



Fundació per la Pau

TOWARDS A CULTURE OF PEACE 25 ARGUMENTS

1. Things can change. History is open. The past and the present determine a part of the future, but we can invent part of the future, and we can and we want to have influence on it.

2. The important historical changes are always a long process, they are never simple dates or punctual claims that can be achieved with only one action. Usually, the important historical changes are the result of the daily and constant work of several generations. But it is necessary to initiate them, to maintain them and to build up over them. All through the history, regarding all this social and political "revolutionary" work, the humanity has won huge challenges that have changed life conditions all over the earth (abolition of slavery, replacing of the feudal system with democratic rule, universal suffrage, etc.)

3. Public opinion is the main tool for leading any change. An organized, active and well informed public opinion has a strong power. In the end, it is not governments who transform societies, but societies who transform governments.

4. Wherever people stay, conflicts arise. The problem is not the conflict but the way we face them. If people face conflicts in a positive way, conflicts could be used for the progress of the humanity. That conflicts are unavoidable should not worry us; the most important thing is to avoid violence.

The violence we shall eradicate

5. Violence is an absurd and ineffective way of conflict resolution. With violence the strongest, not the fairest will win. There is not any relationship between being the strongest and being right. Aggressive violence is the law of animals, not the law of rationality.

6. Violence is ineffective: it does not solve conflicts, it just covers and hides them. We must not mistake victory for solution. A solution imposed by the use of force can only be maintained by the use of force. When the power ratio changes, conflicts arise again with even more violence, resentment and hate. History offers us many examples of violent conflicts that reappear constantly.

7. The use of violence always causes pain and suffering. As a minimal consequence, it represents a real damage in order to avoid a hypothetical one, and almost always, violence causes a pain even stronger than the one it tries to prevent. Violence is always a cruel and inhuman method of degradation of the human dignity, both for the one who suffers it and the one who causes it. War is one of the strongest sources of pain for human beings and, unlike other causes, is the results of in a direct decision that has been taken by someone, somewhere. To make violence more difficult every day is the responsibility of all of us.

8. Although war sometime in the past was considered as a minor harm nowadays is, certainly, a major harm. The apparition of military aviation, the air bombing of cities, the massive destruction weapons and the free flow of light weapons have brought us, in current wars, to a 90% of civil victims. So, who does wars protect? Who are those protected by the armies? If only we followed our instinct of prudence and conservation, we would not use technology and destruction tools in the 21st century with the same mentality as we did in the prehistoric era.

9. Security obsession creates insecurity. The obsessive aim of eliminating risks is leading us into a neurotic situation of increasing constant anguish and into irrational actions that can create new risks. Armament race is a clear example: we can destroy the earth several times!

10. The concept of security only in a military way is expensive and ineffective. World military spending are around one billion US \$ every year. With only the two per cent of this amount it should be possible to eradicate hunger in all the earth. These great expending, in the best of

the possibilities, will be futile. And we should recognize that the use of these weapons in a world war will be the worst of the perspectives. We must ask ourselves whether all this resources into military spending help us to feel more protected or not. The prevention of the violent conflict progression and the work made for eradicating the situations that make unavoidable the conflict violent escalation (hunger, unfair economic imbalance, unsustainable development, absence of social welfare, etc.) are much cheaper and they offer more security. Furthermore, it is more useful because it helps to improve life conditions in the earth.

11. Arms production and its trade feed and worsen violent conflicts. Conflict roots usually are complex and mixed, and arms dealing helps them to lengthen and to worsen, if it does not cause them directly. Both, the use of violent conflict for private enrichment and the toleration and promotion of this kind of trade by the states, is an intolerable scandal.

The peace we shall build up

12. Peace is a positive concept we shall build up. Peace is not war absent. Peace is not a casual matter but the result of different conditions that are not easy to obtain. It is essential to know which are those conditions in order to prevent war and to help people to build peace. Peace is difficult and fragile but Peace is Possible. The Human Rights respect and the promotion of a fair economic system that assures decent life conditions for everyone, are inseparable elements for building Peace. In this sense, some critics to violent explosions, to terrorist acts and even to some "humanitarian actions", become hypocrisy if they are not accompanied by a strong commitment to act against the roots that cause violent and the will of changing the situations that originate the violence in conflicts.

13. We ask the change to start, we do not ask the change to finish today. We do not ask for the elimination of all the armies for tomorrow. The change we promote is an historic process that must not be improvised. We must chose between following the same way or starting to walk the opposite sense in order to change step by step the wrong direction. It is not a question of all or nothing, but it is necessary to start changing something The are lot of small steps that we can walk right now.

14. It is necessary a progressive change on the priorities of use of the economic and human resources. It is necessary the demilitarization of the security concept and free, thus, resources that will be useful to create human security, as it is focused below.

15. From military spending to social development spending. A society with great inequalities and clear injustices can only be supported by strong police corps and with the use of the force. On the other hand, the strongest the cohesion, the justice and the harmony are in one society, the less necessary the force is to maintain it. If we give worthy life conditions to everyone, we will avoid lots of violent conflicts. Investment on justice, sustainable development, social security, solidarity and ecology would lead us to a more security situation than the one we get when the majority of the resources are for military issues. We must to go further in this conversion of the resources.

16. From war research to peace research. It is necessary to go forward in the research of violent conflict prevention, in the mediation skills, in the research of alternative ways for conflict resolution and transformation. Only with a small part of the resources that are dedicated to war research and war preparation we would get more effectiveness on security issues. Peace by peaceful ways is more effective, economic and efficient than war.

17. There are already alternative models of conflict resolution. We must remark that the majority of conflicts are not solved by violent ways. Modern state function is based in the renounce of violence made by the citizens, who delegate that use to the State. The State offers them protection and a arbitration system in front of daily conflicts (police and justice systems). With all the malfunctions that we may identify, this system is more rational and civilized than the law of the strongest. We only have to ask the states to do among them what they ask to their citizens.

18. From conflicts solving to conflict prevention mentalities. It is necessary to transfer resources to the creation and the maintenance of an early warning and conflict prevention networks. In the same way as preventive medicine does not consist in fulfill the cupboard with medicine, conflict prevention does not consist neither in militarize ourselves more than the others nor in focusing only on military issues. It is necessary to act over the economic, social,

cultural, ethic, borders, ecological and political factors which are previous to violent explosion and which are the root of conflicts. Conflict intervention is easier and more effective at the beginning of it, instead of the intervention in the conflict when it has arisen with all its virulence.

19. From offensive armies to defensive armies. The renounce of the armies to fit themselves out with weapons and infrastructure that help them to act out the own territory will help to diminish the suspicions and international tensions. This is a fore step, tiny but possible, in the way towards the disappearance of all kind of armies.

20. From particular security to common security. In the issue about security and international conflicts, we must go forward in the sovereignty and competence ease off from the state to supranational bodies. Good steps in the right direction would be:

- International Law Development.
- The creation of International Courts of Justice and Arbitration with binding sentences.
- The transformation of human and economic resources from Governmental armies to International Peace Forces, some kind of international police with adequate training and skills, and the capacity of reacting quickly in violent conflict areas. This process has to follow, at least, two conditions:

1) The respect to the subsidiary principle: everything that can be solved in a small ambit, it should not be solved in bigger one (local-international).

2) A clear regulation of the control of this International Force (only have a look into the different meanings of the police force in a democratic state and in a dictatorship). Consequently this point is directly connected with the next one.

21. Improvement of the UN's structure and functions. The limit and the few efficiency and transparency of some UN actions is evident. However, the UN system is necessary. Without its intervention, probably, a lot of things would have worked worst. But, if UN must assume with guaranty all the points we have quoted above, it is necessary to go forward in its representative functions, democratization and in its economic, juridical and human resources.

22. Arms manufacture and arms trade control. We have to forbid mass destruction weapons and continuous with the progressive restriction of conventional arms manufacture and its trade. It is also necessary to go forward in the conversion of the military industry into civil industry.

23. Full recognition of the right to be a conscientious objector against any kind of collaboration in war preparation such as military service objection, draft resisters, military tax objection, military research objection, etc. Any way to refuse militarism, armament race and violence are inestimable contributions for peace. We defend the full recognition and the legal protection of these rights.

24. Diffusion and promotion of the Nonviolence. Nonviolence is the anthropological root of pacifism. Without it, it is easy to find deep contradictions. Nonviolence is both a way of life and a method of action and fight. The research of True, Justice, Love and Freedom (also towards our adversaries) allow us to act in different ways in front of the conflicts, both personal and collective. The nonviolent person refuses neutrality, surrender, passivity and violence. The deep inner force to acquire these attitudes and to impregnate our activities with it is also peace work.

25. Peace education for all the people is the way to establish a Peace Culture. Peace education is not an exclusive matter for children in the school. We, the adults, are responsible to walk all the steps that will close us to a peaceful world. Nobody can give our children the responsibility to solve problems that we do not know how to solve or we do not want to solve. To project our fears into our children is something that creates to them futile anxieties. Peace education involve an alternative presentation of the history remarking as positive factors not the military victories against others but those victories which have improved the living conditions over the earth. The historical and fiction heroes, the self-identification models, the dominant values, etc., have to be revised under this peace education, culture of peace perspective. We would like to arrive to all the people, with the awareness that we are not defending any good or any particular interest against somebody else's good or particular interest, whether we are defending realistic things that will give to everybody a better quality of life.