

# Newsletter 3 – August 2016



## IPB World Congress

### **Disarm! For a Climate of Peace**

Creating an Action Agenda

30 September – 2 October 2016, Technical University of Berlin



## EDITORIAL

Paris, Brussels, Nice, Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray, Munich, Ansbach, Würzburg – all these cities come to mind when thinking of recently committed terrorist attacks that have triggered waves of shock all over Europe. Paralysis, fear, hatred – these are the most common reactions European societies show these days. Though even more brutal attacks are regularly being committed in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Syria or Nigeria – to name only a few countries most frequently hit by terrorist attacks – we are emotionally a lot more influenced and worried about attacks happening in our direct neighborhood.

While terrorist attacks have shaken Europe back in the 1970s with sometimes even greater force, the motives have been of a different nature. Today, the perpetrators of terrorist attacks have mostly been radicalized abroad or are influenced by propaganda from foreign terrorist networks. Their decentralized structure makes them a threat that is extremely difficult to get hold of.

The Islamic State – the most prominent terrorist organization we may think of today – presents a completely new kind of threat. Its adherents are unscrupulous, brutal and ready to kill civilians at random at any second – anywhere. The Islamic State is capable of attracting young people from all over the world (also those in Western societies who perceive themselves as “left behind”), of fostering radicalization and of creating a global hysteria.

Whatever the exact motive of the individual deeds, the recent attacks have resulted in renewed debates on how to overcome the radicalization of European citizens and stop the escalation of violence. Military solutions are the first to be named, and certainly seem to be the most popular. But let’s hold on for a moment. Let us take the time to ask about the origins and the motives of most terrorist attacks. In a great number of cases, the perpetrators of terrorist attacks are driven by hatred, rage and contempt for Western societies’ way of living. They also want to show a sign of rebellion against the politics of interventionism pursued by many Western states. Our policy makers, however, instead of searching for peaceful ways out of this spiral of violence, confront aggression by their own kind of aggression. Violence only arouses new violence. Thereby, it is easily forgotten that contributing to war and destruction in the countries of origin of most terrorists will only bring about more terrorists.

Consequently, what we really need are innovative, peace-based alternatives to the current politics of force. We have to determinedly strive to end this kind of extreme violence, we have to promote dialogue and common peaceful approaches to social and political challenges. We have to drain the pool of recruits by offering real alternatives to the jihadi temptation. We have to engage in peace work and show real social commitment.

This is what the IPB World Congress – among other things – aims at. No more sales of weapons to terrorists. No more dirty deals. No more acts of aggression, no more politics of interventionism by Western powers. It is a peaceful, socially just world we all work for.

Thus, we ask you to spread the word, to register for the IPB World Congress this autumn in Berlin and to work on solutions for the most urgent challenges our world faces today! Terrorism surely holds a prominent place among these challenges, but it may be overcome –through common efforts!

Conference organizing team:

Colin Archer, Ingeborg Breines, Reiner Braun, Juliane Drechsel-Grau, Amela Škiljan, Lucas Wirl

# IMPRESSIONS FROM BERLIN

## Technical University Berlin



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## The Berlin Wall



Image © Flickr. Osamu Kaneko



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## Berlin Mitte



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## The Red Town Hall



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## IPB ACTION AGENDA FOR PEACE

Many people ask us: what will be the **outcome of the Congress**? The answer is of course: many things...too many to list and impossible to know in advance. New contacts will be made, lessons shared, ideas debated. We are confident that **new energy** will be generated for our common struggles. No resolutions will be passed, **but one important outcome document** will be the **IPB Action Agenda for Peace** promised in the sub-title of the Congress. This will be presented at the final plenary on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, and then uploaded to our various websites and social media channels. It will also be considered at the **IPB General Assembly** the following day. It is important to be clear: this will be an **IPB document**, not a summary of the congress (which would be impossible to do adequately). In no way is it binding on the participants. There will be a **special workshop** for those who wish to discuss the **implementation of the Action Agenda**. Since we are beginning now to draft the text, we welcome your **suggestions** for what it should cover. Please write to the **Berlin Office** or **IPB Geneva Secretariat** ([mailbox@ipb.org](mailto:mailbox@ipb.org)).

## SPEAKERS OF THE CONGRESS

As previously announced, in each newsletter we will be presenting two of our renowned speakers. Today, we are happy to introduce **Vandana Shiva** and **Philip Jennings** to you.

**Vandana Shiva** is an Indian scholar, environmental activist and anti-globalization author. She is one of the leaders and board members of the *International Forum on Globalization* and a figure of the global solidarity movement (known as the *alter-globalization movement*). She also is a member of the scientific committee of the *Fundacion IDEAS*, Spain's Socialist Party's think tank, of the *International Organization for a Participatory Society* and of the *Steering Committee of the Indian People's Campaign Against the WTO*. She has received many prizes, inter alia the *Right Livelihood Award* in 1993.

Vandana Shiva does a lot of interdisciplinary research in science, technology and environmental policy. She has founded the *Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology* in Dehra Dun and a national movement called *Navdanya* to protect the diversity and integrity of living resources and to promote organic farming and fair trade.

Vandana Shiva combines sharp intellectual enquiry with courageous activism. Her work spans teaching at universities worldwide to working with peasants in rural India. She has contributed in fundamental ways to changing the practice and paradigms of agriculture and food and is engaged in gender and environmental movements worldwide. She also advises governments, expert groups and environmental organizations worldwide.

**Philip Jennings** has been General Secretary of UNI Global Union since its creation in the year 2000. He has contributed a great deal to UNI Global Union's growing influence and membership. Today, the organization that represents the service sector counts 20 million members in 150 nations and 900 unions. UNI is a force in Europe, Africa, the Americas as well as Asia and the Pacific. To date, UNI has negotiated more than 50 global agreements with leading multinationals. One of those is the Bangladesh Safety Accord, a legally binding agreement that was passed in response to the Rana Plaza factory collapse in 2013.

In a globalization process gone wrong, Philip Jennings sees unions as part of the solution to build a sustainable and fairer global economy. He firmly believes that it is time for big business to work together with global unions to 'change the rules of the game' and create a more responsible world. He has taken this message to the G20, IMF, World Bank, OECD and the World Economic Forum. There, he continuously tries to ensure a "seat at the table" for working people.

In view of his commitment to the rights of workers he has been described as one of the labour movement's "Global Warrior".

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

As we are still in need of help during the three days of the IPB World Congress, we ask everyone interested in supporting us to act as a **volunteer during the congress**. The task mainly is to support us with the registration procedure and with organizing last-minute logistical details. The volunteers will be paid an **expense allowance** for their help during the congress.

So, if you are motivated to support us and make the congress become an unforgettable, successful event, **please contact us** via [info@ipb2016.berlin](mailto:info@ipb2016.berlin).

**Thank you!**

# NUCLEAR DANGER

## Interview with Joseph Gerson

### 1.) What does Hiroshima mean today?

The A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, among the world's worst war crimes, marked the most fundamentally important turning point in human history. Humans now possessed the capacity to exterminate all life as we know it. Einstein was right that everything changed except our thinking. The A-bombs killed more than 200,000 people by year's end— many in most painful and horrible ways. Hundreds of thousands more died over time and to this day with a host of radiation inflicted diseases. As the surviving Hibakusha (A-bomb witness/survivors) teach us as urgently as they can, the meaning of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is that human beings and nuclear weapons cannot coexist.

Joseph Rotblat, the sole senior Manhattan Project scientist to quit for moral reasons and founder of the Pugwash Conference explained that after Hiroshima, our species faced the stark choice of either completely eliminating the world's nuclear weapons, or they would eliminate us.

The A-bombs illustrated the degree of brutality that ostensibly rational people can inflict in the drive for power, domination and as a consequence of “othering” and racism. The determinative reasons for the A-bombings were to bring the war against Japan to an immediate end and to send an early Cold War message to Moscow. One goal was to win Japan's surrender before the U.S. had to share power and influence with the Soviet Union in northern China, Manchuria and Korea. The A-bombings were also designed to intimidate Stalin and his coterie, demonstrating the power of the United States' new super weapons, and the will to use them, even against innocent civilians. As Truman wrote, with the A-bomb, he would have “a hammer over those boys”. These actions were reinforced by the widespread wartime racist propaganda that Japanese were “vermin to be exterminated.”

The outrageous propaganda myth that the A-bombings were necessary to end the war with Japan, and that it saved hundreds of thousands of U.S. and Japanese lives continues to serve in the U.S. as the ideological foundation for the ostensibly “legitimate” preparations and threats to initiate nuclear war. In fact, Japan was attempting to surrender on the terms ultimately accepted by President Truman. And his Secretary of War had advised that Japan's surrender could be arranged on terms acceptable to the United States. Senior generals and admirals, from Eisenhower and Leahy, to (firebomber) Le May and Nimitz advised that Japan was already defeated, that its surrender was merely a matter of time, and that the A-bombings were unnecessary. This and much more information has been systemically kept from the majority of U.S. people.

### 2.) How do you assess the danger of a nuclear war in South Asia?

We need to heed the warning of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists whose Doomsday Clock remains set at three minutes to midnight. As in Europe, the dangers of catastrophic nuclear wars in Asia and the Pacific are serious, and they emanate from more than the traditional great powers. With both the United States and China upgrading their nuclear arsenals and delivery systems, there is a nuclear dimension to the world's most intensive arms race. With growing tensions, military buildups, operations and exercises in the South China Sea (now the geopolitical center of the struggle for world power) and the East China Sea (Japan and China) there is the danger that an accident or unanticipated incident (for example a panicked soldier shooting down an adversary's plane) could lead to escalation that cannot be contained. To a

lesser degree, the same applies to continuing tensions over Taiwan, which is again ruled by a pro-independence party and – as in 1996 when the U.S. and China both engaged in nuclear “signaling” – remains backed by the United States.

India and Pakistan are also engaged in a nuclear arms race. During the 1999 Kargil War they each threatened the other with nuclear attack, and tensions ranging from Pakistani-backed acts of terrorism to the struggle for control of Kashmir could trigger yet another Indo-Pakistani war. Worse, a study initiated by Physicians for Social Responsibility informs us that fires from a nuclear exchange of 50-100 Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons could lead to global cooling, famine, and the deaths of up to two billion people.

With simulated U.S. nuclear attacks against North Korea and North Korea’s nuclear weapons program, the dangers of nuclear weapons accidents, miscalculation and even intentional nuclear warfighting remain.

### **3.) In your opinion, does nuclear deterrence contribute to global peacekeeping and international security?**

The concept of nuclear deterrence is misleading and extremely dangerous. Since they were first deployed, these weapons have been used for more than what most people understand as deterrence: preventing nuclear attack by other nuclear powers. As Bush the Lesser’s Pentagon informed the world, their primary purpose is to prevent other nations from taking actions that are inimical to U.S. interests, for example ensuring U.S. hegemony over the oil-rich Middle East or defending successive South Korean dictatorships. Former Secretary of War Harold Brown testified that they serve another purpose. With nuclear weapons, he testified, U.S. conventional forces became “meaningful instruments of military and political power.” Noam Chomsky explained that this means “we have succeeded in sufficiently intimidating anyone who might help protect people who we are determined to attack.” Thus, as I detail in my book *Empire and the Bomb*, on more than thirty occasions during international crises and wars, the U.S. has prepared and/or threatened to initiate nuclear war.

In analogous circumstances, every other nuclear power – even those whose policies seem to be more rooted in classical nuclear deterrence than those of the United States – has prepared and/or threatened to initiate nuclear war at least once.

Classical deterrence needs to fail just once – with incalculable human consequences – to demonstrate its fallibility. As we learned during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the unexpected happens, and things can go wrong. When the odds that the United States would initiate nuclear war were already estimated to be 50-50, the danger of nuclear cataclysm was heightened by the actions of rogue U.S. military officers and by orders to fire nuclear armed missiles that were mistakenly conveyed to U.S. troops in Okinawa. Eric Schlosser’s definitive study in *Command and Control* demonstrates that such mistakes, miscalculations and accidents didn’t end in 1962.

# **A WAR OF MINDS! IT TAKES IDEAS TO WIN THE PEACE**

**Fr. Paul Lansu, Senior Policy Advisor, Pax Christi International**

Several brutal and barbarous terrorist attacks have taken place in our society (recently in France, Belgium and Germany) and elsewhere in the world (Istanbul, Baghdad, Dhaka, Mogadishu, and so on). Hundreds of people have been killed or injured. Relatives live in deep discomfort and anger. These events affect us all—not just the victims—as people live increasingly in fear. We are just in the middle of the year, but it's already clear that this year will be remembered for the scourge of near daily terror attacks all over the globe.

Some of these cruel acts in Europe have been done by asylum seekers, refugees or migrants. Nevertheless, some of the attacks have been done by persons with a different ethnic-cultural background who are living in our western societies as citizens of the second or third migratory generation. Also converted autochthone people who were radicalised into extreme violent thoughts have committed these cruel acts. Some of them act in the name of their God – often in their belief of “the signs of the End Times” which excludes all the others who do not share their thoughts and which justifies the use of extreme violence in killing the other. In such a deadly scenario, the “life of the other” has no meaning anymore.

Many are young people who choose the violent path for a variety of reasons. Although such attacks cannot be justified, Pope Francis has said that “Europe is pushing its young into the hand of extremists.” [1] In order to prevent radicalisation, societies must make sure that vulnerable young people can participate in society and feel included.

## **Growing Fear and Uncertainty**

A major result of all this is the growing fear among people (which needs to be taken seriously) which, in many cases, ends up creating negative and unjust reactions against asylum seekers and refugees, especially when they are coming from different religious backgrounds or cultures. Fear can lead to seeing the other as a threat, as an enemy. It leads to closed-mindedness. It's a development that we can also see reflected in politics as nationalistic and anti-immigration discourse has been on the rise in many of our societies.

It also creates insecurity, as well as uncertainty. Given that our societies and our world are changing faster than at any time in history, and since change creates disorientation, it leads to a sense of loss and fear that can turn rapidly into hate. Fear becomes hate and then murderous violence.

## **Stop Misuse of Religion**

Our world today is again confronted with the misuse or misinterpretation of religion. Nowadays, we live in the midst of “a war for minds.” It takes ideas to win the peace. Violence has nothing to do with religion as such. Religion is about identity and life and a sense of belonging. Therefore, Pax Christi International works with other religious and faith communities to reveal that God's name has been misused to perpetrate injustice.

Those who claim to believe in God must also be men and women of peace. One may never kill in the name of God. Only a distorted ideological form of religion can think that justice is done in the name of God by deliberately slaughtering defenceless persons, as in the brutal terrorist attacks which occurred in recent months in Europe, but are also intensely taking place in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and elsewhere.

The internet is the key instrument to radical political and extremist Islam. Religious radicals use the new electronic media with greater sophistication than their secular counterparts. The internet also globalises hate, although it also can be used to keep us informed about these terrible actions and enable us to respond against it.

### **Religion Can Offer Meaning**

Murder is both a grave crime and a sin. The use of religion in justifying killings and inspired by political ends is not righteousness but idolatry. Killing the weak, the innocent, the very young and old is evil. Indiscriminate murder by terrorist attacks or suicide bombing is sinful. Murdering people because of their religion or race or nationality is evil.

The issue of “identity” is one of the most fundamental human needs, not in the least for young people. Pax Christi International, as a faith-based organisation and network, believes that religion can offer meaning, direction, belonging, a code of conduct based on shared values and a set of rules for the moral and spiritual life. An identity can be based on those principles.

I ask myself the following questions: how is it that people kill in the name of the God of life, wage war in the name of the God of peace, hate in the name of the God of love, and practice cruelty in the name of the God of compassion? How can we build up trust among people in which faith is experienced as a “religion of peace”? “Trust building” is part of the mission of Pax Christi International.

### **Show Humanity!**

The consequences of the recent refugee crisis (since 2011) will take many more years to overcome. We all have moral and humanitarian obligations to offer our help. Refugees do not have to be treated as objects but rather as people who need their rights to be respected for their safety; and for them, if they cannot go back, to build up a new life. Sharing the burden between governments and society as a whole and offering ongoing humanitarian assistance for those in need are key values in all of this.

We have to show humanity! Our traditional sense of hospitality and solidarity will not be weakened by the inevitable difficulties of the moment. Our societies may prove capable of accepting and integrating the social, economic and cultural contributions which migrants can offer. Indeed, refugees and migrants, more than ever before, can play a pivotal role in the future of our world, and our response must be the fruit of a common effort respectful of human dignity and the rights of persons.

Brussels, 1 August 2016

## GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Date</b>	September 30 <sup>th</sup> – October 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2016 + Side meetings from September 29 <sup>th</sup> – October 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2016
<b>Venue of the Congress</b>	<i>Technical University of Berlin</i>
<b>Logistics</b>	A list of hotels and hostels in the direct neighbourhood of the <i>Technical University of Berlin</i> as well as information on public transportation in Berlin is available on our website <a href="https://www.ipb2016.berlin/logistics/accommodation/">(https://www.ipb2016.berlin/logistics/accommodation/)</a>

## REGISTRATION

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