

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN



World without Wars and Violence, International Humanist Organization

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Greece, the Trojan Horse of European Union bankruptcy?

Economic violence has radically accelerated towards European citizens in 2010. Unemployment and a drastic decrease in the standard of living has been felt and the Trojan Horse of this invasion seems to be Greece. The appearance of the IMF in the country has led to some extremely harsh measures in favour of the macro-economic numbers but against the real needs of the people.

World without Wars and Violence in Greece started a campaign in March, a steady process of protest against this violence, with the campaign "The Invisibles" which was first used successfully 3 years ago by Czech humanists who achieved the cancellation of the installation of the notorious "Star Shield"! The concept of the invisibles is that they represent the everyday people who are not seen by the politicians and who decline the violent ways of reaction. During these 4 months the situation in Greek society has become more and more violent. "The invisibles" have become a clear reference and are managing to introduce new ways to demonstrate the people's reaction with strong non-violent strategies, while simultaneously attracting the attention of national and international media.



In their last appearance on the 13th of July, the invisibles found themselves outside the Greek parliament protesting and at the same time providing real information and clear cut solutions for what should be done. The central point is the cancellation of the agreement that was signed by the Greek government on the 11th of May, known as the MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) which is unconstitutional. This activity was strongly supported and empowered by members of WwW&V in Milan, Prague, Madrid, Helsinki, Maputo and Dublin outside the Greek embassies by delivering a letter to the Greek ambassadors.



The politicians and the economic interests they protect seem decided to continue this injustice and unprecedented policy. We are equally decided...

Building bridges of nonviolence

Almost a year after the beginning of the World March for Peace and Nonviolence started from Wellington, New Zealand, on October 2nd, 2009, the dream of a world without wars and violence seems to be contradicted by reality: in a time of frightening economic crisis and ferocious cuts in social spending, the only thing that grows is spending on weapons, which in 2009, according to data from SIPRI (Stockholm International Institute for Peace Research) reached 1,531 billion dollars, 6% more than in 2008. As usual half the investment in weapons belongs to the United States, with 661 billion dollars, followed by countries such as China (100 billion), France (63.9 billion), Britain (58.3 billion), Russia (53.3 billion), Germany (45.6 billion) and Italy (35.8 billion). As it happens, the top five countries of this tragic list are also nuclear powers.

Given these sad statistics, the lack of progress towards disarmament is not surprising.

Yet we must not lose hope: the world we want is possible, it is possible to build bridges between people, generations, countries and cultures, different but united by a common aspiration for peace and by the rejection of violence. Last year we experienced this directly with the World March.

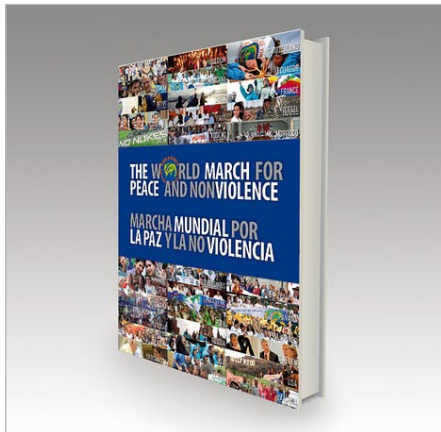
This newsletter aims to continue and strengthen the union and mutual inspiration initiated by that great adventure, giving space to initiatives, news and points of view that can help those who believe in nonviolence as the only way out of the current crisis to continue on their path and to involve others with the same sensitivity.

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The World March Book + 3 DVDs

The book is a very visual compilation, with lots of colour photographs, that shows the best of the World March for Peace and Non-violence. A souvenir and a summary that serves to document the World March trying to reflect its breadth and depth. Bilingual edition: Spanish - English. The DVDs show the best documentaries, films and music from the March.



Published on the 31st of August 2010, to be in your hands on the 2nd of October, UN International Day of Nonviolence and the first anniversary of the start of the World March.

Advance orders (before 31st July 2010):
25€ for the book and 3 DVDs

www.shop.theworldmarch.org

Nonviolence Festival in Canada

The 6th annual Nonviolence Festival in Kitchener, Canada, brought together over 1,000 people under the banner of nonviolence. The day-long event consisted of over 30 vendor and community group tables, a stage for local musicians and speakers, food, children's activities and an "area of reflection" for meditation and workshops on tai chi, yoga and conflict resolution.



Peace Boat

The Peace Boat's global voyage started in Japan on the 16th of April 2010. Along with over 850 participants, a group of 10 Hibakusha (Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb survivors) are visiting 22 ports in 20 countries during the 101 day journey. They are giving moving testimonies of their experiences. World without Wars delegations collaborated in the reception events in 2 countries.



Spain | WwW used the occasion to continue the support of Mayors for Peace, that started many years ago. Putting all efforts in the same "boat", a meeting was held on May the 25th convened by Peace Boat and WwW organisers with invited guests, the Mayors of 8 Galician municipalities, to explain to them why and how to endorse this initiative. Later, the Documentary of the World March was shown, to the delight of the many travellers on board Peace Boat.



Ireland | In Dublin a press conference was held upon arrival of Peace Boat on June the 14th. A Round Table Discussion took place as well featuring many well known participants: Nobel Peace laureate Mairead Corrigan Maguire and US and British parliamentarians, among others. A quiet commemoration of the atomic bomb victims was the final event. The laying of flowers was accompanied by music from a locally renowned singer and active support member of Irish WwW.

Emotional testimonies of the Hibakusha brought the reality of the consequences closer, as they revealed how their health still suffers from the radiation and how an atomic war can effect future generations not only the directly affected victims.



World without Wars and Violence

World without Wars and Violence (WwW) was launched by the Humanist Movement; a network of volunteer activists started in 1969 by Argentinean writer and thinker Silo (www.silo.net). World without Wars and Violence was presented for the first time in 1995 in Santiago, Chile.

Why is a WwW necessary?

Human history has witnessed more than 2,500 wars in which millions of human beings have perished. War and violence continue to be justified as part of a supposed "human nature". An attitude of ethics, solidarity and compassion that is revolutionary and humanising is the only force capable of taking humanity out of its pre-history and towards a Universal Human Nation.

What are the objectives of WwW?

A social movement looking to create a worldwide non-violent consciousness. The vast majority of human beings do not want wars or violence, but at the same time don't believe that it's possible to eliminate them. WwW therefore: 1) organizes social demonstrations of nonviolence, and 2) works to revise beliefs that surround this supposedly unchangeable reality.

Why is WwW a global movement?

WwW understands that everything that happens in any part of the world affects the rest of it making it impossible to act in isolation. WwW therefore aims to act, change and become a reference at the grassroots (district, town, etc), while maintaining a global vision and understanding.

What social strategy does WwW use?

Active Nonviolence! It's based on the ancient universal rule: "When you treat others as you would like to be treated, you liberate yourself". It is expressed by: denunciations, disobedience, not responding to violence with violence, strikes, protests, rallies, personal and social boycotts, and fundamentally, coordinated and simultaneous actions in different points. These are the principle tools of present-day nonviolence.

How is WwW organized?

WwW is an open and participative worldwide organization. It works from the base organizing itself at different levels. The basic structure of WwW is the "base teams" that develop their activities in neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces, the internet, etc.

Struggling for Nuclear Abolition

With Obama's rhetoric in Prague followed by the signing of the New START treaty between the USA and Russia, one could think that we are on the way to finally abolishing nuclear weapons. The NPT Review Conference, held in May in New York, could have been another step on that way. Delegates from dozens of NGOs came to New York, including World without Wars and Violence represented by 46 people from 16 countries.

Before the NPT conference, an NGO pre-conference was held at the Riverside Church, attended by nearly 1,000 people. WwW volunteers took an active part in organizing the event.

On the 2nd of May, 15,000 people marched to the UN Headquarters demanding immediate total nuclear abolition. The abolition torches which circled the globe with the World March were handed to the UN disarmament High Commissioner, Sergio Duarte, by the World March spokesperson Rafael de la Rubia.



During the 4 week long NPT conference at the UN, NGOs were given space for their workshops and presentations. WwW delegates attended various meetings, strengthened relations with other organizations and established new contacts. The World March Documentary, which will be included in the DVD to be published with the World March Book, premiered at the UN on the 4th of May, touching the hearts of the audience.

In spite of all the efforts, the desired step towards abolition was not made. Most of the non-nuclear states expressed their growing support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. However, due to nuclear states' unwillingness to disarm, only a vague commitment for abolition without any timeframe was made. Not much of a breakthrough, considering that such a commitment is included in the 40 year old NPT treaty itself. There are 23,000 nuclear warheads in the world. The conference proved that this is not going to change unless there is a strong public movement putting a pressure on governments. World without Wars must take the challenge and become such a movement.

June 5 – ICAN Abolish Nuclear Weapons Day

On the 5th of June, people around the world responded to the NPT Review Conference outcome. The message was simple: it's time to negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention to outlaw nuclear weapons and set up a framework for total abolition.

The call for action, initiated by International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), was supported by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

50 events took place in 25 countries, some of them organized by World without Wars base teams.

Mozambique | WwW members in Mozambique, who have chosen to work in 2010 with the Nuclear Disarmament issue (whose relevance for Africa is not much recognized), joined the action on June the 5th. A workshop was organized in a public garden, the goal of which was to produce short materials that could be used in future street demonstrations. Four groups of 5-8 people had a nice time interchanging, discussing and compiling the written documents of the NPT into graphical posters and flyers.



Italy: Let's eliminate the nuclear threat

In May, World without Wars launched a campaign for total nuclear disarmament in several cities.

Since the Italian government is trying to reintroduce civil nuclear power despite a referendum in 1987 which abolished it, the campaign also aims to inform the public about the risks with a petition asking the government to: negotiate for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, remove the 90 U.S. nuclear bombs stationed in military bases in Aviano and Ghedi, secure the fissile material, abandon the construction of new nuclear facilities and invest in alternative forms of energy.



Within the campaign many different initiatives are taking place: flashmobs, conferences and events with an ironic and creative spirit.

Photos and videos: www.MondoSenzaGuerre.org

Canada | On June the 5th, in Toronto, World without Wars and supporters organized an activity called: "Screw This Death Trip" cycling tour of nuclear weapons' consulates. This was a 5 km downtown bike tour of the Chinese, Indian, Russian, French, British and American consulates, and at each consulate they gave a very short talk about the history of that country's nuclear weapons program.



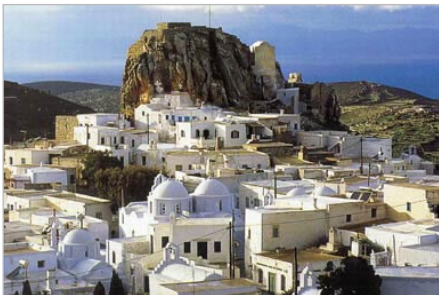


European Humanist Camping

12-29th of August in Corfu, Greece

Corfu will be the location for hundreds of humanists this summer! Between 12-29th of August we will have the chance to spend our vacations together, enjoy the fantastic landscape of North Corfu and the beaches that stretch along the northern coast of the island and extend for no less than 10 kilometres (Astrakeri, Roda, Arahavi, Kalamaki, Almyrou)! Roda village is popular and energetic, hosting restaurants, bars, car-bike rentals and many interesting places to visit in the surrounding areas. Excursions to Antinioti Lake, the ancient Roman Baths and to small inland villages will be organized throughout our stay.

Camping Roda Beach is one of the best campsites in Greece, recommended by the Greek Ministry of Tourism. It is a high quality campsite full of shade and flowers. 20,000m² of land and 1,500m² of buildings are waiting to accommodate us with excellent facilities.



Prices:

Camping: 6€/person/day + 2.50€/tent/day

Cars: 3.50€/day (bikes and motos for free)

Part of this money will be given by the camp site to World without Wars, Greece.

During our rest there a lot of informal meetings of interchange will take place and on the 20th of August a big event is being organised. We expect friends from Greece, Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, Holland, and others.

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Interview: Tony Robinson

the new international spokesperson of World without Wars

WwW&V was very actively involved in the NPT conference at the UN, do you think that we moved some steps ahead regarding this issue?

From the point of view of humanity, I don't think we can say that we moved at all in the direction of nuclear disarmament during the NPT conference. For sure we didn't move backwards. [...] The problem is that there is no political will to achieve disarmament in countries with nuclear weapons. Nuclear Weapons are the Viagra of international diplomacy (they make you feel hard) and there are too many economic interests stopping disarmament.

Everyday people don't seem to have a particular interest on the nuclear issue. Why is that so?

It is inconceivable for many people that Nuclear Weapons would ever be used. They were last used 65 years ago. [...] They are not threatening whereas around the world domestic violence and economic violence are very real threats. [...] Until a bomb goes off either by accident or on purpose, the theme will not become really urgent.

Last year, you participated in the greatest march ever done in human history; The World March for Peace and Nonviolence. How do you think it contributed towards its aims?

We knew that we would not eradicate weapons or wars or reduce military spending just through doing the World March. So we can't judge the success of the March on that basis. However, we did say that our aim was to create a consciousness of nonviolence and this we have started. You can't create a consciousness like this in one year, not even 10 years; this consciousness takes an entire generation to create. In this respect our model is the ecological movement whose first activists started to organise themselves in the 60s.

Our March was built on the work that Humanists have been doing for 40 years and we gave a simple way for people to get involved which allowed us to reach millions of people. Now if we also inspired a few young people in this time so that they become the activists of tomorrow to build on our work, then we contributed towards a world of Peace and Nonviolence.



2010 is different than the 60s where people were on the streets and were making revolution. What is the revolution of today?

You have to see the 60s as a particular moment in history which has gone. [...] There was a clearly identifiable enemy: colonial powers, white people, communists, men, straight people, etc.

Today's conflict is not so much a conflict with an identifiable group of people. Today's conflict is with a system of social values. [...]

Our revolution therefore is against a system, and specifically an economic system, where money is the central value. The problem we have to tackle is that people don't really connect the points of the conflict. It is not clear for people that the stress at home which is manifested in depression, stress, family conflicts, alcoholism and drug abuse, domestic violence, isolation, etc, is connected to the economic system, the banking system, lack of democracy, the power of the arms industry, etc. Our job in World without Wars is to connect the pieces of the puzzle. [...]

What should be expected from the new body of WwW&V elected this June?

We have to build a social movement from a small base. We know that a few hundred members will not change an entire system, so we have to be a few hundreds of thousands or, even better, a few millions. This we can't do in 2 years, but what we can do is to lay the foundations so that the next team can take the next steps. [...]

Read the full version of the interview at www.worldwithoutwars.org

Bulletin of the World without Wars and Violence, International Humanist Organization.

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