IS A FUTURE WITHOUT WAR POSSIBLE?
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The title of this article reminds that of the last book I published: " Per un futuro senza guerre - *For a future without wars*"(Liguori Publisher, 2008), which was written to challenge the underestimation, by the traditional culture, of nonviolence as a tool for social transformation. In fact, the current culture, in our and many other countries of the world, particularly western developed ones, is very steeped in the concept of "homo homini lupus" (Hobbes) that brings, for example, in our country, to the fact that a good percentage of the population (from 70 to 80% according to various researches, and the various age groups interviewed), is convinced that the others want "to cheat you" and, therefore, if you do not want this to happen "you have to be the first to do it"; a culture that rewards violence and aggressive behaviour instead of the nonviolent one, often considered passive, and not as the correct response to injustice and the violence of others
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For these reasons one of the first problems I faced was the conception of human beings, both in traditional cultures and in most current scientific researches, not only sociological, but also anthropological, psychological. These researches show that the human being has a "survival instinct", but that this instinct is not necessarily aggressive, as it is often believed. Our culture is also much influenced by the well known Darwinian theory of the survival of the fittest, introduced in sociology by the British sociologists H. Spencer. In reality the animals that survived were not the strongest, like mammoth or dinosaurs, now only a distant memory of the past, but rather those who had greater ability to live together and cooperate with their similar.

But other psychological, sociological or anthropological researches, showed that underlying the phenomenon war, usually considered connected to the so-called "natural" aggressiveness, there is rather a completely different attitude, namely the "passivity" of human beings with regard to those who hold power and use war and armed conflicts to increase their economic and political power.

Typical, from this point, the experimental researches of a North American psychologist, Stanley Milgram (*Obedience to authorities*, Bompiani, 1975), who, after the beginning of the process of Jerusalem against Eichmann, one of the most cruel Nazis, started to experiment whether it is possible that a "normal" person might commit crimes of this kind simply to obey orders received, as Eichmann tried to justify himself. The aim was to study the behaviour of those to whom authority (in this case a scientist) orders actions in conflict with their ethical and moral values. Persons selected for the sample, males from 20 to 50 years, had been informed that they should cooperate to an experiment on the effects on memory and learning, and they would be rewarded. The person leading the experiment, dressed in white to show his authority, asked them to press a button that gave an electric shock increasingly larger when the answers to questions posed to the tested ones (who were actors pretending to show, aloud, a growing pain as the shock was higher) were not correct. The result was that of a very high obedience (over 60%), although people in the sample were told that those levels of electric shock, they gave, were so high that could endanger the health of those who received them. This high obedience, which led the participants to violate their moral principles, was explained by the fact that obedience induced by an authoritarian figure, which is considered legitimate, induces a person to an *eteronomic* behaviour, characterized by the fact that the subject does not consider himself free to take autonomous decisions, but as a tool to execute orders, and does not feel morally responsible for his actions, but executors of wills

of an external power. This experiment was repeated several times, even in Italy and Germany, with results not very dissimilar, but even worse, showing in these two countries, a trend to uncritical obedience even higher than in USA.

A second experiment, at Stanford, also of a U.S. psychologist but of Italian origin, Philip Zimbardo (*The Lucifer Effect. Understanding how good people turn evil,* Random House, New York, 2007: Italian translation, Cortina, 2008) leads to a similar conclusion. In this experiment there was a simulation of the life inside a prison, with participants randomly assigned to the role of prisoners or jailers. The experiment was meant to last 2 weeks, but it was suspended after only six days because it had become, according to the author, a *'spiral without control'*. Pupils who, by chance, were chosen to assume the role of jailers identified themselves so much in this role to create in the others major problems of stress and "burn out". Prof. Zimbardo asks to himself, with this effect Lucifer, how can a good person, "normal", "*ordinary*" in his words, become suddenly "bad"?. What mechanisms can explain such important change? The answer is clear: *power*. Human beings are fatally attracted to the power to control others and this happens especially when the system allows it. According to Zimbardo, therefore, we should not look too much to individual predispositions, but also to the psychological and social contexts that create, maintain or modify the behaviour of individuals. According to his conclusions, the psychological and sociological culture has so far committed a fundamental error in the allocation, hyper-estimating the influences of individual predispositions, and underestimating the stimuli coming from the environment.

A confirmation of the important role of the external environment, and its weight in the behaviour of human beings, in a culture where the dominant values are those of mistrust and detachment from others, comes also from studies on pro-social behaviour (Mussen P, Eisemberg-Berg N., *Roots of caring, sharing, and helping ,*Freeman & Co, 1978: Italian translation , Bulzoni, 1985), which shows that people behave in an altruistic manner most frequently when nobody observes them, rather than when they are observed, or they are in a group.

On the other hand this discovery of psychologists of the conditioning importance of the external environment on the behaviour of human beings, making them more or less aggressive, is confirmed in full by cultural anthropologists who have studied and compared, with each other, so-called primitive peoples in which prevail behaviour of these different types, and the cultural roots of this pre-eminence. Among these best known researches are: R. Benedict (*Patterns of culture*, Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1934; Italian translation, Feltrinelli, 1970), M. Mead (*Cooperation and conflict among primitive people*, Transaction Publ., 1937), and A. Montagu (*Learning non-aggression*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1978. Italian translation: Elèuthera, 1987). Sociologists consider so important the environment in conditioning human behaviour of that some of them, on the contrary criticize what they have called "the ultra-socialized conception of man" (D. Wrong, in, *The Psychanalitic Review*, 69,1961), or denounce the "sociologism" (R. Boudon, *La logique du social,* Hachette, Paris, 1979. Italian translation, Mondatori, 1980), thus questioning the tendency of many of their colleagues not to take into account the individual responsibility of action, and to ascribe all the faults of the worst happening in the world (crime, gratuitous violence, etc..) to the external society, thus risking to transform the human being into a puppet managed from above.

These discoveries have been confirmed by a group of scientists (of all involved disciplines) coming from many countries of the world, who gathered in Siviglia (Spain), have formulated, for UNESCO, a fundamental declaration on this subject. In this they assert, among other things, that: "*It is scientifically incorrect to say that we have inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ereditance…. to say that war or any other violent behaviour is genetically programmed into our human nature… to say that in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behaviour more than for other kinds of behaviour*"…. "*How we act is shaped by how we have been conditioned and socialized…. There is nothing in our neurophysiology that compels us to react violently….Modern war involves institutional use of personal characteristics such as obedience…. Just as 'wars begin in the minds of men', peace also*

begins in our minds. The same species who invented war is capable of inventing peace". (Adams, D., ed., *The Seville Statement on Violence*, UNESCO, 1991).

But the person who most contributed to investigate this matter and to give concrete indications on how to overcome its negative effects, was a writer who, when young, was an active member of the Communist Party, Arthur Koestler, who had then denounced the limits of a system, like the one then prevailing in URSS where he lived for several years, based on the fact that "the end justifies the means," and that the "party" should be placed over of what is good and evil. His most famous novel is "*Darkness at Noon*" (Bantam Books, New York, 1940, Italian translation, Mondatori, 1940), whose protagonist is a man of the Soviet Bolshevik Party falling victim of the system of persecution of which he himself had been part. In this novel Koestler shows how a former communist accepts confession and sacrifices himself for the sake of communism. But Koestler, as well as a novelist and auto-biographer, was also a scientific researcher, contributing (*The act of creation*, Hutchinson, London, 1964 . Italian translation, Astrolabio, 1964) to focus an attitude nor aggressive nor passive, but called by him, and others, " *assertive"*. The assertiveness is the ability of the subjects to maintain the active pursuit of their aims, not responding to violence with more violence, but also not enduring it and passively submitting to it, but responding to violence with a constructive attitude that seeks to transform the conflict in confrontation, and then, if possible, in a dialogue. It 'a trait of personality characterized by tenacity, consistency, clarity, security, commitment, attention, availability.

On the basis of this teaching I personally continued for many years, with my pupils, many of them teachers in schools of various levels (*Giovani e Pace - Youth and Peace-* , Pangea, 1990), testing various educational models to try to transform the attitude and behaviour of the students from aggressive or passive, to assertive, both transforming, in schools, competitive games, as they normally are, in cooperative ones, both experiencing a form of participatory education, involving pupils and their parents in the planning of the educational process. The results of our work has been very positive managing to change aggressive and passive attitudes in assertive ones. For us, therefore, peace education has become education to assertive attitude and behaviour.

But it is clear that to arrive to have a future at least less full of wars and armed conflicts, although the education for peace and nonviolence of the younger generation is very important (see: UN decade for education for peace and nonviolence of the new generations) surely it is not enough. Although we have seen that the conception of war as a natural phenomenon linked precisely to the aggressiveness of human beings, is fundamentally wrong and not scientifically grounded, we must consider how spread is this idea, and we need to demonstrate, concretely, that there are other streets, much more valuable then war, to deal with conflict situations.

From this point of view, in my recent book, I try to demonstrate how the war is not only a fact that happens, often not even knowing, precisely, why, but it is a process that is born from afar, that we can predict and perhaps even prevent. In fact, the intervention in a conflict when this is already exploded, to try to overcome, or at least soothe it, is always very difficult, and often not productive. But if you spread the art of forecasting (as was the case, for example, for predicting the weather), if you seriously study the process of escalation of a conflict, and intervene before its explosion, the possibility of interrupting the escalation and to resolve the conflict in a peaceful manner (for example trying to mitigate, or mediate, and find solutions that go to the benefit of all the contenders) are much greater and real.

Among the personal experiences mentioned in the title of my last book, and illustrated in it, there is also the Peace Embassy in Kosovo, organized by Kosovo Campaign to which many organizations participated (V. Savoldi, L. Gjergji, *Resistenza Nonviolenta nella Ex-Jugoslavia-*Nonviolent resistance in former Yugoslavia*,* EMI, 1993; A. L'Abate, "*Kossovo.Una Guerra annunciata* - Kosovo. An announced war, Ed. La Meridiana, 1997,1999). This is an excellent example of how it is possible to foresee a conflict, and also, if wished, to prevent its explosion. Already in 1992, a Swedish organization specialized in conflict mitigation (TFF, Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research), after seriously studying the problem of Kosovo

listening to both antagonists, had written an important report on "*Preventing War in Kosovo* ". This proposed to establish in the region a UN civil multinational authority offering to the parties the opportunity to take into analysis the roots of their problems and to participate in negotiations. This authority should later replace the Serb police with a team of civilian police, and with a number of "civil peace workers", including non-governmental organizations, with a mission to build bridges between the conflicting nationalities: mostly Albanians and Serbs. Inspired by this document, and after having heard and discussed these proposals with the Kosovar leadership and the Serbian one, leading the opposition (the Serbian government did not permit intrusions in a problem that he considered being its internal affair) the Peace Embassy presented in 1995 to the European Parliament a proposal to organize, and send in that area, "European Civil Peace Corps". This proposal was founded on a request, made to the European Parliament by Alex Langer, and the Group of Greens to which he belonged, and from that Parliament repeatedly approved, according to its politics of prevention of conflicts, to organise brigades trained in nonviolence, conflict mediation and, if necessary, in case these interventions were not able to solve the problem, also to reconcile the adverse parties after the end of an armed conflict. Another proposal made on that occasion, by the Peace Embassy, and accepted by both parties, was to give to Kosovo a special type of autonomy like that of the Åland Islands (between Sweden and Finland), which provided: international protection, no armed forces, and a complete neutrality between the parties. This proposal was taken up also by the Network of Prevention of Armed Conflicts organised by the European Parliament in that occasion. But nothing was done to pursue these proposals, and after trying an agreement in Rambouillet (G. Scotto, E. Arielli, *Guerra del Kosovo anatomia di una escalation* - The war in Kosovo: Anatomy of an escalation*, Riuniti, 1999), defined by the Swedish organisation before quoted (TFF) as a "prevention of peace and not of war", we arrived to the outburst of armed conflict which was concluded, several months after the start, with an agreement very similar to the original proposals of TFF. But the war had meanwhile raised the hatred between the two parties, and the current situation of Kosovo is anything but peaceful, with an ever-present risk of a new explosion of an armed conflict.

Why this deafness toward the prevention of armed conflicts ?. The causes may be various. Surely there was the need for NATO, in the fiftieth anniversary of its constitution, and after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, which tended to empty it of its main tasks, to demonstrate that it was always useful and active. There were also the strategic interests of the United States which will bring them to organise in Kosovo, in the area administered by them after the war, one of the largest military bases in the area. And there were also the interests of that economic-military-scientific complex, whose deleterious effects for democracy and peace were pointed out, years before, by Eisenhower, former commander of the Allied Army in Europe, and later President of the United States. Unfortunately war gives incomes out of the sale of weapons (SIPRI Yearbook 2007): In 2005 the U.S. were the first sellers of weapons in the world, with 62.9% of total arms sales, England was the second (11.8), and France the third (6.9). Italy was in the fourth place with 3.8%. But war gives also profits by eliminating unemployment, within single countries, which sometimes, if it is too high, is a threat to internal stability, and through the necessary reconstruction at the end of the war, war gives often profits also allowing to winners to control energy sources (oil, gas) needed to keep alive their current development model. Certainly there is an enormous difference between the expenses for prevention and those to wage war. According to a British scholar, an expert on these issues, speaker at a conference on Civilian Peace Corps (Provincia di Bolzano, IPRI- Rete CCP, Ass. A. Langer, Univ. Bologna: *Giornate di studio ed iniziativa su interventi e corpi civili di pace,* Bolzano 29-39/11/2007, Bologna, 1/12/2007)) the relationship between the respective costs would be 1 euro for prevention against 10.000 euros for war. According to others experts at the same conference, the real difference would be even greater. If this imbalance is maintained, and we do not give more importance to prevention, the future of humanity will be full of wars and armed conflicts.

But this leads us to talk about what one of the greatest scholars of these issues, Johan Galtung, described as "structural violence": this is the difference between the potential of an individual and the possibility of realizing this potential. It is the violence perpetrated by the socio-economic system, where it is not detectable only one actor agent of violence. It is structural violence every situation where the possibility of implementation (physical, intellectual) in human beings is below their potential (eg. unequal distribution of drugs and its effect on the number of years lived by individuals, or the problem of hunger that, according to many experts, it is not determined by the shortage of food, but by its unequal distribution with the inability of many people to buy the food at the fixed prices).

The current development model of Western countries, imitated by China and India, greatly increases the imbalances between these countries and others, the poorest, and it does increase the differences, in each country, between people earning from this development (a little minority of the population), and those that are impoverished more and more. And these growing imbalances, instead of enhancing the safety and welfare of the population, despite the continuous increase of arms of the rich countries who seek to defend themselves from any attack to their welfare by the poorest ones, on the contrary increase the general insecurity. In 2006, most industrialised countries in the world, participating to the G8, with China and India, the two countries in the so-called third world that are pursuing with great success (from 8 to 10% of annual development of GDP) the Western development model, along with Israel and Saudi Arabia (among the countries most militarized of the world), while having a total population of approximately 50% of the world, spent (data on 2005 in Sipri, 2007) for weapons and war more than 86% of the total expenditure of the world. All other countries in the world, with about the other half of the world's population, for these same items spent only just a little more than 13% of the total. This imbalance of military expenditures in international relations, especially when long conflicts are going on, such as that between Israel and Palestine, if these countries do not want to accept the domain of what has been called the "new empire" (Allegretti U, Dinucci M. , D. Gallo, *Sulla strategia dell'impero* - On the strategy of the empir*e*, Ed. Culture of Peace, 1992), and do not have the ability, or have not discovered the effectiveness, to bring on a nonviolent struggle, they feel compelled, or at least encouraged, to invent new weapons, effective but inexpensive, able to strike at the heart the opponent. These weapons are the so-called suicide bombers (kamikaze) who, educated in fanaticism, sacrifice themselves killing many people in the opposite side, or settle bombs and lethal instruments in trains, or other vital centres of Western society. This has led the life of individual citizens in all countries of the rich world at a level of insecurity never reached so far. So the increase in weapons, and military spending does not bring to a decrease of terrorism, but, on the contrary, to an increase of it (A.K. Sen, "Gandhi and the World", in, *Sarvodaya*, July-August 2006).

On the other hand, according to studies made by one of the most famous worldwide engineers, the designer of the geodetic dome (of which there are two important examples in the village of Science in Paris, and in Montreal, Canada) J. Buckminster Fuller, with simply a little less than 30% of the annual military spending of the world, we could eliminate, in 30 years, death due to starving, illiteracy, desertification of the planet, the ozone hole, and all the other major problems afflicting humanity (see the website of War Game Institute). But this involves, even by our part, to give life to a completely different development model, based on a sustainable economy, renewable energy, greater justice between people, and the enhancement of nonviolence both as a way to fight against injustices that continue to persist, both as a constructive project in order to develop an environmentally friendly society, suitable to human beings (J. Friedmann, *Empowerment. A policy for alternative development*, Blackwell Publ., Oxford, UK, 1992. Ed. Quale Vita, 2004).

But all this implies the need for the human being to become free from the passive submission to power that we have seen, at the beginning, so widespread and prevalent, one of the causes of the spread of violence and war. Yet never the participation of citizens for a more peaceful world was as high as in this time. Nearly 100 million people in 70 countries in the world, on the

same day, have demonstrated, in 260 different places, against the beginning of the war of Iraq, justified as a fight against a country having "weapons of mass destruction" (this was later proved to be a lie), this was an event that never happened before. An important U.S. newspaper, the New York Times, called this movement "the second world power", opposed to that of the USA, which , after the collapse of the communist regimes of the Warsaw Pact, and of bipolarity, seem to be the only world power. It was possible to organize such an event thanks to various global or regional forums, (in Porto Alegre, Bombay, Florence, Paris, Nairobi) attended by thousands of people from many countries of the world in order to discuss and find ways "For a different possible world ", as these Forum were called (M. Pianta, *Globalizzazione dal basso: economia globale e movimenti sociali - Globalization from below: global economy and social movements*, ManifestoLibri, 2001). In these forums very many participants, in hundreds of seminars and study meetings, discussed and studied seriously the limits of the actual development model, its possible alternatives, forms of community economy, the possibility of a participated democracy (not simply delegated), the main reasons and the characteristics of current wars, the possibility of overcoming them, Nonviolence and Civil Peace Corps as possible tools to prevent them, and other issues related to these. And it has been from these forums that was launched the slogan: "Put the war out of history!" which inspired the title of this article.

But the results of this popular participation have not been up to the expectations. Indeed, we can say that these were rather disappointing. In fact, this mass participation against the second war in Iraq has persuaded France and Germany to propose that the UN specialised agency for the control of nuclear arms should intervene in Iraq to verify the existence of these weapons, a proposal that was accepted and implemented. The weapons of mass destruction, which were intended to justify the armed intervention, have not been found, but were instead found a hundred missiles of longer range than the allowed one, that, at request, and under control, have been destroyed. According to personal information by J. Galtung, this destruction of long-range missiles would have persuaded the chiefs of the armed forces (U.S.A. and British) that their military intervention could be done with less risk for their soldiers, so even though the mass destruction weapons were not found, changing only the name of the war which was announced for the "democratization" of Iraq, war started only a few months later, thanks to the opposition events and the intervention of the United Nations. Therefore, this so-called "second world power" has managed only to delay war for few months, and not to block it, and indeed, perhaps made it easier and less dangerous for those who started it.

But this does not mean that *participation* is unnecessary, but only that we need to study better ways in which this can be pursued and it can be effective. And I believe that we must recognize the limits of this sort of demonstration, which brings people to participate to an initiative which lasts only one day, perhaps with the help of parties or local authorities, which organise trains or buses at a low cost, and after it go back at home, and perhaps behave exactly the way the system requires us, buying products at low cost only because made in countries where workers are paid very little, and where they can not even organize unions, and where, often, the exploitation of child labour is widespread. We have, nevertheless, to add, to be truthful, that who is really exploiting these living and working conditions in countries of the so called "third world" are not so much the poor people of the rich countries who are looking only to overcome their poor conditions of life spending less, but the corrupted industrialists and traders of these countries who, often, move their industries there, and buy products made in these other countries at a low prize, and sell them, in the developed countries, at a much higher prize, earning a lot. These advantages, for some people, of "globalization", and their connection with the war, have brought Alex Langer,

our MEP disappeared some years ago, to write, before the outbreak of the first Gulf War, (New Earth Forum, in January, 1991): "*Against the war, we must change life: wars break out "downstream " when a terrible chain of oppression, violence and failure is already started and appears unchangeable; peoples, the common people, are then called upon to pay the final bill without having been able to intervene on single items that have gradually increased it. But in front*

of the failure of politics and negotiation, leading to war, we must strengthen the "anti-bodies" available to every single person to prevent wars and not to be caught by them , once they have broken out. If our whole lifestyle (consumerism, production, transport, energy, banks ...) needs very unjust conditions in the relationships between different peoples and with nature, we must intervene "upstream" questioning our participation (even as individual) to an economic, political, social, ecological and cultural "order" needing the wars that support it. " And Alex goes on : "*If the consent to war (in the form of nationalism, racism, prejudice, stereotypes, etc..) can be shared easily by a majority - not only between "Islamic fundamentalists!" – we should intervene even here "upstream" and enlarge an ideal and cultural strong basis for peace and coexistence, detoxifying hearts and minds. If it is considered self-evident that once the war has broken out, we have to align and (materially and culturally) enlist, someone must work to create and consolidate choices of "objection to war".* And as forms of action that, each one of us, can bring to "change our life before the war", to deny it any consensus and support, and to cause its loosing at least a small part of apparent justification, Alex made the following proposals*: 1) develop the weapon of information; 2) to establish and multiply inter-ethnic, inter-cultural, inter-religious groups / alliances / agreements / tables for dialogue and joint action, trough, for example, tools such as " twinning" between municipalities, regions, associations, etc., concretely, bringing together peoples and make it more difficult the consensus to "bomb the other "(it is more difficult to agree to bomb peoples that we know), 3) to work seriously for a new international law and for a new U.N., based not only on the outcome of the Second World War (with its "Great Powers", their veto rights, etc..), but also against a concept and a practice of "state sovereignty" not at all useful for the common destiny of humanity. The traditional distinction between " international" and "internal affairs" requiring non-interference of others (for which torture and massacres should not be considered by the international community until a dispute between at least two states breaks out), and does not stand the test of environmental emergencies, nor of human rights; 4) ask the UN to promote a sort of "St. Helena Foundation " (name of the island where was finally exiled Napoleon, among eases and honours, but rendered harmless), to facilitate the dictators and their bloody courts to have an exit security before they rely on a bloodbath in order to try to save themselves".* A few years after the first Gulf War, Alex also made a fifth proposal, of which we have already spoken, the establishment of European Civil Peace Corps as a mean of prevention and nonviolent resolution of armed conflicts. All very actual proposals, which sometimes are supported by some local authorities, or NGOs working in this field, but to which States give very little attention, convinced, as they are often, that conflicts must be confronted and resolved almost exclusively with weapons (and only in some cases with high-level mediation but often pursued in the interest of the mediator more than of that of the populations involved in the conflict).

The problem, earlier mentioned, of the failure of the struggle against the second war in Iraq opens a question about the nature of these demonstrations, and the quality of the engagement they require. Indeed, as already mentioned, the demonstration of one day in normal situations do not require a big commitment nor big risks, and is therefore easy to find people willing to participate, especially if aided by mass organisations. But the participation changes considerably when the initiatives require great commitments and risks. The activities of intervention and mediation of the conflict in the first Gulf War have involved a few hundred people; those in the former Yugoslavia (Sarajevo, Mostar, etc.) have involved several thousand; conscientious objection to military service in Italy, when implied also repeated condemnation and imprisonment for one or more years, was chosen by very few young people highly motivated, and when it was recognized by the law and it was possible without any risk, in our country there were more than 60,000 requests. We could continue with examples that confirm this fact: that actions and initiatives which do not imply risks can involve hundreds of thousands and even millions of people, those that imply them, involve, at most, a few thousand. And this is certainly a problem: how can we struggle against the big interests affected by war and by the construction and sale of weapons, since only small minorities fight seriously, and for long time, against them?

But this raises another problem, namely the character of the peace movement. This is usually purely <u>reactive</u>. It is very strong and involves hundreds of thousands and even millions of people before the war, but if this starts, it disappears almost completely. The nature of the nonviolent movement is different, it is much smaller in numbers in comparison to the first, but it requires a much greater personal commitment. It is <u>proactive</u>, not reacting to initiatives and decisions of others, but moves much earlier, trying to anticipate and prevent armed conflicts, to interrupt them through nonviolent forms of intervention, and to seek alternatives to the use of arms. It is not growing or decreasing like the peace movement: it is acting in fact in two ways: 1) through nonviolent struggle against injustice and violence, including the structural ones, 2) It tries to study, anticipate and promote a diverse, more just and humane, society through the constructive project. And these two activities do not have a precise moment in which can be carried on: they start long before the explosion of the conflict, when, through the forecast you can see the growth of the process of conflict, and continue long after its end in order to reconcile former enemies (H. Goss Mayr, *Come i nemici diventano amici* - How the enemies become friends, EMI, Bologna, 1997), and to eliminate the causes of a possible new outburst.

But unfortunately, although many people currently declare themselves non-violent, only a few of them accept the fact that nonviolence means, in certain circumstances, also conscientious objection and civil disobedience to unjust laws, and these lead, often, to very serious legal consequences. As an example of this diversity, we could cite the war in Kosovo. When the Kosovo Campaign, born in Italy in 1993, has begun to deal with the problem of this area, and to seek support to prevent the explosion of the conflict, only a few Italian non-governmental organizations (including the Community of St. Egidio) involving a total of not many thousands of people, only some Regions, few municipalities, and a few parliament members (60), responded positively. That made it much less effective all initiatives (books, newspaper articles, photographic exhibitions, videos, studies, conferences, meetings, files, appeals and motions, etc.) undertaken to make known in our country the tragic situation of the Albanian population in Kosovo, and to find and enforce possible nonviolent solutions to overcome them. When, after the war, arrived funds from both our country and the European Community to help the Albanian population to return in the area, and to rebuild their homes, all the organisations that first denied their support to our work ("because for the prevention there is no money!") were attracted by these funds in order to have their projects financed. Again, if there are no risks and problems, and there are funds, is very easy to find organizations and individuals willing to cooperate, if the situation is not so, and there are risks to be faced, there are few people and organisations willing to commit themselves. This shows a very low quality of the commitment, which, if not overcome , may deprive almost entirely initiatives for peace and against the widespread use of war (consider the "permanent war against terrorism", with the effects that we have already analysed).

But I believe that the time has come for the conclusion of this article that, to answer the question of its title, can only regard how to act to reduce the use of wars and armed conflicts. Some things have already emerged, and we will try only to recall them to memory, I will outline the others in the last few pages. The first, *is the importance of information* stressed by Alex Langer. Newspapers and televisions tend to amplify everything that's rotten in today's society, and often neglect the good news; for example, the great successes, in various countries around the world, in the last century, of nonviolent struggles for obtaining independence (India), for overcoming the apartheid (South Africa), or against dictatorial regimes (Poland, Philippines, Chile), for improving the living conditions of minorities of color (USA), to defend the Jews by the Nazis harassment (Denmark), for the release of their Jewish husbands by Aryan wives (Germany), etc.. etc.. (see the videos: "*A force more powerful*", Zimmerman, New York, in Italy reproduced and distributed by the newspaper "Azione Nonviolenta"). What are the reasons for this neglect? . Galtung, the founder of peace studies in the world, has very clear ideas. In his book "*Peace by peaceful means"* (Sage, London , 1996. Italian translation , Ediz. Esperia, 2000) tries to overcome the current opinion that "*nonviolence does not work*", and argues that this view "*is based on*

misinformation, given the stunning successes achieved in the second half of the twentieth century by it ". And he continues. "*Given the increasing failure of violence and war - with modern technology that certainly does not ennobles nor the winner nor the victim but degrades both - and given the significant results obtained with non-violent means why are they not used much more?* "(Ibid. p. 219). In his remarks to the many successes of nonviolence Galtung writes: "*We are not assuming that nonviolence is always successful, and that it is a panacea [a medicine for every sickness . But many oppressed groups could have obtained more independence if they had used nonviolence*". (ibid., p.218). He believes that answers to this question maybe searched at the bottom of our culture which accepts the theory of the survival of the fittest, and he proposes that both positive and negative factors be analysed in order to see if there are also hidden factors in favour of nonviolent action. At the end he expresses the theory that in the western

A second indication, already seen, is the importance of *education for nonviolence and to assertivity*, with appropriate pedagogical methods, overcoming, for example, the teaching coming only from professors (ex cathedra), and favouring instead forms of bidirectional (maieutic) and participatory education.

A third indication, which incorporates part of Langer proposals, is the need to *overcome the separation between the three forms of pacifism* identified by Norberto Bobbio. He, in fact, in his fine book " *Il problema della guerra e levie della pace”* .(The problem of war and the ways of peace . Il Mulino, 1979) distinguishes between institutional pacifism, pointing to peace, for example, by reforming the United Nations (as Alex Langer proposed), or with the development of lows that make increasingly difficult the recourse to war; as an example it would be very important an enhancement of the Rome International Penal Tribunal, to whom actually don't adhere just some of the more militarized countries of the world (USA, China, Israel, Saudi Arabia), with the progressive elimination of national armies and their substitution with an international policy of UN which would intervene, when necessary, to implement the tribunal decisions; the instrumental pacifism, pointing instead to reduce armaments: an example of this may be the Galtung proposal, to eliminate, immediately, long range arms, which are "offensive", maintaining only those which have short-range, and are "defensive" (which, moreover, in our country, are the only ones allowed by the Article 11 of our Constitution that admits only the war of defence); another example could be the concrete realization of the fifth proposal by Langer, already mentioned, about the organization, in each country, at European and UN level, of well trained Nonviolent Civilian Peace Corps, to intervene for the prevention of armed conflicts, to interrupt them through a nonviolent interposition, to reconcile enemies when the conflict is ended .

The third type of pacifism pointed out by Bobbio is pacifism with a purpose , which aims to convert or cure the human being and to make him more peaceful and more nonviolent. But Bobbio believes that the three forms of pacifism can not go together because they have different wavelengths and objectives: the first pacifism searches results in the short haul, the last instead can obtain results only in the long haul. But the experience of those who struggle for peace with nonviolence, with its two arms (nonviolent direct action and constructive project), leads them to believe that these three forms of pacifism can only go together, and must be united in a common strategy which aims, simultaneously, to change the human being, but also the social structures in which he is immersed. Otherwise the result is zero, or almost.

A fourth indication regards the participation of citizens. Although there were positive exceptions, such as the mentioned actions against the second war in Iraq, normally the population reacts particularly when there are disasters. To approve, in our country, with a referendum, the closure of civilian nuclear power plants (which are known as an introduction to military nuclear, which is certainly not defensive) we needed the disaster of Chernobyl that made even uneatable our milk and our vegetables. But if people, to move, must wait until a disaster occurs and that this leads to serious inconveniences, there is a big risk that, if it's too big, it will not be possible to overcome it. It is important to develop what we have called the art of forecasting, and tie closely

the forecast to prevention, and this is true for conflicts, and for possible environmental disasters, that the continuation of our current development model makes increasingly likely to happen. But this assumes that we should begin to organize research and training centres, much more widespread abroad than in our country, that could study thoroughly these problems and train people to deal with them before they become unsolvable and irreparable.

A fifth indication, which I have already   mentioned, is the need to work towards a development model very different from the current, which would start from the bottom, from the population itself, and not from above, and could be environmentally friendly and sustainable. The latest indication regards this issue, mentioned by Alex, of the interconnection between war, type of development, and the way we act everyday, summarized by his statement: "*Against the war change the way of life.*" This assumes that movements struggling against war, those involved in the defence of the environment, and those for the development of alternative forms of economy, those who seek to help the peoples of the Third World out of their misery, but also out of their addiction, and finally the movements of women working to improve their living conditions (women who are often the first victims of wars and misery) begin to overcome a narrow way to look at the world, and work together, not to create a single organizational structure (it would be too huge and bureaucratic), but to begin to unite their goals and their strategies because there is a close link between these different aspects of social life. Only a different development, based on justice, on the enhancement of human beings, whatever their sex, colour, religion or political belief, can bring to our earth a future of peace. One image, reported by Spencer in his sociological text, seems to show how we should work. He talks about the work of a coachbuilder adjusting the bodywork of a car. If a car needs to be repaired having a blow, he does not seek to correct it beating the blow on the other side, at the centre of it. This would only worsen the situation by adding to the initial original blow   others at the opposite side. He begins instead to beat the blow in the farthest point where this is almost imperceptible, and continues slowly to beat the body in the opposite direction and moves more and more   toward the centre of the blow. If the job is done well at the end the body returns to its original state, and we not even see the point where the blow was received. It seems to me that this will indicate how these various movements should work together, each acting in its specific field to try to correct the many faults of present-day society, but with a unique strategy to bring their work to approach increasingly at the heart of the blow, which means overcoming a culture that is simultaneously exalting war, the oppression by the strongest and richest on the pour ones, or by man to women.

As we have seen that the process of "globalization" is going on very quickly, and how all the decisions in several sectors are interconnected, this process of aggregation from below and of the elaboration of a common strategy must not limit itself to a single country, but must involve the entire mankind, through a process that has been defined, rightly, of "globalization from below" (M.Pianta, quoted), and that, in a recent conference in Wardha (India), in the anniversary of the death of Gandhi (30/1/2008) has been specified and focused as a process of "globalization of nonviolence". If this will happen maybe we can have a world where wars belong to the past, as is currently slavery in the forms that previously had. Certainly other forms of slavery more difficult to see and interpret were born, as other conflicts, already developing, will arise, more difficult to see and understand, but if we manage to overcome war and armed conflict in the way they are at present, we will be certainly better prepared to tackle with the new forms in which they grow and develop. Is it an utopia? Posterity will have to decide this, but everything depends on the fact that human beings begin to become aware that war, and   injustice, are not necessary and natural phenomena, and that, as man has invented them, he can also invent the way to overcome them.

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