are approaching a collapse of the present world economic and political structure, a UNPA could become key element in a new global governance structure, which, in turn could help in the development of a new, and hopefully, more equitable, economic order.

So what needs to be done?

Already regional parliaments of Africa and Europe are on record to support a UNPA. We need a similar initiative from the Latin American Parliament, and support from parliamentarians in North America, Asia and the Arab States.

We have seen that organizations of mayors often take progressive positions on the issues related to war and peace. It would be good if they would support the development of a UNPA.

There needs to be a concerted effort by alternative, progressive media to put the UNPA on the agenda for action by the civil society. To the extent that this is done it can stimulate the mainstream commercial media to pick up the issue as well.

International NGO's should be encouraged to see in a UNPA a potential support for their progressive initiatives, and they should get on board a global movement for a UNPA.

With increased attention to the question, there needs to be further study of the methods and effectiveness of the regional parliaments that exist already, in order to determine how a UNPA should be structured. This was the conclusion of a recent meeting of the organizations already involved in working for a UNPA: Parliamentarians for Global Action, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Campaign for a UN Parliamentary Assembly.

The establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly could move us a step closer to the transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace. No doubt there will be resistance from national governments, and especially the great powers, who will understand the a UNPA provides an alternative to their power that is based on the culture of war. Hence, the struggle will not be easy. But, as Richard Falk reminds us with regard to the nuclear ban treaty and the elimination of nuclear weapons, there is historical precedent for progressive change as a result of "deep commitments, sacrifices, movements, and struggles that eventually achieved the impossible, ending such entrenched evils as slavery, apartheid, and colonialism."

Posted in **democratic participation**, **reform of United Nations**

Transition to a Culture of Peace

World history as it is happening

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Mayors and Media for Peace

Posted on **July 3, 2017**

Imagine what the world would be like if the United Nations was managed by mayors instead of states! And imagine how it would be if the mass media was dedicated to a culture of peace!

We have some hint of how this might be in the recent events covered by CPNN.

While all of the nuclear-armed states and their allies are boycotting the UN conference to draft a treaty against nuclear weapons, we see that mayors have a different point of view.

At their annual meeting the United States Conference of Mayors adopted a resolution that "welcomes the historic negotiations currently underway in the United Nations, involving most of the world's countries, on a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination" and they demanded that the US government join the negotiations in good faith. Their resolution concludes with the following remarkable paragraph:

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The United States Conference of Mayors urges all U.S. mayors to join Mayors for Peace in order to help reach the goal of 10,000 member cities by 2020, and encourages U.S. member cities to get actively involved by establishing sister city relationships with cities in other nuclear-armed nations, and by taking action at the municipal level to raise public awareness of the humanitarian and financial costs of nuclear weapons, the growing dangers of wars among nuclear-armed states, and the urgent need for good faith U.S. participation in negotiating the global elimination of nuclear weapons."

Mayors for Peace already includes the mayors from more than 7,300 cities around the world!

If the mayors of the world were running the UN instead of the states, we could achieve nuclear

disarmament! And much more! Once again we come back to the need for a radical reform of the United Nations!

As for the media, some indication of the positive role that they could play can be seen in the role of community radios in the peace process in Colombia. They are supported by funds from the European Union in order to send messages on peace to the territories and to promote reconciliation between the Colombians. The EU initiative not only opens microphones to the people, but also includes workshops in which 200 community radio journalists have been trained in the elaboration of educational content on peacebuilding, as well as 50 broadcasters receiving technical assistance and donations of recording equipment.

Similarly, in Uganda, community radio stations continue to work for peace. Back in 2004, they played a major role in convincing over 22,000 child soldiers and commanders to abandon the armed rebellion of the Lord's Resistance Army: "In short, the LRA conflict could only be ended after the intervention of peace journalism." Today they continue to work for peace, especially to give a voice to the massive number of refugees in Uganda.

As The Senegalese writer Aissatou Cissé said at the recent meeting of the Writers' Union of Africa, Asia and Latin America, which took place in Senegal: What we need are "readings of peace in this world context of turbulence, verbal and physical violence". "Every morning, when we get up, we read on the Internet, or through a newspaper or a book, and what we read does not promote the culture of peace, it disrupts even more and creates zizanie [discord]."

"Children, adolescents and adults who read us need to read positive things that can boost their creativity, and it is in peace that we can create," said the Special Advisor to the President of the Republic, Macky Sall.

Thank you, mayors, and thank you, writers and journalists! You remind us that "A better world is possible!" Imagine it!

To quote George Bernard Shaw: "Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine and at last you create what you will."

Posted in **cities**, **disarmament**, **free flow of information**, **reform of United Nations**

Transition to a Culture of Peace

World history as it is happening

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Who are the biggest terrorists?

Posted on **June 1, 2017**

Readers of this blog know that I believe that in order to move from the culture of war to a culture of peace, we must develop a new order of world governance in which the United Nations is based on cities or regional parliaments rather than the present system of Member States. This is because the nation state is inextricably tied to the culture of war. More evidence for this comes from the recent United Nations vote on a resolution concerning a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons.

All the rich and powerful countries are against the resolution, including all the countries that possess nuclear weapons and their allies, including most of Europe, Australia, Canada, Japan and South Korea.

What this tells us is that nuclear weapons are considered essential to the power of the state

This is state terrorism.

Let me explain.

The definition of terrorism is the achievement of political goals through violence or threat of violence against innocent populations.

What can better describe the possession of nuclear weapons than to call it terrorism.

The only times they have been used, they slaughtered the populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 for political goals. Some think it was to end the war earlier. Others, having examined the evidence, say that it made no difference in ending the war, but was rather meant as a threat against the Russians which evolved into the Cold War. In any case, the populations of Hiroshima and

Nagasaki were mostly civilians, not military.

Since 1945, nuclear weapons are used as a threat against whatever enemy a state happens to have. During the Cold War it was the American against the Russians, and it seems now that a new Cold War is being developed, especially by the American "deep state" that supported the Hillary Clinton candidacy. The weapons of France and the UK are jusitified by their membership in NATO which is on the American side of the Cold War. Then there is the antagonism between India and Pakistan which is used to justify their weapons. And between Israel and North Korea and their enemies which seems to be much of the world.

Nuclear weapons do not distinguish their victims. That means that in all these cases, the threat is against the populations of the enemy country, without regard for the fact that most are not engaged militarily. This is terrorism. State terrorism.

Why do I say that this is essential to the state?

After considering the history of the culture of war in my book by that name, I come to the conclusion that over the course of history, the state has come to monopolize the culture of war. No one else is allowed to make or prepare for war except the state. Not cities, as was the case in the Middle ages. Not indigenous peoples, as was the case before they were conquered and subjugated around the world. Not private armies or armies of religious sects (although sometimes states with a state religion are allowed to have nuclear weapons as in the case of Israel, but not Iran).

In the same way, the state monopolizes nuclear weapons. No other institution is allowed to develop or possess them.

In fact, the culture of war, if we include the defense and limitation of trade and travel at its borders and the raising of taxes (mostly to pay for the culture of war), is one of the few functions that can only be performed by the nation-state. Other vital functions, such as healthcare, education, housing, transportation and communication services, etc. can (and often are) regulated at a higher and lower level. For example, aviation and maritime shipping are regulated at the level of the United Nations. As for healthcare and education, the United Nations has specialized agencies that are capable of regulating them (WHO and UNESCO). At the same time, many of these functions can be effectively regulated at lower levels, as is done for education in the United States.

The culture of war is the defining characteristic of the state. As stated clearly by the great sociologist Max Weber the state is defined as the organization that has a "monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory."

The next time you see reference in the commercial media to "terrorists," ask the question, "who are the biggest terrorists?" And join the ranks of those who are struggling to abolish nuclear weapons. In the short run, the struggle is being carried out with states from the Global South at the United Nations. But in the long run, we need a new United Nations run instead by cities or regional

parliaments.

Transition to a Culture of Peace

World history as it is happening

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Trump and Le Pen: Symptoms of the empire's collapse

Posted on **May 1, 2017**

What is the appeal of Donald Trump and Marine Le Pen? Why have they able to get so many votes?

A superficial response is easy: Voters are angry and fed up with the present political system and they will vote for whoever best shares their anger and damns the present political system. The more the media attacks Trump, the more his US supporters are confirmed that he represents their own rejection of the system. And the more the other political parties and political elite attack Le Pen, the more the French voters are confirmed that she is allied with them against the present political system.

But a more profound response requires that we analyze why voters are angry and fed up. One cause is their economic hardships. The average wages of a worker continue to decrease year after year. More and more families are forced to work two or three jobs just to survive. And they understand, to some extent, that the problem is due to government policies that support capitalist exploitation, enabling the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer. On the other hand, many are confused, misled by populists like Trump and Le Pen, who tell them that the problem is caused by imigrants who take their jobs and receive government welfare.

There is a classic term to describe the anger and frustration related to economic hardship that is blamed on the government and other institutions of the society. It is called "alienation." The young Karl Marx devoted his doctoral thesis to this topic, describing how industrial workers, unlike handicraft workers in previous centuries, no longer had control over the products that they created. Instead, the capitlalist controlled production and took the profits from it. The more the worker toiled, the more the capitalist got richer and could exploit him even more.

Ironically, when I worked in the 70's and 80's in the old Soviet Union, I found that my so-called communist friends had never heard the Russian word for alienation (отчуждение), even though their economic conditions were deteriorating as their country's economy declined under the burden of the arms race. However, they knew that the government was lying to them about the economic situation. They would say "You can find the truth anywhere except in Pravda and the news anywhere except in Izvestia." These were the two leading state-run news media in the Soviet Union and their names are the Russian words for Truth and News.

Nowadays, Trump and Le Pen make short-term gains by criticiizing the news media. In the short-term, they gain support of many voters who have come to mistrust pronouncements by the government and the capitalist class that are repeated by the media. The voters think that Trump and Le Pen are "on their side."

But in the long run, they are playing with fire.

In fact, it is true that the media are lying and that the government is directly or indirectly responsible for the lies. If you read Rolling Stone magazine back in the 1970's, you would have know from Carl Bernstein's article that all the major media were infiltrated by the CIA during the Vietnam War in order to ensure support by the American people for the war. Although the Bernstein article was simply the account of the US Senate hearings, headed by Senator Frank Church, he could not publish it anywhere except in Rolling Stone. Why? Of course, because the other media were controlled by the CIA!

The Bernstein story is not an exception. It is more and more the rule. In fact, as I conclude in The History of the Culture of War, the control of the media through secrets and lies has become the most important weapon of the culture of war.

We all know now about the big lie of weapons of mass destruction used to justify the war in Iraq. How many remember the falsified Gulf of Tonkin incident that was used to justify the war in Vietnam? Few know the reason for the war against Ghadafi in Libya: it was because he was using Libya's oil money to strengthen the African Union to the point that the Africans began to resist exploitation by the Americans and Europeans. And unless you dig deep in the foreign media you will not know that the media reports of a poison gas attack by the Syrian government used to justify American intervention, was based on what appears to be faked videos by the White Helmets, an organization established and funded by the US and UK governments as part of their campaign in the Syrian war.

In fact, control of the media, including secrets and lies, is necessary to the culture of war if is to survive. This is due to two other general historical trends: the increase in democracy throughout the world, and the increasing anti-war sentiment throughout the world. People don't want their country to make war. A few years ago, a political scientist at Yale got a lot of press by arguing that democracies do not make war against other democracies. When I looked at his data, I came to a different intepretation: in order to conduct a war, a democracy has to convince its people that the enemy is not a democracy or else they have to make war secretly, because otherwise the people will not

Transition to a Culture of Peace

World history as it is happening

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Women, religion, socialism, and the state

Posted on **April 1, 2017**

(Une version française suit en dessous)

Each March in CPNN, we celebrate International Women's Day and the annual meetings of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, and we see how women are a force for peace.

There is a deep historical reason for this. As I found in my one foray into anthropological studies, women were excluded from war very early in human prehistory because of the social contradiction between war and marriage. Marriage, in prehistory, was often arranged between different tribes or communities that would also be at war from time to time. In such a war, a woman's loyalty was torn between her husband on one side and her father and brothers on the other. There was a simple solution: women were excluded from war.

Does that mean that we should promote women to positions of leadership in order to achieve peace? The answer is no. And we saw a good example last year. Hillary Clinton became the first woman who was a serious candidate to become President of the United States. And as we documented in CPNN, she was a war candidate, having been largely responsible when she was Secretary of State for American involvement in the wars of Libya, Syria and the Ukraine.

It turns out the the state as a force for war has a stronger effect than women as a force for peace. Once a woman becomes head of state, she becomes part of the culture of war. Another example in recent history was Margaret Thatcher in the UK.

This is similar to the situation for religion and war. As a general rule, religions are for peace. We

devote an entire section of the Culture of Peace Network to the theme of "How can different faiths work together for understanding and harmony?"

But when religions take power in the state, they become a force for war. Look at the situation today in Israel and Iran for clear examples. Once again we see that the state as a force for war has a stronger effect than religion as a force for peace.

And finally, consider the relation of socialism and war. In general those who are for socialism are also for peace. Exactly 100 years ago, the Bolsheviks took power in Russia under the slogan of "Peace, Bread and Land." Their leader, Lenin, was a powerful critic of imperialist wars. In his essay War and Revolution, he wrote "Peace reigned in Europe, but this was because domination over hundreds of millions of people in the colonies by the European nations was sustained only through constant, incessant, interminable wars, which we Europeans do not regard as wars at all, since all too often they resembled, not wars, but brutal massacres, the wholesale slaughter of unarmed peoples."

But once the Bolsheviks took power, they succumbed to the culture of war of the state. Trotsky called for forced labor camps to "build socialism" and his rival, Stalin, put them into place and later, invaded by Nazi Germany, he built a powerful war machine which eventually led to the crash of the Soviet empire.

The crash of the Soviet empire was forced, intentionally, by the United States and its allies, by bankrupting them with the arms race. I cannot forget passing by Lenin's tomb in the May Day celebration in Moscow in 1976 and looking up to see all of the Soviet leaders, all old soldiers proudly wearing their military medals.

No one is forcing the United States today to be bankrupted with an arms race, but we see the same old soldiers with their military medals being appointed by President Trump to run (and bankrupt) the American empire. They learn nothing from history!

In fact, as I have documented in "The History of the Culture of War," over the course of history the state has come to monopolize the culture of war. Other entities of the the culture of war, such as cities which flourished in Europe in the Middle Ages, were taken over by the state, and since then cities have no culture of war.

All of this goes to show that in order to move to a culture of peace, we must develop alternatives to state power. That is why I work for a global network of culture of peace cities that could someday run the United Nations when the state system collapses into bankruptcy and chaos.

If you can help with this, contact me at coordinator@cpnn-world.org.

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LES FEMMES, LA RELIGION, LE SOCIALISME ET L'ETAT

Chaque année en mars, nous célébrons dans CPNN la Journée internationale de la femme et la réunion annuelle de la Commission des Nations Unies de la condition de la femme ; cela nous permet de voir comment les femmes sont une force pour la paix.

Il y a une raison profonde dans notre préhistoire. Comme je l'ai constaté lors de mon incursion dans les études anthropologiques, les femmes ont été exclues de la guerre très tôt dans la préhistoire, en raison de la contradiction sociale entre la guerre et le mariage. Le mariage était souvent arrangé entre différentes tribus ou communautés qui seraient également de temps en temps en guerre. Dans de telles guerres, la loyauté d'une femme était douteuse, parce que partagée entre son mari d'un côté et la famille de son père et de ses frères de l'autre. Il restait une solution simple: exclure les femmes de la guerre !

Cela signifie-t-il que les femmes doivent être promues à des postes de direction pour parvenir à la paix? La réponse est non. Et nous avons vu un exemple récent l'année dernière. Hillary Clinton est devenue la première femme candidate sérieuse pour devenir président des États-Unis. Et comme nous précisé dans CPNN, elle était une candidate ''guerrière'', ayant été largement responsable de l'implication américaine dans les guerres Libye, de Syrie et d'Ukraine quand elle était la ministre des Affaires étrangères.

Il semblerait que l'État en tant que force de guerre a un effet plus fort que celui des femmes comme force pour la paix. Une fois qu'une femme devient chef de l'État, elle devient partie intégrante de la culture de la guerre. Un autre exemple dans l'histoire récente a été Margaret Thatcher au Royaume-Uni.

Ceci est semblable à la situation pour la religion et la guerre. En théorie, les religions sont engagées pour la paix. Nous consacrons une partie entière de CPNN au thème : «Comment différentes confessions peuvent-elles travailler ensemble pour la compréhension et l'harmonie? »

Mais quand une religion prend le pouvoir dans un état, elle devient une force pour la guerre. Regardez la situation actuelle en Israël et en Iran pour des exemples clairs. Une fois de plus, nous voyons que l'État, en tant que force de guerre, a plus d'effet que la religion comme force de paix.

Et enfin, considérons le rapport du socialisme et de la guerre. En général, ceux qui sont pour le socialisme sont aussi pour la paix (voir la position de Jean Jaurès avant la 1ere guerre mondiale).

Il y a exactement 100 ans, les Bolcheviks prenaient le pouvoir en Russie sous le slogan «Paix, pain et terre». Leur chef, Lénine, était un puissant critique des guerres impérialistes. Dans son essai ''Guerre et Révolution'', il écrit: "Pendant que la paix régnait en Europe, les nations européennes exerçaient une très forte domination sur des millions de personnes dans les colonies. Cette domination n'a pu exister que parce qu'elle n'était soutenue que par des combats constants, incessants, interminables que les Européens ne considéraient pas comme des guerres, puisqu'elles ressemblaient d'avantage à des massacres brutaux, à l'abattage massif de peuples désarmés."

Transition to a Culture of Peace

World history as it is happening

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Role of mass demonstrations in history

Posted on **March 1, 2017**

Once again, as described in this month's CPNN bulletin, we are seeing mass demonstrations against corrupt and repressive government policies, which leads us to the question of their historical significance.

I am reminded of mass demonstrations which I have experienced over the years in the United States: the gathering for civil rights at the Washington Monument in 1963 when Martin Luther King made his great speech "I have a dream!"; the mobilization of one million people for a nuclear test ban in New York's Central Park in 1982; and the mobilizations in 2003 against the American invasion of Iraq which involved millions of people around the world. The mobilization in Barcelona in 2003 was cited as the precedent for the new mobilization a few days ago in that city demanding that Spain should receive refugees.

The effect of these demonstrations, as I look back at them, was to mobilize the consciousness of participants and onlookers, to make them realize that progressive change is possible if enough people demand it. In the words of the World Social Forum, it makes us realize that "A better world is possible!" In the words of the Black Panther Party in the 1960's, "Power to the People!" And in the words of the poem I wrote when working for the culture of peace at UNESCO:

"… those who would drive the team of peace
must link arms on either side,
harness their anger against injustice,
conquer the fears of centuries…"

Yes, this kind of consciousness is essential for progress! In the cases mentioned above, it led to civil rights legislation in the United States in the 1960's, to nuclear agreements of the 1980's (Gorbachev said at the time he was influenced by the mass demonstrations), and to the great increase in consciousness against the culture of war that we have seen in this century.

But consciousness, by itself, is not enough to bring us to a culture of peace.

Think of the massive demonstrations in Iran in 1978 or in Egypt's Tahir Square in 2011. Yes, there was a great leap forward in consciousness of the people in those countries. And yes, change was achieved. But in the end they did not lead to a culture of peace, but rather to new authoritarian (culture of war) governments in Iran and Egypt.

I come back to the analysis put forward last year for the changes towards peace in Colombia, which has also been accompanied by a great increase in consciousness. Like Martin Luther King in the 1960's, President Santos has received the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in this important historical process. But as I wrote last year in my advice to the people of Colombia, one cannot leave progress in the hands of the state because ultimately the state is inextricably linked to the culture of war. Instead, "develop a network of local peace committees and keep them strong and independent so that you do not have to depend solely on the national government to maintain the peace."

It is for that reason that we continue to search for more initiatives such as the peace commission of the city of New Haven where I live.

Posted in **democratic participation**, **dialectics of history**

Transition to a Culture of Peace

World history as it is happening

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Can we learn from history?

Posted on **February 1, 2017**

The events reflected in recent CPNN bulletins concerning the voting split in the United Nations and the results of last fall's elections, remind me of turbulent periods of the 20th Century and raise the question if we can learn from what happened then.

The rise of populist and potentially fascist parties last year remind one of the rise of fascism in the 1930's. What can we learn from those times?

First of all, we must avoid a Third World War. That requires a unified opposition against fascism and preparations for war such as those that took place in Germany and Spain in the 1930's. A lesson from the 1930's is that the opposition was weakened by serious infighting between communists, socialists and anarchists. In France, in the late 1930's there was a united front under the leadership of Leon Blum (who later played a major role in the establishment of UNESCO), but by then it was too late for united fronts in Germany and Spain.

Lesson 1: the need for solidarity of those opposed to fascism and war.

These times also remind us of the 1960's and the movements for civil rights and against the Vietnam War. I was part of the new generation at that time in the United States, and our generation was opposed by many peace activists of the previous generation who were influenced by the anti-communism of the government and the media. We were considered too radical! Of course, there were some in the previous generation who worked with us, the Kennedys, Martin Luther King, Jr and Malcolm X. but they paid for it with their lives (to what extent at the hands of government forces remains an open question). In Europe, too, the new generation took a revolutionary stance in the face of opposition for the most part from their elders.

Lesson 2: the need to listen to the new generation and work with their progressive leadership.

Returning to the voting split in the United Nations, we can ask if the Global South can provide leadership at this period of history beyond their votes at the UN. In recent years, this blog has followed progressive trends in Latin America and Africa, but the more a regime is progressive the more likely it will be overthrown by the forces of imperialism. The classic example from a previous generation was the government of Allende in Chile. But now, Venezuela is overturning the left-wing legacy of Hugo Chavez and Brazil has overturned the leftist legacy of Lula. And perhaps most dramatic was the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi, we may assume because of his leadership for African unity to oppose Northern imperialism.

Lesson 3: the need to develop oppposition based in the civil society rather than relying on states to provide the leadership that is needed. Even in Colombia, which has provided leadership for peace in the last year, we have warned that the people should develop a strong civil society and not depend on the government to remain progressive. Even if the government is not overthrown, it may be weakened by corruption as is the case now in South Africa.

As for the reaction to the rise of right-wing politics, we have been following the post-election fightback for human rights in the USA, which can also serve as an example for other countries faced with similar problems. One of the outstanding aspects of the fightback for human rights in the USA is the leadership of cities. Something like 300 American cities continue to maintain their stance as sanctuaries to protect undocumented immigrants against national police raids, despite the threat of the new president to cut funding to those cities. These are the cities that voted against Trump and that mounted huge demonstrations on the day after his inauguration.

Lesson 4: the need to develop an alternative progressive movement based on cities.

These lessons are played out at a local level in my city, where I am writing the annual report, The State of the Culture of Peace in New Haven, for the official city peace commission, of which I am a member. Here are some of the remarks of activists who were interviewed for that report and who were asked about how to respond to the new political situation in the country:

* Ideally, we should unite the widest movement possible to defend the human rights of everyone, beginning with the most vulnerable. And at least, we should struggle against divisiveness, not necessarily to convince the other, but at least to find ways to collaborate.

* Listen to the youth. They have a more holistic view than us adults, especially with regard to sexual orientation. They're angry and will not tolerate inaction. We need them in public office to push the legislature to defend public services and policies.

* Resistance is needed at every level against hate and persecution. For immigrant rights, the city needs to continue providing leadership and link up to the resistance on a national level. Despite the election results and false news by some of the mass media, we must realize that progressive

opinions are those of the majority of Americans.

* Protest is necessary, but with an agenda that is clear and unifying. We need dialogue at every level, engaging the opposition and taking care that legitimate anger does not stifle dialogue. We need the emergence of a moral voice like that of Martin Luther King, with an effective media strategy.

I have presented a rationale previously that we need to develop a movement of progressive cities that can take control of the United Nations if and when there is an economic and political crash that leads the Member States to more or less abandon the UN.

But now we arrive at a major contradiction. On the one hand, cities are more progressive than rural areas, but on the other hand, they are also more vulnerable if and when there is a global economic crash. And there is reason to think that such a crash is imminent. We face the possibility of a sudden and traumatic reversal of the trend towards urbanization that has been developing over recent centuries.

That leads us to Lesson 5: The need to develop links between progressive organizations based in cities (such as City Peace Commissions) and adjacent rural associations that can help us survive a global economic crash.

In this regard, an economic crash at this point in history could be worse than that of the Great Depression, because small, self-sufficient farming has been replaced by industrialized farming dependent on oil deliveries. It is not easy to find an historic precedent or roadmape for how we should respond. Perhaps the closest is the experience of Cuba after loss of oil deliveries following the crash of the Soviet Union when they reformed their agricultural production to be more diversified, more integrated, and smaller in scale.

Posted in **cities**, **democratic participation**, **dialectics of history**, **tolerance and solidarity**, **youth**

Transition to a Culture of Peace

World history as it is happening

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Where are we in the course of history?

Posted on **January 1, 2017**

I have long believed that we are at the point of human history where we can make the transition from the culture of war which has dominated us for 5,000 years to a new culture, a culture of peace. As I prepare the CPNN review for 2016 and compare it to the CPNN review that I wrote one year ago for the year 2015, it gives me the chance to reflect on the question: where are we in this transition?

I frame my response in the context of my novella, "I have seen the promised land", in which I have tried to imagine the stages by which the transition to a culture of peace could take place.

In the novella, I suppose that the system of nation states, led by the Amerian empire, which have come to monopolize the culture of war, will crash, first as an economic collapse, then follwed by a political collapse (such as I witnessed in the Soviet Union during the 1980s). It will be accompanied by attempts to impose fascist governments, such as occurred during the great depression of the 1930's. To move forward, we will need strong nonviolent movements to resist the movement towards fascism. I imagine that after the crash, governments will abandon the United Nations and leave a void in which cities, which no longer have a culture of war, can take change of a renewed United Nations and thereby manage the transition to a culture of peace.

In my blog last month, I remarked that "the election of Trump promises to embolden fascists everywhere. We already see fascism in Turkey, and it is threatened in Brazil and Venezuela. Not to mention fascist political parties on the rise throughout Europe. Hence, we are aleady challenged to overcome fascism now, before we suffer from the economic collapse. Perhaps that is to our advantage, because the struggle will be more difficult later when economic survival becomes the priority." More details are provided in the recent CPNN article that quotes the human rights chief of

the United Nations, "'Fascist Rhetoric' Becoming Commonplace in US and Europe: UN" Let us recall that fascism is simply the extreme form of the culture of war, with all of its eight aspects exaggerated.

In other words, we are already seeing signs of political collapse, even though the global economy continues to struggle along. At the same time, there is no let-up in the various economic contradictions listed by Johan Galtung as the basis of his prediction that the American empire will crash by the year 2020. These contradictions include: 1. between growth and distribution: overproduction relative to demand, 1.4 billion below $ 1/day, 100.000 die/day, 1/4 of hunger [i.e. the widening gap between rich and poor]; 2. between productive and finance economy (currency, stocks,bonds) overvalued, hence crashes, unemployment, contract work; and 3. between production/distribution/consumption and nature: ecocrisis, depletion/pollution, global warming. Not to mention the ever increasing balance of payments deficit of the United States as it imports without exporting, and the economic burden of its military bases around the world.

Another sign of political collapse is suggested in recent speculations that the new government in the United States, may withdraw its support for the United Nations.

As I concluded in last month's blog: "We are entering a watershed period of human history. Although it is being pushed forward by economic factors, the ultimate determining factor can become the social consciousness of the people themselves."

Now, let us look at the CPNN reviews for 2015 and 2016. Do they give us cause for optimism? In the reviews, we have given particular attention to the transition to peace in Colombia, as well as advances elsewhere in Latin America. However, as we have discussed previously, the transition to a culture of peace will ultimately have to be global in scope if it is to succeed.

On a global level, our reviews present some evidence that the social consciousness of the people is developing rapidly enough to resist fascism in the coming years? In particular, we see advances in the practice of nonviolence and the development of peace education, as well as continually expanding participation in the International Day of Peace. We have seen advances in confronting terrorism without violence, and, most recently, the strengthening of sanctuary cities, universities and churches in the face of threats by the new Presdient of the United States.

But, as we have often considered, consciousness is not enough. It needs to be accompanied by the development of a new institutional framework, if we are to replace the nation states in a reformed United Nations. Here, it seems we are lagging. There are calls for UN reform, but they do not seem radical enough. There is growth in peace cities, as reviewed by CPNN, but it seems that the growth is not yet sufficient to play a determining role.

Some things can be done immediately. In particular, I have previously proposed the establishment of an Alternative Security Council composed of mayors or parliamentarians from all regions of the world. Such a "Shadow Security Council: would regularly consider the issues faced by the actual UN Security Council and publicize its "decisions" in order to provide an alternative vision of how the

Transition
to a
Culture of
Peace

World history as it is
happening
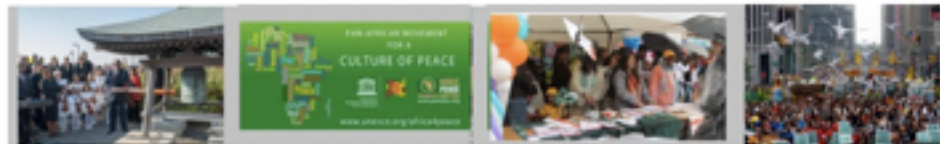
Main menu

Entering a watershed period of human history

December 1, 2016

Let me start by quoting this month's CPNN Bulletin.

"We've seen two shocking election results recently: the defeat of the referendum for the peace accords in Colombia, and the election of Donald Trump in the USA based on a racist and xenophobic campaign. What does it mean? It means that voters in the two countries are alienated from their governments - quite simply, they do not trust the government. And they are angry. So what comes next? Do we slide back into war or into fascism? Or do we return to the people, listen to their fears and anger, and organize them in the sense that Martin Luther King told us?: "The supreme task is to organize and unite people so that their anger becomes a transforming force."

Hopefully, we can avoid a nuclear war, which would have been greater if Cllinton had been elected.

But at the same time, yes, we are moving backwards.

By looking at the big picture, we can see that this is inevitable. As I describe in my novella, "I have seen the promised land", the American empire is crashing, and it will bring immense human costs in dislocation and suffering, far greater than we can imagine at this time. As a

result, we may assume, as I describe in the novella, that there will be attempts to impose a fascist "solution" much as was done during the greatest economic collapse of the 20th century.

In fact, the election of Trump promises to embolden fascists everywhere. We already see fascism in Turkey, and it is threatened in Brazil and Venezuela. Not to mention fascist political parties on the rise throughout Europe.

Hence, we are aleady challenged to overcome fascism now, before we suffer from the economic collapse. Perhaps that is to our advantage, because the struggle will be more difficult later when economic survival becomes the priority.

In the CPNN bulletin, we list some of the measures being taken already in the fightback against the attacks on human rights in the United States and towards territorial peace in Colombia. The move towards sanctuary universities, cities and states in the USA is especially impressive. Were there such moves when minorities were targeted in Germany during the 30's? We can never forget the words of the pastor Martin Niemöller in Germany at that time, We cannot forget the words of the pastor Martin Niemöller in Germany at that time, "First they came for the communists and I did not speak out— because I was not a communist." Then the trade unionists. . Then the Jews . . . Then the catholics. "Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me."

We note that in both the USA and Colombia, the fightback takes place primarily on the local level, often at the level of cities and towns. At the national level, the corruption of the culture of war continues. We may be slow it down, but it cannot be eradicated there because it is too much entrenched in the structure of national government. At the local level, however, we can be free from the culture of war and free to develop strength for the culture of peace.

In Colombia, there was consideration of a process by which the revised peace accord would be adopted through open municipal councils with direct participation of citizens. Unfortunately, however, there is so much violence and threat of renewal of war that it was decided not to take this route but rather to seek ratification immediately from the national congress. However, in the long run, I have argued elsewhere, the peace will not be sustainable until it is established and maintained at the local and municipal level.

We also note that in both the USA and Colombia, the leadership is being taken by young people. That is inevitable and necessary. As I have documented in my history of American Peace Movements, each new peace movement must reinvent its methods, because the preceding movement has become rigid and inflexible in its approach. However, that does not mean that the older generation should remain on the sidelines. We have ever more work to do as advisors to the new generation. In that regard, I call your attention to the example of I.F. Stone who served as an advisor to the youth movements of the 1960's. The new generation of activists will have to look for our advice based on the experience of previous generations, and we must be there alongside them.

To some extent, our advice will be tactical. We must teach the methods of nonviolence and mass mobiization. We must alert the new generation to avoid the influence of agents provocateurs.

But even more so, it is important to provide strategic advice. The most important task is to prepare both the consciousness of the people and new institutional frameworks, so that when the institutions of the culture of war have momentarily collapsed, we can create a new United Nations based directly on the people.

We are entering a watershed period of human history. Although it is being pushed forward by economic factors, the ultimate determining factor can become the social consciousness of the people themselves..

links:
King quote: <a href="http://culture-of-peace.info/ppa/chapter4-10.html">
Clinton: http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=7762
Promised Land: http://culture-of-peace.info/books/promisedland.html
cities and towns: http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/blog/?p=144
Colombia: http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=7735
APM: http://culture-of-peace.info/apm/chapter9-29.html
I.F. Stone: http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=7861
new United Nations: http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/blog/?p=440
economic factors: http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/blog/?p=485

How history moves: Economic change precedes; political change follows

November 1, 2o016

The years I visited and worked in the Soviet Union and later Russia gave me a useful view of the laws of historical change. I watched from within as an empire crashed.

The crash of the Soviet empire, foreseen a decade before by Johan Galtung, was first an economic crash, and then secondarily to that, a political crash. The empire crashed economically because it lost the arms race to the West. The West, led by the United States which devoted something like 40% of its budget to the military, forced the Soviet empire to match them, soldier by soldier, boot by boot, rocket by rocket, military scientist by military scientist. But since the Soviet empire had only half the size of the West's economy, it had to devote something like 80% to the arms race.

Hence, it went bankrupt first and the West won.

Once the Soviet economy crashed, the political system crashed on top of it. The people stayed home, the soldiers stayed in their barracks, and the oligarchs, aided by CIA economic advisors, finished the economic collapse by drastically devaluating the ruble. The people stayed home because they were totally alienated from the system. They used to say you could find truth anywhere except in Pravda (which means truth in Russian) and the news anywhere except in Izvestia (which means news in Russian).

In this month's CPNN bulletin, we see once again where economic change goes first and political change comes second. Here it concerns the solution to the problem of global warming. We have known for many years that to halt the global warming, we need to change from fossil fuels to renewable energy. But politically, we could not make the change. Last year's global summit of the world's nations failed to address the challenge of abandoning fossil fuels.

It's the economic factors that are making the change. Renewable solar energy has become so cheap and readily available that it is more and more replacing energy from fossil fuels. And the faster we change over to renewable energy for economic reasons, the faster the political change will follow.

The first great sociologist, Karl Marx, understood this dynamic when he developed his theory of historical change. Here's what he wrote in his Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy:

> The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or — this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms — with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.

How does this apply the great historical change that we have yet to make: the transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace?

There is a growing psychological and political consciousness around the world that this transition is necessary. The movement for a culture of peace takes its model as the movement for sustainable development which has been the greatest political movement of the past half century.

But as we are seeing, the movement for sustainable development can only become effective as a sequel to economic changes which make sustainable development possible and profitable.

The sequence of economic change first, political change second, applies equally to the transition towards a culture of peace. A culture of peace will become politically possible after the economy of the culture of war has crashed. When will that come? Too soon, because we are not ready for it!!!

The same economic fate that destroyed the Soviet empire is already far advanced towards the destruction of the American empire - and for the same reason - devotion of the greatest part of the economy to armaments and wars. Johan Galtung predicted in 2004 that the crash would come by the year 2020. The economic crash will be followed by a political crash -Americans and European are already as alienated from their political system as the Russians were in 1989. As evidence, just look at the abstention from voting in national elections.

When the American empire crashes, the rest of the world will crash with it, just as Eastern Europe crashed when the Soviet Union crashed.

At that moment, there will be a window of opportunity to establish a culture of peace - but that can happen only if we are prepared with institutional frameworks that can replace the nation states. If we are not prepared, we risk the replacement of the present system by a fascist system - just as happened after the crash of 1929 in Europe (and almost in the United States as well).

Whereas the question of global warming and changes of energy sources are matters of many decades, the question of the collapse of the economy of the culture of war is a matter of only a few years. Like the collapse of the Soviet Union, it threatens tol catch us by surprise.

I work with cities in the hopes that they will be able to provide an institutional framework to replace the role of the nation states as the basis for the United Nations Security Council (See blog of June 1), but the work is painstakingly slow. Too slow. History is moving faster than us!

links:
http://culture-of-peace.info/books/history/evolution-2.html#7
http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=7634
https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm
http://www.oldsite.transnational.org/SAJT/forum/meet/2004/Galtung_USempireFall.html
http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/blog/?p=440
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_Plot

Success of the United Nations

October 1, 2016

We know all too well the failures of the United Nations. At this moment of history, its failures include the wars and potential wars everywhere in the world, including the potential of a catastrophic nuclear war. As we have stated previously, as long as the United Nations is run by the Member States, it will not be able to control their culture of war.

But let us not ignore the successes of the United Nations.

First, it has succeeded in developing around the world a universal consciousness for peace.

This is shown in the celebration of the International Day of Peace, which, as we have documented in this month's CPNN bulletin, has been taken up by millions of people in all parts of the world.   And, as we have mentioned in the bulletin, this follows in a tradition that includes the 75 million signatures on the Manifesto 2000 for the International Year of the Culture of

Peace and the mobilization for peade by thousands of organizations of the civil society during the International Decade for a Culture of Peace 2001-2010.

The universal consciousness for peace follows on the heels of the universal consciousness for human rights.

In both cases, a key moment was the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of a key Declaration. For human rights it was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and for peace it was the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace of 1999. The simple fact that all the countries of the world could adopt a resolution has enabled the UN to play a key role in the development of universal consciousness.

In sum, one great success of the United Nations has been its standard-setting function.

Second, the United Nations has succeeded in managing international matters on a global scale when they are not part of the culture of war.

Here are some examples:

In 1967 there were 130,000 cases of smallpox in the world. By 1984, there were no cases and the virus was declared extinct. This was due to the global vaccination program of the World Health Organization, one of the United Nations agencies.

At any given moment there is a bewildering number of airplanes taking off and landing in airports around the world without accident. This is due to the work of the International Civil Aviation Organization, another United Nations agency.

You can mail a letter to any destination in the world by puttiing it in a mailbox in any country. This is due to the work of the Universal Postal Union, yet another United Nations Agency.

In all these cases, success comes because the problems are not political. They are simply technical.

That leaves us with the big question: could the United Nations succeed in bring us a global culture of peace? Not just peace consciousness, but could it achieve a true and universal disarmament, just as dueling, slavery and other such practices were previously eliminated? The problem here is not technical.   It is political.

My experiences when I worked at UNESCO tell me that a culture of peace is technically possible. As I have described previously, we were able, as an agency of the United Nations, to involve the people of Mozambique and El Salvador to design national peace programs during the 1990's following their civil wars, and I believe that they would have achieved peace and disarmament in those countries if the Member States had supported our work.   But they did not support our work - for political reasons. I am reminded of that history when I see the progress towards disarmament that is being achieved these days in Colombia, and I hope that they can sustain the peace despite the arrival of political changes.

Yes, a culture of peace is possible. What is needed is a radical reform of the United Nations, putting it in the hands of the people instead of the states.

links:
stated previously
 this month's CPNN bulletin
 Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace
described previously
radical reform of the United Nations

The dialectical pace of history

September 1, 2016

History does not progress at an even rate, but by long periods of slow development punctuated by sudden revolutionary changes, as described by dialectical philosophy.

The news in CPNN this month illustrate the slowness of the development of the culture of peace.

The development of the peace process which led to this month's signing of a peace accord in Colombia comes after a half century of war and many years of peace negotiations.   The case is similar for the progress towards a peace accord with the communist movement in the Philippines. When I took part in the UNESCO international conference for a culture of peace in the Philippines twenty years ago, negotiations were already underway.

Development is similarly slow for city peace commissions. We began the New Haven City Peace Commission in the 1980's and it is still trying to find its identity. The newest city peace commission, that of Santos, Brazil, was begun six years ago, and only this year has it been officially formalized. As they say: " It is a long walk on a road that builds itself as we walk over it; we cannot see the end of it, but it is known that the end is a much better place than the one we are living today."

Human rights are widely recognized and respected today, but the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was ignored and unknown for the first 40 years after its adoption by the United Nations. It was only after the Nobel Peace Prize to Amnesty International in 1977 that it began to get recognition. The equivalent UN resolution for a culture of peace was adopted in 1999. If the same pace is followed as that for human rights, it may not gain universal recognition for another 25 years!

When development is very slow, it is hard to see. As the activists of the new Ashland Culture of Peace Commission state, "we need to acknowledge the important and often unnoticed work that is being done in our community that moves us toward a better world."

The culture of war has dominated humanity for more than 5000 years. Should we expect it to be replaced by a culture of peace in a short period of time?

On the other hand, at the present time, there are other historical tendencies developing that may come quickly to the point of sudden revolutionary change. In his most recent column, Johan Galtung considers that "the world 'right now' [is] so unstable with imbalances everywhere that what we are living is fluxes and jumps. . . . power imbalance that can lead to war 'before it is too late', to passive coexistence, or to active coexistence, peace. Very, very dynamic indeed. No stability."

The "peace" mentioned by Galtung would seem to be a relative peace in the sense of the absece of war, caused by the exhaustion of the warring partries. However, even if that comes about, we will still be far from the culture of peace that we need and that is developing much too slowly.

Consciousness, by itself, is not enough; the task is also political

August 1, 2016

We are seeing progress towards a culture of peace on several fronts:

In this month's CPNN bulletin, we feature progress in peace education around the world.

In the bulletin of May, it was progress in the practice of nonviolence.

As described by the Brazilian pedagogue, Paulo Freire, there is a development of consciousness in the sense of understanding plus action.

But consciousness, by itself, whether through peace education or the practice of nonviolence, is not enough to change the course of history.   If we are to make the transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace, our task is not only psychological, but also political. I have discussed this previously by insisting that peace education, to be effective, must be prepared to confront the dominant culture of war.

To be political, consciousness needs to be linked up to the development of a new institutional framework.

As we have previously observed, peace education is an integral part of the peace process in Colombia, but to make a permanent change, it needs to be linked to a network of peace committees at the local and regional levels.

We can begin to see signs that such a linkage is happening. For example, restorative justice, a key practice of nonviolence and an important aspect of peace education is being promoted by the peace commissions of the cities of Londrina in Brazil and Ashland and New Haven in the United States.   Cities are also promoting the practices of mediation and participative budgeting, two other key practices of a culture of peace.

A great step forward is underway as cities for peace link into global networks such as those described in a recent CPNN bulletin.   This process should be strengthened by regularly

assessent of the state of the culture of peace by each city (see CPNN February 24) and exchange of their practices and results in this regard.

The development of networks of cities for peace can be seen as a step towards the development of a global institution of the culture of peace, perhaps a radically-reformed United Nations (as we suggested in a previous blog), or perhaps an entirely new institutional framework at a global level.

Looking at the headlines of the mass media might make us pessimistic, but we need to keep in mind that a better world is possible and keep working to establish its institutional framework.

What happens after peace accords are signed

July 1, 2016

Now that there is a ceasefire in Colombia, as described in this month's bulletin of CPNN (1), the question arises whether a culture of peace can be maintained afterwards.

When I was working on the culture of peace in UNESCO, I experienced a similar situation in two countries, El Salvador and Mozambique. Both of them emerged with peace accords in the early 1990's after civil wars comparable to that in Colombia. In both we established national culture of peace programs to maintain the peace afterwards. They were major efforts, as I will describe, but ultimately they failed. Now, twenty five years later, both El Salvador and Mozambique are once again descending into violence, verging once again on civil war.

Why did they fail?

First, consider the efforts. The program in El Salvador is described in a journal article (2), available on the Internet, written by the three of us who managed the program. To quote from its conclusion: the program transformed "conflict into cooperation by engaging thosepreviously in violent conflict in the joint planning and implementation of human development projects of benefit to all. . .. [it] developed both a set of guidelines accepted byall parties to the previous violent conflict, and institutionalized these guidelines in a National Coordination Council and its Executive Committee which ensure that they are put into practice. In particular, the guidelines are being followed in the implementation of project 507/ELS/01, the production of daily radio broadcasts and non-formal education campaigns for the most needy and neglected women in the country. In the course of the working out of this project, during the period from the summer of 1994 to the present (spring of 1996) the participants, representing the government, community radio stations and nongovernmental organizations including those associated with the FMLN, have internalized the basic principles and guidelines of a culture of peace. While at first they distrusted each other to the point that UNESCO had to play therole of arbitrator and mediator, they have since learned to negotiate and arrived at the point of regular concerted decision-making. Daily radio broadcasts are

now being produced which reflect the fruits of this process of dialogue, participation and concertation and which up until now have been well-produced and well-received despite time pressures and the demanding schedules of radio broadcasting. These broadcasts are carried by 24 radio stationsaround the country, as well as in marketplaces, and they are accompanied by the work of 64 correspondents in the various communities who monitor the broadcasts and provide information from their communities to the technical team that creates the programmes."

The radio project was only one of 20 human development projects in El Salvador (3) that were developed by the method of concertation described above.

In Mozambique, a similar process of concertation between ex-enemies resulted in the elaboration of ten human development projects with rural women, demobilized soldiers, schools, youth, mass media, community leaders, etc.(4)

The process worked. Hoping to develop their country, the ex-enemies could be brought together and could work together.

But the programmes did not work. The Member States of UNESCO refused to fund the projects, preferring to put their development funds into projects that they could manage themselves for political advantage (including, in some cases, corruption and exploitation).

Alvaro de Soto, who had mediated the El Salvador peace accords, warned us at the time that it could not work. As part of the accords, the US and Europe had promised to fund land reform and judicial reform in El Salvador, but afterwards they reneged and never provided the funds they had promised. By the way, the same thing happened with the peace accords that established Zimbabwe. The UK never came through with the money they promised as part of the accords, to buy land from the white farmers and distribute to the African farmers. Eventually, President Mugabe got tired of waiting and seized the land and Zimbabwe was punished by international sanctions.

In general, we came to realize that the powerful Member States of the UN do not want peace. They want to exploit the poor countries of the world and that requires the old method of the culture of war: "Divide and conquer."

Hopefully, Colombia can learn from the failures of the past and achieve a sustainable peace. As I have suggested in my previous blog, "Advice to Colombia," (5) they need to develop a network of local peace committees and keep them strong and independent so that they do not have to depend solely on the national government or United Nations support. Those of us in other countries can help with direct people-to people support; as Amada Benavides says, "Peacebuilding moment starts just now. Today we need more support than ever." (6)

1) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=6377
2) http://www.culture-of-peace.info/annexes/IJPS-1996.pdf
3) http://culture-of-peace.info/annexes/El_Salvador/El_Salvador_programme.pdf 4)

http://culture-of-peace.info/annexes/mozambique/contents.html
5) http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/blog/?p=312
6) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=6317

Proposal for a Radical Reform of the United Nations

June 1, 2016

As it is structured now, the United Nations is controlled by national governments, with their military institutions and military budgets. Over the course of history, national governments have come to monopolize war. As a result, if we are to make the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace, we need a radical reform of the United Nations. Instead of being controlled by the Member States, it should be controlled by "We the Peoples," the words that begin its Charter.

Before making a proposal for such a radical reform, we need to consider the following:

1) The national governments of the world increasingly ignore the United Nations when faced with global problems. Just this last month the major countries failed to send heads of state to the United Nations Humanitarian Summit. We first saw this trend with the global economic crisis of 2007-2008; the powerful states, meeting as the G-7, ignored the relevant financial institutions of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and responded to the crisis with meetings of their finance ministers. Then in 2010, the powerful countries ignored the United Nations Non-proliferation conference and met in Washington in a parallel conference called by President Obama. Only Iran sent a head of state to the United Nations conference. Finally, even when the national governments attend a United Nations summit, the results are not adequate, as illustrated by the conferences to confront global warming in 2012 in Rio and 2015 in Paris.

2) The global system of national governments periodically fails, leaving a void where other institutions can take their place. During the 20th Century this occurred twice with World Wars I and II, as well as during the global economic crisis beginning in 1929, and (for half of the world) with the economic, then political collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. There is a growing awareness that the world is due for another economic (and political?) collapse, including a collapse of the American Empire, which may leave a temporary void in international decision- making. It may provide a "window of opportunity" for radical change.

With this in mind, let us consider what a radical reform of the United Nations could look like.

Let us begin with the proposal of the Pan-African Parliament, as reprinted in this month's CPNN bulletin, for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly. This would have the advantage that parliamentarians have less vested interest in the culture of war than

do the representatives of national governments. Parliaments do not have military forces, although they may vote on military budgets. As the Parliament's President explained, "It is long overdue that 'We, the Peoples,' as the UN Charter begins, have more say in global affairs.

But the real problem is the Security Council. As the bulletin describes, there are many proposals to reform it, but they all continue to assume that it should be controlled by representatives of the Member States. Instead, we need a global organization where the decisions are made by "We, the peoples". I can imagine two possibilities: a Security Council controlled by the mayors of the world, or one controlled by the parliaments of the world.

Since such a reform cannot be achieved under the present system of national governments, it must await the "window of opportunity" of their next crash. In the meantime, I propose the establishment of an "Alternative Security Council" (ASC) composed of mayors or parliamentary representatives from all the regions of the world. This ASC would regularly consider the issues faced by the actual UN Security Council and publicize its "decisions" in order to provide an alternative vision of how the issues of war and peace could be managed at a global level. One can imagine that their decisions would be radically different concerning, for example, nuclear disarmament, approaches to the disasters in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya, etc. This would be a powerful force for consciousness-raising in the general public, and it could provide a model for an eventual radical reform of the UN.

There are several ways that mayors and parliaments are organized globally, any of which could be represented in an Alternative Security Council:

1) Regional organizations of parliaments such as the European Parliament, the Latin American Parliament and the Pan-African Parliament or of cities such as the Council of European Municipalities and Regions and the Arab Towns Organization.

2) Global organizations of parliamentarians for peace such as Parliamentarians for Global Action or of mayors and cities for peace, as described in a recent CPNN bulletin and blog.

3) Global organizations of parliamentarians in general such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union or of cities in general such as the UCLG: Global Network of Cities, Local and Regional Governments.

All that is needed in order to establish an Alternative Security Council at the present time is;

a) an institutional host for the ASC, preferable a recognized international body that promotes a culture of peace;

b) an agreement for membership of the ASC, which could be established with any one of the organizaions of mayors or parliaments mentioned above;

c) a small secretariat to manage the Council by email (rather than actual meetings which would not be convenient, both because of the cost and because the members would not be free from their other tasks)

d) a means to disseminate widely the decisions of the council, i.e. a network of partners for publicizing these decisions.

e) a small budget which would be minimal if the sponsoring organization were receptive and if the secretariat and ASC members were volunteers.

The time is now to prepare a new system that will be ready to install during the next window of opportunity. If we wait for the crash of the present system, it will be too late. The time is now for radical action. And here is an action we can do now: an alternative security council.

Peace, nonviolence, compassion, and culture of peace

April 1, 2016

The various initiatives at the level of the city described in this month's CPNN bulletin are devoted to these four different goals: peace, nonviolence, compassion and culture of peace.

Certainly the initiatives are complementary and they have the potential to join in a unified struggle to change the world. But their unity remains to be achieved.

What are their differences and advantages/disadvantages?

At UNESCO, when we developed the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace for the UN system, we distinguished culture of peace from the traditional notion of peace. Peace, we reflected, is the period between wars when countries prepare for the their next wars. Culture of peace, instead, is a change in the culture so that wars become unnecessary, even impossible. Culture of peace was conceived as a political strategy to replace the culture of war. Each of the key characteristics of the culture of war was countered by its opposite in a culture of peace. For example, you cannot have a war if you have no enemy. It's that simple!

The complementarity of Culture of Peace and Nonviolence was recognized in the title of the United Nations Decade following the International Year for the Culture of Peace the United Nations International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.

Whereas culture of peace was conceived specifically as a political strategy, nonviolence may be considered as a necessary tactic. Strategically, a culture of peace cannot be achieved by tactics that are violent. This is an important consideration if we analyze the history of the last few centuries. Revolutionary movements have succeeded in

overthrowing cultures of war, but because their tactics were violent, they ended up establishing new cultures of war instead of cultures of peace.

In this regard, let us recall the reasoning of Mahatma Gandhi. We have no enemies, only opponents whom we have yet to convince. To succeed, the struggle must be carried on at the level of ideas, dialogue and mediation rather than force and violence.

It seems to me that we should advance under a banner of culture of peace as well as nonviolence. In that way we make it clear that this is a political strategy, not just a tactic, a strategy to replace the culture of war by a culture of peace.

And what about compassion?

Let us look closely at the text of the Charter for Compassion:

"The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the

centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect."

I see at least two aspects of this Charter that make an important contribution to the struggle for a culture of peace.

First, it is not enough to have very rational strategy and tactics, unless we also have an emotional empathy and concern for "every single human being." This is the cry of the heart that is needed to accompany the reasoning of the head.

Second, the movement for a culture of peace should gather force from the millenia of religious, ethical and spiritual struggles that have gone before us to make a better world. While it is true that the concepts of nonviolence and culture of peace are relatively new, the struggle for a peaceful, nonviolent world is as old as humanity. Most of the great religions were established by prophets who rejected the violence of the societies in which they lived. They should be considered as the prophets of a culture of peace and nonviolence.

Another world is possible! Let us develop the unity of all these initiatives and struggles in order to achieve it!

Africa: the struggle between culture of war and culture of peace

March 1, 2016

Once again, articles from Africa are featured this month in the CPNN bulletin and here as well (see previous blogs re Africa). The articles illustrate what I wrote recently in the article Africa's Contribution to the Global Movement for a Culture of Peace for the African journal, The Thinker:

Culture of Peace Consciousness

"Africa is the leading continent of the world for peace education and media for peace." This is exemplified by actions described in articles this month from Cameroon, Mali, Tunisia, Congo and Ethiopia.

Culture of Peace Methodologies

Africa has shown its leadership in culture of peace methodologies that promote reconciliation and solidarity "with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa and the Gacaca in Rwanda, enabling Africans to overcome bitter conflicts and enter a path of reconciliation." Recently we see movement towards African solidarity in Morocco, Sierra Leone, Chad and the Gambia.

Culture of Peace Institutions

"During the transition period in South Africa following Nelson Mandela's release from prison, as part of the National Peace Accord, a broad set of regional and local peace committees were established that united representatives from political organizations, trade unions, business, churches, police and security forces to resolve disputes at local and regional levels."

Culture of peace institutions are once again beginning to develop thanks to initiatives of the African Union, as indicated by their most recent assembly and their meeting of the Pan-African Network of the Wise, as well as their support for the UNESCO initiatives such as the African bienneial for a culture of peace and the networks for African youth and women for culture of peace.

Conclusion

"Historically, Africa may be in a good position to take a leadership role in the global movement, because in the course of history, with the exception of the ancient empires of Egypt, Africans did not develop culture of war empires and states to the same extent that they were developed in other continents. And the rich tradition of Pan-Africanism provides an alternative model to that of empires and states. A Pan-African union could be based on a culture of peace rather than culture of war. It would be within the tradition of peace-building by Nelson Mandela. And it would fulfill the dream of that great African-American, W.E.B. Dubois, which he shared at the end of his life with Kwame Nkrumah and the people of Ghana, an Africa at peace with itself and the world."

Culture of Peace: Are we making progress?

February 1, 2016

This month's bulletin (1) gives us an idea of where progress is being made (or not being made) towards a culture of peace if we compare it to the CPNN bulletins of 2015 (2).

On the good side

Progress is being made at a grass-roots level by social movements for sustainable development and food sovereignty, often led or inspired by women and indigenous peoples. Often this involves the return to traditional practices.

On the bad side

The national governments of the world, gathered in Paris, did nothing to reduce the global dependence on fossil fuels which makes development unsustainable, contributing to pollution and global warming. Despite technical advances which begin to make renewable energy cheaper than fossil fuels, a large portion of technological innovation and development planning continues to favor the old unsustainable energy systems.

On the good side

Increasingly there are political movements against the policies of austerity that have been imposed by international financial institutions and national governments, policies that have accelerated the concentration of the world's wealth in fewer and fewer hands.

On the bad side

The rich continue to get richer and the poor to get poorer, both within and between countries. This is not just. And it is not sustainable!

On the good side

Wise men and women tell us that the scourges of terrorism and displacement of peoples (refugees) cannot be defeated by more violence and xenophobic barriers, but we must address the roots of these problems by rejecting the culture of war and adopting policies corresponding to the culture of peace.

On the bad side

Influenced by the mass media and political demagogues, many people, perhaps a majority in many countries, continue to support policies of violence and xenophobia.

On the good side

After decades of civil war, Colombia is arriving at a peace accord with participation of the entire country and, in fact, all of Latin America.

On the bad side

Wars and civil wars, often fueled by the most developed countries, continue to plague much of the rest of the world.

In sum, are we making progress? It would seem that we are developing the base for a future culture of peace, but it will not come easily because at the higher levels of the world, things are getting worse. Where is the United Nations in all this? What if it could be reformed to really represent "we the peoples", as stated in the opening lines of its Charter? Imagine what it would be like if the Security Council were composed of representatives of the mayors of the world. Do you think they would want to maintain nuclear weapons? Or to make peace by bombing people? Look, for example, at the recent approach of the mayors of Madrid and Paris (3) !

(1) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=5068
(2) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?page_id=805 (3) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=5043

Some Advice to the New Generation

January 1, 2016

Kumi Naidoo of Greenpeace and the indigenous elders who came to Paris for the Climate Negotiations are correct in their assessment. As the elders say, "We have misplaced our trust in governmental leaders and the leaders of industry. They failed us by trying to maintain their profits, economies and their power over the people . . . Those seeking profit and power have created a business of war and destruction that now threatens the lives of billions around the world . . . We can no longer wait for solutions from governmental and corporate leaders. We must all take action and responsibility to restore a healthy relationship with each other and Mother Earth." And as Naidoo says, "We need substantial, structural, systemic change – and this change can only be led by the youth, who are not infected by the political pollution of the past."

With this wisdom in mind, I should like to offer some advice to the youth who are seeking "substantial, structural, systemic change." It concerns two needs: 1) a general raising of consciousness; and 2) the development of new institutions.

At CPNN we are very familiar with the challenge of raising consciousness. In contrast to the dominant culture of war that uses the mass media to justify their power and their violence, we are part of a growing movement of alternative media that seeks to provide what the people are seeking: the truth.

Of course, the truth is not simple. As Gandhi teaches us, the truth is mountain that we are climbing by many different paths, often invisible to each other. We may not always understand each other's truth, but we can always recognize the falsehoods of the propaganda for the culture of war by its emphasis on violence, fear and passivity.

Never before have so many people come to the truth that we need a world without war. What is more difficult is the development of new institutions. It often seems that the state has already pre-empted the possibilities for institution-building. But the state, as I have shown in the History of the Culture of War, has come over the centuries to monopolize war to the point that it has become itself the embodiment of the culture of war. Even when revolutionaries have sought to end war by taking over the state, they have simply ended up by creating new cultures of war.

However, the state is neither stable nor necessary.Several times each century the state system collapses from the contradictions of its culture of war. In the 20th Century we can point to four such crashes, two of them from the two world wars and two of them from the economic contradictions of the culture of war (the Great Depression and the crash of the Soviet empire).

Nor are states necessary. Human needs, as well as care of the environment, can be handled by local and regional government and coordinated at a global level by institutions such as those of the UN system. For what is the state necessary? For wars and war preparation and for the guarding of frontiers.

So here is my advice: don't worry about the state, but strengthen local, regional and global institutions that can replace the state next time the system crashes, so that we can arrive at a world without war or frontiers.

Listen to the refugees

December 1, 2015

As we have emphasized previously, education for peace, to be effective, must be informed by an incisive understanding of the culture of war.

And who knows better the culture of war than refugees? In the rich countries we consider war as a distant event that we see only on the television screens. Even our warriors now sit in air-conditioned offices in the US where they guide remote-controlled drones that can destroy whole villages on the other side of the world. But the refugees are coming from those villages. They know what war is all about.

Let us listen to the refugees! Let them teach us that we must abolish war, that we must stop the bombing, stop the killing, and find non-violent ways to deal with conflict.

Of course, as the articles this month in CPNN indicate, it is the right and humane thing t do to welcome and integrate refugees into our societies, into our homes as Michael Moore demands.

But more than that, our future depends on what we learn from these refugees. If we do not learn from them to abolish war, our children and grandchildren will be the next generation of refugees. Our empire is crashing and when the culture of war crashes, it may come about through war (1914, 1939) or through economic collapse (1929, 1989). In either case it is the common people who suffer. Cities and regions become unlivable and the people must flee from their homes. Now this happens on the other side of the world. But unless we learn and change to a culture of peace, tomorrow it will happen here!

Let us listen and learn from the refugees!

The Colombia Peace Process and Education for Peace

November 1, 2016

Several years ago (September 2013 to be exact), I posed the question in this blog, "What Kind of Peace Education?" (1) and responded that an effective program of peace education must begin by analyzing the culture of war. But this approach is strongly opposed by those who hold state power because, in fact, their power is based on that culture.

Therefore, it was a refreshing change to hear the discussions when I took part last month in the National Encounter for Peace Education for post-conflict Colombia. The people of Colombia know very well what is the culture of violence and war, as they have experienced it for many decades, and now that a peace accord is being reached, they want to change from that culture to a culture of peace.

An especially clear exposition of this kind of peace education is made by Alicia Cabezudo, who also took part in the Encounter. As she says in her essay, reprinted by CPNN, "violence, and especially the 'culture of violence' needs to be analyzed and studied in the content of education for peace because the concealment of violence in the educational system serves to legitimize violence and makes it more difficult to study and understand its causes and search for its roots. The analysis of violence, including the actors and the specific context is needed if we are to identify and select potential solutions to this violence."

As Alicia says, "one of the characteristics of education for the Culture of Peace is the social construction of knowledge, following the educational precepts of the famous Brazilian educator Paulo Freire." Education should be a process of democratic participation: "Not only teachers, but also student representatives, parents associations

and relevant members of the education community should be involved in establishment of the curriculum and how it is taught." (2)

The National Encounter was organized in a culture of peace manner. Most of the time we sat in small circles in workshops, face-to-face, and exchanged ideas, listening to each other rather than "talking at each other." As I remark in my description of the event, there was a remarkably high proportion of young people involved in these discussions. It is evident that the youth of Colombia wish to construct a new society of peace. And they realize that it must be "peace" in the broad sense, not just the absence of war but a culture of peace. (3)

There was a rumor that President Santos might stop by the Encounter on his way back from Havana where he was taking part in the negotiations around the Peace Accord. After all, he

was elected President on a platform of peace, and only a week before had taken part in a nationally televised program on peace education with some of the educators who organized our Encounter. (4)

Although the peace initiatives of the national government are needed and applauded by the people, they realize full well, as Alicia insists, that this "should not be only an agreement between the government and the guerrillas or the paramilitaries – It is and should be an agreement of everyone. It is and should be an agreement in which the civil society participates actively. For that reason, it is an educational theme par excellence."

The message that I brought to Colombia from South Africa (see my previous blog-5) was one that they were ready to hear and take seriously, that they should "develop a network of local peace committees and keep them strong and independent so that [they] do not have to depend solely on the national government to maintain the peace."

As Alicia says, peace education has a crucial role in the peace process: "Peace Education should be used as a tool, a way to facilitate the return to peace at the territorial level; the democratization of the political, social and economic system, and the effective practice of social solidarity and equitable justice . . . Never before has a peace process after an armed conflict been accompanied simultaneously by a pedagogy of building a culture of peace as it is being discussed today in Colombia. It's an opportunity that must not be wasted."

(1) http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/blog/?p=152 (2) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=4400 Alicia
(3) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=4364 Me
(4) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=4121 Santos

(5) http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/blog/?p=312

Advice to Colombia for the Peace Process

September 1, 2016

As described in this month's CPNN bulletin (1) , Colombia is preparing for peace as the peace talks advance between the Government and FARC. Local and regional peace initiatives, as well as a national move for peace education, are taking place in this context. It seems that Colombia will achieve peace accords that allow the election of a unity government that represents all of the people. But we should ask the question about what comes next. Can one trust that a unity government will continue the serve the people, or will it become corrupt?

I am reminded of the situation 25 years ago in South Africa when the peace talks between the apartheid government of South Africa and Nelson Mandela inspired the entire country to prepare for peace. At that time a network of local peace committees were established. At their peak in the early 1990's, there were 11 regional committees and over one hundred local peace committees, with an annual budget of almost $12 million which enabled the hiring of full time staff for regional offices. These committees united representatives from political organizations, trade unions, business, churches, police and security forces to resolve disputes at local and regional levels. They engaged people directly in conflict management on a grass roots level throughout the country. (2)

Earlier this year, I had the chance to spend a month in South Africa and to meet with social activists who had been active in the anti-apartheid movement. The told me that they regret now that they abandoned the network of local peace committees, because the national government has become so corrupt they can no longer work with it. The corruption is exemplified by the alleged involvement of Cyril Ramaphosa in the massacre of striking mine workers three years ago.

The massacre took place in 2012 at the Lonmin platinum mines near Marikana, South Africa where 41 striking mineworkers were killed and many more injured, mostly by the police, many of them shot in the back. (3) The strike was carried out by workers opposed to the leadership of their union, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which they considered to have sold out the company interests. The NUM was founded by Cyril Ramaphosa, after which Ramaphosa became the leader of COSATU, the national organization of trade unions, and then leader of the ANC, and now Vice President of South Africa.

Most recently, according to an article in Jeune Afrique (4), the leader of EFF, the new political party opposed to the ANC, announced the filing of a legal complaint against Ramaphosa, for having had "a decisive effect on the final decision of deliberating the mass murder of the miners at Marikana". At the time of the massacre, Ramaphosa, in addition to being Vice-President of the country and founder of the National Union of Mineworkers, was also a shareholder in Lonmin. Ramaphosa is accused by the leader of the radical left to have insisted that the police should break the strike. Although there was an official investigation after the massacre, its mandate did not allow it to investigate the role of government members in ordering the police action.

One year after the massacre, the journal Amandla! concluded (5) : "Perhaps the most important lesson of Marikana is that the state can gun down dozens of black workers with little or no backlash from 'civil society', the judicial system or from within the institutions that supposedly

form the bedrock of democracy. What we have instead is the farcical Farlam commission, an obvious attempt to clear the state's role in the massacre and prevent any sort of real investigation into the actions of the police on that day. In other words, the state can get away with mass murder, with apparent impunity in terms of institutional conceptions of justice and political accountability."

Meanwhile, Ramaphosa has become one of South Africa's richest men, with Forbes Magazine estimating his wealth at $275 million (6). Many believe that he is in line to be elected the next President of South Africa.

Hopefully, the activists in South Africa can revive a network of local peace committees. And hence, my advice to the people of Colombia: develop a network of local peace committees and keep them strong and independent so that you do not have to depend solely on the national government to maintain the peace.

(1) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=3785

(2) http://culture-of-peace.info/monograph/pages138-139.html

(3) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marikana_killings

(4) http://www.jeuneafrique.com/243512/societe/afrique-du-sud-julius-malema-attaque-cyril- ramaphosa-en-justice-dans-laffaire-de-la-tuerie-de-marikana/

(5) http://www.cetri.be/Marikana-massacre-One-year-later
(6) http://www.forbes.com/lists/2011/89/africa-billionaires-11_Cyril-Ramaphosa_6K7M.html

Political will - Will it be there for the global meeting on climate change?

August 1, 2015

This is the question posed by this month's CPNN bulletin (1) with regard to the global meeting on climate change to take place at the end of the year in Paris.

It is generally agreed, at least by the citizens of the world, that we need to reverse the global warming that comes from the exhausts of power plants, automobiles, factories, airplanes, etc.

So what has been keeping national governments from reaching agreements all these years, despite the desires of their citizens? Where has there been democracy?

The first and most obvious reason has been the powerful lobbies of the oil industry and their allies that have tried to deny the obvious fact that there is global warming and that it comes from their pollution. They have tried to convince us with pseudo-scientific articles. By now, however, the peoples of the world have seen through their false propaganda and they overwhelmingly demand action to stop global warming.

But more important, the big corporations have paid legislators not to take action that could reduce their profits. In other words they have corrupted the national governments.

The outcome in Paris will depend on the relative weight of corruption and democracy. What should we expect?

If nuclear armaments are any precedent, we should expect that democracy will lose, that corruption will win, and that global warming will continue.

After all, we have known for decades that nuclear weapons are an even greater danger than global warming for the future of our planet, and yet there has been no effective action to eliminate them. This year the meeting of national governments at the United Nations in May produced no agreement. (2) Why? Because the United States followed the political demands of Israel that their weapons program should not be questioned.

National governments are corrupted. In my opinion they are hopelessly corrupted. By the culture of war. Over the centuries, for millennia, in fact, they have come to monopolize war and to construct their power on its basis. (3) Their power has been shared with the miltary-industrial complex, and more recently the military-industrial-media complex, since the media also have been corrupted.

For this reason, it is of the utmost importance that cities, provinces and regions, as well as civil society, have taken up the cause of preventing climate change. Unlike national governments, they cannot make war, and hence they are relatively free from the culture of war. This month we recognized climate initiatives by the provinces and regions of the Americas,(4) by the mayors of the world meeting with the Pope (5), by mayors from Africa and Europe meeting with the mayor of Paris (6), and by the civil society meeting in Mozambique (7) , as well as election results from the oil-rich province of Alberta, Canada, where voters threw out the incumbent party and elected candidates who pledged to establish tougher policies against climate change. (8)

The leadership of cities, provinces and regions to prevent climate change is a good precedent for their leadership on a more general level, the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace.

(1) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=3427
(2) disarmament: http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=2908 (3) http://culture-of-peace.info/books/history.html
(4) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=3262
(5) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=3329

(6) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=2853 (7) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=2444 (8) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=2697

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How One Culture of War Begets Another

July 1, 2015

In this month's CPNN bulletin (1), we read how the "unjustifiable" war in Iraq has been a major cause of the rise of the barbaric 'Islamic State' in the region. This observation comes from two important figures in our time, Ismail Serageldin, head of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, and Mary Robinson, formerly President of Ireland, then High Commissioner for Human Rights, and now one of the "Elders."

Let us expand on their analysis. The forces that now lead the Islamic State received their arms from the American Empire (i.e. the United States, NATO, and their allies) in order to take part in the overthrow of President Assad in Syria, and then they captured arms that had been sent by the US to Iraq in order to overthrow President Sadam Hussein. And then there is Boko Haram and Al-Shabab in Africa who are inspired by the Islamic State even through they lack the heavy weapons. But let us expand in time as well as in space. The Islamic State is a successor to Al Quaeda and Osama Bin Laden who got their arms and training in the beginning as part of the war of the American Empire against the Russians in Afghanistan. And Sadam Hussein was armed by the American Empire as part of their war against the Iran that came after they had overthrown the legitimate democracy of Mossadegh.

And so, over time, the West's culture of war has reproduced its mirror image in the Middle East - another military empire. One culture of war has armed, trained and justified another. One must say "justified" because the Islamic State, like its predecessor Al Quaeda, attracts its recruits by promising to rid the region of the American Empire!

Perhaps, some readers will be shocked to consider the Islamic State as the mirror image of the American Empire. But think carefully. Which one has killed the most people? Which one has produced the most inter-tribal, inter-religious, inter-ethnic conflicts? And is it better to kill with drones than by beheading?

And now, as the Western Empire prepares its military options in an attempt to destroy the Islamic State, what new monsters will it create? And are there not already new monsters arising from the ashes of their military intervention to overthrow Muammar Gaddafi in Libya? Not to mention the military aid and advice provided to fascists in the Ukraine. . .

Where will it end? Perhaps very simply by the bankruptcy of the West. These wars are very expensive, and they continue to add to unsustainable national debts. While it may seem that the production of arms provides jobs to sustain their economies, the people of the American Empire cannot eat or find shelter from the weapons they produce. As Marx once said, the production of arms is like throwing money into the sea. Or to quote

a more contemporary specialist, the economist Lloyd Dumas, in his book The Overburdened Economy, shows how military production has a general negative effect on the economy.

And as for the Islamic State, perhaps it does not need to worry about bankruptcy, but once it loses its enemy, the American Empire, it will lose its claim to legitimacy, and will not be able to sustain itself. For, as Hina Jilani reminds us, they are not about religion, but only control. "It's not about religion or any attempt to impose any kind of religious values, because those values are obviously values of peace, of tolerance, of humanity. " (2)

So, what should we be doing?

Planting Seeds for the Culture of Peace

July 1, 2015

As stated above, the American Empire and its mirror image in the Middle East, are destined to collapse. The most important question is what will come next. Will new empires arise quickly to take their place? Will they be fascist regimes (extreme cultures of war), which is what happened after the economic collapse that began in 1929? Or will we have a window of opportunity to make a culture of peace instead of a new culture of war?

The answer depends upon what we do now. Have we prepared the ground and sowed enough seeds for a for a culture of peace?

In Ismail Serageldin's "Cultural Program to Reject Extremism and Violence" he refers to the arts as "seeds of hope." This is what we should be planting. (3)

A culture of peace is just that: a culture. Cultures are not constructed. They are cultivated, and the first steps of cultivation are preparing the ground and planting the seeds. In my latest book, Embrace the Fire, Cultivate a Culture of Peace, I consider the myriad initiatives that we have read about in CPNN over the years to be like seeds for a new culture. Of course, like the planting of seeds in general, not every seed will survive and grow. But if we continue planting them, eventually enough of them will survive to produce a new culture. It is not only the culture of war that reproduces itself, but the culture of peace can do so as well - but by a very different method.

I was very impressed by a visit last year to see the giant sequoias in California and to learn that their seeds can only be productive after they have passed through a fire. And so we may look at the culture of peace like the sequoias. The seeds we plant will have to pass through the fiery death of the culture of war and survive to start a new culture that will replace it afterwards.

This approach requires patience and a long-range vision of history. The results do not arrive quickly. It requires the attitude of the farmer who assumes the cycle of seasons. It assumes the old prophetic wisdom: "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted. . . "

As usual, CPNN this month describes seeds of hope. If we go to the original essay of Serageldin we find many seeds of hope, some of which have been planted already, and some that need resources in order to be planted. Then look at the work being done by Syrian women: stopping child marriage, uniting refugees and host communities, policing the streets, listening to marginalized groups, reopening schools, helping families survive, reforming corrupt courts, vaccinating children, disarming youth and mobilizing a movement for peace.(4) If we go to the International Symposium of the Pan-African Centre for Social Prospects for Peace and Development through Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue, we find the planting of a culture of peace in Africa. (5) Also in Africa we find graffiti art employed as a tool for social change to promote women's rights, including equal pay and educational access. (6)

As usual, there are many good examples from Latin America. Several come from Colombia, where the people have suffered from war for many decades and now there are seeds of peace coming to fruition. The negotiations between the FARC revolutionary movement and the government are moving forward with the decision to establish a Commission for Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition (7). The national law for teaching peace is in the course of implementation (8). And in the Caribbean region of Colombia a regional peace assembly is being developed (9).

Are we doing enough? Probably not. And do we have a lot of time? Probably not. I fear that the American Empire cannot last much longer, and when it crashes, its allies and its mirror images will probably crash as well, just as the crash of the Soviet Empire led to the collapse of most of its allies.

Let us redouble our efforts. We are racing against time.

(1) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=3191
(2) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=3127
(3) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=3121
(4) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=3088
(5) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=3057
(6) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=3094
(7) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=3031
(8) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=3716
(9) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=3047

Food Sovereignty is Culture of Peace

June 1, 2015

In CPNN this month, we ask the question "What is the relation between peasant movements for food sovereignty and the global movement for a culture of peace?" (1)

Here is my own response to the question. It is based on the many articles in CPNN this month about the global movement of peasants for food sovereignty.

Yes, they are an important part of the global movement for a culture of peace, for several reasons.

First, they are the first line of defense against one of the main advances of the culture of war. As we said in the document that we sent from UNESCO to the UN to define the culture of peace, it "represents a major change in the concept of economic growth which, in the past, could be considered as benefitting from military supremacy and structural violence and achieved at the expense of the vanquished and the weak." (2) What better way to describe the advances of a few transnational corporations, supported by so-called "free-trade treaties" who are attempting to monopolize the seeds that farmers use throughout the world and to impose monoculture agriculture based on their seeds and their pesticides?

The transnational corporations are supported by the power (ultimately military) of nation states around the world, not only by the great powers, but also by the governments of the small countries. An example is Guatemala, where despite pressure from a strong peasant movement to support a Rural Integral Development law, the law is blocked by a coalition of right-wing parties.(3)

Second, the peasant movements are organized not only locally, and to an increasing extent, on a global scale. Look at the map of protests on April 17, the International Day of Peasant Struggle against Transnational Companies and Free Trade Agreements. There are actions on every continent. (4)

The peasant movements are based ultimately on the wisdom and experience of their ancestors as described in the blog from this February, "Listen to the indigenous people." (5) This is clearly stated in the declaration of the 6th Congress of the Latin American Coordination of Countryside Organizations: "We emerged from the heart itself of the 500-year process of indigenous, peasant, black and popular resistance." (6)

The peasant struggle ultimately concerns all of us. As we concluded in the February blog, we need to "organize local cooperatives and local food production instead of importation and agro- business . . . In this way we can protect ourselves against the crash of the American empire and the global economy that it manages."

Finally, we can say that the peasant movement for sustainable agriculture is not only part of the global movement for a culture of peace, but perhaps its most critical component because it will enable us to survive after the crash and during the period

when it may be possible to make a transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace. For this reason it is especially important

that we see more and more young people turning back to small-scale, "human-scale" farming, as described in the CPNN interview this month (7).

LINKS

(1) bulletin: http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=2920

(2) A/53/370:#: http://culture-of-peace.info/annexes/resA-53-370/pages27-29.html (3) Guatemala: http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=2702
(4) April 17 map: http://viacampesina.org/map/17apri/2015
(5) blog from February #: http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/blog/?m=201502

(6) Declaration: http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=2481
(7) interview: <a href="http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=2998">

Anti-Austerity is Culture of Peace

May 1, 2015

This month's CPNN bulletin refers to CPNN articles on the anti-austerity movements in Greece, Spain, Germany, Ireland, France and Canada, with reference to the fact that for many years already South American governments have rejected the austerity imposed by international financial institutions (1).

We have posed the following question with regard to these articles: "Movements against government fiscal austerity, Are they part of the movement for a culture of peace".

Here is my own response to the question.

In theory they should be considered as contributing to a culture of peace. The definition of the culture of peace adopted in UN resolution A/53/243, the official culture of peace resolution, includes, among its eight program areas : "Actions to promote sustainable economic and social development". It includes the following details which certainly are contradicted by national austerity policies (2) :

. . . appropriate strategies and agreed targets to eradicate poverty. . .

. . . implementation of policies and programmes designed to reduce economic and social inequalities . . .

. . . effective and equitable development-oriented and durable solutions to the external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries

. . . ensure that the development process is participatory . . .

In fact, we may consider that austerity measures are part of the culture of war, since they are imposed by the rich in order to protect and increase their wealth which they gain at the expense of the poor. The culture of war, since its beginnings, has served the profits of the rich, whether by slavery, by colonialism, or by today's neo-colonialism. As we said in the document A/53/370 which we sent from UNESCO to the UN General Assembly to prepare for its official culture of peace resolution: the culture of peace "represents a major change in the concept of economic growth which, in the past, could be considered as benefitting from military supremacy and structural violence and achieved at the expense of the vanquished and the weak (3)."

In practice as well, the anti-austerity movements should also be considered as contributing to a culture of peace. They mobilize people to fight for justice by non-violence means. Insofar as people in these movements are able to achieve economic justice, they will be empowered to fight as well for the other aspects of a culture of peace, including human rights, women's equality, tolerance and solidarity, etc.

In this blog, we have mentioned many times that the transition to a culture of peace will probably come through a breakdown of the present global political and economic system, leaving a space for the institution of an alternative system with the characteristics of a culture of peace. The economic hardships imposed by the present policies of austerity are only a mild preview of the hardships that are likely to come when the global system breaks down. Hence, we need all the practice we can get to learn how to overcome such economic hardships and the policies that cause them. The more we can learn now, the more we will be prepared to make the transition to a culture of peace when the historical time is ripe.

And we should consider that possibility that such an historical turning point is coming very soon.

(1) http://cpnn-world.org/new/?p=2380
(2) http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/resolutions/resA-53-243B.html

(3) http://culture-of-peace.info/annexes/resA-53-370/pages27-29.html

How to recognize women's leadership

April 1, 2015

Over the years at CPNN we have seen the global movement for a culture of peace developing in thousands of articles about initiatives throughout the world. Looking over these initiatives, we can see that women are usually in the lead, and in any case, they are involved as essential players. This month's bulletin illustrates this clearly (1).

Initiatives of the United Nations for peace, initiatives of the civil society such as Nonviolent Peaceforce, various prizes for peace, in all of these we see the predominant role of women.

As we remarked in an earlier blog, "the linkage between women's equality, development and peace is essential to replace the historical inequality between men and women that has always characterized the culture of war and violence (2).

This is not to say that women will save us by themselves. Instead, what is needed is collaboration between women and men on the basis of equality. It is necessary that not only women, but also men struggle for the equality of women, and that everyone becomes conscious of its importance. As a first step, it is necessary that men are involved in the struggle to eliminate violence against women.

When I was working at UNESCO and responsible for developing the initial drafts of the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, many of my colleagues, both men and women, urged me not to include equality of women as a distinct domain of the culture of peace but to include it in a broader category of equality in general, including race, sexual orientation, etc. Fortunately, I resisted their pressure and we were able to include women's equality, put simply, as one of the domains of action for a culture of peace.

Of course, it is important to struggle for equality of all people with regard to race, sexual orientation, etc., but we need to recognize the special significance of gender. From the beginning of humanity, as far as it can be determined, women were excluded from warfare, and hence they were excluded from the power of violence which has continued to characterize human culture up until the present time, and especially the nation-state. To arrive at a culture of

peace, both the subordination of women and the political dominance of violence will have to be reversed, and the two struggles are intrinsically related.

In this regard, we need to take another look at our conception of leadership. Is it by chance that when we speak of leadership for a culture of peace and we mention Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, we are mentioning only men? Where are the women leaders?

In reading this month's article in CPNN about Ela Bhatt (3) , I recall how I met her a number of year's ago in Hamilton, Ontario, after giving a talk at Hamilton's annual Gandhi festival. I had spoken about Gandhi's message as being important for a culture of peace. Afterwards, this little lady, very modest, approached me to say that she had appreciated the message. I didn't recognize her, so I asked her who she was. Ela Bhatt, she replied. I didn't recognize the name, but asked if she was involved with the culture of peace. She told me that she was visiting family in Hamilton, but back in India she did trade union work with women. I asked more and discovered that she has done amazingly courageous and effective work in organizing thousands (millions?) of women in India into a trade union for their basic human rights.

Ela's demeanor was so modest, that one had to ask and listen patiently in order to know of her exemplary leadership.

From this we can draw an important lesson about recognizing leadership. Great leaders are not necessarily in the news. They are not necessarily involved with the politics of nations. They may be modest. And they may be women!

Fortunately, there are those who recognize this. Go to the website, Theelders.org and and there, at the same time as you can read about the work of Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Kofi Annan and Jimmy Carter, you can also read about the work of Ela Bhatt, Graça Machel, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Mary Robinson and Hina Jilani. (4) It was by reading Theelders.org that I found the article about Ela Bhatt.

(1) http://cpnn-world.org/bulletin/bulletin-15-4.html
(2) http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/blog/?p=88
(3) http://cpnn-world.org/cgi-bin/read/articlepage.cgi?ViewArticle=2062 (4) http://theelders.org

An Institute to Train for Culture of Peace Tourism

March 1, 2015

The following is excerpted from the talk I gave at the recent symposium on Tourism and Peace (See this month's CPNN bulletin).

Tourism is an enormous enterprise with enormous resources, and it needs a culture of peace. Tourism is the first industry to suffer when there is violence. And it has a great potential to promote all the eight program areas of culture of peace.

Acknowledging my gratitude to a good friend here today, Lou D'Amore, who has shared with me this idea, I propose that we should develop an Institute to train workers for culture of peace tourism

As a model for this, let us recall the early years of UNESCO after World War II, when UNESCO helped establish three institutes for training literary workers. The institutes, located in Mexico, Iran and Egypt, trained a generation of literacy workers, coming mostly from national ministries of education. The subsequent engagement of these literacy workers led to an great increase in literacy throughout the world. Even if it is not mentioned in most history books, the drive towards universal literacy should be considered one of the great achievements of the modern era.

It is proposed here to learn from that experience to develop an institute to train a new generation of workers for another kind of literacy, the literacy of peace. The UNESCO experience provides a reasonable model for such an institute.

First, it could be self-financing with income from tuition paid by institutions such as ministries of tourism, hotel, tourist agency and airline companies who send their workers to get training, as well as young people seeking a career in this field. The faculty could be recruited from activists and retired officials who believe sufficiently in the challenge of culture of peace tourism that they would work for minimum salaries, and from people on-loan from relevant organizations involved in the tourist trade.

An important lesson was told to me by a veteran of the UNESCO literacy institute in Iran: one should minimize the involvement with buildings and infrastructure by renting space from existing educational institutions rather than building or owning the buildings with its costs of maintenance, cleaning staff, guardians, etc.

Where should such an institution be located? In Africa, of course. Nowhere else is tourism so vital to the economy of a continent. And nowhere else is there so much to offer to tourists and those who host them.

How should we go about establishing such an institute? First, a sponsor is needed. The most appropriate would be the United Nations World Tourism Organization. Then, clients are needed. The most appropriate would be ministries of tourism. And finally, we need faculty. From among the distinguished gathering of experts on tourism for peace gathered here this week in Johannesburg, I'm sure we could find an excellent faculty.

There is another reason that we should locate such an institute in Africa. In the North, especially Europe and North America, the states have become so linked to the culture of war that they would have a conflict of interest to support a culture of peace. In Africa, on the other hand, the independent state is a new development dating only from the post-colonial era, and although it is often corrupt, it is not so linked to the culture of war. Its involvement with culture of peace tourism would point it in a good direction for the future.

To conclude, I hope that together we can develop an institute for culture of peace tourism, and I offer my services to help work on this. I hope others will join in.

Listen to the indigenous people

February 1, 2015

This month's CPNN bulletin carries remarks by indigenous peoples who are guarding their environment against the destruction brought by our modern civilization:

From Brazil: "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."

From Canada: "We have one Earth, and unless this government is hiding another healthy Earth somewhere, we need to take care of the one we've got, and it's now, it's now we have to step up."

From Colombia: "sooner or later indigenous peoples will be recognized as the true guardians of nature."

And it is in the same spirit that the most radical environmental law in global history, the "Mother Earth" law, was adopted in Bolivia, a country with a majority of the people indigenous and a President who is indigenous.

We should listen to all of them for several reasons.

They remind us that our very existence depends upon having a sustainable development that does not destroy the earth on which all development depends. We need to be reminded of this because our lives have become so specialized that we have come to think that food simply comes from a supermarket and that water simply comes from a faucet. Our civilization puts a priority on exploitation of mineral, oil and water resources without regard to the future, and the imposition of highly-mechanized, monoculture agricultural production which cannot even feed those who produce it.

Indigenous peoples realize that the destruction of their environment will lead not only to their inability to survive as individuals, but even more profoundly, it will lead to the destruction of their culture. We need to take this seriously for our own culture.

Our culture has become urban over the past few centuries, and we depend upon agricultural systems outside of the city. Often the agricultural production is so distant that we must depend upon transportation systems that bring their products from hundreds and thousands of miles away. Meanwhile, small farms, people directly tied to the land, have been run out of business by large-scale, monoculture industrial farming. We take it for granted that all this will continue.

But we should not take this for granted. The culture of war, in which we live, is based upon exploitation and exploitation is not sustainable, neither of resources nor of people. Sooner or later, the culture of war crashes. This can happen through violence, as it did in the two World Wars of the 20th Century. Or it can happen through economic collapse as it did in 1929 and for half of the world in 1989.

A global economic crash at this time of history would be far more disastrous than the crash of 1929 because we are more urban, there is less sustainable agriculture, and the transportation of food is, at the same time, more essential and more vulnerable to a financial collapse, because it is largely dependent upon oil transported in tanker ships.

In the face of this possibility, Johan Galtung, the dean of peace researchers, recommends that we "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 (3)." In this way we

can protect ourselves against the crash of the American empire and the global economy that it manages. And if Galtung is correct that this may happen within the next five years, we have no time to waste.

During this time there is great danger of war and/or a shift to fascist states. Hence our work for a culture of peace is crucial, and we can also take lessons on this from some indigenous peoples. As the indigenous of Cauca have told us, "We survived by struggle, but we are peoples with a culture of peace (4)."

Not only do we need to listen to to indigenous peoples, but even more we must follow their example. The very survival of our culture is at stake. And soon.

(1) http://cpnn-world.org/bulletin/bulletin-15-2.html
(2) Bolivia: http://cpnn-world.org/cgi-bin/read/articlepage.cgi?ViewArticle=459 (3) Galtung: http://cpnn-world.org/cgi-bin/read/articlepage.cgi?ViewArticle=1656 (4) Cauca: http://cpnn-world.org/cgi-bin/read/articlepage.cgi?ViewArticle=171Skip to primary content

Importance of Truth Commissions

Posted on **January 1, 2015**

First, Truth Commissions are important because they break the secrecy of the state which is one of the key defenses of the culture of war.

This month, as described in the CPNN bulletin, there are several examples of this. The US government, and in particular its CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) has kept secret the details of its torture of prisoners in Guantanamo and elsewhere in recent years, as well as its invasion of Panama in 1989. Despite opposition by the CIA, the torture report by the US Senate has revealed details of the torture, while the upcoming Truth Commission in Panama promises to reveal details of the invasion.

Similarly, despite a law by the Israeli authorities that forbids discussion of the Nakba, the NGO Zochrot has launched a Truth Commission to discuss it. Other Truth Commissions in Canada, Brazil and Burundi are revealing atrocities previously previously shrouded in secrecy by their states.

Second, they promote such key aspects of a culture of peace as human rights and democracy, by revealing and condemning their violations.

And third, Truth Commissions are designed to launch the process of reconciliation, a process that will be necessary for the transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace. The classic example is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa in the transition from Apartheid to democracy under the leadership of Bishop Desmond Tutu and the presidency of Nelson Mandela. Since then, according to Amnesty

International, there have been truth commission in more than 25 countries (as of 2007), most of them dedicated to reconciliation as well as truth. The commissions mentioned here continue this important historical trend.

Other than Canada, today's commissions are still far from the stage of reconciliation. Those in Burundi and Panama are just getting underway. The Truth Commission in Brazil is still far from the stage of reconciliation, and there is so much opposition that one doubts that the U.S. Senate will be able to go beyond its initial stage and achieve any reconciliation.

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. See a similar analysis by the dean of peace researchers, Johan Galtung. The strong defense of state secrecy by the U.S. and Israel is revealed by the continued house arrest of Mordecai Vanunu in Israel for having revealed its nuclear arsenal and the continuing attempts by the U.S. to capture and punish Julian Assange and Edward Snowden for having divulged its secrets.

In my utopian novel about how we arrive at a culture of peace, I imagine that one of the key moments is when Jerusalem, after a process like that of South Africa (with the involvement of Bishop Tutu), becomes an international city of peace where people of all religions are able to coexist with mutual respect. As for the United States, I can only that its empire will crash like that of the Soviet Union, giving us the chance to establish a radically new economic and political system in the world.

Africa as a model for culture of peace

Posted on **December 2, 2014**

Imagine ! ...
...if we could apply in Europe and North America initiatives such as those described from Africa such as the contributions of Nelson Mandela, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, the Gacaca in Rwanda, etc....

Imagine ! ...
...that networks of mass media, radio and television, devoted to the culture of peace, like those described this month from Africa would be made available to everyone on a daily basis at a grassroots level...

Imagine ! ...
...that governments and the CEOs of the tourism industry, including hotels, airlines and

tourist agencies would develop tourism based on people-to-people understanding and sustainable development...

Imagine ! ...
...that our educational systems would make it a priority to develop and use manuals for culture of peace and human rights written in such a way to speak directly to local communities, and that these were

developed as a network that unified the peoples across national boundaries....

Imagine ! ...
...that UNESCO or the UN could develop international networks of youth, women and research institutions for a culture of peace like those being developed in Africa...

Imagine ! ...
...that elections were 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...

Imagine ! ...
...that the forces of the culture of war would accept these advances, knowing that in the end it could lead to a transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace....

Thank you, Africa, for showing us where we need to go.

The Universality of the Movement for a Culture of Peace

Posted on **November 2, 2014**

This month's CPNN bulletin shows that initiatives for a culture of peace are taking place in most regions of the world. As discussed in previous blogs, Latin America and Africa are in the leadership, although this may be difficult for the North to accept. The Arab States took two steps forward with the "Arab Spring", although the turnaround in Egypt moved them one step back. The only region which seems to lag is East Asia.

The apparent lag of East Asia 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, which 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 previous blog, with the title "Can a Culture of Peace be created in only one zone of the world?", I answered that it has not been possible, because previous attempts limited in scope have been crushed by the culture of war.

Only when the states of the culture of war crash universally will there be a chance to install a culture of peace. This occurs periodically, including four times in the previous century: World Wars I and II, the Great Depression, and (in half of the world) the crash of the Soviet Empire. And it will no doubt occur fairly soon again in this 21st Century.

But when the next crash comes, will we be ready to establish a culture of peace universally? That is the key question. If we only establish the culture of peace in one or two regions, it is likely that the culture of war will be re-established and once again return to crush our attempts at a culture of peace.

Networking for a culture of peace

Posted on **October 2, 2014**

When we drafted the Declaration and Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace at UNESCO in 1998, adopted by the UN General Assembly a year later as Resolution a/53/243, we envisaged that progress towards a culture of peace could be achieved through the following:

- Partnerships between and among the various actors [including civil society] as set out in the Declaration should be encouraged and strengthened for a global movement for a culture of peace.

- A culture of peace could be promoted through sharing of information among actors on their initiatives in this regard.

As readers of this blog know, the communication function is being provided by CPNN and other such Internet websites.

And now we begin to see the development of the first function of partnerships, through development of civil society networks for a culture of peace.

At Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, UNESCO and the Network of Foundations and Research Institutions for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace in Africa co-sponsored the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the UNESCO initiative for a Culture of Peace, and met to refine and implement their Programme of Action. I was privileged to represent the Culture of Peace Corporation (the parent organization of CPNN) at this meeting.

Their initial Programme of Action was adopted last September in Addis Ababa and includes the following :

- Coordinate actions in order to ensure a common understanding and community of practices in pooling our resources in the implementation of our actions

- Strengthen the visibility of our organizations and our activities among citizens and institutions at national and international level;

- Contribute to the implementation of the Luanda Action Plan by the elaboration and implementation of joint programs;

- Endeavor to implement the African Union's 2063 Agenda and the UNESCO Intersectoral Programme on Culture of Peace;

- Expand the network to African and non-African organizations with similar objectives.

More details, including the Luanda Action Plan may be found in the UNESCO brochure Sources and Resources for a Culture of Peace in Africa.

This network parallels and interacts with the new network dedicated to "Women for a culture of peace in Africa" that was established in March

of this year. There are plans to establish yet another such network next year dedicated to African youth organizations.

Indeed, we see in the pages of CPNN that around the world the consciousness already exists of the need for radical change, and that the necessary actions are taking place, but so far the consciousness and actions are too isolated.

In order to achieve an effective Global Movement for a Culture of Peace, networks like those in Africa need to be developed in other continents. Given the advanced state of consciousness and action for a culture of peace in Latin America, let us hope that it can be next.

History is moving dialectically

Posted on **September 2, 2014**

The CPNN bulletins for August 1 and September 1 illustrate how 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, we are able to show on CPNN that there is progress in the various domains of the culture of peace, most recently in terms of participatory budgeting and restorative justice.

The more that Israel carries out terrible attacks on Gaza, the more the calls for peace are mounting, even with Israel itself as we have seen this month. As described in the blog for July, progress comes out of conflict. Increasingly there are international calls for divestment similar to the campaign that finally led to the end of South African apartheid. And the more that NATO provokes Russia in the Ukraine, the more the demand that NATO should be abolished.

The confrontation in the Ukraine between the US and NATO on one side and Russia on the other side may or may not end up causing such massive destruction and suffering as we have seen, for example, in Syria (and hopefully, no use of nuclear weapons!), but it is

certain to have serious consequences on the economies of both sides. The world economy is already weakened and vulnerable as a result of excessive speculation, government austerity and military spending, and in this context the curtailing of trade between Russia and the West may turn out to be an economic disaster for all concerned. It may, in fact, hasten the collapse of the American empire, as predicted by Johan Galtung and quoted in a CPNN discussion..

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.

- 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?

Two media – two realities – is the world in transition?

Posted on **August 1, 2014**

The CPNN bulletin this month is in great contrast to the headlines of the commercial mass media.

CPNN tells us of progress in participatory democracy in the cities of Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Portugal and the United States. Ordinary citizens are deciding directly what should be the priorities for the budget in their neighborhoods. And the results are to the benefit of

all the citizens of their neighborhoods; not only the rich or a privileged ethnic group, not to the detriment of other neighborhoods or other cities. The culture of peace is advancing and it is not surprising that this began and continues to develop in Latin America, which as we have seen in the blogs of March 2014 and February 2013, is at the leading edge of progress.

The commercial media feed us a starkly different picture of war in Israel/ Palestine and in the Ukraine, not to mention plenty of plane crashes to make us afraid to venture outside our doors.

'The news of participatory budgeting is carried by the local media, since citizens need to be informed about when and where they should go to vote and what are the choices that they can make. But the major commercial media like Fox News, the New York Times and CNN do not include this on their front pages. In the words on top of the front page of the New York Times, this news is not "fit to print." Instead, they consider that war and plane crashes are fit to print on the front page.

In fact, all of this is true. There are wars and plane crashes, and there is progress in culture of peace at the local level. But there are two kinds of media, one for the culture of war and another for the culture of peace, and so it seems like there are two realities.

There are two realities as it would seem that the world is in transition from one culture to another.

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!

As the number of culture of peace news sites increases, and our 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!

Democratic participation is advancing – from below

Posted on **August 1, 2014**

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 nation state.

At the level of the nation 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.

But one should not be surprised at this. As I have shown in the History of the Culture of War, the nation-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 nation-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 is 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.

To see progress we must look below the level of the state. At the level of the city there is continuing progress in democratic participation, as illustrated in the examples of participatory budgeting in this month's bulletin of the Culture of Peace News Network. 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 nation states, the rich cities do not exploit the poor cities.

At the level of the city, progress is best seen in participatory budgeting, "presupuesto participativo" in Spanish, "orcamento participativo" in Portuguese, 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 in previous blogs in March 2014 and February 2013, 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, as we see in this month's bulletin, they vote for simple projects that directly improve their quality of life, such as parks, jogging paths, cooperatives for sewing circles, toy-making or local fruit and vegetables production. In fact, sometimes their decisions are so ordinary that rich people can 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."

Of course, participatory budgeting by itself will not be enough to bring us to a culture of peace, but when we see it in the context of progress in all of the eight domains of a culture of peace, such peace education, free flow of information, equality of women, etc., then we begin to see how the world can get ready for a new way of governance when the nation

No Progress without Conflict

Posted on **July 3, 2014**

This month's CPNN bulletin illustrates clearly that we cannot make progress towards a culture of peace without engaging in conflict.

The divestment from companies that aid the Israeli apartheid oppression of the Palestinian people is a good example.

Several years ago we carried an article at CPNN by a young Palestinian activist at Wesleyan University who called for divestment of university funds from Israel because of its apartheid-like policies. In fact, she was working in a tradition of divestment at Wesleyan which, under strong student pressure, had been the first US university to divest its funds

from South African apartheid. The movement for divestment from South Africa had divided the university campus to such an extent that national television came to film the struggle. The article about Palestine brought on a different kind of conflict. CPNN came under a cyber-attack, presumably launched by pro-Israeli forces, which completely shut down our website for several days until we were forced to remove the article.

It's been a few days since we put on the article by Archbishop Tutu, the video "Why I support divestment" and the news story about the divestment vote by the US Presbyterian Church. And so far, we have not come under cyber-attack. However, it is clear that this is an issue which involves very heated opinions and actions on all sides.

As we say in the rules for CPNN: "Reports should show that peace can be exciting, adventurous and eventful. Making peace takes more courage than making war. Reporters and moderators should not avoid conflicting and controversial material, because that would make it seem like peace is boring and passive. Instead, there is an energy in non-violent conflict that can be used constructively and that stimulates dialogue and debate."

Another example of a conflictual issue in this month's CPNN bulletin is the call for the abolition of NATO which was launched at the Peace Event in Sarajevo and expressed eloquently by Nobel laureate Mairead Maguire. Back in 1997 when I was working under Federico Mayor at UNESCO, I proposed to him that UNESCO, being responsible for

science policy in the UN system, should offer to convert NATO to work primarily for conversion of military industry to production of useful goods. In fact, there was a small unit already within NATO that was concerned with this matter. However, Mayor told me that it was an idea whose time had not yet come. Already, Mayor had too much conflict with the major powers over his progressive actions and lack of budgetary restraint at UNESCO.

Hopefully, the time has come now that we can put sufficient nonviolent pressure on Europe and the US to convert NATO into a peaceful instead of military organization. Just as in the case of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, in the words of Archbishop Tutu, we need "to force the powerful to the table through economic pressure."

In the words of the great American activist Frederick Douglass, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will." and "Without a struggle, there can be no progress."

The Use and Misuse of Human Rights

Posted on **June 3, 2014**

In this month's CPNN bulletin, we consider both positive and negative sides of the discourse about human rights.

On the positive side, the state of human rights is a good indicator of progress towards a culture of peace. In this regard, the lead taken by Latin American countries to ratify and enforce human rights treaties reflects the fact, often noted in this blog, that they are the most advanced continent towards 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.

On the negative side, 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, is accusing 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.".

There are two major components to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: political and economic. During the Cold War while the West refused to accept the economic provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, they attacked the East for their record on political rights. In fact, the West continues to be deficient in guaranteeing economic rights to its citizens. Recently, in doing a report on the state of the culture of peace in my American city, I found that human rights was the one aspect of the culture of peace that is going backwards. Each year, Americans have less and less economic rights such as food, shelter, employment and trade union representation. Meanwhile, the US government continues to use political human rights as a propaganda tool to attack other governments that they wish to overthrow.

In fact, history shows that any good concept can be mis-used. That is true for Culture of Peace, just as it has been true for Human Rights. For example, if you search "culture of peace" in Google news, you will often find statements by Israeli officials criticizing the Palestinians for their lack of a culture of peace. What hypocrisy!!!

Words are not enough. For this reason, one of the basic rules of CPNN is that articles must refer to specific actions: "Reports should refer to specific events, projects or productions rather than be vague and over- generalized abstract comments. .. they do not have to be "breaking news." Instead, they may reflect the "slow news" of processes that develop slowly over long periods of time."

Are we entering an era of relative peace?

Posted on **May 1, 2014**

Johan Galtung, the guru of peace research, predicts that as we get closer to the crash of the American empire, the United States will increasingly realize that wars and preparation for wars are destroying its economy and it will be forced to limit its military adventures.

Already last year the top military official in the US wrote to President Obama to oppose military intervention in Syria in part because it would cost billions of dollars a year. The US interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan have been so costly that they have accelerated the pace towards a failure of the American economy.

The recent peace accord in the Philippines and the progress towards an accord in Colombia described in this month's CPNN bulletin: are they signs that Galtung's prediction applies to nation states in general and that we may be entering an era of relative peace? In both cases, the accords concern violent conflicts that have paralyzed those countries for many decades. In the words of the chief negotiator for the Philippines agreement, "The sealing of the comprehensive agreement is important for . . . all Filipino citizens who have all to gain as one country pursuing its unfinished task of nation-building."

Will the civil society initiatives for Syria and Venezuela described in this month's bulletin also lead to peace accords in those conflicts? Let us hope so.

Perhaps the most intractable of all violent conflicts is the one between Israel and Palestine. Galtung predicts that support for Israel will be seen increasingly as a burden in the United States, in which case it will be difficult for Israel to continue avoiding a just resolution of their conflict with the Palestinian people. Already, just recently, the US Secretary of State John Kerry, warned that Israel could become seen as an apartheid state, similar to South Africa in previous decades. This echoes the analysis of Nobel Peace Laureate Desmond Tutu over 10 years ago.

Does this mean that we have begun a transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace? Unfortunately, I don't think so. Even if the smaller states resolve their internal wars, and the great powers reduce their foreign military interventions, I see no sign that they will reduce their culture of war which maintains internal control by the threat of military force and the control of information. This is why Julian Assange and Edward Snowden are considered as major enemies by the state.

I do not expect that the transition to a culture of peace can be achieved before the present state system collapses. Unfortunately, at the present rate, it seems that the collapse is

likely to come long before we have made sufficient progress in developing the institutions of a culture of peace that can replace those of the culture of war.

Leadership of the Global South will be difficult for the North to accept

Posted on **April 1, 2014**

Is it by chance that the leadership for the culture of peace is coming from the continents of Latin America and Africa, continents of the Global South? The detailed evidence for this may be found in many CPNN articles, some of which are summarized in the CPNN bulletins for March 1 and April 1 this year, as well as bulletins from previous years (February 1, 2013 and August 1, 2012).

It is not by chance that these are the continents that have suffered for centuries from the colonialism of the North: Africa from European colonialism and Latin America from US domination and military interventions?

It is not by chance that many of their best leaders were assassinated, directly or indirectly, by the colonial powers? I am thinking Samora Machel, Patrice Lumumba and Amilcar Cabral in Africa, or Salvador Allende, Che Guevara and Maurice Bishop in Latin America.

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 makes it impossible for them to move 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 will be a difficult thing to swallow, as the leadership of history passes into the hands of the people of the 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.

Can a Culture of Peace be created in only one zone of the world?

Posted on **March 3, 2014**

Again this month we indicate in the CPNN bulletin that Latin America and the Caribbean continue to be in the vanguard of the Global Movement for a Culture of Peace. This month it is the national governments that have taken the leadership with their declaration in Havana that the region will be a "zone of peace" privileging the

development of a culture of peace according to the principles in the UN Declaration .

At first glance this seems to contradict my contention that a culture of peace cannot be created by national governments because they have become inextricably linked to the culture of war.

But on further reflection, the problem is not so simple. Governments in Latin America have tried to move towards a culture of peace other 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 in 1961 and Chile in 1973. And now, even as I write this, there is strong evidence that "state within a state" forces in the United States, perhaps without the knowledge of President Obama, are moving the destabilize Venezuela because its policies to 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 dictature under Pinochet. Is Venezuela destined to suffer a similar fate?

Probably one of the reasons that some forces in the United States want to destabilize Venezuela is to stop its leadership in development of the Banco del Sur which would make South America independent of the US dollar and its financial institutions. The Banco del Sur was officially launched last year in Caracas by Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador and Argentina, as well as Venezuela. So far, however, it is only a small step towards economic independence.

It seems that the global culture of war, headed by the American empire, will not allow the establishment of culture of peace at any national level.

However, even if Latin America is blocked from installing a culture of peace at national levels in its own zone, its attempts to move in this direction will have a lasting effect on the consciousness of its citizens

and we may be confident that it is there, in consciousness, that history will ultimately be determined. What is needed is to reinforce this consciousness by the development of local culture of peace institutions. A start was made in this direction in Brazil 10 years ago, but was not sustained. Let us hope that the process can be re-started.

If Latin American countries can continue to push for a culture of peace, and if they can develop a certain economic independence from the American empire, they will be in a good position when the empire crashes to support the cities of Latin America for a revision of the UN Security Council and to return the power of peace to the people rather than the nation states. I have imagined this scenario in The Promised Land.

Nelson Mandela and Africa's Contribution to the Culture of Peace

Posted on **January 1, 2014**

As the other peace leaders in this month's CPNN bulletin testify, Nelson Mandela provided us a model of leadership for a culture of peace. He left us "a vision of a new and better life and the tools with which to win and build it."

20 years ago in Psychology for Peace Activists, I wrote: "At the present moment of history it is possible that an additional step is being added to those of consciousness development: a step of vision. Mandela exemplifies a new generation of peace activists whose actions provide a vision for a peaceful world. Not content to struggle against the vicious, anti-human system of apartheid, Mandela and his fellow activists in the ANC had the courage and foresight to develop the Freedom Charter which provides not only a vision for South Africa, but by extension for the rest of the world as well.

"As Mandela describes, the Freedom Charter was developed by a process that evoked suggestions from ordinary people throughout the country. The responded to a call asking them 'How would you set about making South Africa a happy place for all the people who live in it?' The Freedom Charter 'captured the hopes and dreams of the people, and acted as a blueprint for the liberation struggle and the future of the nation.'

"The vision in the Freedom Charter is remarkably similar to that of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was formulated in those years by the United Nations. It is at once specific and universal, practical and visionary.

"The vision of the Freedom Charter was further elaborated later by the ANC in preparation for the first free elections in South Africa. As Mandela says, 'Some in the ANC wanted to make the campaign simply a liberation election and tell the people vote for us because we set you free. We decided instead to offer them a vision of the South Africa we hoped to create.'

"Today, to paraphrase Mandela, peace activists can do more than just be against the war system, but they can at the same time act to bring a universal vision closer to reality. In opposing the culture of war, today's activist can help construct a culture of peace."

It is not by accident that the vision of a culture of peace should come from Africa. The expansion of the culture of war and its monopolization by empires and states did not take place in Africa; instead it was imposed on Africa by Islam and the European colonial powers. The difference can be seen in the pre-colonial traditions of African justice, as exemplified in recent years by the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that took place under Mandela's presidency in South Africa. Pre-colonial African justice was not like the justice as developed by monotheistic empires in which the state seeks out the suspect, finds the person guilty and punishes the criminal in the name of the law. Instead, African pre-colonial justice was arrived at through a process of dialogue of the entire community gathered perhaps under the community tree. As I learned from one culture when I worked in Mozambique, "we take whatever time is needed to find a solution to a conflict that is acceptable to everyone. Even if it takes a long time, the milano [the process] does not rot."

As I concluded in my blog of August 2012, "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.

Leadership for a Culture of Peace

Posted on **December 1, 2013**

This month's CPNN bulletin raises the question, "What is good leadership for a culture of peace?"

An initial answer is provided by the Elder, Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway and international leader for health and sustainable development: "To be bold; to have the courage of your convictions; and to think long-term, not short-term or for political expedience."

Nelson Mandela, who founded the group of Elders, exemplified these qualities in his life, and is perhaps the best example of good leadership in our time. In fact, one can trace a

line from Mahatma Gandhi, who inspired Martin Luther King, and then Martin Luther King who inspired Mandela. They show us the nature of leadership for non-violent action which is so effective that it has changed the life of entire nations.

The formulation by Brundlandt is similar to the one in my 1986 book, Psychology for Peace Activists, which describes the "world-historic consciousness" of peace heroes such as the Nobel Peace Laureates Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jane Addams and Emily Balch. I concluded that world-historic consciousness requires a "global view of reality and a sense of moral responsibility for humanity's future" as well as an understanding of "the strengths and directions of all political forces in a systemic, not superficial way . . . recognizing that peace requires fundamental economic and political changes in society."

The "long-term thinking" of Bruntlandt or "sense of moral responsibility for humanity's future" of great peace activists becomes a vision like the dream in the famous speech of Martin Luther King exactly 50 years ago, a vision of a better future which is taken up and shared by the people as a source of hope and inspiration. This is the highest level of leadership.

As pointed out in this month's bulletin, there are many examples of good leadership today, both on a local and national level and on an international level, women and men of great courage and effective action for justice.

But do we have leaders who can give us the vision that we need?

It seems to me that the vision does not depend only on the leader, but also it depends on the people and on the historical contradictions of the moment. Have the contradictions become so strong that people are seeking an alternative? In other words, the vision depends not only on the leader, but also on the subjective mood of the people as a result of the objective contradictions of the historical moment.

It seems to me – as it seems also to Johan Galtung in his recent writings – that the objective contradictions of the historical moment have reached a point that people are starting to look for a radically different future. The time has come that the people have started to look for their

leaders. It seems that there are leaders who can provide this vision, which, like a spark in dry tinder, can lead to revolutionary changes in our way of life by means of nonviolent action.

To me, it seems that the vision needed at this moment of history is for the transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace.

The paradox of disarmament

The latest CPNN bulletin illustrates clearly the paradox of disarmament. On the one hand, there seems to be no progress at all, and then we see what seems like a "breakthrough" in the agreement to inspect and destroy the chemical arms of Syria. Immediately, a Nobel Peace Prize is awarded!

But is it really a breakthrough? I don't think so. Look at the other articles this month. There is no progress in nuclear disarmament. Even the Arms Trade Treaty that was drafted by the UN this spring with apparent support from the major countries, now seems useless, as senators in the US refuse to allow it to be ratified.

How can we explain this?

The explanation is simple. Over the centuries the nation-state has come to monopolize war. Only the state has the "right" to make war. Hence, the state does whatever is needed to ensure that weapons do not fall into the hands of non-state actors. That's why the urgent agreement on the chemical arms in Syria; with the disintegration of the state during the civil war, it seemed likely that the chemical weapons would fall into the hands of terrorist groups, and it was urgent to prevent this from happening.

The state's monopoly on war is its fundamental power, its "sovereign prerogative." This was clearly expressed by the researcher for the International Peace Bureau in the CPNN article this month: "It is counter intuitive that a state would educate its own population to question its sovereign prerogatives, and the author was not optimistic of finding a genuine disarmament education program run by a state."

Although military force is usually justified by the state as being needed to defend itself against foreign powers, its ultimate value for the state is to suppress internal opposition to its power. It is for this reason, rather than external defense, that the culture of war is an essential aspect of the nation-state. I have described this in detail for the case of the United States in the article I wrote for the Journal of Peace Research, Internal military intervention in the United States.

The effort by states to prevent "terrorist groups" from obtaining weapons of mass destruction is ironic. We must ask "what was the greatest example of terrorism in our time?" How can we avoid the fact that the greatest terrorist attack in world history was the American bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? What are nuclear weapons except terrorist weapons? They are not useful in ordinary warfare. Instead, they are the "ultimate terrorist weapon." They hold the entire enemy country hostage, threatening to wipe out its civilian population. That's why they are not an effective counter to terrorist groups, because the terrorists have no civilian population that can be destroyed.

All terrorist acts committed since Hiroshema and Nagasaki are pale by comparison, including the destruction of the World Trade Towers in 2001. And all terrorist threats pale by comparison to the MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction) policies of the US and Soviet Union during the Cold War, each threatening to destroy the civilian population of the other.

Since the culture of war is essential to the state, we need to seek another system of governance. This is why, in my books such as World

Peace through the Town Hall, I advocate a new world system with the United Nations based on regional representation of city governments (See my blog of August 2013). City governments, unlike the nation- state, have no militaries, no military contracts, no borders to defend, hence no interest in the culture of war or its terrorist manifestations.

A United Nations without government interference: Could it manage a culture of peace?

Posted on **October 1, 2013**

The latest CPNN bulletin provides good evidence that the answer to this question is "Yes!"

We are not surprised that air traffic, postal services and telecommunications are managed effectively by agencies of the United Nations. Why should we be surprised that a culture of peace could also be effectively managed?

Let us begin with the two articles about initiatives supported by UNESCO: 1) the establishment of a network of peace research institutions for the promotion of a culture of peace in Africa, and 2) the project to develop shared histories in Southeast Asia that promote peace and mutual understanding.

Having worked at UNESCO between 1992 and 2001, I know very well the roots of these initiatives, including staff and partners of UNESCO that understand the need for a transition from culture of war to culture of peace and who, when they can obtain the necessary resources, are perfectly capable of moving from theory to effective action.

The only question is whether the Member States of UNESCO, who determine the organization's finances, are capable and willing to provide the needed resources. These resources are quite modest when compared with what they spend on the culture of war.

At the meeting of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures of Peace we learned that the unit of the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) headed by Dr. Ozonnia Ojiello has been working in Africa to develop peace structures. These structures are as effective as their model that was so well developed in South Africa during the transition

from Apartheid to democracy twenty years ago. This again illustrates how the UN system has staff and partners capable of making the transition to a culture of peace.

But let me turn to the pointed question of Shale Sofonea from Lesotho, who congratulated UNDP for having helped the civil society from Lesotho to overcome the violence associated with national elections, but who asked pointedly if Africa would be able to depend on help from UNDP well into the future.

My experience at UNESCO makes me especially sensitive to Shale's question. In the early 90's we developed effective programs in El Salvador and Mozambique for a transition from their civil wars to a culture of peace through cooperation by the former enemies in programs for education, culture, communication and science. However, the Member States of UNESCO were unwilling to finance these programs, preferring to finance other development programs that would serve their own interests rather than the interests of the countries concerned.

For this reason, I have always counseled those working for progressive initiatives at the United Nations and its agencies to work with modest resources and remain "under the radar" so that the Member States would not interfere with their development.

Let me recall the words of Anwarul Chowdhury, who initiated the High Level Forum on a Culture of Peace at UN Headquarters last month: "I find it is the governments and power structures which are the most persistent foot-draggers with regard to advancing the culture of peace through policy steps and action . . . The United Nations has shown great vision by adopting its historic, norm-setting Declaration and Program of Action on the Culture of Peace in 1999, but has not been organised enough in making the document a system-wide flagship effort of the world body. I am a believer that the world, particularly the governments, will come to realise its true value and usefulness sooner than later."

Although I am more skeptical than Chowdhury that governments will ultimately support the culture of peace at the United Nations, I am optimistic that someday we be able to achieve a United Nations that is based directly on the people (as proposed in the UN Charter that begins "We the peoples...") and that such a United Nations will be quite capable of managing the transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace.

What kind of peace education?

Posted on **September 3, 2013**

I was struck by an important difference between the two international summer schools mentioned in this month's bulletin of CPNN.

The summer school of young human rights activists at the University of Connecticut invited me to speak on the transition from culture of war to culture of peace.

The summer school of young activists by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations could not mention the culture of war because the United Nations does not admit that it exists.

How important is this difference? As I said to one young activist at the UN school, "If you cannot talk about the culture of war, you cannot understand the dynamics of a culture of peace." The culture of peace is ultimately a non-violent revolutionary program to replace the dominant culture of war with a new culture (see "the future of the culture of peace" as well as the page that follows). If you cannot mention culture of war, how can you understand its revolutionary dynamics?

Of course, as peace educators we live in a real world where the power and the resources are firmly in the hands of the culture of war, although they deny it vigorously. If we are to promote peace education, we have to live with this contradiction.

Hence, for example, when we sent the draft Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace from UNESCO to the UN General Assembly, it derived the eight program areas of a culture of peace as specific alternatives to the culture of war, one by one (See UN General Assembly document A/53/370, Consolidated report containing a draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace). However, during the informal meetings about the resolution, on May 6, 1999, the representative of the European Union explained that he had deleted the phrase "speedy transition from a culture of war and violence to a culture of peace" because, according to him "there is no culture of war and violence in the world." Over the course of the informal meetings, all the references to the culture of war were systematically removed from the definitions of the eight program areas for a culture of peace. Ironically, at that time, NATO was bombing Kosovo with depleted uranium bombs from high-flying B-52 bombers.

In general, the United Nations and its Member States categorically deny that there is a culture of war. Why? Because they have come to monopolize the culture of war, and they do not want to be challenged about it. This monopolization is described in considerable detail in my book, The History of the Culture of War.

This attitude of the UN and the nation-states, that there is no culture of war, is reflected in the attitudes of the commercial mass media and the various institutions of education, including most universities.

Hence, as a peace educators, if you dare to speak about the culture of war, you risk to lose funding from the UN, from UN member states and from major universities. One must be reminded of the biblical parable of Jesus speaking with the rich young man, and saying that if he wanted to follow him, he would have to renounce his wealth. Of course, if you can find support for peace education that deals with the culture of war, you should use it

as much as possible. This was true, for example, during the 1990's when Federico Mayor was Director-General of UNESCO, and we were able to make remarkable progress, culminating in the 75 million signatures on the Manifesto 2000, an initiative that continues to reverberate around the world.

Often it is possible to discuss the culture of war without being so explicit as to bring down the wrath of its institutions. Thus, for example, it is often possible to discuss the eight program areas of the culture of peace as specific alternatives to the eight basic principles of the culture of war (see, for example, "values, attitudes and behaviors").

If it is to be sustainable and yet address the culture of war, peace education must therefore be prepared to work without steady and reliable financial support. That has been the case, for example, for the Culture of Peace News Network, which depends exclusively upon volunteer labor.

Peace education, with or without funding, can be ultimately more powerful than the nation-states and their culture of war. Why? Because peace education can deal with human consciousness and with what Gandhi meant by "truth." The nation-states and their allied institutions, to maintain their culture of war, depend upon control of information, secrecy and ultimately, brute force. Ultimately, they cannot sustain their

falsehoods and initimidation, and from time to time, they will crash, as did the Soviet Union in 1989, and as did all of Europe in 1914 and Europe and East Asia in 1939-1941. It is at these moments when they crash that the people who have developed the truly sustainable forces of history, which are consciousness and truth, have a chance to make a revolutionary change in human culture.

Can cities bring us to a culture of peace?

Posted on **August 2, 2013**

Through my studies of the culture of war, I came to the conclusion that the state is involved with it so profoundly that we will never achieve a culture of peace in a system of nation states. As a result, I proposed that we need a United Nations that is based not upon Member States, but upon regional associations of cities and towns. After all, cities and towns have no vested interest in the culture of war, no armies, no military contracts, no border defenses, and no recent history of maintaining power through armed force.

Therefore, it is important to know if the culture of peace is advancing at the level of the city. This month's CPNN bulletin provides a number of examples of culture of peace initiatives at the level of the city. But has there been progress? It's not so clear.

There was evident progress in the years when UNESCO and the United Nations promoted the culture of peace through the International Year 2000 and the International Decade 2001-2010. UNESCO instituted a Prize for Peace Cities in 1996, and during the initial years of the Decade there was a flourishing of City Peace Commissions in Brazil, but the UNESCO Prize was discontinued in 2005 and the Brazilian Commissions are no longer very active.

The oldest initiatives, Mayors for Peace and the International Association of Peace Messenger Cities, are devoted principally to lobbying and trying to change the policies of the nation states. This, according the analysis above, is not likely to succeed.

Several other international networks of city peace initiatives started during the previous Decade but are no longer very active, those of Rotary International, Sri Chinmoy, and the peacebuilding project of UCLG, the largest network of city governments.

The newest networks of peace cities, International Cities of Peace and Peace Towns and Cities promise to develop a local culture of peace rather than simply trying the influence state policies.

If we consider only one component of the culture of peace, namely sustainable development, then we must say that the leading example is ICLEI, the world network of cities dealing with sustainable development. See, for example, their meeting that took place in parallel to last year's UN summit in Rio.

Finally, individual cities continue to work on a culture of peace at a local level: for example, Eugene (Oregon, U.S.), New Haven (Connecticut, U.S.) and Hamilton (Ontario, Canada), and hopefully, they will serve as models for other city initiatives.

Culture of peace at the level of the city is a work in process. CPNN will continue to follow its development in the years that come.

We are all Egyptians

Posted on **July 5, 2013**

As we regard the news from Egypt these days, it occurs to me that Egypt now shows us the dynamic that we will probably see on a global scale in the years to come.

The Egyptian crisis, at the base, is an economic one. The Arab Spring brought hope, but instead of economic stability and prosperity, it has brought instability and massive unemployment. Of course, Egypt is not alone in suffering from economic instability and unemployment, but, for the moment let us consider only the case of Egypt as a kind of laboratory of the future.

On top of the economic crisis there is a political crisis. The government headed by President Morsi was not been able to obtain the confidence of the masses of the people. Forget, for the moment that it was radical Islamist, and for the sake of a global view, simply admit that it did not have the confidence of the people. In this regard, we could speak of Turkey or Brazil, or even the United States, according to the most recent article in CPNN by David Swanson. But again, let us stay with Egypt as an example.

As I write this the military has intervened. 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 was to shut down four television stations. And UN

human rights chief Navi Pillay has expressed concern over reports of the detention of leading members of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.

If the military maintains control and its culture of war becomes established, it will occur because the masses of the people have allowed it to happen. It will be because the people have no alternative and unified vision such as consciousness of a culture of peace. And it will be because alternative institutions that provide the framework for a culture of peace have not yet been developed.

As for culture of peace consciousness, no doubt there has been some advance since the beginning of the Arab Spring, as described in the analyses published in CPNN by Joseph Mayton and Ismail Serageldin, but it remains to be seen if it has advanced enough to be a determining factor in the days and months to come.

And as for institutional frameworks, they 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, as far as I know, there has not yet been any progress in this direction.

In general, I urge that all of us consider ourselves to be Egyptian in this moment of historic crisis. Not that we can solve the problems of Egypt, which only the Egyptians can solve, but that we can learn from their example how to deal with the coming global crises that are economic and political, and which will bring us the choice between culture of war or culture of peace. As I say in my most recent blog (below), to meet this challenge we need

to advance the Global Movement for a Culture of Peace by developing culture of peace consciousness and institutions based on this consciousness.

The historic challenge to the Global Movement for a Culture of Peace

Posted on **July 1, 2013**

Last month's blog posed two questions. Is the Global Movement for a Culture of Peace growing? And will it be able grow enough to replace the present culture of war when it crashes? This month's CPNN bulletin indicates that it is growing, but is it growing fast enough to deal with the world crises that are coming?

The coming crises are ecological, economic, political and military.

The ecological crises such as global warming and rising ocean levels, lack of fresh water resources and new forms of disease and epidemics, etc. are developing over many decades. The many initiatives for sustainable development – a key component of the culture of peace – can slow the onset of these crises, but cannot halt them as long as we maintain the present political and economic systems.

The economic crises include the uncontrolled financial speculation (the annual gross product of the world being traded every day), the constantly rising American debt and consequent risk to the value of the dollar (which begins to resemble the Soviet ruble 30 years ago), the continually increasing urbanization of the world which means fewer farms and more people dependent upon food production and delivery based on imported oil, and the increasing interdependence of the global economy to the point that a crash would be far more devastating than any in previous history. The time line for an economic crash is probably much sooner than that of the ecological crises, even less than a decade according to some predictions.

The political crises that we see today – the inability of states to deal with nuclear disarmament, with global warming or with economic instability –

can only get worse if there is an economic crash. That's what we saw in the Soviet Union after its economic crash at the end of the 80′s.

The last time there was a global economic crash in 1929, it was followed by the political "solution" of fascism. In fact, fascism is simply the extreme manifestation of the culture of war in all its aspects.

Herein lies the greatest challenge to the Global Movement for a Culture of Peace. If its principles are sufficiently established in the consciousness of people and in institutional

frameworks, it can provide a convincing alternative to fascism in the face of the crises that are coming.

And, of course, there are always the crises of militarism. In recent years we have seen the military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and now underway, Syria, with nothing but disastrous results, and always the risk of nuclear weapons being employed.

More and more there is a global realization that there are no military solutions to the economic and political crises. But can this negative anti- war sentiment be matured into a positive culture of peace consciousness that consists of positive actions as well as ideas?

The challenge facing us is so complex that we cannot predict its details. Hence, we need to strengthen every one of the 8 program areas of the culture of peace, mobilize every sector of society, women, youth, intellectuals, artists, etc., and the Movement needs to be expanded in every continent and region. As this month's CPNN bulletin indicates, there is some progress in all of these respects, but much more is needed if the Movement is to achieve its potential.

The Past and Future of CPNN

Posted on **June 3, 2013**

The bulletin this month marks a milestone in the evolution of CPNN, as its coverage begins to depend on the extensive involvement of reporters from around the world.

Looking back over the 15 years of CPNN since it began at UNESCO in 1998, I recognize this as the most recent of several milestones.

At first it was hoped that there would be many different CPNN sites in various languages, and I ran CPNN only for the United States, but by 2007, seeing that sites were not materializing in other languages and continents, I expanded it to a global level.

2010 was a watershed year for CPNN. The Culture of Peace Decade of the United Nations had ended, and we had submitted the final report from over 1,000 civil society organizations around the world. In order to continue the information exchange among these organizations, it was necessary to expand the service of CPNN, which had almost ceased to function in the previous year. We established the Culture of Peace Corporation in order to involve young people in the management of the site, including those who had worked on the UN Decade report. With their assistance, the site was revamped to be more attractive using many images.

In the years since 2010, the coverage of CPNN has greatly expanded. There were 205 articles in 2011, 413 in 2012, and already 181 in the first half of 2013. Most of these depended upon me to write or seek out the articles, but as of this month, there is more of a contribution by reporters.

As stated in the conclusion of this month's bulletin, CPNN aspires to fulfill the challenge in the UN Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, to serve the development of the Global Movement for a Culture of Peace by exchanging information among its actors. As I have written

at the end of an article about CPNN to appear in the next issue of the Journal of Peace Education, the future of CPNN is intimately tied to the future of the Global Movement. On the one hand, CPNN can only develop its full potential in the context of a growing Movement, and on the other hand, in order to grow, the Movement needs the extensive exchange of information among its actors.

At this moment of history, it is critical that the Movement should grow. The present global culture of war, headed by the American empire, is reaching the end of its power, similar to the situation of the Soviet empire in the 1980's. When it crashes, if we are not ready to replace it with the culture of peace, we risk to fall back on the extreme culture of war called fascism, as happened in the 1930's when the previous system crashed.

But is the Movement growing? And will it be able grow enough to replace the present culture of war when it crashes? This will be the theme of next month's blog.

Disarmament: Two steps forward, one step back

Posted on **May 1, 2013**

If we take only a short-term view of history, I think that we have only taken one step forward and one step back with the adoption last month of the Arms Trade Treaty by the United Nations. By this, I mean that we should not expect any real control of the arms trade to be possible as long as the world (and the UN) is run by nation-states. As I have shown elsewhere in detail, military power has become essential to nation- states, and they consider that to give it up is to commit suicide. Once again this week, 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.

Even the limited disarmament successes, including the present treaty as well as those on anti-personnel land mines and cluster bombs, have been achieved through sustained efforts by the civil society, and against opposition by the nation-states.

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.

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 be possible if and when the United Nations (or its successor) is no longer dominated by nation-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 Arab Spring: Progress toward a culture of peace?

Posted on **April 2, 2013**

In his analysis of the Arab spring on CPNN, the journalist John Mayton concludes that the Egyptian revolution "can, through a culture of peace, set a precedent not only for their own country but for the whole region." Even further, we ask in the discussion question "Can the Arab Spring inspire democratic movements around the world?"

Let us consider this in some detail, looking at the eight program areas of the culture of peace.

1. Democratic participation. This is at the center of the Arab revolutions, as emphasized in the analyses by the President of Tunisia Moncef Marzouki and the Director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Ismail Serageldin with participation by all the people and elections that involve ballots not bullerts. As pointed out in the book review by Janet Hudgins, the struggle for democracy in the Arab states is part of an even more global movement in recent decades.

2. Human rights. In the long run this is crucial, as stated in the annual report of Human Rights Watch: "The willingness of new governments to respect rights will determine whether those uprisings give birth to genuine democracy or simply spawn authoritarianism in new forms." So far there is progress, but, as they point out, "creation of a rights-respecting state can be painstaking work that requires building effective institutions of

governance, establishing independent courts, creating professional police, and resisting the temptation of majorities to disregard human rights and the rule of law." In his analysis, Serageldin indicates that progress is being made through respect of the rule of law and the recognition that one must negotiate and arrive at compromise solutions.

3. Education for peace and non-violence. Despite the ongoing violence in many countries such as Libya, Syria and Yemen,, the Arab spring has provided a rich education for peace and non-violence. This is the first

quality of the Arab spring mentioned by Ismail Serageldin in his analysis, and recent CPNN articles tell about initiatives for non-violence in Yemen and Palestine, two of the countries that are suffering the most from violence.

4. Tolerance and solidarity. There is a struggle with the intolerance of radical Islam, just as there are struggles with Zionism and Christian fundamentalism elsewhere in the world, but they are countered by many initiatives for religious tolerance and solidarity such as those mentioned recently in CPNN from Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and the countries of the Sahel including Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Muritania and Algeria. And slowly, despite the emphasis on violence by the commercial media, the world is learning that there are currents within Islam that promote a culture of peace, as described by Mustafa Cherif for the practice of Ramadan.

5. Equality between women and men. The analyses in CPNN such as those by Serageldin, El Tahawy and Munn and Cleminshaw indicate that women have played a crucial role in the leadership of the Arab spring.

Although there is a long way yet to go before women gain full equality, it is said that their activism has planted a "seed that will grow into greater demand." It is significant that Tunisia is the host for the first World Social Forum in the Arab world and that the rights of women is the highest priority on the agenda.

6. Free flow of information. The fact that the authoritarian regimes in the Arab states have tried desperately to limit access to the Internet and cell phones bears witness to the fact that the free flow of information has been essential to the Arab spring. As Wikileaks founder Julian Assange and others have explained in CPNN, the young generation is motivated to learn and share the truth and they cannot be stopped from communicating it. As described by Serageldin the revolution in Egypt was accomplished by youth armed only with cell phones and IPADs.

7. Disarmament and security. The Arab Spring has revealed the impotence of armed force. Mubarak in Egypt, Ghadafi in Libya, and now Assad in Syria have been unable to maintain power through their military force. And, at the same time, the United States and their European allies have also been unable to impose their will through military intervention, first in Libya, and now (at least so far) in Syria. Although it is ignored by the media and

traditional political power, it is nonviolent resistance that is becoming the true power of the people. As Ziad Medoukh says from Palestine, it is nonviolence that "not only develops human dignity, but ensures the independence and capacity of its supporters to endure retaliation and to fight against all forms of injustice."

8. Sustainable development. Although in many respects around the world the engagement of civil society for sustainable development is the most advanced component of the movement for a culture of peace, in the case of the Arab spring, it is not at the forefront of the struggle. At the same time, however, it is my impression that the leadership of the movement of the Arab spring, both the youth and older leaders such as Marzouki and Serageldin have been shaped in part and are keenly aware of the need for sustainable development.

In summary, I think one can conclude that the Arab spring and the ongoing democratic revolutions in the Arab countries are providing an important new momentum towards a culture of peace.

The dialectics of war and peace, culture of war, culture of peace

Posted on **March 3, 2013**

Regions where wars are raging are also regions where there is a strong movement for peace, as described in several cases in this month's CPNN bulletin.

This is not new. During the 19th Century, In his extensive notebooks called the "Grundrisse", Marx made a note that "War attains complete development before peace." One may assume that he meant that there is a dialectical relationship between these two opposite states, and war inspires people to work for peace. Similarly, in the 20th Century, the historian, Quincy Wright, described in his Study of War how there has always been a "tendency for very severe war periods to be followed by movements for peace," not only in recent times (League of Nations, United Nations), but going back to the Greeks and Romans. In fact, he states that "Anthropologists have pointed out that even primitive peoples, whose military equipment is very simple, may fight wars of steadily increasing gravity until there is a"war to end war" which, because of its extensive destrucitveness of life, is followed by a considerable period of peace." Marx and Wright are describing the old dialectical model of war and peace in which periods of peace alternate with periods of war.

What is new, however, is the concept of the culture of peace, as adopted by the United Nations in the past twenty years. This provides a new and more profound perspective, the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace. Instead of considering peace as an interval between wars, the culture of peace seeks to change the very nature of our culture so that war no longer becomes an option.

The culture of peace approach is radical. It demands fundamental changes. After extensive study and experience at the level of the United Nations, I have come to the conclusion that the nation-state has come to monopolize and embody the culture of war to such an extent that it is incapable of promoting a culture of peace. Hence, it seems to me that we must reorganize society with a reformed United Nations based on representatives of local governments instead of states.

This approach is difficult to accept by educated people in the rich countries of Europe, North America and their allies, because they are

invested in the state system. They have been educated to believe that progress can only be achieved through the state. Even the traditional peace movements associated with the left, radical as they may be, continue to believe that peace can be achieved through revolution or reform of the state, just as the revolutions in Russia, China, etc. promised to bring peace in their time.

For this reason, we should expect that the leadership for a culture of peace will come, not from the centers of power and higher education in the North, but rather from those who seek an alternative to the violence that destroys their lives in the global South. In the previous blogs, we have seen such leadership developing in Africa and Latin America, and this month's bulletin recognizes initiatives in these regions.

Latin America: The leading edge

Posted on **February 1, 2013**

Latin America continues to take the lead in the transition to a culture of peace.

As indicated by this month's CPNN Bulletin, 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. 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, Boliva, 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.

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. And 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.

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 nation 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 five years ago, and now we have only eight more years before 2021. But so far, given the continuing leadership from Latin America, I would still make the same prediction.

Internet Freedom and the Culture of Peace

Posted on **January 3, 2013**

There is good reason why the free flow of information is one of the eight key areas of the culture of peace, as defined by the UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture

of Peace. On the one hand, it is essential for the consciousness-raising and networking that can make the transition possible from the culture of war to a culture of peace, especially in the hands of the young generation. On the other hand, its opposite, the control of information by the state and its commercial allies, has become the chief weapon of the culture of war.

As described in this month's CPNN bulletin, the struggle for internet freedom has been especially sharp in recent weeks. Media coverage of the World Conference on International Telecommunication was heavily biased toward support of information control by the American empire, of which the commercial mass media is an essential part. As the CPNN article by Professor Milton Mueller points out, their unrestrained criticism

of the International Telecommunications Union diverts attention from the control of the Internet exercised by little-known institutions associated with the culture of war such as: "ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee, the US CyberCommand, Israeli cyberweapons, the British Cleanfeed system, data retention and graduated response in the European Union, the Wikileaks financial boycott", etc.

Within this struggle, the figure of Julian Assange has emerged as something of a hero for the new generation, because he has the courage to confront these and other institutions used to control information. As he says in his Christmas message reprinted in part in CPNN: "True democracy is the resistance of people, armed with the truth, against lies, from Tahrir to right here in London. Every day, ordinary people teach us that democracy is free speech and dissent."

Let us agree with Professor Mueller's conclusion and work together for its implementation: "Internet freedom requires the construction of effective new, open transnational governance institutions and globally applicable legal principles that regulate and limit the power of states and private sector actors to abuse users. It requires liberalized communication industries and free trade in information services; multinational, multistakeholder pressure against censorship and surveillance."

Meanwhile, there are media institutions that are escaping from control by the culture of war. CPNN is one of a growing number of Internet information sources for a culture of peace. And described in CPNN this month, journalists in Africa are setting a good precedent by giving increasing priority to culture of peace news. We should push that their example is followed by journalists and commercial media in the rest of the world.

Leadership of Women for a Culture of Peace

Posted on **December 5, 2012**

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.

This month's CPNN bulletin shows that 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.
Of course, much remains to be accomplished, but what is important is that the process is underway. From time to time, there are setbacks, but for the most part, the process is irreversible. Women are gaining equality, and they are in the leadership of the Global Movement for a Culture of Peace. Their leadership is being recognized throughout the world. In this month's bulletin, there are women recognized by peace prizes from Yemen, Liberia, Kenya, Iran, Myanmar, Ireland, Guatemala, United States, Egypt, Tunisia, Indonesia and Bolivia.

At the United Nations, Resolution 1325 was adopted by the Security Council under the leadership of Anwarul Chowdury from Bangladesh in 2000 to provide a role for women in UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding , but ever since then, it has been difficult to get it

implemented. There are some successes, but the struggle goes at the UN, as described in this month's CPNN bulletin.

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, 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 the fact that the state or tribe trains young men as warriors to be violent, and that violence by the state or tribe serves as a behavioral model for the family and community. Hence, the struggle for a culture of peace must include the struggle to end violence against women.

A Vision of the New Generation

As described in this month's CPNN bulletin, the youth participants at the Budapest training were inspired to continue their activism for a better world. I, too, was inspired, and it has led me to imagine a roadmap for the global transition from culture of war to culture of peace.

I see a tremendous multiplier effect in the enthusiasm of the new generation. They are rebellious and optimistic. They believe a better world is possible, and they are willing to struggle for it.

I have a vision of them as trainers of trainers to multiply their rebellion and optimism.

The effects of their training are global since they are connected by Internet, by their travels, and by their ability to speak many languages. I think of the young trainers I worked with in Budapest: one from the Philippines working in Spain; one from Switzerland having worked in the USA and Brazil; one from Portugal working in Italy; their conversations in Spanish, English, Portuguese, Italian, French, German with links to Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Hindu, etc., etc.

I imagine a network of CPNN websites in different languages, fed by reporters everywhere, and translated and shared on other language sites, so that wherever in the world there is action for a culture of peace, it is immediately shared and taken up and mirrored in actions elsewhere.

What will the actions be? They will be as varied as this new generation has imagination. We already saw this imagination in some of the responses of youth organizations in the 2006 report from 475 youth organizations:

* Training and workshops for youth on issues such as the culture of peace, conflict resolution and mediation, values and human rights.

* Vocational training and employment programmes
* Activities in the arts, creativity, music, theatre and dance.

* Intercultural and international exchanges and meetings, where youth activists get to know others,

* Promotion of networks, publishing and documenting their work, distributing the information widely, both online and on paper and by radio in local communities.

Perhaps you are saying that this kind of activity seems weak in comparison with the great power of nation states with their militaries and multi-national corporations with their enormous resources. But I respond that the culture of war, be it the military might of states

or the wealth of corporations is not sustainable. It rises and it crashes. On the other hand, human culture does not crash. It grows. Sometimes it grows rapidly; sometimes it grows slowly. But it does not crash. And the work of the new generation described above, makes it grow more rapidly.

As you can see, I believe, in the company of great sociologists, that history is ultimately determined, not by military might or the wealth of empires, but by the people themselves and their social consciousness.

The United Nations and the Culture of Peace

Posted on **October 1, 2012**

My ten years working in the United Nations system left me with a sweet and sour taste. The sweet side was the universality of the UN, both its staff and mandate, and its great significance for raising the consciousness of the peoples of the world. The sour side was the jealousy of the Member States who make sure that the UN does not encroach on their freedom to rule over their own citizens, as well as people in other countries that they may dominate through neo-colonial relations. This became crystal-clear to me when the United States delegate, during the informal meetings of the UN General Assembly in 1999, opposed the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, saying that it would make it more difficult for them to start a war. In fact, throughout history, war (call it "defense" if you prefer) has always been the most fundamental "right" of the state.

With this in mind, I have been pleasantly surprised by the extent to which the UN system has once again taken up the culture of peace as a priority, as shown in this month's CPNN Bulletin, just as it was a priority in the Year 2000 when I was the director of the UN International Year for the Culture of Peace.

Of course, this does not happen by chance, and great credit belongs to two men who played key roles for the Year 2000, Federico Mayor Zaragoza, who made the culture of peace a priority of UNESCO, and Anwarul Chowdhury, who played the role of midwife at the UN General Assembly, guiding the culture of peace resolution through nine months of opposition by the powerful states. Once again, this last month, these two men motivated and spoke eloquently at the High Level Forum on a Culture of Peace at the UN.

As always it was the countries of the South who supported the initiative (see the CPNN article of September 24 and its discussion), but at least this month it was not blocked by the powerful states.

In fact, it is my impression that the powerful states pay less and less attention to the United Nations. When there was a financial crisis a few years ago, the powerful states did not turn

to the UN agencies , the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, but set up their own temporary system of finance ministers. When it came time for the review of nuclear non-proliferation, President Obama held his own meeting with heads of state in Washington and ignored the UN conference where the only head of state to speak was that of Iran. And the US has pulled out of UNESCO entirely, forcing drastic cuts in its budget.

In fact, the lack of attention by the powerful states may provide the UN system with an opportunity to push the agenda of the culture of peace without their opposition. Let us hope that the UN can take advantage of this.

Of course, in the long run, the UN, or any other institution, cannot mandate a culture of peace. Instead, the culture of peace can only grow from the consciousness, both understanding and action, of the peoples of the world (see last month's blog below). That's why the role of the UN for consciousnes-raising is ultimately its greatest contribution!

Sowing the culture of peace: The International Day of Peace

Posted on **September 7, 2012**

When I went to work in Mozambique on behalf of UNESCO to help develop a national culture of peace program in the early 90′s, my African friends criticized the European notion of building a culture of peace.
"No, they told me, you don't build a culture of peace. You cultivate it."

The culture of war, on the other hand, is built. Empires and their states are built on fear through domination, exploitation, control of information, and the development and use (or threat) of armed force. Economic enterprises are constructed within this shield. Entire economic systems are built, eventually to be ruled by speculation. As a result the culture of war is not sustainable. Fear is eventually overcome by courage, and the truth eventually will out. Arms production exhausts the economy. And speculation, like a house of cards, eventually crashes. From time to time, these spectacular, unsustainable institutions collapse and leave space for the sustainable processes of culture.

And so human history, human culture, slowly, by fits and starts, makes its way forward. Culture is not a state of being, but a process. It is not static, but dynamic. It is not built but cultivated. As stated in the UN Declaration on a Culture of Peace (UN Resolution A-53-243), it consists of "values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behavior and ways of life." It is a social, not an individual process. It is not "inner peace." Instead, it is political in the sense that Aristotle meant when he began his greatest

work with "Man is a political animal", linking the word "political" to "polis," the city.

The process is not steady. We may plant seeds and fail to see the results afterwards. We may harvest fruit and have to wait for the winter before planting again. But slowly, over time, the culture grows – that is our theme and our hope for the future.

There is a terrible urgency to what we are doing. We know from history that when empires crash, there is great suffering, and there is an immediate cry to rebuild the structures of the culture of war that are stronger than ever – what is known as fascism. If we are not prepared at that moment to make the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace, we will risk a transition to fascism.

To help us attain universality for the culture of peace we need to continue involving the United Nations in this process. Even though it is now controlled by states with their cultures of war, the time will come when we can reclaim the United Nations, as the Charter says, in the name of "We the peoples...."

Africa's Contribution to a Culture of Peace

Posted on **August 5, 2012**

It is not by accident that there is so much news from Africa for a culture of peace (see CPNN bulletin for August). 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 nation- 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. And this month on CPNN, 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 recent CPNN articles on a culture of peace featuring African women, artists, especially musicians, educators and journalists. Wouldn't it be great if the commercial media of the North could imitate the media in Africa that are dedicated to news for a culture of peace!

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. As far as I know this initiative is still underway almost 20 years later.

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 conclusion, 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 nation- state with its "military solutions."

Rio+20: Window into history

Posted on **July 24, 2012**
The events surrounding Rio+20 last month, the huge meeting of governments that was called together by the United Nations, can be seen as a window into history as it is occurring. The nation-states are failing and new institutional frameworks are growing up to take their place.

Most commentators agree that the meeting was a failure at the level of national governments. Many heads of state were present and there were many months of preparation, but the meeting was unable to take any strong action on global warming. The failure was especially great because the meeting of scientific experts just before the Rio +20 event stated clearly that global warming is threatening great damage to the earth. See the CPNN article about the UNESCO Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development.

Since sustainable development is key part of a culture of peace, we see once again that nation-states, with their culture of war, are not capable of making a culture of peace.

At the same time we can see other institutional forces developing to create a culture of peace, including youth, civil society, indigenous peoples and especially cities. For details see the CPNN bulletin for July.

The increasing role of cities for sustainable development is in line with what I have written in my recent book, World Peace through the Town Hall. Cities have not had a culture of war since the Middle Ages when they had their own armies, city walls for defense and gates where they could control who entered and left the city. Now these are only sites you can visit as a tourist in the old cities of Europe. Instead, cities are involved in promoting all of the aspects of a culture of peace. Sustainable development is one of the eight aspects of a culture of peace.

It is not by accident that these events took place in Brazil. Ever since the Rio Conference and Environment and Development in 1992 and the 15 million Brazilian signatures on the Manifesto 2000 for a culture of peace, the people of Brazil have been in the leadership of the Global Movement for a Culture of Peace. The World Social Forums, started in Porto Allegre in Brazil, have contributed greatly. And you can find many

articles in CPNN about local initiatives for a culture of peace in Brazil, including at the level of city governments.