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Editorial,

The World March for Peace and Non Violence is drawing to its grand finale at Punta de Vacas in the great Aconcagua, or Andes, on the Chilean side of Argentina. Our hearts and thoughts will be with all our valiant friends who will be there celebrating with joy. The event is a triumphal climax for all the work Silo has accomplished over all these years. A marvelous work in the true meaning of the term. An extraordinary man who has done an extraordinary thing and the entirety is now launched into a more splendid future than any of us could have imagined. However, it's done... and it's a Work In Progress!

The Humanist Movement has changed in terms of its structure and working relations. India has its Promotional Team established so let us see how that develops. The first in Asia under the new conditions.

Here in Hong Kong we have our Humanist Association, as mentioned in the previous newsletter, founded in the same moment as the Humanist Parties worldwide, therefore want to join the federation of humanist parties under the International Humanist Party title. We held one meeting hoping to revamp our executive committee in concert with these changes but only two people came to the meeting so this is still a task. We need to develop the Chinese side, not just the international membership. Do consider becoming an active member of this committee.

I myself am moving at a tangent to what went before in relation to the activities of the Universalist Humanists by moving my attention over to the efforts at establishing a local Park of Study and Reflection (Hong Kong). As this is a big and long term project, first efforts are going into establishing a Centre of Work, later to become a Centre of Studies. In relation to that endeavour I am applying for an apprenticeship in one of the Disciplines of School: Materials, Energetics, Mental, and Forms. See: www.silo.net for details. If you have an interest to start the levelling studies prior to following this same path then do get in touch. The final article of this newsletter tells about that activity.

Tony Henderson
Editor

World March for Peace and Non-Violence

"So that the voices of millions who yearn for peace can be heard as they call for the end of war and all forms of violence."

Began in New Zealand October 2, 2009 and concluded in the South American Andes Mountains, January 2, 2010.

World Without Wars - and without violence

International co-ordinator Rafael de la Rubia - rafael@marchamundial.org
<http://www.worldmarch.info/> <http://blog.theworldmarch.org/>
<http://www.worldmarchhongkong.org/>

"Charter for a world without violence"

The "Charter for a world without violence" is the result of several years of work by individuals and organizations that have won the Nobel Peace Prize. A first draft was presented to the 7th Summit of Nobel Prizes in 2006 and the final version was approved in the 8th Summit in December 2007 in Rome. Its viewpoints and proposals are very similar to those of the March.

On November 11, 2009, during the 10th World Summit to be held in Berlin, the Nobel Peace Laureates will present the Charter for a World without Violence to the promoters of the World March for Peace and Nonviolence who will act as emissaries of the document as part of its effort to raise the global consciousness about violence. Silo, the founder of Universalist Humanism and the inspiration for the World March, will speak about the meaning of Peace and Nonviolence in the present moment.

CHARTER FOR A WORLD WITHOUT VIOLENCE

Violence is a preventable disease

No state or individual can be secure in an insecure world. The values of nonviolence in intention, thought, and practice have grown from an option to a necessity. These values are expressed in their application between states, groups and individuals.

We are convinced that adherence to the values of nonviolence will usher in a more peaceful, civilized world order in which more effective and fair governance, respectful of human dignity and the sanctity of life itself, may become a reality.

Our cultures, our histories, and our individual lives are interconnected and our actions are interdependent. Especially today as never before, we believe, a truth lies before us: our destiny is a common destiny. That destiny will be defined by our intentions, decisions and actions today.

We are further convinced that creating a culture of peace and nonviolence, while a difficult and long process, is both necessary and noble. Affirmation of the values contained in this Charter is a vital step to ensuring the survival and development of humanity and the achievement of a world without violence.

We, Nobel Peace Laureates and Laureate Organizations,

Reaffirming our commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ;

Moved by concern for the need to end the spread of violence at all levels of society and especially the threats posed on a global scale that jeopardize the very existence of humankind;

Reaffirming that freedom of thought and expression is at the root of democracy and creativity;

Recognizing that violence manifests in many ways, such as armed conflict, military occupation, poverty, economic exploitation, environmental destruction, corruption and prejudice based on race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation;

Realizing that the glorification of violence as expressed through commercial entertainment can contribute to the acceptance of violence as a normal and acceptable condition;

In the knowledge that those most harmed by violence are the weakest and vulnerable;

Remembering that peace is not only the absence of violence but that it is the presence of justice and the well-being of people;

Realizing that the failure of States to sufficiently accommodate ethnic, cultural and religious diversity is at the root of much of the violence in the world;

Recognizing the urgent need to develop an alternative approach to collective security based on a system in which no country, or group of countries, relies on nuclear weapons for its security;

Being aware that the world is in need of effective global mechanisms and approaches for nonviolent conflict prevention and resolution, and that they are most successful when applied at

the earliest possible moment;

Affirming that persons invested with power carry the greatest responsibility to end violence where it is occurring and to prevent violence whenever possible;

Asserting that the values of nonviolence must triumph at all levels of society as well as in relations between States and peoples;

Beseech the global community to advance the following principles:

First: In an interdependent world, the prevention and cessation of armed conflict between and within States can require the collective action of the international community. The security of individual states can best be achieved by advancing global human security. This requires strengthening the implementation capacity of the UN system as well as regional cooperative organizations.

Second: To achieve a world without violence, States must abide by the rule of law and honor their legal commitments at all times.

Third: It is essential to move without further delay towards the universal and verifiable elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. States possessing such weapons must take concrete steps towards disarmament, and a security system that does not rely on nuclear deterrence. At the same time, States must sustain their efforts to consolidate the nuclear non-proliferation regime, by taking such measures as strengthening multilateral verification, protecting nuclear material and advancing disarmament.

Fourth: To help eliminate violence in society, the production and sale of small arms and light weapons must be reduced and strictly controlled at international, regional, state and local levels. In addition there should be full and universal enforcement of International disarmament agreements, such as the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, and support for new efforts aimed at the eradication of the impact of victim-activated and indiscriminate weapons, such as cluster munitions. A comprehensive and effective Arms Trade Treaty needs to be enacted.

Fifth: Terrorism can never be justified because violence begets violence and because no acts of terror against the civilian population of any country can be carried out in the name of any cause. The struggle against terrorism cannot, however, justify violation of human rights, international humanitarian law, civilized norms, and democracy.

Sixth: Ending domestic and family violence requires unconditional respect for the equality, freedom, dignity, and rights of women, men and children by all individuals, institutions of the state, religion and civil society. Such protections must be embodied in laws and conventions at local and international levels.

Seventh: Every individual and state shares responsibility to prevent violence against children and youth, our common future and most precious gift. All have a right to quality education, effective primary health care, personal safety, social protection, full participation in society and an enabling environment that reinforces non-violence as a way of life. Peace education, promoting non-violence and emphasizing the innate human quality of compassion, must be an essential part of the curriculum of educational institutions at all levels.

Eighth: Preventing conflicts arising from the depletion of natural resources, in particular sources of energy and water, requires States to affirmatively and, through creation of legal mechanisms and standards, provide for the protection of the environment and to encourage people to adjust their consumption on the basis of resource availability and real human needs.

Ninth: We beseech the UN and its member states to promote appreciation of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. The golden rule of a non-violent world: Treat others as you wish to be treated.

Tenth: The principal political tools for bringing into being a non-violent world are functioning democratic institutions and dialogue based on dignity, knowledge, and compromise, conducted on the basis of balance between the interests of the parties involved, and, when appropriate, including concerns relating to the entirety of humanity and the natural environment.

Eleventh: All states, institutions and individuals must support efforts to address the inequalities in the distribution of economic resources, and resolve gross inequities which create a

fertile ground for violence. The imbalance in living conditions inevitably leads to lack of opportunity and, in many cases, loss of hope.

Twelfth : Civil society, including human rights defenders, peace and environmental activists must be recognized and protected as essential to building a nonviolent world as all governments must serve the needs of their people, not the reverse. Conditions should be created to enable and encourage civil society participation, especially that of women, in political processes at the global , regional, national and local levels.

Thirteenth: In implementing the principles of this Charter we call upon all to work together towards a just, killing-free world in which everyone has the right not to be killed and responsibility not to kill others.

To address all forms of violence we encourage scientific research in the fields of human interaction and dialogue, and we invite participation from the academic, scientific and religious communities to aid us in the transition to non-violent, and non-killing societies.

Nobel Signers:

- Mairead Corrigan Maguire
- His Holiness the Dalai Lama
- Mikhail Gorbachev
- Lech Walesa
- Frederik Willem De Klerk
- Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu
- Jody Williams
- Shirin Ebadi
- Mohamed ElBaradei
- John Hume
- Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo
- Betty Williams
- Muhammad Yunus
- Wangari Maathai
- International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
- Red Cross
- International Atomic Energy Agency
- American Friends Service Committee
- International Peace Bureau

Supporters of the Charter:

- Mr. Walter Veltroni , Former Mayor of Rome
- Mr. Tadatoshi Akiba , Mayor of Hiroshima, President of Mayors for Peace
- Mr. Agazio Loiero , Governor of Calabria Region, Italy
- Prof. M. S. Swaminathan , Former President of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, Nobel Peace Laureate Organization
- David T. Ives ,Albert Schweitzer Institute
- George Clooney, actor
- Don Cheadle , actor
- Bob Geldof, singer
- Peace People – Belfast (Northern Ireland)
- Memoria Collettiva, Association
- Basque Gouvernement
- Hokotehi Moriori Trust, New Zealand
- World without wars and without violence
- World Center for Humanist Studies (WCHS)
- The Community (for human development), International Federation
- Humanist Association of Hong Kong

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The Israel-Palestine Question - one humanist's statement and proposal

By Tony Henderson

As I noted, or came to understand while listening to Ahmadinejad in situ, in Tehran 2008 during a conference on Gaza, people are not listening clearly to his words. He is not denying the holocaust, he is saying the Zionists are overplaying it, harping on about it, thus justifying their 'defensive' occupation of Palestine.

Ahmadinejad makes it clear that his stand is not against Jews or the Jewish faith, but against the Zionists, and that Zionism does not have any religious base. Regarding the words 'wiping out', the Parsee was mistranslated. The reference was 'off the map' meaning Israel should not exist at all and was an entity placed on top of, smothering, Palestine.

This was done by a hegemonic western clique that happened to have the power to do so and ignored what would happen to already present Palestinians and what has happened and is continuing to happen - the strategic Suez Canal was a focus then, until oil took over, bringing in the West's motive.

Sadly, the Jewish peoples have suffered from repression as recorded from long ago for whatever reason to more recent times when they were banned from taking up crafts and trades in Europe - for example in the jewellery industry - and were thereby forced to become moneylenders. Economically herded like that they stuck to their own much as many do today in many countries and the term ghetto came into use.

Even my mother would whisper, "He's a Jew," for her own reasons as our local watchmaker mused over the broken watch he was asked to mend. I only felt an odd bewilderment. Our Jewish family doctor was a well appreciated man and his son's were well spoken and cultured and I came to understand that is common among Jewish people - something interesting there.

However, to view Ahmadinejad's statements as anti-Jewish confuses Zionism with being Jewish, the majority of Jews are not Zionists, just like the majority of British are not ardent nationalists, they are patriotic but not extremists or racists to think their culture is more worthy than that of others.

Speaking of removing Israel from the map means there should be no such place and thus, the two-state solution was not welcomed by those taking a strong stand on Palestine. They say Palestine can stand on its own and can be a home to Moslems, Jews and Christians who can live together peacefully as they have done for generations - actually, until the Christian Crusaders arrived with their violent discriminatory religiosity.

This is why the referendum by all the people of that region was called for by Iran's spokesman. Given there is an Islamic majority of course this will bring what this group favours into play but that is the way of democracy - with the proviso that the minorities have their voice and be cared for as an integral part of the whole.

Israel must leave the territories it unlawfully-illegally occupies, namely, those outside of Israel proper, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and the Gaza strip.

Although generally portrayed as a democracy, de facto discrimination of its minorities and its actions in the occupied territories is criticized by the international community and human rights groups inside and outside these territories.

The UN has criticised Israel's, 'excessive emphasis upon the State as a 'Jewish State' adding it, 'encourages discrimination and accords a second-class status to its non-Jewish citizens.' "This discriminatory attitude is apparent in the continuing lower standard of living of Israeli Arabs as a result, inter alia, of higher unemployment rates, restricted access to and participation in trade unions, lack of access to housing, water, electricity and health care and a lower level of education, despite State party's efforts to close the gap."

Since the second Intifada began in September 2000, ordinary freedoms in the occupied territories have been constricted, making life impossible, mainly affecting the West Bank that is restricted by hundreds of checkpoints, roadblocks, barriers and the Separation Wall that has taken 10% of Palestinian

territory on the pretext of security.

Movement restrictions have split the West Bank into six geographic units - North, Centre, South, the Jordan Valley, the northern Dead Sea, and East Jerusalem. Movement is severely restricted within and between them, with grave impacts on normal economic life - Palestinians are effectively prisoners in their own land.

In the Gaza Strip, the Rafah crossing to Egypt, the only entry and exit point for the 1.5 million Palestinian residents, was kept completely or partially closed by Israeli authorities for most of the year. The passage of goods was similarly restricted with prolonged closures of the Karni merchandise crossing, the only one permitted.

What is needed is trust between the parties so the process of reconciliation can start. That will entail a huge effort. However, when the other side (Iran) is saying something it is better that people listen clearly.

Before I went to Tehran I was not open to these different angles, these different perspectives. Having sat through and participated to some degree and befriended such a wide variety of characters of the like not ordinarily encountered, from widely divergent cultures as Uganda, North Africa, Lebanon and Afghanistan - of course Iran itself, I have a new-found respect for the Islamic-Arab group of peoples - of course, that's why travel is such a good thing.

We humanists need to call on all our friends: Jewish, Muslims and Christians and all those from the Middle East and Arabic speaking lands to promote the needed dialogue and positive interchanges with Israel to start building those roads that lead to peace.

Further, most countries started off with a situation of grey-area legality as they were formed under pressures of war and colonising imperialistic actions and likewise Israel has a controversial birthright but it is likely that the situation cannot now be reversed so the reality today demands that a two-state solution be the goal. Confederation could be brought into play as part that solution.

As for the historical appeal by some Zionists that the Palestinians in residence across the territory were descendants of the early Jewish predating the Common Era made by the protagonists of Zionism - such as David Ben-Gurion, who immigrated to Ottoman Palestine in 1906, shocked by the pogroms and anti-Semitism of life in Eastern Europe, there is no historical backing for such claim.

To hark back to ancient times misses the point besides covering up the present reality which demands that people live in harmony and co-operate and settle matters without violence and indeed with compassion for those in dire straights - which is the situation of a lot of Palestinians and not a few among the Israeli people.

Simply speaking, it would be easier if the demand for a Jewish state be dropped and a secular state of Israel be accepted, and, instead of carving Jerusalem into sectors of creed, make it an open city which doubles as the joint capitals of Palestine and Israel, with shared responsibilities.

If anyone is unfamiliar with the close ties between Islam and Judaism at the time of the birth of Islam (as I was) Karen Armstrong's fine book *Muhammad* - a western attempt to understand Islam is a worthy read. The two religions with their one God can easily live side-by-side despite being on different 'sides of the hill'.

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NUCLEAR POWER

Letter to the Editor, South China Morning Post, published Sunday 6 December, 2009.

Re: Why power companies must clean up their act, by Andrew Brandler, CEO of China Light & Power Holdings who states: "...and have begun to build more nuclear and natural gas, alongside renewables, in Asia." (SCMP 24 November, 2009)

We are not mentally ready for nuclear power and we are already abusing our access to today-cheap energy sources like coal, oil and nuclear energy, in the way these are costed today.

The governments run everything, in all countries, and people have no choice nor do they have a say in their own affairs so power companies - for example - can do what they want and put to the media statements that are biased and speak from a commercially-interested providers point of view only.

Nuclear power is touted as cheap and clean. It is neither.

No nuclear power - means no nuclear weapons.

We are dumping nuclear waste because we don't know what else to do with it. This is a nuclear time bomb dropped on future generations.

If we had unlimited amounts of energy we would massively produce an even greater quantity of non-essential consumer products for the economically developed nations upper stratas

which would pollute to an even greater extent our Earth.

That drive for overt spending would further fuel the haves capability to consume in greater quantities the fruits of the Earth, causing even more depletion of the common flora and fauna, and deepen the problems of over-fishing and niche habitat depletions which is a problematic indicator of wholesale killing of entire species.

Megacities need mega solutions thus the rise of agribusiness but it is these monstrosities and their insatiable demands that are at root of the major problems of food and water shortages today. We are ruining the countryside to sustain the unsustainable.

Given that this argument about nuclear power has been ongoing for decades it is clear that big business tied into systematised government behaviour is unlikely to change, unless ordinary people come out in strong opposition.

The way forward is to consume less, demand government transparency to achieve adequate and affordable medicare and housing, go the way of public transport systems, build regional co-operation in regard to energy supplies, ferment regional trade, de-centralised marketing and distribution where producers meet their own needs locally and then supply outside the territory, and scale down everything from irrigation dams to government control where a municipality decides for itself within the federated framework - and controls its own budget in entirety.

Dear Tony,

Your very good letter, for which I thank you, establishes a clear link between humanism and environmentalism, between mankind and the Earth as well as making the point that the likes of power companies and agrobusinesses are working in favour of neither.

Best

Fabian

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The News Agency for Peace and Nonviolence

Ref: Subscription to **PRESSENZA - IPA International News Press Agency**

PRESSENZA IPA, an International Press Agency, specializes in news and information related to the subject of Peace and Non Violence.

PRESSENZA - INTERNATIONAL PRESS AGENCY seeks to provide a renewed atmosphere of human understanding and cooperation and expand the broadcasting space that focuses events, persons and initiatives who promote Peace and Non-Violence.

We invite you to be our Partner, subscribing to our Agency and reproducing our material. Also suggesting material of your own, which could be useful from the optic of Peace, Disarmament and Non Violence. This is an opportunity to help in building a new worldwide consciousness of peace and understanding, so necessary in this very delicate historical moment. The entire contents of our news can be used by our subscribers for free, provided the source is mentioned.

You will also find additional information about our Agency at

<http://www.pressenza.com/main/aboutUs>

Please, do not hesitate to contact us, at info@world.pressenza.org

Sincerely, Mrs. Silvina Sotelo

On Behalf of the Department of International Relationships

Pressenza International Press Agency

<http://world.pressenza.org/>

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Hong Kong
Centre of Work project, looking at a
future
Small Hall -
of the network of
Parks for Study and Reflection -

Dear friends,

We have received the first memorandum from the 21st and 22nd of November gatherings at Punta de Vacas (Argentina) that had input from the commissions of the main Parks.

This is just a further note to make sure people in any form of contact locally are kept up-to-date with the news.

As mentioned we seek a quiet place where we can continue with the studies of School that have been initiated in the Regional Parks. We are reminded that the local centres are autonomous and not dependent on any other Park.

Now we need first a Centre of Works, with a meeting room and lodging for a maximum of 12 people (for overnighting). Later this can be developed into a Centre of Studies. We need high-speed Internet connection.

The Parks are used for leveling work, by the postulants of School that want to be accepted as apprentices, disciples and masters of School.

They are also used to work with the *Formative Manual for Members of the Humanist Movement*, and, *Manual of Silo's Message*, besides being open for meetings, gatherings, etc. of the Humanist Association of Hong Kong and Silo's Message members. Use is coordinated under a booking calendar. Everyone to pay, no exemptions.

Whereas I have been traveling to the Asia Region Park, the Khandaroli Ashram, outside Mumbai, with some regularity it is impractical economically to expect people to go so far and the idea is from now to do the studies locally, but for this we must have the proper conditions.

March 20 is the next milestone when the works will be implemented in Hong Kong.

This engagement is not a therapy, not a humanitarian-type effort nor a charity, it is revolutionary, it is a Way of Self Liberation, thus an ongoing process without limit.

Please make yourself known if you want to participate.

Peace, Strength and Joy

Tony - 29840094

<http://www.asianashram.net/>

<http://hall-inner-light-china.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.silo.net/>

The Humanist Association of Hong Kong newsletter - Asia-Pacific.

Want to receive this newsletter among friends of the new universalist humanism regularly?

Email: [tonyhen @ humanist.org.hk](mailto:tonyhen@humanist.org.hk)

Humanist Association of Hong Kong, membership fee HK\$50 a year, due each January.

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