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**Pacifists during
the First World
War**

ICIP
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INTRODUCTION

An essential factor and actor

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The present issue deals with some of the peace and anti-militarist movements linked, chronologically or thematically, to World War I, marking the culmination of the commemoration of its centennial. We specifically take a look at the more political movements, such as those linked to anarchism (First International) or to the main leader of the Spartacus League, Rosa Luxemburg, the anti-draft groups and the pioneering work in the academic world of Albert Fried, one of the creators of the epistemic community that is behind the most radical perspectives of international relations and peace research. In addition, Joan Botam, a priest and ecumenist, reflects on the legacy of the Great War and opposition to it among the various peace movements inspired by religious beliefs.

In other issues we have dealt with the role of women and feminist movements. And we are well aware of the fact that we did not exhaust the richness of those movements. We are also aware that important changes took place between World War I and World War II, such as the critical impact with the movements most closely linked to the leaderships of the Second International or the arrival of crucial influences such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the War Resisters League and, especially, Gandhi's radical pacifism. Without them, the origin of peace research, which emerged in the 1950s on both sides of the North Atlantic, and thus our own work, cannot be understood.

There is an *idée-force* that follows from these articles: social movements (in this case, pacifist and anti-militarist) are at the root of the academic, civic and political struggles for peace as well as those waged by international organizations. Without them, nothing would be possible: they have been an essential factor and a key actor from the moment

when, for the first time in modern history, the clamor of “never again” (meaning never again a war like this one) broke out. They had already proved to be essential after the battle of Solferino, which revealed the terrible consequences of increasingly sophisticated weapons such as the “needle gun,” the first quick-firing, semi-automatic rifle, and they were therefore crucial in the creation of the International Red Cross and in the development of humanitarian law and the law of war.

“ Social movements are at the root of the struggles for peace and without them nothing would be possible ”

And they proved to be essential, even more decisively, before, during and after World War I, when, for the first time, the social outcry, generated in part by these movements, demanded an intellectual response to the problem of war. As is often said, it was precisely after the war when the social concern about war became an intellectual concern. This gave rise to the creation of International Relations as a discipline, to understand the causes of war and to establish the conditions of peace, in the pursuit of a lasting and sustainable peace. Without peace and anti-militarist movements, and without their impact on public opinion, nothing that has happened in the analytical, political and social field for peace in the last one hundred years would have any explanation or make any sense.

That is why we must go beyond the duty of remembering and honoring those pioneers. At a time when the impact of social peace movements has again become crucial, and when we salute the agreement between Iran and the nuclear powers, (which, if it goes into effect, will have a decisive impact), it is important to remember some of the lessons of the past. Four, to be precise.

**“ Without peace and anti-militarist movements,
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First, that peace is a process, not a specific state that is reached to remain there, and, as a process, it demands dynamism to adapt to the context and consequences of other intermediate values such as dignity and justice. In other words, peace is built. Second, peace is expressed in many ways; in fact, there are many forms of peace and therefore it is essential to keep in mind, in the intellectual agenda and in the agenda of struggle, that there are different agendas, different biases and perspectives and different accents and sensibilities, all of which are essential. In intellectual, social and civic endeavors, the peace agenda requires the capacity to include different voices, all of which are crucial, with special attention paid to those that come from the global South, from other cultures. Third, that the threats to peace constantly mutate, as demonstrated by the fact that the deaths caused directly by war or terrorism represent less than 25% of all deaths worldwide and that therefore the agenda and instruments of analysis and intervention must always be fine-tuned, improving progressively to grasp what is new and propose forms of collective action to solve problems generated by novelty.

And fourth, that the achievement of peace requires a combination of social and civic action, academic action and endeavor, and also political advocacy and work in the institutions. Working on minds, hearts and institutions, and not just in a formal sense. As our former vice-president and friend Alfons Banda used to say, it requires conquering public opinions, that is to say, creating narratives and counter-narratives that demonstrate that peace has never been a chimera, an impossible, but a utopia that is built, a utopia with a long history and many partial successes. There are always “First World Wars” to fight against or, in the words of Alfred Fried, “demonstration objects with which to teach anatomy.” So thank you, peace, pacifist and anti-militarist

movements, for your great contribution to “anatomy.”

Photography : United States Library of Congress

- *No More War demonstration, Berlin 1922* -

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Rosa Luxemburg: anticapitalism to get to the pacifist eutopia

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At the beginning of World War I, the voice of the socialist leader Rosa Luxemburg was one of those that most resonated within what is known as the peace movement; a space that is in fact broad and complex. On the other hand, that fact that Luxemburg did not belong to the feminist movement – at least not as we understand it today – has for many years been an ongoing source of controversy within this movement. On this question, it is interesting to read “Rosa Luxemburg’s ‘final error’”, in which María José Aubet writes of Luxemburg’s “frequent and substantial” contributions to *Die Gleichheit* (Equality), the newspaper for “working women” of which Clara Zetkin was the editor (Aubet, 1978: 301).

While Zetkin’s struggle for women’s rights, and that of other radical pacifist feminists such as the lawyer Anita Augspurg or the activist Lida Gustava Heymann, have never been questioned, there has been debate – and a lot of it – about Rosa Luxemburg’s support for that cause. Without going any further, we have the above mentioned text by Aubet, which refers to Carmen Alcalde’s book *La mujer en la guerra civil española* (Women in the Spanish civil war)¹.

Thus, some theoreticians such as Lidia Falcón and Carmen Alcalde have accused Luxemburg of equidistance, inhibition (Alcalde, 1978: 317) or “lack of vision” (Falcón, 1978: 305) for not giving sufficient emphasis to “women’s emancipation” when talking about proletarian revolution, for sharing the idea held by some female revolutionary socialists – perhaps a little naively when seen in perspective – that women’s emancipation would come automatically thanks to the emancipation of the proletariat.

“ The fact that Luxemburg did not belong to the feminist movement has for many years been an ongoing source of controversy within this movement ”

While it is true that Rosa Luxemburg was not particularly prolific regarding the specifics of feminism as the “new revolutionary alternative for the complete emancipation of women” (Alcalde, 1978: 320) in the face of patriarchal oppression, she did show a special interest in putting before women workers “policies that particularly affect them both as an integral part of an exploited class, the working class, and as women; that is to say, as working women” (Aubert, 1978: 301).

However, Luxemburg’s constant refusal to take charge of the women’s section of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) alleging that this offer was a ploy by the male barons in the party to exile her from the front line of theoretical debate in German socialism; her struggle for women’s suffrage (Dunayevskaya, 1981: 95); or her correspondence over many years with Clara Zetkin²... all show a clear awareness of the sexism prevailing within the party. In one of those letters to Zetkin, Luxemburg herself expressed pride in calling herself a feminist and she wrote to Luise Kautsky in the same spirit in 1911: “Are you coming for the women’s conference? Just imagine, I have become a feminist! I received a credential for this conference and therefore must go to Jena” (Dunayevskaya, 1981: 95).

In 1912, Luxemburg finished one of her speeches in the same vein:

“The present forceful movement of millions of proletarian women who consider their lack of political rights a crying wrong is such an infallible sign, a sign that the social bases of the reigning system are rotten and that its days are numbered... Fighting for women’s suffrage, we will also hasten the coming of the hour when the present society falls in ruins under the hammer strokes of the revolutionary proletariat.” (Luxemburg 1971: 222)

As her writings show, Rosa Luxemburg's anti-militarist critique and her feminist demands don't come together, as some might expect, in a biological essentialism which locates women within an imaginary vision of the angel in the home, the source of all goodness and pacifist by nature. Her ideas could be located rather in the intersectionality (if I may be allowed some postmodern licence) of gender and class struggles against the arms race, and in the deconstruction of militarism and its causes as the key political strategy for peace and against capitalism. Thus Rosa Luxemburg asked herself (and asked the SPD) in her *Peace Utopias* of 1911 about which road to take in order to achieve a peaceful society:

"What is our task in the question of peace? It does not consist merely in vigorously demonstrating at all times the love of peace of the social democrats; but first and foremost our task is to make clear to the masses of people the nature of militarism and sharply and clearly to bring out the differences in principle between the standpoint of the social democrats and that of the bourgeois peace enthusiasts." (Luxemburg 1970: 250).

From modern capitalism to slasher capitalism: the neoliberal wall of eutopia

Rosa Luxemburg also wrote in *Peace Utopias* that antagonisms had "reached an acuteness never known before." Now, 101 years after the outbreak of the Great War and taking into account the over-specialisation and globalization of violence³ that recent decades have brought, it would be correct to say that Luxemburg's words apply not only to the situation prevailing prior to the outbreak of the First World War, but also to international politics in today's world, which in general accepts the demands for military spending and arms trafficking that move billions of dollars each year⁴, making this one of the most lucrative businesses in the world and which also contributes to a situation where "forms of government are forcibly implemented that are in the political and economic interests of the military power responsible for that very implementation" (Butler, 2009: 37). So, this "acuteness never known before" has continued to develop by leaps and bounds over the last century.

“ Luxemburg showed a special interest in putting before women workers policies that particularly affect them as an integral part of an exploited class ”

We live in a world in which the dystopian has been normalised and in which we continue to pursue the utopia – something which exists nowhere – of peace. Necropolitics, the sovereignty of death – with its associated *slasher* economic system – has taken over and, as Achille Mbembe explains, “the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die. Hence, to kill or to allow to live constitute the limits of sovereignty, its fundamental attributes.” (Mbembe, 2003: 11).

From those “calls for justice and an end to violence” (Butler, 2009: 11) uttered by Luxemburg during the four years of conflict and that would cost her her life in 1919; from those earlier declarations in *Reform or Revolution* (1898) in which she argued that war had been “an indispensable feature of capitalist development” (Luxemburg 1971: 81) and which were then refined and perfected in the arguments of *Pacifist Utopias* (“militarism in both its forms – as war and as armed peace – is a legitimate child, a logical result of capitalism” (Luxemburg 1970: 251)); from then until now, we can see that death capital is on a rising market and that, broadly speaking, Luxemburg’s arguments remain fully valid today:

“(…) the present nations, if they really seriously and honestly wish to call a halt on competitive armaments, would have to begin by disarming in the commercial political field, give up colonial predatory campaigns and the international politics of spheres of influence in all parts of the world – in a word, in their foreign as well as in their domestic politics would have to do the exact contrary of everything which the nature of the present politics of a capitalist class state demands.” (Luxemburg 1970: 251).

“militarism can only be abolished from the world with the destruction of the capitalist class state.” (Luxemburg 1970: 251).

The Socialist leader, who personally suffered the injurability and the vulnerability of the body (Butler, 2009), was thrown into a canal in Berlin without seeing her pacifist eutopia fulfilled. And I say eutopia because if it is true that Peace with a capital P seems to us improbable and unattainable, it is equally true that this is not a longing to be sought in the kingdom of Shambhala, but depends solely on human factors which are diverse but possible and achievable, such as political will, social economy, ~~XX~~ education in values for a culture of peace, real equality between women and men, reparation for victims, reconciliation of opposing parties, the recovery of historical memory, dialogue, mediation... It's true that it's a long list. Perhaps the first thing we should do is ensure that any political, social and economic system has as its centre human dignity and not the precariousness of life. Until this happens, for as long as the industry of death, insecurity and inequality continues to be more profitable than the maintenance of life, capitalism and the war economy will continue to throw thousands of human beings into the canal every day.

1. Alcalde's book sparked a wide ranging debate about Luxemburg, involving Alcalde herself, Maria José Aubet, Lidia Falcón, Marina Subirats and Laura Tremosa. Different contributions were published in volume 9 of the sociology journal *Papers*, in 1978.

2. Correspondence published in *The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg*, edited by Georg Adler, Peter Hudis and Annelies Laschitza.

3. As Sayaka Valencia explains very well in her book *El capitalismo gore* (Slasher capitalism), when she refers to violence as just one more aspect of economics: “Undeniably, the over-specialization of violence has its basis in military techniques and the preparation for war since, as we know, warfare is envisaged as ‘a vast engineering project whose details could, in every important respect, be calculated as precisely as the stress loadings on a dam or the tensile strength requirements for a bridge.’ Thus, one could say that the creative destruction of slasher capitalism can be seen as a discipline based on the forceful and mortal application of technologies of pain to the body; a discipline which admits no moral judgments concerning economic matters”.

4. According to data of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, “The global market for illicit fire-arms is estimated at US\$170-320 million per year”. Furthermore, according to the SIPRI, global military spending in 2013 was \$1,747 billion, “representing 2.4 per cent of global gross domestic product or \$248 for each person alive today.”

Fotografia : Wikimedia Commons

- Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin, 1910. -

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Conscription and Conscience in Great Britain

David Boulton

Journalist

In January 1916 the British government passed a Military Service Act making all single men between 18 and 41 liable to conscription into the army. A second Act extended conscription to married men. Elsewhere in Europe these measures would have been uncontroversial. On the continent, compulsory military service had become a feature of national life, favoured by both the political right and the left. The nationalist right saw it as a weapon against foreign enemies, while the socialist left, particularly powerful in Germany and France, favoured it as creating a “citizens’ army” ready to defend the people against the class enemy at home.

But Britain was different. With grim memories of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century “press gangs”, the belief that military service should never be anything but voluntary had become almost universal. Some within the Conservative party began to espouse conscription during the Boer war, and a National Service League was formed in 1902, ironically arguing that Britain should emulate the “excellent policy” of the Kaiser in strengthening healthy, manly militarism. But the Liberal party, in power from 1906, remained adamantly opposed to any form of compulsion, supported in this by all but one of the forty Labour MPs and the growing socialist movement.

So what caused the 1916 u-turn? First, the early hopes and predictions that the war would be over by Christmas 1914 faded rapidly as the toll of casualties mounted and voluntary recruitment failed to keep pace. When the Conservatives joined the Liberals in an emergency war-time coalition, the pressure for compulsion became intense. An early Conservative proposal was for conscription of “gentlemen only” as an example to the lower classes, described as “the most thoroughgoing example of the rich serving the

poor since Christ first preached the principle". It did not meet with much favour among the rich. But while a popular referendum would certainly have swept any proposals for compulsion into limbo, by late 1915 in political circles it was the conscriptionists who were making the running. Prime Minister Asquith buckled and Britain's first Military Service Act received the Royal Assent on January 27th 1916 with only 38 MPs opposing it.

“ Britain could claim to be the first nation to write the right of conscientious objection into its statutes ”

It was recognised from the start that some exemptions would have to be made for men engaged in vital civilian work such as farming and mining. But as the Bill made its way through Parliament, a small group of MPs led by Arnold Rowntree and Edmund Harvey, both members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), proposed a conscience clause extending exemption to men who could demonstrate a principled objection to military service. Hastily drafted, bitterly fought over and full of ambiguities which would complicate the workings of the Act for the next three years, the clause nevertheless secured a Parliamentary majority, and Britain could claim to be the first nation to write the right of conscientious objection into its statutes.

But how was the genuine conscientious objector to be recognised from the wily slacker and the coward? The Government gave this thankless task to a network of Tribunals appointed in every locality throughout the country. Inevitably, those chosen to judge tender consciences turned out to be the worthy elders of the community: mayors, priests and parsons, and a military representative to see that as few young men as possible slipped through the net. Although empowered to grant absolute exemption from army service, such exemptions were extremely rare. Most applications were either refused outright, or made conditional on the applicant enlisting in a newly-created non-combatant army corps or accepting alternate work in support of the war effort.

The effect of this was to create two classes of objector: those who could conscientiously accept military service in unarmed units where they would not be required to kill, and those whose objection to participation in war, direct or indirect, was absolute. It was of course the absolutists who proved the prickliest thorn in the side of the civil and military authorities. When ordered by the Tribunals into the non-combatant corps they refused to enlist, were arrested, “deemed to be soldiers” whether they liked it or not, refused to obey orders, suffered cruel and degrading treatment in prison or military detention, and in at least 35 cases received death sentences, commuted at the last minute. Nearly a hundred men died as a direct result of army or prison brutality, and many more suffered physical or mental health problems from which they never wholly recovered.

“ Two classes of objector were created; those who could accept a military service where would not be required to kill and those whose objection to participation in war was absolute ”

Between 16,000 and 20,000 men – the number has grown as new research unearths hitherto unrecorded cases – registered as conscientious objectors. Probably more than half of these were members of mainstream churches and fundamentalist sects such as Jehovah’s Witnesses (then known as International Bible Students), Plymouth Brethren and Christadelphians. The single largest religious group was the Quakers (although about a third of Quaker men of military age joined the army voluntarily, (and many more joined the Friends Ambulance Unit). The largest group of those whose objection to war was political rather than religious was the Independent Labour Party (ILP), founded by the socialist pacifist Keir Hardie, who wrote in April 1913: “The workers of the world have nothing to fight each other about. They have no country. Patriotism is for them a term of no meaning.”

But to attempt any sharp differentiation between religious and political objectors is to mistake the nature of the British radical tradition. Many socialists were, like Keir Hardie,

Christian socialists, and many young Quakers were members of the ILP. Marxists and Methodists rubbed shoulders in the rolling stream of British nonconformity. Religious and political objection was fully integrated in the brilliantly organised coalition of the No-Conscription Fellowship (N-CF) and the Friends Service Committee, the two-in-one body which tracked every objector, published accounts of ill-treatment and brutality, and incessantly harried the War Office for the release of twice- or thrice-jailed members.

“ To attempt any sharp differentiation between religious and political objectors is to mistake the nature of the British radical tradition ”

The N-CF was led by two ILP men, Fenner Brockway and Clifford Allen, soon joined by the eminent philosopher Bertrand Russell who edited the Fellowship's monthly journal, ironically entitled *The Tribunal*. They were supported by a group of Quaker and suffragist women, most notably Catherine Marshall, an organising genius who ran the campaign when the men were all locked up in prison. The religious/political axis is perhaps best illustrated through comments made by the notoriously atheist Russell, who described his comrades in prison as “vigorous courageous men, full of real religion”. Their joint aim, he added, was “to bring the Kingdom of Heaven on earth – nothing less”.

Their campaign had its lighter moments. When members of the N-CF were prosecuted under the Defence of the Realm Act the prosecutor was a Mr (later Sir) Archibald Bodkin. In a moment of irritation Bodkin complained loudly that “war would become impossible if all men were to have the view that war was wrong”. The N-CF congratulated him on so neat and concise a statement of its own views, and produced posters quoting Bodkin's words, prominently credited to the State prosecutor. This provoked the Government to prosecute the posters, whereupon the N-CF demanded the arrest of Mr Bodkin as author of the subversive words. *The Tribunal* proposed that it was Mr Bodkin's patriotic duty to prosecute himself, and generously offered that, in the event of a conviction, the N-CF would maintain his wife and children while he was in jail. The authorities retired hurt.

When the war ended the N-CF held a final convention attended by 2000 war resisters newly-released from prison or non-combatant service. Clifford Allen told them:

“Every one of us must be only too conscious of how terrible is the comparison between the anguish of those who have died and been mutilated in the war and the test to which we have been subjected... Not one of us would dare to compare our suffering with that of the men who were actually engaged in warfare. Many of them are dead, but we still have the opportunities of life before us. Our lives are forfeit.”

And Bertrand Russell added:

“The N-CF has been completely victorious in its stand for freedom not to kill or to take part in killing. The whole power of the State has not been able to compel members of the N-CF to kill or help in killing. In winning this victory you have won an even greater victory; you have won a victory for the sense of human worth, for the realisation of the value of each individual human soul. It is that, above all, that we must assert and put before the world, that sense that each human soul, each individual growing and living, has within him something sacred, something that must not be warped and destroyed by the imposition of outside forces.”

A century later, that's a message we should still be shouting from the rooftops.

***David Boulton is the author of *Objection Overruled: Conscription and Conscience in the First World War* commissioned by Bertrand Russell and first published in 1967 when *The Observer* described it as “destined to become the classic account of the men who fought for the right to say no to war”. A new enlarged and updated edition was published in 2014 and is [available from the Quaker Centre Bookshop, London](#).

Photography : Ben Sutherland / CC / Desaturated.

- *Memorial to conscientious objectors in Tavistock Square, London* -

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“The whole world is our homeland”: Anarchist antimilitarism

Dolors Marín

Historian

Anarchism as a form of human liberation and as a social, cultural and economic alternative is an idea born from the European Illustration. It belongs to the rationalism school of thought that believes in the education of the individual as the essential tool for the transformation of society. The anarchists fight for a future society in which there is no place for the State or authoritarianism, because it is a society structured in small, self-sufficient communities with a deep respect for nature, a concept already present among the utopian socialists. A communitarian (though non necessarily anti-individualistic) basis that will be strengthened by the revolutionary trade unionism who uses direct action and insurrectional tactics for its vindications. On a political level, the anarchists make no distinction between goals and methods, because they consider that the fight is in itself a goal.

In the anarchist denunciation of the modern state's authoritarianism the concepts of army and war are logically present. This denunciation was ever-present in the years when workers internationalism appeared, due to the growth of modern European nationalisms, the independence of former American colonies and the Asian and African context. The urban proletariat and many labourers from around the world become the cannon fodder in these bloodbaths of youth and devastations of large areas of the planet. The workers' protest is hence channelled through its own growing organizations (trade unions, workmen's clubs, benefit societies, etc), with the support and the loudspeaker of abundant pacifist literature that will soon be published in clandestine booklets or pamphlets that circulate on a hand-to-hand basis¹. We can see how anarchist antimilitarism is always linked to antistatism and pacifism, since it fights against the very existence of the military institution – considered one of the pillars of

the modern state. This anarchist antimilitarism has adopted various forms throughout the years, all of them connected to the European and American tradition: conscience objection, draft-dodging, insubordination and, of course, the civil disobedience that went all the way back to Thoreau, Mc Say, Spooner, Tucker, etc.

If we look at the Anarchist Encyclopedia organized by Sebastien Faure in the 1920s in Paris we see that on the subjects of the army, militarism, pacifism, the flag, the fatherland, etc., there are many entries by different authors. Most of them share a concern about war and they always link it to the social problem. Their analysis discards the nationalist or colonial problem, focusing instead on the problem of the inequality between nations. They condemned militarism in two aspects: an army, whatever its size has a chemical arsenal destined to destroy the enemy; and a formidable police force spread out through the territory destined to obtain obedience (through coercion or fear) from the less fortunate strata of society. So, for many anarchists, to transform a society through justice, liberty and social welfare, the extinction of the army was absolutely necessary, since that would bring about the disappearance of “fatherlands” and States due to lack of support. Pacifists were in favour of direct action, proclaiming their belief in “Pacifism but not passivity; a concept expressed by Paul Gille that embodies the beliefs of most of the libertarian thinkers, who did not discard the use of arms in actions of social revolution or in acts of self-defence or disobedience of the armed forces of the State.

“ Anarchist antimilitarism is always linked to antistatism and pacifism, since it fights against the very existence of the military institution ”

The Spanish and Catalan internationalists also shared this antimilitaristic stance and they condemned the bourgeoisie’s satisfaction with the colonial army. In their publications we find articles, verses or essays asking for anti-war position in various sectors of the society. An example is the text by Cels Gomis, an ethnographer, called *A las madres* / “For the mothers” (1887). The idea behind links it to the first French

anarcofeminists and malthusians, like Madaleine Vernet or Maria Huot, who were in favour of women not having children who might be destined to fight in nationalist or colonial wars. This same ideology was behind the creation of the Spanish Unión Progresiva Femenina, like Amalia Domingo Soler and her poem Patria (Fatherland). The inclusion in the syllabus of Ferrer i Guàrdia's Escola Moderna (Modern School) of the book *Pensamientos Antimilitaristas* (Anti-war thoughts), that reflected the aspirations of scientific rationalists of the early 20th century.

Within this social magma that grouped wide sectors of the organized urban proletariat, the antimilitarist sentiment was always present. Specially so when associated to the extremely unpopular "sistema de quintes" (Draft system) that deeply affected the Spanish 20th century, reaching aspects of urban revolt as impressive as those of July 1909 in Barcelona and its surrounding areas, in events that came to be known as the "Setmana Tràgica" (Tragic Week). The cause of the widespread violence was the refusal to send the reservists to the war in Morocco.

So we see that the international anarchist movement presented, from the very beginning, many initiatives in favour of deserting the army. They organized themselves by creating networks to hide the deserters in various countries. On the other hand, the press also helped in making this position known, with writings by left-wing (but not necessarily anarchists) critics, such as Herbert G. Wells, Oscar Wilde, Romain Rolland, Bertran Russell, Jules Verne or the-very popular-Anatole France, who campaigned in favour of peace in their books. The press also gave a wider public to the ideas of Lev Tolstoi, an anarcho-Christian and, of course, Mahatma Gandhi, who defended direct action with his non-violent campaigns of civil disobedience. There was a widespread debate, and in the years before and during the Great War, it became much more intense.

**“ Kropotkin’s pro-Allies position was confronted
against most of the anarchists such as
Malatesta, who supported a working-class
antimilitarism ”**

The most renowned dispute was the one that confronted the Russian geographer Piotr Kropotkin and some of his followers against most of the anarchists in the world, and particularly against the Italian Enrico Malatesta. We find details of Kropotkin's position in the detailed biography that George Woodcock² wrote of him, where he reflects on his pro-Allies position that had a huge impact on the contemporary labour movement. Kropotkin mistrusted the Germans due to the support and protection they had always to the Tsars and he aligned himself with position of Russian exiles in France or England (Bakunin, Herzen, etc...) where they could operate without repression, creating organizations and publishing their works.

Kropotkin published various articles against the German arms race in the months before the First World War, a fact that caused a great confusion in the anarchist camp. It was one of the worse moments in his life because he lost many beloved friends, among them, Malatesta. The most remarkable incident took place among the "Llibertat" group. Most of its members disagreed with Kropotkin but-making use of their principle of non-coercion of personal liberties-they published his text in the *Freedom* newspaper. In October 1914 a letter was published, addressed to professor Steffen from Norway, in which the Russian geographer defends his pro-Ally stance and he attacks the antimilitarism of the working classes. He published two more similar articles.

The reaction in the form of article and letters of protest did not take long and they were also published. In one of them Malatesta says: "In fact, Kropotkin is now against antimilitarism because he considers that national issues have to be solved before the social ones. We think the national rivalries and hatreds are the best weapon that the owners have to perpetuate the slavery of the workers, and we have to oppose them with all our might. As far as the right of small nationalities to preserve, if such was their wish, their language and traditions, it is only a question of liberty and it will only be solve once and forever when, once the States have been destroyed, every human being, every individual, will have the right to associate with any group whenever he wants (...) I never could've even dreamed that Kropotkin could invite the workers to do common cause with the governments and the wealthy".

The dispute continued around *Freedom*, which had been founded by Kropotkin himself. He was deeply enraged and, although gravely ill, he decided to sever his links with the

publication, which continued to be antimilitaristic. The Russian anarchist was supported by Jean Grave, Carlo Malato i Paul Reclus (son of Élisée, and also a geographer).

“ The antimilitaristic libertarians could only admit one kind of war, the war of liberation by the oppressed against the oppressors ”

In 1916, with the war raging on, the French agitator Jean Grave visited Kropotkin in Brighton and together they wrote the Manifesto of the Sixteen, in which they defended war. It was signed by convinced anarchists, like Guérin, Cherkezof, Malato, Reclus, Cornelissen... up to 15³. The text was published in *La Bataille Syndicaliste* and, significantly, the old fighter James Guillaume, who had sometimes manifested himself in favour of war, did not sign it. In Spain, Ricardo Mella gave support to Kropotkin's position.

An answer did not take long to appear, from the majority of European and American anarchism. The already mentioned Enrico Malatesta and Alexander Shapiro, elected in the Assembly of the Anarchist International in 1907, signed a declaration. They were joined by Domela Nieuwenhuis, Emma Goldman, Berkman, Bertoni, Ianomvski, Charles Albert, André Colomer, Marcel Dieu (known as Hem Day), Coatmeur Gerard Hervé and many more. A bit later, Luigi Fabbri, Sebastien Faure, Émile Armand, Han Ryner and others also signed. Rudolf Rocker, even though he was against the war, could not sign because he had been interned. The entire staffs of the main publications also joined the “no to war”, like (the already mentioned) *Freedom*, the American *Mother Earth*, the French *Le Libertaire* and all the individualists clustered around the-also French-newspaper *L'Unique*.

It is also worth mentioning that in April 1915, In Ferrol, Galicia, an International Congress for Peace had been held, promoted by the CNT and held in the Trade Union's Athenaeum. The followers of the position of *Freedom*, spearheaded by Malatesta, collaborated in the

congress: Eusebi Carbó, Àngel Pestaña, Antonio Loredó, Mauro Bajatierra, José López, Bouza, and many more. Despite the government's prohibition, the detention of working class militants and the deportations of foreigners, two sessions were celebrated with the intervention of delegates from Spain, France, Argentina and Brazil.

Among many other reasonings, the antimilitaristic libertarians said they could only admit one kind of war, the war of liberation “by the oppressed against the oppressors, the exploited against the exploiters”, to promote “the spirit of rebellion” and fight against any form of authority, with the state as its most significant embodiment.

1. There is not enough space in this article to quote the various sources where the internationalists reject the actions of the military and the explicit calls for desertion and the abandonment of arms.

2. Woodcock, G. i Avakumović I. *The anarchist prince: A biographical study of Peter Kropotkin*, New York: Schocken Books, 1971

3. Even though there only 15 signatures, the text is known as the Manifesto of the Sixteen because initially Hussein Dey was considered another author, when it really is a place name.

Fotografia : Wikimedia Commons

- Anarchist Alexander Berkman speaking in Union Square, NYC 1914 -

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Illusion and vision: the scientific pacifism of Alfred H. Fried

Bernhard Tuidar

Librarian at the Department of Planned Languages and Esperanto Museum, Austrian National Library

“Alfred Hermann Fried had the invaluable gift of ‘common sense’ and straightforward, analytical thinking, the gift of clear conception and a comprehensive, profound vision based on objective information. He was sober without being dry, passionate without exaggerating; his ideas were complex but always directed towards a single center and, thus, mutually reinforced each other. This center, on which he focused all his intellectual and ethical passion, was the idea of world peace. (...) The organization of the international community: that was his achievement before the war. It is his intellectual endeavor – but his human achievement, which makes him so admirable for us as a figure, as a person, only began during the war. Here Alfred Hermann Fried achieved true greatness, historical significance. (...) And no one reading the ‘diary’ and the texts of Alfred H. Fried today will be more ashamed than those who persecuted him with scorn and hatred.”¹

In his recollections of Alfred Hermann Fried, Stefan Zweig did not only praise the qualities of his fellow writer, but also mentioned the “war diary” which Fried regularly published between 1914 and 1919 in the journal “Die Friedens-Warte”. Although Fried had been an outspoken pacifist since the early 1890s he only gained recognition at a relatively late stage. In recognition of his untiring efforts as a pacifist editor, journalist and writer he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1911 and the honorary doctorate of the University of Leiden in 1913; the latter was of particular significance for him, as he saw it as proof of the scientific character of his theory and program.

Alfred Fried was one of the leading international theorists of pacifism in the years leading up to World War I. As international networks, relations and cooperation continued to grow and intensify, he was convinced that a European war would become impossible in the near future. The 25th World Peace Congress in Vienna, which he had prepared together with his closest collaborator Bertha von Suttner and which was to take place in September 1914, was also designed to promote this goal. Therefore, Fried was all the more shocked and saddened when war was declared in the summer of 1914.² In July he still had hopes that the catastrophe could be avoided, but sharing the insights of Jan Gotlib Bloch concerning modern industrial warfare he soon came to fear that the war could turn into a “terrible object-lesson” and go on for a long, indefinite time.³

“ Distancing himself from a purely ethical pacifism, Fried was convinced that the peace movement required a scientific basis ”

In order to continue to publish “Die Friedens-Warte” and to gather information from the Central Powers as well as from the Entente Powers Alfred Fried decided to emigrate and stay in Switzerland while the war lasted. Remarkably, he only began to keep a diary and to publish his notes after the war had broken out. By writing down his thoughts he could get melancholy and depressed feelings off his chest but, even more importantly, he hoped to influence his contemporaries in a pacifist way and to promote his concept of scientific pacifism; for him, the ongoing war was constant proof of its validity. In the preface to the 4-volume edition of his diary (1918) he wrote:

“I wanted to give expression to my feelings, my insights, my fears and my hopes. I wanted to record the events, to discuss them from a pacifist point of view. By tracing the progress of Europe’s fever I wanted to identify the faults of the past and show the path to recovery.”⁴.

In a letter written to David Starr Jordan, peace activist and first President of Stanford University, Alfred Fried made it clear that World War I was merely a demonstration object to explain his pacifist theory:

“This [the war diary] is the work into which I channeled all my efforts in the struggle against the insanity of war. The Great War has little to do with it. It was only a demonstration object, the corpse I used to teach anatomy.”⁵.

“ According to Alfred Fried wars are fundamentally risky, arbitrary acts that can never be humanitarian but can always be avoided ”

Alfred Fried's diary reflects the scientific approach towards pacifism and international relations which he developed at the beginning of the 20th century. Distancing himself from a purely ethical pacifism, he was more and more convinced that the peace movement required a scientific basis to make it impervious to nationalist criticism, to exert a wider influence on the public, and to encourage many more people to support pacifist activities. He presented his theory and program in numerous speeches and articles and summed it up in the monograph “Die Grundlagen des revolutionären Pacifismus”⁶. It became the basis for his perception and interpretation of World War I: in his diary he consistently spoke of scientific pacifism and made an effort to argue for peace from an analytical perspective.

According to Alfred Fried wars are fundamentally risky, arbitrary acts that can never be humanitarian but can always be avoided. They are not worthwhile under any circumstances because their progress and eventual end can never be foreseen, and compared to the alleged success they cause far too much suffering, disease, injury and death.⁷ Hence, he did not only seek to erase the unpleasant consequences but to eliminate the causes of war altogether and to preclude warlike operations by fostering international understanding and by forming an intergovernmental organization: two

crucial elements of his concept that are still relevant for peaceful policies today.

In his peace program, which he considered an open road map, a work in progress, Alfred Fried mainly focused on peace between countries. He called for developing international traffic and facilitating international interaction at all levels: by bringing international law in line with the development of international traffic, and by adopting policies that reflected the changes in international law. In short, he appealed for improved political, humanitarian and legal instruments and for a speedy process of demilitarizing and ‘civilizing’ all internal and external affairs in order to overcome and stop war.⁸

**“ Fried appealed for improved political,
humanitarian and legal instruments and for a
speedy process of demilitarizing ”**

Fried’s scientific pacifism met with mixed reactions by his contemporaries: many agreed with him, many didn’t. The most positive reaction was the fact that many people who had not been concerned with pacifism before now became interested in the peace movement. Among them were members of the Social Democratic Party as well as experts on international law. The most prominent experts influenced by Alfred Fried in Germany were Hans Wehberg and Walther Schücking, who used Fried’s publications in his lectures on international law.⁹

In the short term, though, Alfred Fried’s pacifist ambitions remained rather illusory, as the Treaty of Versailles did not implement the program he had advocated for so many years. However, after World War II many of his visions concerning peaceful conflict resolution – primarily in Europe – and intergovernmental organizations became reality with the establishment of the United Nations Organization and the unification process of the European Union, even though under circumstances he could not have foreseen.

1. “Alfred H. Fried hatte die unschätzbare Gabe des ‘Common sense’, des geradeaus und nicht in Winkelzügen Denkens, die Gabe der klaren Konzeption, der weiten, durch sachliche Bildung immer vertieften Übersicht. Er war nüchtern ohne Trockenheit,

leidenschaftlich ohne jede Übertreibung, seine Ideen komplex, aber immer auf ein einheitliches Zentrum gerichtet und darum sich wechselseitig verstärkend. Dieses Zentrum, dem seine ganze geistige und moralische Leidenschaft sich zuwandte, war die Idee des Weltfriedens. (...) Die Organisation der Völkergemeinschaft, das war seine Tat vor dem Kriege. Sie stellt sein geistiges Werk dar – seine menschliche Tat aber, sie, die ihn uns als Gestalt, als Erscheinung so bewundernswert macht, begann erst mit dem Kriege. Hier hat Alfred H. Fried wirkliche Größe, historische Bedeutsamkeit erreicht. (...) Und niemand wird heute das ‚Tagebuch‘ und die Schriften Alfred H. Frieds mit größerer Beschämung lesen, als eben jene, die damals mit Hohn und Haß hinter ihm hergehetzt haben.“ Stefan Zweig: Alfred Hermann Fried. In: Rudolf Goldscheid (ed.): Alfred H. Fried. Geb. 11 Nov. 1864, gest. 4. Mai 1921. Eine Sammlung von Gedenkblättern. Leipzig 1922, 76-78.

2. Alfred Hermann Fried: Aus meinem Kriegstagebuch (Bruchstücke). In: Die Friedens-Warte 1914, Jg. 16, Nr. 8/9, 282-283.

3. Fried: Aus meinem Kriegstagebuch (Bruchstücke). In: Die Friedens-Warte 1914, Jg. 16, Nr. 8/9, 282-283.

4. “Ausdruck verleihen wollte ich meinen Empfindungen, meiner Erkenntnis, meinen Befürchtungen und Hoffnungen. Die Ereignisse wollte ich festhalten, sie vom pazifistischen Gesichtspunkt aus erörtern, am Krankheitsverlauf des fiebernden Europas die Fehler der Vergangenheit klarlegen und den Weg zur Genesung weisen.” Alfred Hermann Fried: Mein Kriegs-Tagebuch. Das erste Kriegsjahr (7. August 1914 bis 28. Juli 1915) (= Sammlung Europäische Bücher). Zürich 1918, VIII.

5. Letter: Alfred H. Fried to David Starr Jordan, 30.10.1920. League of Nations Archives, International Peace Movements, Fried Papers Box 88. “Es ist dies [das Kriegs-Tagebuch] das Werk, in das ich meinen ganzen Kampf gegen den Wahnsinn des Krieges konzentriert habe. Der Weltkrieg hat eigentlich damit wenig zu tun. Er war nur Demonstrationsobjekt, die Leiche an der ich Anatomie docierte.”

6. Alfred Hermann Fried: Die Grundlagen des revolutionären Pacifismus, Tübingen 1908. Besides “revolutionärer Pazifismus” the theory and program was also named “ursächlicher Pazifismus”, “organisatorischer Pazifismus” and “wissenschaftlicher

Pazifismus”.

7. Fried: Mein Kriegs-Tagebuch. Das erste Kriegsjahr, 25.8.1914. Alfred Hermann Fried:
Mein Kriegs-Tagebuch. Das vierte Kriegsjahr und der Friede von Versailles (1. August 1917
bis 30. Juni 1919) (= Sammlung Europäische Bücher). Zürich 1920, 28.6.1918.

8. Alfred Hermann Fried: Die Grundlagen des ursächlichen Pazifismus. Zürich 1916, 61-62.

9. Bernhard Tuider: Alfred Hermann Fried. Pazifist im Ersten Weltkrieg. Illusion und
Vision. Saarbrücken 2010, 60-61.

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- *Portrait of Alfred Hermann Fried* -

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IN DEPTH

The Practical Internationalism of Esperanto

Xavier Alcalde

International Catalan Institute for Peace

“The Esperantists from around the world who went to France to attend the 10th World Congress of Esperanto, in Paris, and who, once there, witnessed the war invasion and experienced the hardship and misery of that tragic retreat by road and rail; those of us who went to France to sing pacifist songs and were answered by cannons; (...) those of us who, refusing to abandon our ideals, locked ourselves up in cellars lacking light and air, we must inevitably be Esperantists.”

Josep Prat i Bonet¹

At the beginning of the 20th century, the rise of nationalism among European powers on the one hand and the need for the internationalization of scientific research on the other had situated the debate about the auxiliary language among the main issues of the international agenda. It was a debate related to the intellectual dilemmas of the time that went from scientific to spiritual issues, from national or ethnic identity to the so-called Jewish problem and, especially, the possibility of peace in international relations.²

According to a contemporary sociological study, if there was something that characterized a large part of a movement as diverse and plural as the Esperantist movement, it was its pacifist nature. In this respect, it is no exaggeration to say that, had it taken place, the World Congress of Paris in 1914 would have been the largest

gathering of pacifists in all of history.³ But war broke out and Esperantists had to adapt to the new situation and perform various tasks either through the press, through humanitarian actions or in pacifist organizations.

“ The 1914 World Congress of Esperanto in Paris would have been the largest gathering of pacifists in all of history ”

First of all, they informed of ongoing developments through their periodical publications, often from positions that were close to pacifism. One particular case was *Internacia Bulteno*, a periodical that was first published in November 1914 to inform about the war from the official point of view of the German government. Its objective was to counteract English, French and Russian propaganda about German cruelty as well as to criticize the evil deeds of its adversaries. Meanwhile, given the difficulties that periodicals in Esperanto were experiencing in most of the countries of the Triple Entente and its allies, the debate on the neutrality of the international language was taking place in the pages of *The British Esperantist*. It was also in this magazine where Zamenhof published his famous *Call to Diplomats*, to those destined to rebuild Europe after the Great War.⁴

The humanitarian action carried out by the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA) is also worth mentioning. At the time, its head office was in neutral Switzerland. From Geneva and under the leadership of Hector Hodler, it reported on Esperantist prisoners on both sides with new sections in its periodical like “Our dead” or “Esperantist prisoners of war”.⁵ In this mediating role between citizens from enemy countries, UEA volunteers, in collaboration with the International Red Cross, collected hundreds of letters and other private correspondence through their network of local representatives and sent them to their addressees every day.⁶ They also helped trace people, distribute food, clothes and medicines, and repatriate prisoners of war. It is estimated that the total number of these services could have exceeded 100,000 a year.⁷

Apart from Esperantist associations, we can find many supporters of the international language among the leaders of the main pacifist currents of the time: scientific pacifism, feminist pacifism, religious pacifism and proletarian internationalism. With respect to the intellectual world, Nobel Peace Laureate Alfred Fried, co-publisher together with Bertha von Suttner of the journal *Die Waffen Nieder!* ("Lay Down Your Arms!"); and Henri La Fontaine, co-creator of the Universal Decimal Classification and president of the International Peace Bureau (IPB); the painter Felix Moscheles, godson of the musician Felix Mendelssohn and president of the International Arbitration and Peace Association; Gaston Moch, fervent defender of Alfred Dreyfus in what is known today as the Dreyfus Affair and president of the International Peace Institute in Monaco; or journalist William T. Stead, who was very active in the peace conferences of The Hague and who died in the shipwreck of the Titanic two years before the beginning of the Great War.⁸

“ We can find numerous supporters of the international language among the leaders of the main pacifist currents of the time: scientific pacifism, feminist pacifism, religious pacifism and proletarian internationalism ”

As for pacifist and anti-militarist feminism, we shall mention, by way of example, Sylvie Flammarion, who led the Women's Association for Peace and Disarmament, which merged with other organizations to form the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in 1915. Another prominent figure was the Quaker Priscilla Peckover, who was also a member of the IPB. And the fact is that, at this time, both the WILPF and the IPB defended the use of Esperanto for their correspondence and international meetings. Regarding the relationship between feminism and Esperanto, Roberto Garvía has noted the (relatively) high number of women interested in the international language.⁹

From a religious perspective, the Esperanto movement of the time reflected the universalist message of the language, with ideas close to ecumenism and interfaith dialogue. These proposals were ahead of their time and were in contrast to official Catholicism. In this regard, a fundamental figure was Émile Peltier, an advocate from the journal *Espero Katolika* of what, years later, theorists like Joan Botam would call macro-ecumenism.¹⁰ German priest Josef Metzger was another person who was active in Catholic ecumenism and thus at odds with the Church hierarchy of the time. He founded various organizations such as the World Peace League of the White Cross, an international Catholic organization created in 1916 that used Esperanto as a working language. Metzger later confronted the Nazi regime and was executed in 1944.

Esperanto was also strongly promoted in the conscientious objection movement, and, as a result, many prominent supporters of the international auxiliary language spent the war years behind bars. One of them was the Slovak doctor and writer Albert Škarvan, a follower and friend of one of the main leaders of Esperantist pacifism: Leo Tolstoy. Due to his opposition to military service, Škarvan was arrested on several occasions, the last time in 1915, and he would remain in prison until the end of the World War. Fenner Brockway, who would later become the first president of War Resisters' International (WRI), was also in jail at the time.¹¹

Finally, the Workers' Esperanto Movement is worth mentioning, together with its most prominent figure, Eugène Adam, known as *Lanti*. Lanti was a radical pacifist who sympathized with the anarchist movement and who had learned the international language while serving in an ambulance unit during the war. And it would also be an anarchist, Ángel Pestaña, a follower of Malatesta's anti-militarist position and one of the organizers of the 1915 International Peace Congress of El Ferrol, who would propose, in the context of the Third International, that every delegate should speak in the language that they felt more comfortable in and that there should be only one translation to the international auxiliary language. This proposal would not succeed.¹²

But the debate about neutrality and pacifism regarding the war went beyond the labor movement. Many Esperantists were conscripted and many died in the conflict.¹³ Among those who fought were the aforementioned Gaston Moch and also one of the main Catalan Esperantists, Frederic Pujulà i Vallès, who, like many others, was in Paris at the

outbreak of the war. While Pujulà was fighting with the army, his wife Germaine Rebours, who had been the secretary of the Fifth World Congress of Esperanto (Barcelona, 1909) wrote articles like “Women in War,” in the periodical *El Poble Català*. In this article, she proposed the creation of a war godmother program (similar to one that already existed in France) where these women would take the place of the mother, sister or friend that could not be with the soldier at the front.¹⁴

In the meantime, the war raged on and in April 1917 the Esperantist movement suffered an irreparable loss with the death of Zamenhof, creator of the international language. Affected by the consequences of a militarist environment that hit close to home (a few months earlier, his younger brother Alexander had committed suicide)¹⁵, he would not live to see how most of his descendents perished in the Treblinka extermination camp. However, not everything was bad news. Indeed, violence stirs consciences and new projects can emerge from the ashes of destruction.

At the end of the war, a series of conferences took place in Bilthoven (Holland) that would be vital to the future of international pacifism.¹⁶ Three institutions that still exist today were created: the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Service Civil International and the aforementioned WRI. The latter was originally called *Paco* (which means peace in Esperanto) and continued using the international language as one of its working languages for many decades.¹⁷

“ At this time, Esperantist action was defined as practical internationalism, focusing on its humanitarian dimension ”

At this time, Esperantist action was defined as practical internationalism, focusing on its humanitarian dimension. Esperantists from the Austrian region of Styria, for example, put out a desperate call to their comrades from other countries to temporarily take in children who were suffering deprivation in the tough post-war period. In the end, three hundred Austrian children were taken in by Spanish families and some of them

stayed to live in Spain permanently.¹⁸

It is estimated that a total of over 35 million people died as a result of a war that also dealt a severe blow to universalist ideals such as those of Esperanto. Subsequently, the interwar period would provide new prosperity to Esperanto, both at an official level (the debates in this respect that took place at the League of Nations are worth mentioning)¹⁹, and in the labor movement. But that is another story to be told on another occasion.

1. Josep Prat i Bonet (Berga 1894, Córdoba (Argentina), 1936) was a Catalan who became a pioneer of the Argentinean Esperantist movement. In Argentina he was also a pro-Catalan leader (he was a founding member of the *Orfeo Català* and a very active member of the *Casal Català* of Buenos Aires), as well as a trade unionist. See article by Prat, Patricia (2014). “Vaganta Hirundo. Omaĵoj vortoj honore de Josefo Prat i Bonet, pioniro de Esperanto en Argentino” *Almanako Lorenz* 2014. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, p. 133.

2. One of the studies that best demonstrates the relevance of the movement for an international auxiliary language in the first decades of the 20th century is Garvía, Roberto (2015). *Esperanto and Its Rivals: The Struggle for an International Language*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

3. This statement is based on three premises. First, already in the 1913 World Congress of Esperanto in Bern, Switzerland, most of the discussions tackled the issues of peace and war. See Künzli, Andreas (2014). “La 9a Universala Kongreso de Esperanto en Berno” *La Gazeto* 169, p. 7-16. See also Van Dik, Ziko (2012). *Historio de UEA*. Vitazna, Eslovàquia: Espero; b) Second, the total number of registered participants was 3,739, three times more than in Bern; c) Third, according to the data gathered in the mentioned contemporary research, at least 30% of the Esperantists of the time had learned the language because they associated it with pacifist values. See Reuben A. Tanquist (1927). *A Study of the Social Psychology of the Diffusion of Esperanto with Special Reference to the English Speaking Peoples*. M.A. thesis, University of Minnesota (cited in Garvía 2015: chapter 12). See also Rašić, Nikola. (1994). *La rondo familia. Sociologiaj esploroj en Esperantio*. Pisa: Edistudio. The reader interested in a comparative analysis with the number of participants in peace conferences of that time can find extensive data in Shenton, Herbert N. (1933). Cosmopolitan conversation: the language problems of

international conferences. New York: Columbia University Press.

4. See Guerrero, Javier (2015). “La premsa en esperanto durant la primera guerra mundial” *Kataluna Esperantisto* 362/363, pp. 11-12.

5. UEA had been founded in 1908 by Edmond Privat – who would become a close friend of Romain Rolland and Gandhi – and Hector Hodler. For a detailed analysis of Hodler’s action at the forefront of UEA see chapter 2 of Lins, Ulrich (2008). *Utila estas aliĝo* Rotterdam: Universala Esperanto-Asocio. Also Künzli has examined Hodler’s role as a theorist of pacifism. See Künzli, Andreas (2013). *Milito kaj paco laŭ Hector Hodler*

6. It should be noted that the Red Cross distributed thousands of copies of various publications in Esperanto. Among them, one containing detailed vocabulary with the translation to the international language of the main medical terms in different languages, intended for those who, in times of war, had to give or receive aid in ambulances and hospitals. See Lavarenne, Christian (2012). *Esperanto: Son idée interne dans ses origines et quelques-unes de ses expressions et manifestations*. Ph.D. thesis in History. University of Paris 13. See also Rodríguez, José María (1996), “The Esperantist Movement’s humanitarian activities in the two World Wars and its relationship with the International Red Cross” *International Review of the Red Cross* 312, pp. 315-322.

7. Jakob, Hans (1958). “La help-agado de UEA 1914-1918”, *Esperanto* 51. Pàg. 55-57. (cited in Lins 2008, p. 66). See also Lins, Ulrich (2000). “The work of the Universal Esperanto Association for a more peaceful world”. *Esperanto Documents* 45 A. Rotterdam: UEA, p. 7. Similarly, the Christian youth association YMCA distributed thousands of books to learn Esperanto among the imprisoned soldiers on both sides. See Privat, Edmond (1927). *Historio de la lingvo esperanto. Parto. 2 La movado 1900-1927*. Ferdinand Hirt & Sohn: Leipzig, p. 95-96. It should be noted that the years spent in prison were a particularly appropriate time for the dissemination of the international language since it allowed for people who did not share a common language to understand each other in a very short time. There were even periodicals in Esperanto published in prison, as in Rennbahn, Germany. See Lavarenne (op. cit.).

8. Other pacifist intellectuals and advocates of the international language include the Nobel Laureate in Medicine Charles Richet, the Nobel Laureate in Chemistry Wilhelm

Ostwald and psychiatrist Auguste Forel. All of them, as well as many of the examples mentioned of scientific pacifism, feminist pacifism, and religious pacifism, are dealt with in more detail in chapter 13 of Garvía (op. cit.). In addition, Hèctor Alòs, in the introduction of Catalan Esperantists: Pacifists in a Globalised World (ICIP Working Papers 2012/03) includes other prominent figures such as Paul Berthelot, Jean Jaurès and Julia Isbrücker. Possibly Gaston Moch was the one who worked the most to strengthen the link between pacifism and Esperantism. See Bourrelrier, Paul-Henri (2008). “Gaston Moch, polytechnicien combattant de la paix”. *Annales des Mines – Réalités industrielles* 2008/3, p. 48-61.

9. In this regard, several contemporaries stressed the “effeminate character of the movement: more emotional than rational, and lacking in virile values such as patriotism or militarism” (Garvía op. cit.: p. 97).

10. “It makes us happy to see that socialists, as well as Jews, Protestants and Masons have their own [Esperantist] periodicals. We will go even further. We will open our periodical to everyone. To be fair, we do not believe that we possess the universal truth, and [therefore] we are prepared to concede that people whose religious ideas diverge from ours can teach us many things.” *Espero Katolika I* (1903), cited in Garvía (op. cit.: p. 190).

11. In his autobiography, Brockway recounts that, while in isolation, he was only allowed to have one book at a time and that, for a period of time, it was an edition of the New Testament in Esperanto. See Brockway, Fenner (1977). *Towards Tomorrow: The Autobiography of Fenner Brockway*. London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, p. 54. Not far from the UK, another Esperantist who was supportive of the objection of consciousness was assassinated during the Easter Rising in 1916. His name was Francis Sheehy-Skeffington and he was a friend of James Joyce and a follower of the pacifist and feminist ideas of T. W. Stead. See Levenson, Leah (1983). *With Wooden Sword: a portrait of Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, militant pacifist*. Boston: Northeastern University Press. The relationship between this Irish journalist, mentioned by Leah (op. cit.: p. 13), was confirmed by Christopher Fettes – disciple of the politician and professor Owen Sheehy-Skeffington, Francis’ son – in a personal communication with the author of this article on 31 July 2015 in Lille, France.

12. See del Barrio, Toño (2009) “Anarkiisto proponis Esperanton al la komunista internacion” *Sennaciulo* 05/06, n-ro 1247-1248. On another front, a study about the relationship between anarchism and the international auxiliary language in Spain can be found in chapter 2 of Marin, Dolors (2010). *Anarquistas: un siglo de movimiento libertario en España*. Barcelona: Ariel.

13. An example is Tivadar Soros (father of George Soros), who recounted his experiences in Siberia as a prisoner of war in *Modernaj Robinzonoj*. New York: Mondial 1999 [1923]. Hungarian writer Julio Baghy also wrote his main works precisely during his years of captivity in Siberia.

14. See chapter 6 of Maria Marchese’s thesis “*Visca França, Visca Catalunya!*” *La Catalogna durante la Prima Guerra mondiale: una prospettiva di genere*. University of Naples.

15. Alexander Zamenhof would have decided to end his life because of the atrocities and the cruelty of the war. See Banet-Fornalowa, Zofia (2000). *La familio Zamenhof*. La Chaux-de-Fonds: Kooperativo de Literatura Foiro.

16. One of the most active participants of these conferences was the aforementioned Josef Metzger. See Prasad, Devi (2005). *War Is a Crime Against Humanity: The Story of War Resisters’ International*. London: War Resisters’ International, p. 89.

17. See Prasad, Op. Cit., pp. 89, 95, 143 and 478.

18. See Cortès, Lurdes (2011). “Els nens austríacs acollits a Osona (1920-1923)”. AUSA, XXV (167), p. 209-247.

19. See report by Under Secretary-General of the League of Nations, Inazo Nitobe: *Esperanto and the Language Question at the League of Nations*, (1921).

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Book

***The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism 1918-1924*, by Bruno Cabanes**

The aftermath of the First World War resulted in the most turbulent postwar period the world had ever seen. The survivors of what was then known as the Great War were not only those who had fought and been physically or mentally injured, but also the stateless, the children who had suffered the consequences of the war, as well as the victims of the Russian famine of 1921-1923. This situation led to a rethinking of what was until then a very precarious humanitarianism. The challenges facing international society necessitated the reformulation of humanitarian aid, moving from a national to a transnational level, in order to obtain effective responses.

The subject proposed by Bruno Cabanes in this book is precisely an analysis of that transformational moment in the long development of humanitarianism. The author does not analyze the subject from the point of view of the evolution of human rights, but rather as a historian of the First World War and the transition from war to peace. Cabanes focuses on the relationship between humanitarian practice and humanitarian narrative, and in the defense of human rights, which underwent an increasing reformulation during this period. Thus, “the redefinition of rights was not a step in the history of rights, but a key moment in shaping attitudes and values –the pacification of minds and the progressive restoration of peaceful relationships with former enemies.” (page 10).

As for the structure of the book, the author examines the actions of five remarkable activists –René Cassin and Albert Thomas from France, Fridtjof Nansen from Norway,

Herbert Hoover from the US, and Eglantyne Jebb from England- to explain the transformation of humanitarianism during the interwar period. These people understood that a new type of transnational organization was needed to deal with problems that went beyond national boundaries and rivalries between factions. On the one hand, they promoted human rights and, at the same time, their actions helped clarify the redefinition of these rights in the postwar period.

René Cassin defended the rights of war victims, first from the perspective of veteran associations and later at the League of Nations. Albert Thomas promoted a reform of international labor law from the International Labor Office, one of the few institutions created as part of the Treaty of Versailles that still exist today. Fridtjof Nansen, High Commissioner for Refugees of the League of Nations, created a passport originally intended for refugees of the Russian Civil War in 1922 that revolutionized the status of stateless persons. Herbert Hoover organized the two biggest humanitarian operations of the first quarter of the century: he provided aid to Belgium and the countries of Central Europe during the war, and also during the period of Russia's Great Famine in 1921-1923. Finally, Eglantyne Jebb founded the "Save the Children Fund" in 1919, mobilizing public opinion in Britain in support of Austrian and German children who were suffering the consequences of the Allied blockade after the war; her actions led the League of Nations to adopt the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1924.

The book is therefore a review of a "constituent" moment in international humanitarianism, and, at the same time, an empirical example of how these profound transformations are produced thanks in part to specific people. These individuals are capable of transcending reality to visualize a better future and thus obtain improvements of great importance in the international system. In short, Bruno Cabanes, a pioneer in the study of the aftermath of war and an Associate Professor in the Department of History at Yale University, shows us how and when the right to human dignity became inalienable.

Book

***World Without War: How U.S. Feminists and Pacifists Resisted World War I*, by Frances H. Early**

In this book Frances H. Early traces the history of feminist peace activism and the civil liberties movement in the United States through the lives of the people who participated with the New York Bureau of Legal Advice. Created in 1917 by Charles Recht and Frances M. Witherspoon, with funding from the Woman's Peace Party, the Bureau was the first organization to offer free legal advice to people who refused to participate in projects related to U.S. participation in World War I. Conscientious objectors, political prisoners and "foreign enemies" found a support tool to confront American war policies.

Frances M. Witherspoon was an important activist in the feminist peace movement against World War I and she participated in the founding of humanitarian and anti-militaristic organizations such as the War Resisters League, in the first half of the 20th century. The Czech-born attorney, poet and linguist, Charles Recht, was a conscientious objector and participated in the defense of many radical activists facing deportation. From 1921 to 1933 he served as the official representative of the Soviet Union's interests in the United States.

The importance of this book lies in the author's interpretation of gender relations within the peace movement of the time. In a militarized environment where the dominating cultural image was that of a male warrior and a female caregiver, the Bureau turned things around to deconstruct this reality. Women occupied leadership positions and conscientious objectors became the center of pacifist thought. This gave rise to the creation of a culture of peace as a new way of reflecting on and viewing the world through a criticism of the patriarchic system, seen as inherent to the state and to war.

The author is a Professor in the History Department of Mount Saint Vincent University, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She specializes in historical research on the interaction between gender, war and peace.

Book

War Resisters' International

War Resisters' International (WRI) is one of the most important pacifist and anti-militarist organizations in the world. It was founded in 1921 in Bilthoven, Netherlands, in the aftermath of World War I. It was originally called *Paco*, which means *peace* in the international auxiliary language Esperanto. Its founding declaration, which remains

unchanged, states: “War is a crime against humanity. I am therefore determined not to support any kind of war and to strive for the removal of all causes of war.” The organization’s current chair is Christine Schweitzer from Germany.

Devi Prasad (1921-2011), the author of the book we are reviewing, was a nonviolent Indian activist who was very close to Gandhi. He graduated from Shantiniketan, the university founded by Rabindranath Tagore, and held various positions in WRI – among them, general secretary and chair in the 1960s and 70s. He is therefore someone who knows the ins and outs of the organization, as well as the various pacifist ideas that have influenced it over the years.

The book has two parts. In the first part, the author discusses the reasons for anti-militarism and the origins of nonviolence up until World War I. He specifically focuses on various religious denominations, as well as pioneering organizations such as the International Peace Bureau (IPB) or the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). In the compilation of prominent pacifists offered by Devi Prasad, one of the most renowned individuals mentioned is Russian writer Leo Tolstoy. This part ends with a fundamental chapter that deals with compulsory military service and the opposition to it that arose in various countries, mainly in Europe, but also in America, Africa and Asia. And it is this chapter that connects with the founding of WRI.

The second part of the book is very detailed and explores the evolution of WRI from its origins to the 1970s. It covers more than fifty years of actions, anecdotes and experiences, including various historical contexts such as World War II or the Cold War. Finally, a number of appendices complete the book, including key documents in the history of WRI, as well as various high-definition photos (almost eighty). Particularly worth mentioning are those of the international campaign in support of Spain’s first conscientious objector, Pepe Beunza.

In short, an essential book for anyone interested not only in the history of anti-militarism, but also in the reasons for pacifism and nonviolence, which are as valid today as they were in 1921.

Films

Anti-war films about World War I

Anti-war cinema has demonstrated many times throughout its history why it is an art form. Here we present two well-known films that deserve recognition for their qualities. Besides, they share curious similarities: both were based on true stories, banned for some time and are deeply anti-war.

Films

***Paths of Glory*, by Stanley Kubrick**

The irrational savagery of war is brutally reflected in this film by the American director. A French attempt to conquer a hill ends in failure and the generals want to blame the soldiers, who, in the end, are found guilty. This event really happened and two of the families of those found guilty managed to have them rehabilitated. Humphrey Cobb later wrote the novel of the same name and, in 1956, Kubrick made the film. In Spain, the film was not screened until thirty years later because of its high anti-war content.

Films

***La Grande Illusion (Grand Illusion)*, by Jean Renoir**

Premiering in 1937, *La Grande Illusion* was promoted as “a film about the war where you don’t see any fighting or spying.” And, in fact, it was an atypical film for that time. Renoir made it as a criticism of the military spirit that led to World War II and that impregnated some of the films of that time period. The director himself talks about it in a [video](#) made as an introduction.

Diametrically opposed to Kubrick in his film, Renoir preferred to make a much more subtle criticism of war. In the middle of the conflict, several French officers establish a relationship with German officers in their prisoner-of-war camp. Preserving social class ties, the captains on both sides, who are aristocrats, quickly forge links –Erich von Stroheim’s performance as a German officer is particularly noteworthy. Thus the film successfully demonstrates that relationships between people are more important than their sense of national identity and that class is more important when forging bonds with others.

TRIBUNA

100 years after the genocide: Armenia at the crossroads

Jordi de Miguel Capell

Journalist

The first 1, a sharp-edged sword; the 9, a rope with a noose; the other 1, a rifle pointing to the sky; the 5, an axe over an Ottoman saber: 1915. It's April in Yerevan and one expects to find all kinds of posters recalling the massacre, but none this crude. The first entry in my notebook: "What can be built from a pain this great? What insurmountable obstacles does it entail?"

During the weeks prior to the centennial, the media redirected their attention to the forgotten Armenia. Most of them followed the trace of pain printed on the Yerevan poster; others, the international repercussions of Pope Francis's condemnation or the declarations of countries such as Austria or Germany, which, at the last minute, joined the short list of 26 states that recognize the first genocide of the 20th century. Like many other colleagues, a team of journalists from Contrast traveled to the country drawn by the persistent memory of its people, but also determined to go a bit further. We asked ourselves, and continue to ask ourselves, how this memory interacts with the identity and the future of a country permanently located at a multitude of crossroads. The final objective: to generate a debate which, while essential for Armenia, can inspire other realities.

“ It seems as though there are two Armenias: the one that bears and struggles with the heavy

burden of a gloomy and maladroitness present, and the one that gains momentum in order to turn memory into a demand for justice. ”

Geostrategy and peace

The first crossroads the country encounters is historical and can be measured in square kilometers. Armenia is a small state of three million people which, while retaining only a fraction of its original territory, still maintains the same geostrategic importance that has led it to be continuously invaded by neighboring empires (Ottoman, Persian, Russian, etc.) throughout its history. To the west, the border is closed. The Turkish state is still the great ally of Western powers in the region, which explains the lack of support for the cause to gain recognition of the genocide perpetrated by the government of the Young Turks between 1915 and 1923. Every year, President Erdogan expresses “sorrow” for the death of thousands of Armenians “in the context” of the First World War but, along the lines of his predecessors – and shared by countries like the US, Spain or Israel – does not recognize the existence of a planned massacre as such. Meanwhile, to the east and southeast of Armenia, Azerbaijan has been on the warpath since 1991, when the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which has cultural and historical Armenian roots, proclaimed its independence in the midst of an escalating war between the two countries. Despite the ceasefire signed in 1994, the trickle of soldiers killed at the border of this de facto state, unrecognized by any other state in the international community, is continuous and nothing suggests that it will end anytime soon – quite the opposite. The death toll has increased considerably over the past few years (34 in 2012, 72 in 2014) and the situation is still at a stalemate. Perhaps it is time to listen to local organizations like Peace Dialogue that have been working for years to disseminate peace culture in the region.

The landless flower

The second crossroads is temporary and has to do with the geostrategic crossroads and the direction the country wants to follow in the short term. During the fifteen days we were there, we were able to understand how the economic crisis Armenia is in does not

only call into question its alliances in the region, but also the foundations of its identity. First of all, it calls into question its alliance with Russia. The government of Serzh Sargsyan has strengthened economic and military ties in search of a strong ally, but the move hasn't paid off: the crisis that is already shaking Moscow has hit the weakened Armenia full on. In the last few months, remittances from 200,000 migrant compatriots who work in Russia have decreased (21% of the Armenian economy depends on remittances, 80% of which come from Russia) while the prices of basic services supplied by Russian companies have gone up. Last June, the protests of thousands of people in the streets of Yerevan forced the government to call off a planned 17% electricity rate hike.

“ International recognition of the Armenian genocide is conceived not only as an ethical demand, but also as an opportunity for progress ”

Apart from the passions and phobias aroused by the alliance with the Putin government, the massive emigration triggered by the crisis has spurred, in front of our cameras, another debate: What does Armenia need to recover? Endemic corruption and repatriation policies aimed at the eight million Armenians living outside the country came into play in the debate, but so did the fear of a progressive loss of identity. “It's like pulling a flower from its habitat and taking it somewhere else: it will be subjected to a short life,” historian Gevorg Yazedjian told us at his home. Like him, many members of the diaspora that we interviewed fear that the two-pronged effect of migratory processes and globalized life will cut the roots of a millenary culture that has always been a beacon and a shield in the face of all kinds of danger. Including genocide.

It is difficult to speak with a minimum of authority, and even more so from this simplifying distance, but it would seem that two Armenias soar over the country. One that bears and struggles with the heavy burden of a gloomy and maladroit present, and another one that gains momentum from the past in order to turn memory, not only into

an imperative of identity, but also into a demand for justice. In the eyes of this Armenia, sustained mostly by the families of the survivors who were expelled from the country one hundred years ago, international recognition of the genocide is conceived not only as an ethical demand, but also as an opportunity for progress, since admitting its existence would open the way to a legal return of properties seized by the killers in the massacre of 1915. With this in mind, dozens of Armenian lawyers around the world have for years been collecting the documentation needed for justice to be revived. Only then, they say, will it be possible to make the country a more prosperous and democratic land. The land where the flower must survive.

Photography : Jordi de Miguel Capell - *Poster recalling the massacre in Armenia* -

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TRIBUNA

A bold statement

Miquel Carrillo

Advocacy officer in Àgora Nord Sud

It will soon be the 30th anniversary of the last and probably only time that we were asked for our opinion about what foreign policy we should have as a State. On the 12th of March, 1986, the government of the then Prime Minister Felipe González, following the electoral promise his Socialist Party (PSOE) had made in the first elections it won: it held a referendum to decide if Spain should continue to be part of NATO. You probably know the story because you remember first-hand or because you've heard it for nearly three decades: the "Yes" vote won with a wide margin of 13 percentage points, while the "No" vote won in the Canary Islands, Navarre, The Basque Country and Catalonia.

The socialists tried to justify the U-turn from their initial "OTAN, no entry" in the campaign in 1982 to the "In the best interest of Spain, vote YES" in the wake of the referendum by stating that Spain would never join the military structure of the alliance, that there would be less North American military bases and that Spain would not harbour or permit transit through its territory of any nuclear weapon. Years later, the government of the conservative president José Maria Aznar-despite the incomprehensible abstention of his own party, Alianza Popular-completed the entry into the military structure. He also authorized the entry-with Spain's prior authorization- of nuclear weapons, and the support for American military bases has been constant even in the last days of the Socialist government of José Luis Zapatero: a good reminder is the delivery of the keys to the Rota military base in 2012, so that it could be used as antimissile shield. Zapatero probably regretted the moment when he hadn't stood up for the American troops in Spain's yearly military parade. Luckily for him, there was the excuse of the crisis and the opportunity of creating jobs with "Mr. Marshall" coming to visit Cadix.

González had no qualms in blackmailing his own voters when he assured that he would step down if the referendum didn't have a "Yes" as a final result. By doing this he was clearly manipulating the nature of a vote that, years later, he would describe as one of the hardest moments in his political career, regretting the fact that he ever decided a referendum should be held, stating that "Citizens shouldn't have to vote if they want or not to stay in a military pact, this should be within each party's program and decided in the elections". Quite a quote. The statesman had learnt his lesson and that's what he would state in his conferences and while occupying seats in the most prestigious board meetings: citizens should be asked -if at all- about banal things, democracy should be sold wholesale, not as individual products. You can either buy the whole program or buy nothing at all.

**“ Catalonia tries to project itself internationally
displaying a growing international diplomacy
with more good intentions than effective power ”**

I remember the faces of resignation back home, the arguments during the campaign and probably the first open political rebellion in front of the television: ideals versus *real politik*. So this was "serious" democracy and that's as much as it could give us. The referendum could've brought a major earthquake in the international equilibrium, just months after having joined the European Community and just before Europe would grant Spain international funds, finally putting an end to the Spanish autarchy. Spain had finally found its place in the world, which had to be supporting the West, particularly in a moment when the tension between blocks was growing, a few short years before the collapse of the Eastern bloc. I can imagine the secret service phone calls, crossing bets about how long that wrestle would last, and I remember the nuclear threat, the deployment of Pershing and Cruise missiles in 1983 Germany appearing on every news bulletin. When you're 10 or 12 this leaves a deep print in your mind: if today children have nightmares with the Islamic State, in our generation it was all about our days ending with a red button being pushed.

Never again have we been asked about how we want to relate with the rest of the world. There was indeed a referendum for the approval of the European Constitution, with 20% less participation than in the 1986 referendum. It also laid bare the limits of “serious” democracy, when the process was annulled due to the French and Dutch negative results. That campaign between the antimilitarist forces of the civil society and the parties who had honestly been against the entry into NATO, coordinated by Antonio Gala, restructured the Spanish left. Even more important for me is the fact that it was probably the last chapter of the Spanish Transition. Many people felt the same way and that frustration was channelled into more international solidarity, acting as some sort of outlet that would allow those implied to continue their work and transformation where there was a possibility of change.

“ Why don’t we have a completely different foreign policy? Why don’t we prove that we have new ideas and that we know how to make them realities? ”

So what’s all this about, apart from the anniversary? Thirty years later there are some who believe in creating a new country, changing the future, building a new present, whatever you prefer. Having or not having an army in a hypothetical Catalan state is just one of the factors discussed in the pro-independence movement, proving that this debate is very much connected to the things that form the pattern of a country. Let’s see. A friend of mine from ERC (Republican Left of Catalonia) admitted that it wasn’t an easy issue, it wasn’t simply all or nothing: “Wouldn’t it be hypocritical letting the other countries take care of the defence of a common ground? And wouldn’t it be absurd to pay them to defend us just so we’re able to say that we don’t have an army?”

Catalonia tries to project itself to the world through a law (considered unconstitutional by the Spanish Courts) that gives it a growing diplomatic force, albeit one with more hopes than power at this moment in time. I believe, and this worries me deeply, that this movement ignores all those who were against the regime of the Spanish Transition,

who condemned the *status quo* established after the March 1986 referendum and who boosted the files of those who, even before the dictator's death, were already working in an international dimension, with very different forms and goals to the rigid embassies Catalonia is trying to build. They prefer to have their photos taken with media-friendly Catalans and to ask for the support of the economic immigration, wherever it may be, in their free time, before giving support to the civil society around the world. Catalans around the world! Help us to build the Catalonia Brand! Help to sell our *fuets* (dried sausages) and figurines of the Sagrada Familia! A few months ago, I was talking to the man who used to be in charge of the Catalan Agency to Promote Development, who, in the name of patriotism was rallying the NGOs to defend Catalonia's good name. "If Catalonia manages to have the same kind of reputation that Nordic countries have in foreign politics, their defence of human rights, justice or peace, I will immediately become a patriot", I told him, with some bravado.

Why don't we do a radically different foreign policy? Why don't we have delegations of peace, with the same status and budget of the commercial delegations? Why don't we explain our haste in burning all weapons, of any calibre, right now, without even considering what's happening now in our home country? Why don't we demonstrate that we are the ones who have new ideas and know how to turn them into a reality, with 10% of the resources, gaining the stability and security that all the armies in the world are incapable of guaranteeing? The truth is that we are only able to act in the same way as the rest of the countries, that there is nothing new in the Catalan foreign blueprint. Maybe it's the lesson that González told us only too well: that in these matters it's better not to experiment or ask too many questions. Or maybe it's simply a question of the route of our (national) transition leaving things in a different but effectively identical situation as the one we have now? Do we need another country in the international board who scramble for a place in the UN's Security Council in New York and who will then refuse to accept 1,500 annual refugees from all the wars tearing apart the African continent?

And it's not only about economic resources. One cannot give what one does not have. It is simply having the will to do it and to push in the right direction. There is a network of Catalan town councils who, with their obviously reduced capabilities, works for "Cities Building Peace". Can you imagine the force that a whole country, not only Granollers or

Sant Boi, was a Peacebuilder?

After thirty years, we have the same questions and challenges, three decades later common sense can again vote No, that this is not the answer. Maybe just by having a state deliberately and declaredly involved in the peace processes around the world, starting in the Mediterranean, would it be worth seeing this new state born? Are we ready for a bold statement?

Photography : Ariet / CC / Desaturated.

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INTERVIEW

Interview with Joan Botam, Catalan priest and Capuchin friar

Xavier Alcalde / Eugènia Riera

International Catalan Institute for Peace

Joan Botam, *Catalan priest and Capuchin friar*

In the First World War, at least three branches of international pacifism could be found. The first one, scientific or realistic pacifism (which we analyze with d'Alfred Fried), was characterized by the belief that peace could only be guaranteed with world organization and scientific research. The second one, feminist pacifism (which we have dealt with in this article), was represented by women who associated their subjugation with militarism and military spending. The third one is the religious pacifism of Quakers, Mennonites or Tolstoyans. We will be talking about this branch of pacifism in this interview with the Catalan priest and Capuchin friar Joan Botam, who has launched numerous initiatives linked to peace and ecumenism.

Botam (Les Borges Blanques, 1926) is a doctor in theology and founder of the Víctor Seix Institute of Polemology and of the Ecumenical Center of Catalonia. He represented Barcelona at the United Nations Millennium Summit of religious and spiritual leaders.

To understand religious pacifism during the First World War, one of the fundamental groups one must look at is that of the Quakers. What are their characteristics?

The Quakers are staunchly nonviolent pacifists, with a spirituality of a personal nature, without borders. The term “Quaker” come from the verb “to quake.” Their human and faith experience is so sensitive that when they engage in communication, projection or dialog, they “quake” because they are aware of the infiniteness of God, of the

absoluteness of God. It's the creature before the Creator, limitation before absoluteness. And they have had this sensation since their origins in England, in the 17th century, with George Fox, their founder.

With the outbreak of war, the pacifist movement FOR (Fellowship of Reconciliation) was created in 1914 at the initiative of two Christians, Henry Hodgkin (an English Quaker) and Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze (a German Lutheran). You have known people associated with this movement. What is the philosophy behind it?

FOR -later IFOR- is a movement of reconciliation that is heir to an exceptional pacifist like Jean Goss-Mayr. I knew him and his wife Hildegard, who was the daughter of an Austrian pacifist [Kaspar Mayr, founder of the Austrian branch of IFOR]. Jean Goss was a French railway worker, a charismatic man with a great amount of energy and conviction. He maintained -as do I- that violence is one of the greatest absurdities. It's an absurdity and also a sin because everything that is an imposition does not respect or take into account the other. It manipulates subordinates and kills the other.

You didn't live through the First World War, yet you have a long-standing relationship with pacifism. When did it start?

I come from the pacifist movements of the 1950s and 60s. In fact, my story begins with the Second World War, with the founding of Pax Christi, a pacifist movement of people of all creeds, united by Nazi persecution. In 1956 I was called to serve as a counselor to the movement and I started to play a prominent role. Pax Christi was a religious movement, but free, not institutional or hierarchical. It wasn't Catholic from the top but from the grassroots, and with a clear purpose to form citizens, members of the international community, on a solid foundation of democracy and freedom.

“ I am anti-war, anti-military and anti-weapons because I believe that the world is built from good, truth and justice, by peaceful means ”

What does being a pacifist mean to you?

I am anti-war, anti-military and anti-weapons. Because I believe, from Gandhian philosophy and from the mystical thought of Martin Luther King and also from the Gospel, that the world is built from good, truth and justice, by peaceful means. Those who use non-peaceful means, such as war, to build peace fall into a flagrant contradiction!

How did experiencing war affect your personal thinking?

I experienced war personally. I was a teenager in 1936 when bombs fell on my town. I had been taught in public school about what to do in the case of bombing and, while it was being explained to you, it sounded like heavenly music, but darn! When, on April 2, 1937, I looked up at the sky -a bright sky like today- and I saw advancing planes that suddenly started giving off flashes of light, sparks that whistled as they came down... and then I heard crackling sounds amid a cloud of dust, and screaming and yelling. I was 9 or 10 years old and that stayed with me. It was negation, death, hell. And I heard women yelling "Stop this! Stop the war!" I carry that cry inside of me, almost like an anthropological constituent element.

Is it also war that leads you to religion?

For me, until 1939, there was zero religion. That year I was forced to make my First Holy Communion dressed up as a little Falangist, with cannons and machine guns by my side. That was all the religious instruction I had had until then. But from 1939, since there was no school, my father -a Republican, anti-clerical believer, as I would have been because there was no other honest alternative- took me to the Capuchins of Les Borges. The very next day after Franco's troops had marched through, the Capuchins opened their doors.

“ Religions are not always a source of peace. The Church as an institution sometimes feels it has

power. And power kills. ”

What did studying in the convent of the Capuchins mean to you?

It was a shock from the point of view of the environment, education, methodology, seriousness, work and determination. I was above average and proof of that is that in 1942, after three years, I was at the top of the school. I underwent a process of self-renovation, an educational process: to bring out what you have inside of you with the means at your disposal. And thanks to the beautiful human relationships I found between students and teachers, the belief element also emerged. It was not an ideological, conceptual or philosophical process. But it was the beginning of a vocation with which I'm not dissatisfied, quite the opposite: I have found "meaning," that which is self-satisfying, which makes you feel useful and helpful.

Considering your knowledge of different spiritualities, do you believe that religion is always a source of peace?

No. Because religion –not faith– as an institution and as an organization tries to institutionalize and normalize a human, spiritual and divine experience. It tries to explain things that are inexplicable, such as the supernatural experience of the absoluteness of God. I'm not saying that religions are useless, but the Church should always serve and research with care. But sometimes it feels it has power. And power kills.

In your opinion, can there be a contradiction between the Church as an institution and as spirituality?

Certainly, because there is the Vatican State, Papal States, media and economic potentialities like Opus Dei... and this is in total contradiction with belief and spirituality. There is a theologian that I greatly admire, Karl Barth, who says that religion explained in this way is a sin.

And do you agree with that?

Yes. It is a religion that does not question itself, does not challenge itself, does not know its place and often creates obstacles. The Inquisition, for example, is an obstacle. How can you burn at the stake someone who believes differently? Now that doesn't mean that peace cannot be built from religion because the vocation of a Christian is precisely to build peace. And building peace means collaborating and talking to everyone, without adjectives. Peace is peace and it is the peace of everyone. Limits cannot be placed on dialog; one must talk to everyone, even to the devil if necessary!

“ Building peace means collaborating and talking to everyone, without adjectives or limits ”

What role does ecumenism play here?

Outside the Christian world, there are other groups that link ecumenism and peace, like the Baha'i faith. Do you know them?

Outside the Christian world, there are other groups that link ecumenism and peace, like the Baha'i faith. Do you know them?

Yes, I have Baha'i friends. Baha'is originated in Iran, in conditions of persecution, and they represent an attempt at ecumenism from an Islamic root. They belong to a movement of spirituality -not a religion- according to which God is everyone's father, humanity is one single family and our work is peace and dialog. There are also the Brahma Kumaris, for example, who are similar but of Hindu origin, with a universal vocation of fraternity and nonviolence.

Taking into account the conflicts and wars of the 20th century, do you think that religious pacifism has fought enough to build peace?

No. One gets the impression that many still don't believe in it. People like Jean Goss, Lanza del Vasto, Lluís Maria Xirinacs or Martin Luther King are hard to find. I am spiritually radicalized in that respect, in the struggle for peace, but it is hard to create a culture of peace and relationships based on the building of peace. It is difficult to make

people conceive that reconciliation and peace are above one's own interests.

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SOBRE L'ICIP

News, activities and publications about the ICIP

ICIP

International Catalan Institute for Peace

Open call for grants for participation and research projects on the promotion of Peace

ICIP has now opened a call for grants and subsidies for participation and research projects on the promotion of Peace. The call is aimed at non-profit organizations, foundations and cooperatives based in Catalonia; the total amount of the call is 40.000€ and the deadline to submit applications is September 15th 2015.

Applications can be submitted electronically [here](#).

Living on the edge, an exhibition on divided cities

Next October 1st the exhibition *Living on the edge. Conflicts and reconciliation in divided cities in Europe* will open at Plaça de la Corona, in Granollers. The photographic exhibition depicts how the stories of conflict and reconciliation interlace and reflect on the torn urban society in which they take place.

More specifically, the exhibit explores the wounds, still recent, of four divided cities in Europe: Nicosia (Cyprus), Belfast (Northern Ireland), Mitrovica (Kosovo), and Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Four cities in which ethnic and religious conflicts have left a profound scar in their societies, but also where there are people willing to get over the past and to define a common future far beyond differences.

The exhibit has been created by the journalist Angelo Attanasio and the photojournalist Marco Ansaloni, and it has been produced by ICIP. It will open next October 1st in Granollers within the frame of the project “Cities defenders of human rights”, in collaboration with the centre Can Jonch, and it will be open until October 27th.

New ICIP Strategic Plan 2015-2018

ICIP Strategic Plan 2015-2018, approved by the ICIP Board of Governors, establishes the Institute’s strategic lines, aims and objectives for the years 2015-2018. This is ICIP’s 2nd Strategic Plan and it continues to develop the strategic lines depicted in the Strategic Plan 2009-2012, which was prorogated until 2014.

The Plan is structured, as the first one was, in six areas: three substantive or final focal points (Research, Training and Dissemination and Peacebuilding and the Prevention of Violent Conflicts) and three instrumental focal points (Internationalization and service to other actors, Resources and Organization).

The elaboration of the Strategic Plan was preceded by a participatory process which consisted of meetings of the ICIP Board of Governors with ICIP team members and with other key actors in the creation of ICIP: organizations from civil society, members of the Catalan Council for the Promotion of Peace, academics and researchers, and government bodies.

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