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Peace Science: Orientation and Reorientation

Abstract: Peace is non-violence and there is only one way to achieve it: peace as structural and interpersonal non-violence. The daily non-violence is as instructive as the spectacular actions of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Peace education is better based on demonstration what we “can” than to postulate of what we should do. The Peace Studies prefer a resource-oriented approach to education instead of a deficit-oriented. Our central thesis is that the youth is living in a kind of transculturality, the best conditions for peacebuilding. Considering the increasing sensitivity we expected that latest in 2075 we will make the war a taboo. The central key to solve conflicts nonviolently is conflict transformation in trusting a spiritual third power in between the opponents, even secularized people. The peace education has to help us to discover the third in nonviolent activities. There is a lot of difficult issues that the non-violence has to reflect in future, including elimination of the extreme violence, reconciliation, an impact of economy, the peacebuilding’s relevance of structural measures.

Keywords: *peace; non-violence; peace education; sensitivity; war; transculturality; conflict transformation*

Reflections on peace and attempts at its realization are as old as the humankind. Everywhere and at any time, people had to deal with conflicts in practice and theory, and to consider methods of solving them peacefully. Either they reflect on conflict and conflict resolution as aspects of peacebuilding in the framework of, for example, philosophy or theology implicitly and secure the results in special scriptures, or they

do it explicitly in the discipline of the Peace Studies. Either they practice peace *en passant* within the wide context of cultural activities and shared daily life, or they do so through peaceful actions. Moreover, reflections on the conflict and peace and their realizations are always affected by the conditions and impacts of the contemporary times and therefore have to be rethought time after time. This is exactly what we will explore in our article. We will explain the subject not only as an orientation of peace studies but also and primarily as a reorientation – by giving propositions for readjustment and realignment in terms of the current challenges, conditions and perspectives (Liu & Spiegel, 2015).

The Peace as ‘Non-violence’

First of all, we have to make clear that our understanding of conflict resolution and peace is defined by the recent United Nations’ decade for *Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World* (2001–2010). From this perspective, peace is inextricably linked with non-violence; indeed, it is only thinkable as non-violence. From the perspective of this understanding, peace science and the Peace Studies (as a university discipline) are essentially oriented towards non-violence, both as goal and way. By this measure, we have to distinguish between the Peace Studies as a discipline that reflects peace within the framework of an understanding of peace which includes dealing with violence and violent structures, and the Peace Studies in a form that is clearly oriented on the practice, principles and perspectives of non-violence (Nagler & Spiegel, 2008). The first involves dealing with the issues in a conventional framework, like academics in military facilities or political scientists in universities that are system immanent – these are oriented on classical military political theories. The proposals of the second form are system transcendent – and, as such, they are concentrated on non-violence in practice and theory. Their perspectives in terms of solving conflicts surpass the classical models that involve violent resolutions; yet, because of the intersections of the two, it is often difficult to distinguish the specific academic direction of the discipline.

The “nonviolent” variant of the Peace Studies usually focuses on spectacular nonviolent actions in order to demonstrate the human ability to solve conflicts peacefully and to show the dynamics of non-violence. The power of non-violence was doubtless the revolutionary discovery of Mohandas Gandhi (1954). By figuring out the potential of nonviolent actions we can learn a lot about conflict resolution and peacebuilding. But, much more and additionally, we can learn from and teach about non-violence through the perception and consideration of non-violence that we meet in everyday life. This second revolutionary discovery makes non-violence much

more communicable and far reaching than the first discovery on its own – which is as a power in extraordinary situations. To reflect this, peace science or the Peace Studies need to make clear that daily life is primarily defined by non-violence, especially against the contrasting impression given by the media. Most significantly, the potential of non-violence as the concretization of peace can be realized by consideration of unspectacular non-violence.

A characteristic feature of peace movements is the moral imperative that their representatives and members like to make clear to others. Love your neighbor, love your enemy! Of course, that's not wrong. But the moral appeal is not enough, and often counterproductive. In particular, young people hate to have someone pointing a moral finger. But not only young people are sensitive to coming in moral suasion. Definitely, we all need morality, and we need to internalize moral commandments. But acting solely on the basis of morality is both a shallow foundation for interpersonal acting and a dangerous one, especially if the moral postulate is not really understood. In the first case, the pure ethical postulate of dealing peacefully with others cannot be sustained through critical phases. In the second case, the moral postulate can develop into sheer moralistic ideology that is close to indoctrination and propaganda. All of this can be prevented by figuring out of non-violence not as ought but as can. If peace studies can demonstrate peace as can, ought will develop automatically. But actually the last isn't necessary – we don't need ought against the cogency of can. And, in our perspective, this can is an expression of egoism, that is, of a synthetic egoism – the result of the insight that dealings that are morally bad (violence) cause bad consequences (violence) and vice versa.

'Resource-Oriented' Peacebuilding and Transculturality

Traditionally, peace science focusses on what is going wrong with the ways we live together. Thus, peace education and peace activism are focused on the dark side of life. In particular, they concentrate on the wide spectrum of violence (war, massacre, torture, rape, racism, death penalty, exploitation, oppression, etc.) in order to criticize and minimize it. Also, classical Peace Studies is primarily organized around phenomena of violence. Peacebuilding of this type tries to change the world by dealing with violence directly: by analyzing it and resisting it. In contrast to this kind of deficit-oriented peacemaking, the one preferred here is oriented on the human potential for peace and the resources for a nonviolent shaping of the world (resource-oriented): the smaller dark (evil) is relativized by the larger bright (good). On the base of this anthropological position, the didactic of peace does not centralize the phenomena of violence but the phenomena of non-violence (Ebert, 1970).

Concerning this perspective, peace building tries to solve conflicts by transforming the whole situation in the context of the human potential for peace. However, focusing primarily on the good rather than the bad (thus, changing the perspective) does not mean to ignore or to accuse the bad. Indeed, the opposite is true. Its only purpose is to overcome the bad indirectly, by activating the good; by a kind of encapsulating or isolation of evil by prioritizing the good¹. “Peace counts” for example is an initiative and a project – a movement and organization – that actualizes the overcoming of evil through the good of successful peace activism, peace education and appropriate reporting.

The (approximately) three decades old diversity discussion is a favorite child of peace education and peace activism. Indeed, valuing the ‘otherness’ of others and engendering respect for others from the viewpoint of acceptance of the differences was an important step in learning to deal sympathetically with others. But equally important, indeed we would go as far as to say still more important, is systematically looking for universals and unity discussions as the main basis (common ground) of peacebuilding. Human beings are much more connected by (transcultural, trans-religious, transnational) communalities than separated by specialties. Therefore, it makes sense to look for a common ethos, a kind of “World Ethos” by Hans Küng. Through this, the declaration and realization of human rights make sense, as does the United Nations’ plea for efforts in terms of realization of a local as well as a global “culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world”. Never before has the opportunity of solving conflicts nonviolently been as great as it is today. As the historians McNiell and McNiell (2004) highlighted, we now have what we have wanted throughout the whole of human history to help us to get along: a global human network. This correlates with our notion of worldwide development into a state of transculturality, especially so as a cultural specialty that defines the awareness and lifestyle of the youth of today.

Nevertheless, cultural differences will exist in lesser forms as regional ones; furthermore, the specialties will be deconstructed and increasingly reduced by bridging the ‘cultural time lag’ between the cultures as historian or political constructs. In this context, we suggest to change our understanding of culture from a ‘vertical’ to a ‘horizontal’. This means that we can define culture on the basis of the same or similar life worlds rather than in terms of territorially shared lifestyles, or speaking the same language, or by being members of the same nation. For example, the rich people in one country are much more linked with the rich people in another country than with the poor people in their own country. Similarly so with the poor – and

¹ This groundbreaking idea is articulated in Paul’s letter to the Romans 12, 21.

with farmers and academics, with well-educated people and uneducated people, with women, golf players, firefighters and military men, and with businessmen and young people. Against this background, peacebuilding can have recourse to a lot of global networks: networks of youth, of musicians, of carpenters, of abused women, of shepherds, of teachers, prostitutes, priests, pilots, hackers, waiters and so on. If we imagine the world as a place of countless networks, the conditions are much better for peacebuilding than a world that is constructed as separate countries, nations, religions, or languages. Our networks of life worlds are the natural basis of peacebuilding.

In a remarkable reflection on religion, the Dalai Lama has recently asked the question whether, maybe, it would be better not to have any religion. The context that inspired his consideration is the contemporary experience of civil wars that are initiated and led by religious fundamentalists, as well as the religiously motivated and intensified violence that characterize these wars. Indeed, conditions and causes, length and degree of brutality of war are often defined by religiosity and based on the membership of a religion. Peace on this basis will never be realized. In contrast to the situation and pattern of behavior described above, we highlight not only the Jewish-Christian idea of a cross-religious convergence inherent in their religions (pilgrimage of the peoples to Zion, the Pentecostal community) but also the increasing tendency of religions to come together. The first step of the unification process of religions on the horizon of the apocalyptic vision of a city without a temple is defined by understanding, tolerating, but much more significant are accepting, then appreciating and finally joining.

It is important not to be a proponent of thinking in terms of linear progress as a means to ascertaining whether the world is developing to a more humane place. This does not mean that there are not indescribably dire conditions all over the world. Although sometimes peace activists do not like to hear this, we assert that this world is becoming better and better. In the context of globalization, human beings are moving closer together. One of the key reasons that we are becoming an increasingly humane world is the development of communication around the world in response to the high pressure to increase transparency and – along similar lines – a considerable increase in the relevance of investigative journalism. It is significant that in many fields there are competitions relating to goodness, with corresponding evaluations and rankings. We can find this in the field of schools and health care and, at an international level, in the creation of the Global Peace Index. To name but a few further developments, there are the molding of a world ethos, major campaigns against corruption, the generating of more and more transnational agreements, organizations, and structures. Additionally and in the context of this

we discover a remarkable growth in interpersonal ‘sensitivity’, of empathy that even includes animals. One phenomenon of increasing sensitivity is, for example, the medical fact of PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder. Soldiers who killed thousands of virtual people by playing computer games when they were young are becoming ill after doing the same in the reality of war, or by only observing others hurting or killing people². Now, people are becoming more and more sensitive and aware of what is ethically right or wrong – a development that perhaps goes some way to explaining the decline of religions worldwide. We have to know and consider this rising sensitivity against the opposite perspective put forward by some people, including those who, as pacifists, are focused and stuck on the more or less broad reality of violence and on this horizon often really indignant in terms of turning our attention to the ethically bright side of life.

2075: the War Will Be Made a Taboo

There are a lot of reasons why the war could be made a taboo in the year 2075 . Actually, making war a taboo should not be less possible than making murder a taboo, which we realized long ago and all over the world. Indeed, we can tabooize war in the same way that we are able to organize safety zones in the center of war zones and to realize the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. In particular, modern history demonstrates our capability of making a lot of questionable things taboo. We tabooized slavery and beating women and children by law. We enshrined human rights and children’s rights in international conventions. Moreover, since the seventies, we have learnt a lot in terms of ecology. Similarly, nobody would claim today that the earth is a disc or the sun turns around the earth. At a particular moment, considerations regarding an issue lead to a point of no return: from that moment, there exists a zone of consolidation of critical meaning regarding it. In the same way, we can forecast the tabooizing of war for the year 2075, maybe even earlier. It is not only the advanced sensitivity (of young generations), nor solely religious ethics, that will lead us to this point of no return. It is, primarily, the close-knit economic networks and an electronic lability of our society that will be essential to helping us to prevent war. Because of the global networks each war risks

² It is a terrible fact that until today more American Vietnam veterans died by suicide than American soldiers were killed in the Vietnam War. Also, about 400 British soldiers were killed in the Falkland War while more than 400 killed themselves after coming home. The dark cohorts of traumatized soldiers who fought in Afghanistan or Iraq are much greater than officially registered, or than are in medical or psychological therapy.

a form of economic wildfire with horrible consequences for all participants of war. Imagine a city with a central electricity supply or a central water supply that loses these due to war. Imagine also the loss of lifts or subways or trains, the communication systems, media, the petrol stations and hospitals, the fabrics and administrations, the purification plants and so on and so on – all due to interference with the electronic data processing. War is out due to the background context of our economic and electronic interwovenness. This interconnected world has become too fragile for a war to still happen. Nevertheless, war is only over if we want it to be as John Lennon once said. This implies that because we are able to know the conditions and causes, the kinds and outcomes of war, we are able to take appropriate actions.

We will not only make the war a taboo but, progressively, the violence in general. Yet, we cannot abolish a phenomenon of the conflict itself. It is part of our human nature, it is the result of many limitations (of space and time and resources) that we have to regulate interactively. Because of this, we will also get economic conflicts. But it is not the (natural) fact of conflict that is the problem, rather the (ethical) right strategies and methods, as well as the means that sometimes we choose in terms of solving a conflict. Violence in all its variants represents an impasse. Anyone who decides to solve conflicts by violence is automatically making a decision concerning the goal: it will be violence because the road is the goal and nobody can achieve peace as a goal if he or she has not chosen peace as the road.

This is a political law of nature, pioneered and defined by Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Also research relating to what are known as mirror neurons confirms that violent actions cause violent reactions and vice versa (a boomerang effect). Conflict resolution, from the perspective of the doctrine of peace presented here, is based on widespread nonviolent conflict transformation that includes interactive concepts of dialogue and negotiations and special attention to subtle motivations of positioning that we are often unaware of (the iceberg theory). Unfortunately, most politicians and even many representatives of the different religions are not familiar with the basics of non-violence in theory or practice. Therefore, non-violence is very often – and totally wrongly – equated with defenseless passivity. Moreover, during a conflict politicians very often argue that they took unsurpassable nonviolent actions in terms of solving a conflict without having any idea of the doctrine of non-violence and its countless expressions. The reality: they never took part in a nonviolent action nor read a book, nor even a booklet, on non-violence, such as the foundational and comprehensive study of Gene Sharp (1973a; 1973b; 1973c). Such people would not even agree to non-violence in the interest of peacebuilding on the principle of advocating a ‘situative’ non-violence (that is, non-violence only under special conditions – for example, lack of weapons or military skills). The intellectual basis

of principled non-violence is the form of peace research that understands itself as system transcendent research (“thinking outside the box”) instead of system immanent research (that includes conflict resolution using violence).

The concept of non-violence would only be a strategy or tactic in order to achieve a specific goal (and so not actually very different to concepts of violence) except that there is a spiritual power behind it (Gandhi used to call this, the ‘power of truth’) and an adequate confession of this power ensures that representatives of non-violence are not allowed to use non-violence as an instrument for his/her own interests. In the end, he or she has to let him/herself be surprised by the results of conflict management characterized by nonviolent acting of at least one party. Anyone who tries to occupy the position of the Third Power by acting between or above the counterparties or persons is trying to become a kind of God for the other. This is exactly what violence is: the occupation of the position of the third power. Non-violence is the opposite: regulation of conflict’s outcome by an inaccessible third power. It is the traditional task of religions to highlight this third power and to describe the social practical relevance of this power: social cohesion as the incarnation of its real efficacy. Spirituality is the contemplation of this power and our attempt to shape life and the world according to the existence of a third. To be clear: the existence of a third, and our trust in it, is the central matter; not the name that is used for this.

Even activists do not have a name for this third and refuse the interpretation of their activities as the result of religious trust (in a third); but they trust in it, as a fact, and they are moved by it. Because of this, non-violence – as a practice that paves the way for the “truth” – does not depend on any declared religious orientation but can be practiced by a declared atheist and also be realized by people that would describe themselves, or be described by others, as secularized. Undoubtedly, though, religions contain the knowledge and the skills concerning how to build peace. Unfortunately, the converse is true since they also cause a lot of partly indescribable brutal violence. This has led the Dalai Lama – currently the most famous Buddhist leader – to the theoretical question that he formulates as: Perhaps it would be better if religions did not exist? Normally, leaders of religions argue not only for the existence of religions as a general phenomenon but also for the existence of their own religion on the basis of its claim to absolute truth. At the same time, we are experiencing an increasing worldwide decline in religions. From the perspective of the religious hierarchies, on the one hand, this development is alarming. On the other hand, it signals the necessity that the religions have to renew themselves, continually and critically. However, on a positive note, the decline could be an indication of the fact that the (ethical) postulates of religions are being partially fulfilled, one by one. The world has become much more human during recent decades. Therefore, the current

secularization could be increasingly superseding religions since it actually includes their best postulates. By considering the history of religions, we can see the potential that we usually only link with religions and religious education but which also reflects the potential found in the roots of secular peacebuilding; these roots are the same as those of religions.

Peace Education

The non-violence doctrine is not of a moral 'ought' but of an empirical 'can'. This approach is basic to the form of peace education that we represent. We can illustrate it using a spiral with nine steps: This spiral starts with pure perception since first we need to notice (1) that we mostly act nonviolently. If we do not see this, other people (educators, teachers) have to help us to dis-cover (2) the non-violence that surrounds us. We are (hopefully) able to feel astonished (3) at the result of this. This leads us to the need to reflect (4) on what is happening and on the roots of our normal nonviolent activities. As we cannot do this alone, we need to communicate (5) with others (including traditions as the sediment voices of people that have lived before us). In the process of discovering a remarkable power behind our nonviolent acting and our discussion about this, we need to name (6) this power (the specialties of names must not warp into the assumption that there are different powers, there is only one – in Gandhi's words: the power of truth). Now, our process of exploration achieved an understanding whereby we are rationally able to augur (7) a power that brings people together and keeps them together in peaceful relationships. In a further step, we can contemplate (8) this power by realizing several spiritual exercises that make clear to us that this power really exists. In the last step, we trust (9) in that power in principle. In summary: our spiral, which has three parts (consisting of seeing 1–3, judging 4–6, acting 7–9), leads us from the perception of our daily nonviolent dealing with conflicts (in the sense of unconsidered, spontaneous behavior), through reflection on this regarding its deep roots, finally, to highly reflected upon, conscious nonviolent acting. The object of this illustration is to explain that we cannot lead people to non-violence, and indeed we do not need to do so; rather we can profile the non-violence that everybody brings with her/himself – neither less nor more than this – and, moreover, we need to do this within the framework of peace education. We have to grasp non-violence in our practice of life (practice), and we then have to reflect upon it (theory) in order to be able to profile our already existing non-violence (practice).

Despite this, we have no choice but to befoul our own nest regarding certain areas. The history of peace or non-violence teaches us that often representatives of

non-violence tend to like the idea of the masses as much as their opponents. They intend to win the support of the masses without problematizing the psychological processes that are responsible for the fact that the masses cannot be more than a ‘paper tiger’ and very often include weak personalities. Against this, non-violence needs to assert its authentic positioning on the basis of ego-strength and reflected opinions. Furthermore, especially in the past, the peace movement was defined by a certain centralism and by its leadership. From a strategic perspective, both are dangerous errors. If you want to eliminate a movement you have to occupy the center, and if you want to stop a movement that is led by one or more leaders you must only paralyze or kill those leaders. But, much more important than this, is the fact that both centralism and leadership are contrary to the goals of a nonviolent society – which is, therefore, decentralized as much as possible.

Another point refers to a particular kind of rigidity that can be associated with the peace movement, especially in terms of lifestyle and the pressure to live a life that is ecologically pure and correct. In this vision of a nonviolent existence, there is not seldom – in the context of specific peer pressure – not a place for owning a car, wearing the newest fashion, using a cellphone, travelling by airplane, taking a vacation like the average Joe, and so on. There is a kind of party line, against which one is not allowed to sin. Therefore, if a member of such a scene is detected by leaving a filial of the McDonald’s (as evil incarnate), he or she has only one way of escaping moral condemnation, which is with the excuse of being relieved oneself. Furthermore, you can detect a moral elitism or fundamentalism in the judgment of political situations and persons and promoting actions. Seriously, we cannot deny that the superior attitude that we sense in parts of the peace movement is based in a kind of hidden aggressivity or an expression of this. This assumption is highlighted by the morosity and missionary zeal, the mentality of moralist and stern features of a guardian of public morals, and a kind of obsession and fanaticism that you can find among some “peacemakers”. Finally, by focusing on peace or non-violence, not least on the basis of an association of terms, the representatives of declared peace movements and peace organizations are not able to recognize peace activities in millions of movements and organizations that do not have the term ‘peace’ in their name. For example: an insurance company is also a peace organization, and an insurance agent is a peacemaker, as is a sports club that integrates people of different ages, status, or political and religious opinion is a peace organization, and a railway company is a peace organization, and so on. What we are intending to highlight here is a kind of peace snobbism. However, in doing so, we cannot exclude the possibility that authors like us – who claim to judge such people by taking a higher standpoint – may be an extreme example of such elitism or snobbism.

Unsolved Issues

Grey areas of non-violence are particularly found (1) in dealing with situations of fateful excessive violence (i.e. the Islamic State) and the question of monopoly on the use of violence (i.e. by the United Nations), and (2) the challenge of reconciliation after a civil war or an intra-state massacre experienced in the tension between punishment (courts of justice), historical and juridical investigations (truth commissions) and pure forgiveness (unconditional restarts). These are highly complex questions between the conflicting positions of non-violence and violence. In addition, peace movements, peace organizations and also Peace Studies tend to focus their critical view more on (3) territorial conflicts and less on economic conflicts. Overall, political thinking as systemic thinking is not one of the favorite tasks that the peace scene is ready to try to solve. Therefore, (4) political theories concerning decentralization and federalism are not at the center of the spectrum of peace postulates although they are important as solutions in the context of interpersonal direct violence. It is true that (5) cooperation with those who support the regulation of conflicts by using violence is a difficult strategic question, since non-violence is actually only successful in its pure variant. Moreover, cooperation with proponents of violence might not only be interpreted as an ethical compliance on the part of the nonviolent activists but might actually be compliance. Because of this, there is seldom much willingness to cooperate with military people or to reflect on the professional or existential consequences of some postulates for these people. Thereby, not only the potential of military people is ignored, but synergetic effects are excluded in non-violence as a principle. Thus, a moral split between persons of two parties can prevent a cooperative dialogical searching for the truth (unless we acknowledge that such a split is found in everyone).

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