Learning from history, shaping the future

ICJA
Freiwilligenaustausch weltweit

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Foreword
75 Years of ICJA, ICYE Germany – 75 Years of Working for Peace

In 2024, ICJA Volunteer Exchange Worldwide, ICYE Germany, celebrates its 75th anniversary. This small brochure is a gift from ICJA to itself and its friends. It is intended to be a useful gift, one that, we hope, will help us continue on our path of peace work.

Given the global situation and the situation in Germany in our anniversary year, we asked ourselves: How can we continue to work for peace? Are we doing the right thing? What kind of peace work is needed, and what can our contribution be today? We decided to set out and seek answers to these questions. To this end, we invited peace work experts to digital conversations throughout 2024. These experts provided answers to our questions from very different perspectives.

In our founding year, 1949, the answer seemed simple: Never again war, reconciliation with enemies, help for those in need (at that time, a large part of the German population). Today, the answer is much more difficult. This small booklet with the written contributions of the experts is intended to provide an impetus to continue the internal discussions and search for answers.

The perspectives on peace work today are grounded by a contribution from Kristin Flory on the history of ICJA, ICYE Germany. Embedded in this is the peace work of the small church, Church of the Brethren, from which ICJA (and many other initiatives) originated. We are particularly grateful for Kristin's contribution, which is based on a lecture. It sheds light on the origins of our organization and serves as an encouragement, showing how much a relatively small group of like-minded, determined people can achieve.

Thus, we look back and forward in our search for answers on how ICJA can continue to best work for peace. We do not expect quick answers but rather sustainable ones for ICJA – by 2025, and at the latest by the 2026 General Assembly, we hope to have found them.

Our aspiration for a new understanding of peace is that peace work is not just an idealistic goal but is seen as a transformative force that connects and changes societies. In a world where people of different cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives sit together at the same table to understand, act, and heal, we want to explore this world from different perspectives with this collection of texts.

In everyday actions and grand visions lies the power to overcome conflicts and live in solidarity. In light of the climate crisis, growing inequalities, and geopolitical tensions, we recognize the importance of volunteer services, understood and realized as peace services, at the action level.

The texts take us on a journey to courageous projects, deep reflections, and inspiring stories that show how closely personal, societal, and global levels are intertwined. From the art of mediation to the courage of the »Women in White« in Liberia, to visionary concepts like degrowth or a new (from a Western perspective »new«) view of nature – the texts reveal how different the paths to peace can be (and of course, there are many, many more). Yet they all lead to a common goal: a more just and livable, healed world.

A central thought runs through all the texts: Peace is more than the absence of war. It is an attitude, a decision, and a process. Our focus on volunteer services shows that they offer a unique opportunity to shape this process – through support on the ground, reflection on one's own privileges, engagement with global power structures, and promotion of dialogue and justice.

This collection of texts is also a call to pause and reflect: How can we contribute to peace? What role does our daily action play in a global framework of justice and cooperation? And how can we shape volunteer services as genuine encounters and transformations?

You will find the answers to these questions not only in the words of the authors but also in the reflecti-

ons they provoke in you. Let yourself be inspired, question the familiar, and discover new perspectives. With these thoughts, we invite you to explore the texts – and with them the endless possibilities that arise when people decide to build bridges instead of walls and work for peace.

We would be delighted if you would share with us the important thoughts that arise for you while reading this brochure – as a kind of anniversary gift for ICJA. We would like to incorporate them into our peace considerations. Send them to icja@icja.de with the subject »Thoughts on Peace for ICJA.« Or bring them directly and visit one of our events, such as one of the upcoming annual meetings (dates can also be easily requested at icja@icja.de).

We would like to end our foreword for this small anniversary booklet with a word of thanks. Thanks to those who made this booklet and the series of dialogues possible. Our thanks go to all the authors in this booklet, especially Kristin Flory for her wonderful contribution about our own history, Jochen Neuman from Kurve Wustrow and Christine Schweitzer from the Federation for Social Defense for the project cooperation, as well as our umbrella organization, the Action Committee for Peace Service, for their financial support. A big thank you also to Johanna Fuchs for the sensitive coordination of the dialogue series, Heiko von Schrenk for the professional layout, Angela Jorzik for translating the text by Kristin Flory, and Esther Rasmussen for her support in translating various texts and conducting image research. And finally, a big thank you to all of those who sent us their favorite peace quotes.

We take this opportunity to thank all former participants, host families and projects, our partners abroad and in the International Office, our umbrella organizations and allies, but especially our alumni, the thousands of current and former volunteers, the members of the former John Eberly Support Association, the current members of ICJA e.V., the donors, and the full-time staff who have dedicated themselves to our cause with heart.

At this point, we think with great gratitude of people without whom ICJA would not be ICJA, indeed, without whom it probably would not exist, and who are no longer with us. Representing many, many others, we mention: John Eberly, Hans Königes, Hildegard Bach, Ilse Schranner, Heino Meerwein, and, as mentioned, many, many more.

Board and Management of ICJA, ICYE Germany, February 2025.

Aline Adam
Jan Duensing
Marion Hornung
Robert Kranefeld
Ruben Hartmann
Simone Kleinekathöfer
Stephan Langenberg

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Johanna Fuchs
75 years for peace

»The ICJA Volunteer Exchange Worldwide (ICJA) and Youth Action for Peace – Christian Peace Service (yap-cfd) were founded after the world wars on a Christian-ecumenical basis with a view to lasting and just peace.« (Vision 2024 Preamble). When the first exchange programs between the USA and Germany, which would lead to the founding of the ICYE in 1957, were launched in 1949, the focus was on reconciliation after years of war. Creating human encounters and exchanges between people whose societies had been at war with each other for a long time was a challenging task. They were to provide the basis for more mutual understanding, with the idea that people who meet and see each other in their complexity are less likely to fall into warlike camp thinking. After two world wars, the prevention of further armed conflicts between the former warring parties was the most fundamental and at the same time an almost utopian aspiration. Since then, peace has guided the ICJA and the ICYE Federation as both a utopian vision and a practical framework for orientation. How this is defined, however, has changed again and again over the decades and the work of the ICJA is also constantly evolving. In a constantly changing society, we are therefore returning to the question of what exactly peace and working for a peaceful world can mean. In a time of crisis, marked by climate change, remilitarization, neoliberal exploitation, the strengthening of the right and the consequences of a global pandemic, but also by immense political mobilization and strong social movements and their demands for justice and system change, we would like to take the 75th anniversary of the ICJA as an opportunity to address this question in depth.

In doing so, we are building on many earlier reflections in the association and in the network as well as scientific conceptualizations of peace from peace and conflict research, and would like to supplement these with current perspectives from science, activism and practical peace work.

The following section will briefly elaborate on the theoretical perspectives on which the ICJA's reflections to date are based. The project of the event series will then be presented, which will provide the input for the development of an updated understanding of peace and the resulting consequences for the work of the association.

Older and more recent developments in the understanding of peace

The ICJA was founded on the vision of making further wars (initially between the USA and Germany) less likely through greater understanding between people of different backgrounds, i.e. through encounter and reconciliation work. However, the work and understanding of peace of the association today is not limited to the absence of war and has changed again and again over the years.

Under the influence of the peace and anti-nuclear movement of the 1970s and 1980s and in the midst of the Cold War, there were various developments in the discussion about peace in the 1980s that were also to influence the work of the association. One of these can be found in the theoretical considerations of the Norwegian founding father of peace and conflict research, Johan Galtung. He was one of the first academics to formulate a broad understanding of peace, which conceived both direct and structural violence as a limitation of peace. He thus considered social justice alongside the fight against direct, personal violence and war as a central goal of peace work. His sociological model of violence, the violence triangle, which shows the interactions between the various forms of violence, is well known. Direct/personal violence, the form of violence that is often the most prevalent in everyday life, is presented in conjunction with indirect/structural violence and cultural violence. Direct violence refers, for exam-

ple, to direct attacks, harassment or threats; structural violence refers to injustice anchored in the social system, for example socially and politically determined unequal access to resources and basic rights; cultural violence explains the ideological legitimization of the other two forms of violence, e. g. through norms anchored in education.

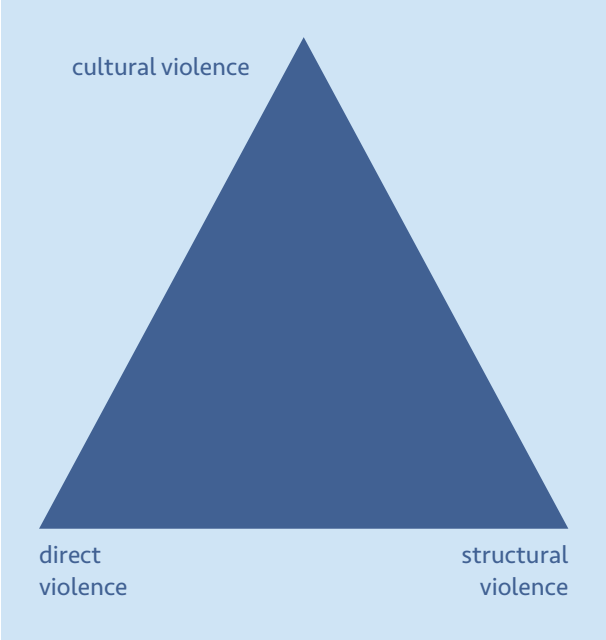

Figure 1: Violence triangle according to Johan Galtung

Galtung's work made the concept of violence and therefore also the concept of peace more complex. From his concept of positive peace, which must include social justice, he derived a link to work for development.

A link that was also important in the context of the conciliar process of the churches, which played an important role for the ICJA as an association with Christian origins. This process of the Ecumenical Council of Churches, which also began in the 1980s and continued into the 1990s, was a worldwide association of different churches with the aim of working together more effectively for peace, justice and the preservation of the environment (creation). Justice was understood by the Council to mean, among other things, working against inequality, racism, for gender equality and access to education and for human rights. The relationship to the environment as God's creation was also mentioned here as part of the triad alongside peace and justice. Interpreting the protection of the environment as an aspect of or basis for peace was derived from the fact that the earth, as God's creation, is to be regarded as sacred and worthy of protection. According to the ten fundamental convictions of the Ecumenical World Assembly in Seoul in 1990, God's creation has value in itself and is not to be regarded merely as a source of resources for humanity.

The derivation of the importance of a changed relationship to the environment can also be found in a similar way in other, currently much-discussed cosmovisions such as Buen Vivir (also known as Sumaq Kawsay or Suma Qamaña). The concept is based on the Andean philosophy of the Quechua and the Aymara, who also regard the earth as inherently worthy of protection and as a so-called »subject of law« – translated into the Western understanding of the state. In this context, peace implies a harmonious relationship with the environment as well as with other people and with oneself. The spiritual elements of the concept contradict the anthropocentric, i.e. human-centered, world view that prevails in Western philosophy.

In the context of peace work, however, peace and conflict research and migration research primarily point to the very direct effects of the exploitation of nature in terms of justice and interpersonal peace. In recent decades, extractivism and climate change have become increasingly drastic sources of armed conflict, displacement and injustice (see e.g. International Rescue Committee, 2024). Pastoors, Drees, Fickel and Scheffran therefore relate the three fields to each other as follows in an article on the connection between peace, climate and development:

They advocate promoting cooperation instead of competition and focusing on human and planetary well-being in policies instead of fueling long-term conflicts by investing more in short-term security measures and at the same time not changing the structural causes of climate change. In doing so, they also establish a connection with historical questions of justice in the context of colonialism and capitalism, which they discuss under the term sustainable development: »[The] three core concepts of environment, development and peace can also be described as follows: Human development is primarily about social aspects, the environment represents the embedding in ecology. Sustainable development can therefore also be described as a socio-ecological process. If we also take the understanding of peace as a basis, which sees peace not only as a state, but above all as a creative process of constructive conflict transformation, this dimension of the triangle also expands. The ›socio-ecological transformation‹ ultimately sums up the shaping of sustainable development, i. e. the shaping of a sustainable development in the relationship between environment, development and peace« (Pastoors et al., 2022). As an instrument, the authors see civil conflict transformation as part of a possible solution. This sees peace not so much as a distant goal, but rather as a complex, long-term and multi-layered process in which violence should gradually decrease and justice increase. The focus is on working on relationships and non-violent conflict transformation.

Wolfram Hahnfeld and Sigrid Dangel-Engelhardt (ICJA)

»There is no way to peace, because peace is the way.«

Mahatma Gandhi

What is striking in this context is the use of the concept of development, including in relation to a quote from the UN, which reads as follows: »There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development«. The quote is strongly reminiscent of a statement by Martin Luther King, who in a 1967 speech made a close connection between peace and justice in the slogan »There can be no justice without peace, and there can be no peace without justice« (quoted in Haider, 2020). The statement has since been taken up by many anti-racist movements, taken to the streets by anti-racist activists in 1986 as »No justice, no peace!« in response to the murder of Michael Griffith, and has become more widespread again in recent years through the Black Lives Matter movement.

The demand for justice from an anti-racist and often decolonial perspective, however, often questions the existing system much more radically than development research and policy or even than conventional peace research according to Galtung. Thus, questions of direct violence and the justification of different means in the struggle for justice are also negotiated differently in this context of extreme structural violence. At the same time, decolonial approaches in the context of peace research have pointed out that the dominant understanding of peace is often based on the invisibilization of racist structures, centers white perspectives and has a tendency to stabilize rather than dismantle existing inequalities. A historical example of the anti-colonial perspective on the topic of violence is the work of the Caribbean psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon, who played a major role in the development of post-colonial theory. In his work »The Wretched of the Earth«, he dealt extensively with the connection between various forms of violence and justice in the context of decolonization. However, in the foreword to the film »Concerning Violence«, which deals with the first chapter of Fanon's work, Gayatri Spivak, herself a co-founder of post-colonial theory, rejects overly simplistic interpretations of his work. She states that Fanon actually insists that the »true tragedy is to be found in the fact that the poor are reduced to the means of violence, because no other answer is possible to the absolute absence of answers and the absolute unrestrictedness of legitimized violence by the colonizers.« It is therefore not a matter of presenting violence as a legitimate means in principle, but of analyzing the cruel structures that leave some people with no other means. In the debate on peace, justice and the concept of violence, the contributions of those who have historically suffered the most from colonialism, imperialist wars, violence and oppression are essential for a profound understanding of these phenomena.

Many people now fundamentally agree on a »positive concept of peace«, i.e. a broad understanding of

peace. The importance of social justice for peace is generally recognized and the urgency of change in dealing with climate and nature for sustainable peace is also finding more space in the discourse. Nevertheless, as we can see from the highlights mentioned, there are very different ways of arguing and nuances in the spectrum of the respective topics. In some cases, these are in tension with each other, but in other cases, points of contact can also be found. The project of the series of events on this topic is described below.

Visions and perspectives on peace for peace work projects

The ICJA has also incorporated various developments and perspectives described above into its vision and work. In addition to the work with youth exchanges, the concept of development and development cooperation also became a central component of the association's educational work and projects. The great importance and the change brought about by funding programs for volunteer services such as weltwärts, as well as other funding from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, made development issues one of the cornerstones of ICJA's work for some time.

In recent years, projects in the area of climate justice have also been developed and climate issues have been integrated across the various areas of the association's work. Social justice has received increasing attention due to the greater focus on anti-discrimination work, among other things.

In a constantly changing society and a world that is always presenting new challenges, it is necessary to continuously develop the basis of our own work and the underlying concepts. In 2024, armed conflicts and wars such as in Ukraine or Palestine/Israel, which are also linked to colonialism, imperialism and resource issues, dominate the news; climate change is noticeable everywhere, but climate policy is being put behind military investments despite mass protests, while environmentalists and activists against extractivism are being threatened and murdered worldwide; social justice and freedom from discrimination, both within German society and internationally, still have to be fought for. There is a lot of political disillusionment and cynicism, the sense of crisis seems omnipresent. Nevertheless, countless people are still politically active and campaigning for change. Crises and conflicts can also be the starting point for change. And the ICJA would like to continue to make a positive contribution to this.

In a series of events, we would like to explore the three interrelated topics of »peace, justice and the environment« under the guiding question of

»What can a contemporary understanding of peace, which can form the basis of the ICJA's work, look like?«

take a closer look.

The concrete interpretation of the respective concepts plays a role here – what exactly is meant by social justice? How does it relate to social inequality and colonial structures? What do we mean by climate protection or »climate justice«? What does it take to achieve this? How are our relationships with nature, with other people and with ourselves connected? What basic assumptions underlie the current system and which are proposed by other visions? What do we mean when we talk about violence or non-violence? How exactly do we see peace, justice and climate as being connected? And much more.

This documentation is based on a text by Kristin Flory, which sheds light on the origins of the ICJA and thus forms the foundation on which the ICJA's peace work today can be viewed. This brochure thus forms an arc of historical and current perspectives on peace and peace work specific to the ICJA. We have approached the current perspective through six 90-minute digital events with various experts in the subject areas:

In the first block, three experts in different methods of civil conflict transformation from the ICJA network will present the basics of their work. The approaches of conflict transformation, non-violence and mediation are each based on a broad understanding of peace, viewing conflict as an opportunity for transformation and peace as a process rather than a utopian, distant goal. In the three events, we want to find out more about the means they use to put this into practice, the challenges they face and how they deal with different power relations and unjust conditions.

In a second block, the connection between justice and peace will be concretized, especially with a view to decolonial perspectives. On the basis of the criticisms and references to the concept of peace from a decolonial perspective, we first want to critically question the pitfalls of common peace work that often remain invisible and, if possible, think them through further. Using

the historical documentary film »Concerning Violence« about anti-colonial struggles in Mozambique and Angola, we will discuss the complex question of violence as a means of liberation under conditions of extreme oppression. The film will serve as an impulse to explore the complexities of violence (freedom) in the peace discourse and the questions of the origin of violence. We will also look at Buen Vivir, a concrete vision of a different way of living together that is based, among other things, on the decolonization of the anthropocentric world view, which always places human needs above those of the earth. The proposals based on the concept of Buen Vivir pose very fundamental questions about the relationship between people, about justice in capitalism and about the exploitation of nature as a resource, which are also of central importance in terms of peaceful coexistence.

A third block will focus even more on the latter in particular, i.e. the relationship to nature and climate justice. In the first part of the block, we will talk about the connections between peace and climate change and working towards a socio-ecological transformation. This will involve both the necessary structural changes and the corresponding attitudes at a personal level. The connection between these two levels, the structural and the personal, will also play a role in the final event. This will conclude with a discussion of the spiritual aspects of our relationship to nature and the environment and the connection between inner and outer peace.

»Peace is not just the absence of conflict; it is the presence of justice, understanding, and the willingness to embrace our shared humanity.«
Adeolu Onamade (ICYE Nigeria)

We conclude the series with some concise theses on the questions: What makes voluntary service a peace service

The contributions to the series of events are intended to provide a basis for further reflection on the future direction of the ICJA, which can ultimately be translated into practical work.

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The Roots of ICJA/ ICYE
(A lot of history, a little bit of theology, and many quotes from John Eberly)

1) My own background

I was born into the Church of the Brethren; my father and uncles and cousins and grandfathers were and are pastors. I became a member of the church as a young adult and was very involved in the church youth programs. I studied at a Brethren college and dropped out after a year to join ICYE in 1974. I was placed in a family that had a pub in a village near Hameln, Germany, but after I'd been there two weeks, they split up so I left – I still wonder if they thought I was going to be cheap labor for the pub! I then switched to another family in another village and attended school in Hameln. After six months I transferred to yet another family in Hannover that had had two daughters with ICYE in England and the USA, and I volunteered at a hospital instead of school. So I guess I was a pioneer volunteer during the days of the exchange program.

After that year I returned to college in Indiana, then went back to Germany to Marburg with another Brethren program for a year in the university there. Following college, I joined Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) in 1978, where I served as a volunteer in peace organizations in Austria, West Germany, and West Berlin for six years. After a short-lived apprenticeship, I was offered the Brethren Service European coordinator job in Geneva, Switzerland, based in the Ecumenical Center. Having accompanied over 300 long-term BVS volunteers in Europe during almost 33 years, I retired at the end of 2019; we closed the Geneva Brethren Service office and shifted the BVS European program to Northern Ireland and Ireland.

2) So what is the Church of the Brethren?

First, I can tell you what it's not: It is not the Moravian Brethren or the Czech Brethren; it's not the Plymouth Brethren; it's not the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde; it's not the Mennonites, although we're very similar and I like to claim that we're their younger cousins.

We originated from a group of eight Christians who committed an act of civil disobedience in August 1708 in a village called Schwarzenau in the principality of Wittgenstein in central Germany. The illegal act they performed was to be re-baptized in the Eder River. All of them had been baptized as infants in the established churches, and adult re-baptism was a crime.

Three of them were women, and five were men. »Brethren« sounds like it means men, because that word is the archaic plural form of brother, and linguistically in English until a few decades ago, »men« and »brethren« would have meant all people – as in »all men are created equal,« or »we are all brothers,« or »the brotherhood of man« – but language and (some) attitudes have evolved, even though some churches haven't. So although some of us want to change the name to something more inclusive, traditions die hard. Our first name was the »Neue Täufer,« then the German Baptist Brethren, then the Church of the Brethren. (I personally like the name »Dunkers« which is about our way of baptizing, dunking in water. If »The Religious Society of Friends« can be nicknamed Quakers, why can't we be Dunkers?)

Background. Let's start with the Thirty Years War, 1618-1648. Many of the early Brethren originated from the Palatinate. The political, social, economic, and religious conditions were terrible after the Thirty Years War there, through to the early 1700s. Thousands of peasants and townspeople were reduced to begging and thieving because of the loss of fields, homes, and trades.

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The Roots of ICJA/ICYA

One historian wrote that »the period when the Brethren emerged was one of continual warfare. It is not surprising that from that beginning they took a firm stand against war and violence.«

As for religious conditions, the Treaties of Westphalia in 1648 decreed that whoever ruled an area, established the religion. The three dominant churches, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed, did not tolerate religious dissenters, who were banished or punished if caught. These were mostly Mennonites or Anabaptists – re-baptizers – *Wiedertäufer* – originating in the 16th century in Switzerland, southern Germany, and the Netherlands. They rejected the infant baptism of the state church because through their study of the Bible, decided that only baptism of adult believers was valid. Most Anabaptists believed in complete nonresistance and nonviolence.

The Palatinate was especially disturbed by switches from the Lutheran to the Reformed to the Catholic faith, and back again. Most rulers were oppressive, there was harsh dogma and rigidity in the churches, unrest and discontent. But the Bible was also being distributed in German and there were more educational opportunities. All of this led to rise of Pietism, which simply means reading the Bible more intently, lay leadership, Christianity practiced in daily life, and other reforms. For some, reform within the churches was too slow, so the more radical Pietists wanted to split from the established churches.

So our Brethren origins go back to both those early Anabaptists/adult re-baptizers as well as the Pietists.

They were also known for not carrying weapons or involvement in the military, not swearing oaths, not attending communion in the established churches. Alexander Mack, who later became the leader of the Brethren group, was a miller in Schriesheim. Pietists gathered in Schriesheim; the local ruler there decreed that Pietists were to be arrested and subjected to hard labor. Mack decided to move to the village of Schwarzenau, which he had heard offered religious freedom. Many religious refugees migrated to this area, ruled by a tolerant count. The count's tolerance was probably also influenced by economics – he needed to attract settlers after the wars during which many locals had fled, so he offered good conditions for land. Dissenters gathered there from all over the European world – vagabonds, Pietists, Anabaptists, Quakers, and Mennonites – a colorful bunch, whose main thing in common was their distaste for the established churches.

The early Brethren realized, after intensive Bible study, that they should create a new form of church community. They paid special attention to Matthew 18 – about settling disputes in the church – and to the commandment to be baptized by what they decided should be »trine immersion,« dunking, or dipping, three times immersed in water. So a group of eight decided to act and were baptized in the Eder River in August 1708. They were called the »Neue Täufer,« the new Baptists. Word spread, they traveled and established new groups. »They were convincing because they were convinced.« They were often expelled because of the baptisms and moved around a lot. The early Brethren numbered about 1000 in Europe.

Brethren shared the Protestant beliefs of the Reformation, that is, the authority of the Bible and the priesthood of all believers. Their differences with the established churches were not about doctrine so much, but about religious freedom, and that the established church laity and clergy did not lead moral lives. Things that were important to early Brethren included: discipleship, obedience, nonconformity, separation from the world, discipline, mutual aid, Biblicism (»no creed but the New Testament«), and nonresistance – i.e. pacifism and nonviolence and not joining the military. One of my college history professors said that the »genius of the early Brethren was that they left out the worst and took the best of the Pietists and the Anabaptists.«

Suppression and Migration. Because what they'd done was an act of civil disobedience, they endured confiscation of property, prison, and torture. Eventually almost all of the Brethren emigrated from Germany to North America. The reasons were not only due to persecution and seeking religious freedom, but also economics, meaning the lure of cheap land in America. Pennsylvania was attractive because the Quaker William Penn offered land to the hardworking German Mennonites and Brethren. The first twenty Brethren families migrated in 1719. Alexander Mack and the Schwarzenau group moved to Friesland and then across the Atlantic in 1729.

The first settlements were in Germantown near Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. Later they went westward and southward; by the end of the American colonial period there were 1500 adult members, and 5000 people had Brethren connections. We were known as a plain people; our clothing and meetinghouses were known for their simplicity.

The Revolutionary War. Brethren tried to stay neutral in the French & Indian wars and in the Revolutionary War, because our people had risked migration to come to a place where we could worship freely and we thus owed much to the British. The revolutionary people in America were predominantly the Anglicans and Presbyterians who protested the British taxes on tea and much more, but the Brethren were rural folk and those kinds of luxuries were not essential. The revolutionaries did not force the Brethren to take up weapons, but did require them to pay fees instead. Brethren tried to have those funds go towards relief of the needy.

The Civil War. Brethren officially opposed slavery, both in the north and the south. Some Blacks were members. But Brethren were not really involved in the abolitionist movement or the underground railway because they did not want to do anything illegal. Brethren on both sides faced difficulties; some were forced into the military and again, some were permitted to pay a fee or to find substitutes or were assigned to care for the wounded.

Abraham Lincoln said, »People who do not believe in war make poor soldiers. ...the attitude of those people has always been against slavery. If all our people had held the same views about slavery as these people hold, there would be no war.«

After the Civil War, in the 1880s and in the 1920s, the church experienced divisions. The arguments then were about higher education, Sunday school, missions, and the paid ministry. Deeper issues were about how to relate to the world, changing slowly from a German sect to an Americanized denomination. We split a number of times and are now the Church of the Brethren, the Brethren Church, the Grace Brethren, the Dunkard Brethren, the Old German Baptist Brethren, and several variations of these names. The most recent split is called the Covenant Brethren Church.

Early Brethren in Germany were millers, weavers, and metalworkers. In America they were farmers. Like other German sectarians, they could pursue their faith best in isolated places. Urbanization however gradually made Brethren move away from a rural economy. The language shifted, too. Previously only German, along with the name change in 1908, came bilingual publications, worship, and music.

Early Brethren were known to be a »peculiar people,« a plain group with rules and regulations protecting them from contact with the world, but in the early 1900s they began aligning themselves with reform movements for temperance and peace, and began to urge the government to take action on moral issues.

World War I. Brethren were surprised by President Woodrow Wilson's declaration of war in 1917. The USA found itself in war hysteria. Other Americans were suspicious of peace churches like the Brethren and the Mennonites because they were of German origin and many were unwilling to join the war effort. A government Selective Service law for drafting men to the military was passed in which peace church members were excused from fighting, but still had to serve in the military as noncombatants.

Brethren were unprepared for the war crisis. The church's peace stance was no longer very strong. Brethren had become more involved in the world. Most Brethren men who were drafted accepted noncombatant status, some went to war, and several hundred refused all military participation, and were court-martialed, some convicted to life in prison or death.

The Goshen Statement. The church leadership called a conference in Goshen, Indiana, in January 1918 to find a response to the military draft. Their statement described the Brethren position on war, being incompatible with the teachings of Jesus, and recommended that Brethren should »refrain from wearing the uniform« and avoid military drilling. But the US War Department decided that the conference leaders were guilty of treason and were about to prosecute them – with up to 20 years prison and a huge fine. So the conference leaders met with the assistant secretary of war and declared they were patriotic Americans, and withdrew the statement. After the war, some Brethren came out of this time more determined than ever to better prepare the church for peace. This also renewed the Brethren dedication to relieving suffering caused by war, and many contributed money to the Red Cross, Quakers, YMCA, and to the newly organized Brethren Service Committee. Much effort went into raising money for the relief of Armenians in Turkey in 1917.

World War II. Brethren were much more alert and aware of this impending war. In 1932 the Annual Conference declared that »all war is sin« and established a committee which advised that conscientious objectors to the military should do alternative service, and that

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Dove of peace fly, Source: Vecteezy.com

Brethren should not buy war bonds nor pay war taxes. Brethren cooperated with the Quaker relief effort during the Spanish Civil War – Brethren staff person Dan West reported about hunger in Spain and eventually developed the concept of the Heifer Project, providing cows and other animals for those suffering from war and natural disasters, whereby the recipients would promise to donate the animals' offspring to others in need. This Brethren organization eventually became an ecumenical organization called Heifer International, which we »set free« in 1953, much like with ICYE.

Historic Peace Church (Quakers, Mennonites, and Brethren) representatives met often with US government officials and President Roosevelt in the prewar years, being concerned about conscription and what would happen with conscientious objectors (COs). Eventually a conscription bill was passed in 1940 which provided for alternative service for religious COs in camps doing government work projects, and Civilian Public Service (CPS) was born. The Historic Peace Churches financed the CPS. The COs did maintenance, construction and firefighting in the national parks, served as human guinea pigs for medical experiments, and served in mental hospitals.

Many of the young Brethren men who were drafted did join the military. Statistics are uncertain but it seems that only 20% of the Brethren men drafted performed alternative service.

The CPS experience paved the way for the expansion of the Brethren Service Commission (BSC) after 1945. Its origins were in special relief efforts in the late 1930s that aided those suffering in the Spanish Civil war, the Sino-Japanese War, and for refugees fleeing Nazi Germany, i.e. for Jewish refugees while they waited in Cuba to emigrate to the USA. Michael Robert Zigler was the key staff person for these efforts. During the war the Brethren Service Commission mainly worked on the CPS camps in the USA. Some overseas work took place during the war with refugees from Spain in Vichy, France, with German POWs through the YMCA in England, as well as in other countries and in many relief centers in the USA. The main location was in a small town in Maryland where material aid, medical supplies, refugee resettlement, and later the initial student exchange happened.

3) Postwar

Michael Robert (M.R.) Zigler wrote: »Reconciliation was highly desirable but most difficult to establish in the presence of mass cemeteries. The records of Dachau and Buchenwald, the destroyed cities and villages, the church spires with sanctuaries missing, rubble and ashes, men with parts of their bodies injured, many blind, widows and children homeless, worn-out farm animals and equipment, lack of fire to heat the rooms crowded with people, not enough food to go around, scanty clothing, these were European realities.«

The long desire of Brethren to demonstrate their willingness to work for the benefit of others in times of crisis was let loose after the war. A remarkable outpouring of energy, funds, and personal commitment took place.

The film »Food and Clothing, Cattle and Love: Brethren Service in Europe after World War II« demonstrates this.

It was impossible for US civilians to enter Germany after the war, but M. R. Zigler somehow obtained special permission from the US Army in fall 1945. He related the story of meeting a woman in Berlin with four children who told of having to decide which one or two of her children to give food to, in order to survive.

Brethren postwar work moved from England to the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Italy. Relief for Poland started in 1946, phased out in 1949 and was restarted in 1957 as an agricultural exchange. The longest-term programs were to Germany and Austria. Brethren work in Germany was centered in Kassel. In 1948 the

young people in the Church of the Brethren in the USA organized the Brethren Volunteer Service program, and in the fall of 1949 the first group of those volunteers came to Europe.

4) »One of the significant German BSC programs involved student exchange

… At first limited to mature students who went to Brethren colleges in the USA, after 1949 it was extended to high school age youth«. (Fruit of the Vine, A History of the Brethren, p. 485.)

John H. Eberly was the director who guided the student exchange program from 1949 until 1957 when ICYE was born. He became the first executive secretary of ICYE 1957-1958, and then served as ICYE's denominational director for the Church of the Brethren until his retirement. In 1964 he spoke to the annual consultation of the national ICYE committees from overseas and the ICYE Board and said (quoted from »HOW IT ALL BEGAN«):

»The beginning of the student exchange was exceedingly simple, unpretentious, and certainly none of us knew that it would have any kind of a future like this… Here was a movement demanding to be started. Many factors – coming out of the war – and in the very nature of our Christian society … were calling for this kind of an effort, a program which would pledge actual flesh and blood, our goodwill, our faith and confidence in one another. You know it is easy to be ecumenical in words only, but when you begin to exchange young people as we did and are doing, as a guarantee of the sincerity of what we say, this makes it a bone fide effort. I think it will be easy to overestimate the role the Brethren played in this and that I have played, but I want to go back and recall some of the very simple facts of those early days. Certainly there was something close to the spirit of God trying to get us humans to move forward and do some things perhaps more daring. And I would say that in 1949 an exchange of high school students was rather a daring thing.«

He continues: »I went to Italy in 1948 in an agricultural program called Heifer Project, dealing with cattle, and in 1949 moved to Frankfurt. I discovered that Brethren Service, through our director in Switzerland, M.R. Zigler, had been laying some tentative plans to do something for youth in Germany. (This goes back to an experiment we had in Poland in 1947 in which ten Polish young people had been brought to America to stay for a year with American farmers.) Someone said, »Why couldn't that be worked now in our programs in Germany?« This seemed to be the seed which started growing.

»Serious talk began with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Refugee Commission on the possibility of bringing some German young people to America to spend a year on an American farm. It was decided that if we could get young people to come to America, they should be from refugee families. But FAO was not the kind of organization which could move people from one country to another. It was different from moving cattle or seed wheat or things like that! Our next step was to relate our efforts to the appropriate U.S. occupation government office, which was the Cultural Affairs Department.

Almut Schüz (ICJA)
»Peace is the masterpiece of reason.«
Immanuel Kant

»… I can't tell you what the plans were. It just seems that they must have pretty largely worked themselves out automatically. We certainly didn't do a very thorough job. We discovered after the first 2 years that we completely overlooked the matter of insurance … But the occupation government was so very directly responsible in it with us that it didn't matter very much in those days whether we had insurance or not because we had the US government behind this program…

»I think that when the fifty young people from refugee families were finally found, they were completely cleared, given visas, and were ready to come to the United States in a record time of approximately six weeks.«

Eberly shared about meeting the first students in Frankfurt at Schumann's Snack Bar on the American military base before sending them to Bremerhaven, and realizing »what will we do with these 50 young people for lunch?« And that »we didn't plan things ahead. We didn't know enough to. But once lunch time came we knew enough that we would have to find some food for 40 young people« and relating how groups of 4 or 5 at a time were taken through the cafeteria line, »there was no disguising that these were German guests because every last boy had lederhosen.«

They brought the young people over to the USA by boat. »Neither we nor the occupation government knew any way to bring them over to the U.S. except by military transport. The few girls in the group were given nice cabins. The boys slept in the general dormitory quarters and were required to do some swabbing of the decks and other chores that needed to be done. The occupation government perhaps recognized even before we did that this was a mistake, and at the end of the year (perhaps in compensation for this trip over in which the boys were not oriented in the spirit of what we wanted them to feel) each one of them was given a plane ticket to go home.«

Another account from the Brethren magazine the Gospel Messenger in 1949 about the first group, »German High School Students Arrive« relates: »When final negotiations were completed, fifty boys and girls had been very carefully selected by the cultural affairs branch of the government from 200 young people whose names have been furnished by the offices of the Central Refugee Commission office in Western Germany on a proportionate basis of refugee population. These young people would become members of Brethren families for a year, going to high school and participating in church and rural youth activities. In the meantime, host families in the USA were selected and approved by the BSC office ... The task of finding families was not too difficult... Harold Row, secretary of Brethren Service Commission: »We feel the American home factor has great value in this project as well as the educational experience which students will receive in American public schools. The thing America has that Germany should learn to know is the spirit and quality of the American home and the freedom and democracy of the American public school. Germany's impression of American family life has come from the movies. But these students will get a truer picture of our community and church life and of our school and business relations. ... There is also the good that will be realized by the host church and family and school that have the German youth in their midst.«

A Cup of Cold Water, the Story of Brethren Service describes the beginnings somewhat differently from John Eberly's memoirs: »As one of the four powers who occupied Germany, the USA was concerned about the future development of Germany. US occupation officials were open to the idea of an exchange program as one way to effect positive influence on the former enemy.« John McCloy, the US High Commissioner for Germany, met with all directors of relief agencies in Germany for a report on their activities. Afterward he asked the Brethren to stay for a private conference, and asked them (since they were already taking Polish and German students to the USA and delivering aid), why not take high school students to live and study for a year in the USA. The Brethren liked the idea, so he asked them to draft a proposal for such a program, which they did the next day. In a few days, his staff replied positively to the proposal »but felt the youth should not be assigned to the agency of one small denomination.« A man from Penn State University, working in agricultural rehabilitation in southern Germany, offered to find homes for 40 German youth in Pennsylvania. BSC planned to find homes for another 50 refugee youth. The High Commissioner's office recommended the program for support from the US government, which then agreed to fund the transport to the USA. A US State Department publication described it like this: »One of the major purposes of the exchange program is to provide the German people with the democratically trained youthful leadership, which they now lack but must have, and have soon, if Germany is to take its place as a cooperative member of the family of Western nations. Today's German leaders are for the most part middle-aged or elderly, and the 30-year to 40-year age group that would normally provide the base of replacement for older leaders has been decimated by World War II. Hope lies with Germany's youth, the boys and girls who were too young to have been firmly set in the Nazi mold, old enough to have suffered the common hardships of civilians under the total defeat of their military and the wholesale destruction of their nation, and blessed with the tremendous recuperative powers, the resilience, and the responsiveness of the very young. (A Cup of Cold Water, p. 153-154)

Were we Brethren instrumentalized by the US government? Or did we just use what the US government provided for the better good?

As he wrote in his memoirs, John Eberly was atta-

Lucie Layaz Carrasco, (ICYE Schweiz)

»Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.«

Mark Twain

ched to the food and agriculture group of the military government which gave him status, and as he said, »the freedom to carry on our own program under our own name. I can benefit from all their help without being bound to them.« He provided the leadership; Brethren Service located »the good farm families who would be willing to take in a young German for a year and treat him as a family member, supporting him, sending him to a local high school, teaching what they knew about farming.« (Cup, p. 154)

Brethren had agreed to find fifty homes for the fifty young refugee Germans who had been forced to flee from their homes in Eastern Europe. But the Penn State person who promised to find forty homes in Pennsylvania discovered that he couldn't find any, so he appealed to the Brethren who after a quick phone call with the USA said yes, and »responded in a way that verified the trust placed in them by their service workers abroad.« Homes were found. The 90 students had gone through »intensive selection processes and were facing the reality of actually travelling to the land of their former enemy. For years they had heard only negative things about the United States. Even after the war, the images were contradictory: »America was Wall Street and Hollywood, wild Indians and gangsters; Americans were weak and degenerate, Americans were strong and brutal, Americans were warmongers, Americans were anarchists, Americans worshiped the almighty dollar instead of Almighty God. Americans cared more about bathtubs and automobiles than anything else.« (Cup, p. 154-155)

»Yet, these youth knew that Americans had been sending clothing and food to the people of Germany immediately following the war.« And »this… enabled the teenagers and their parents to look with eager anticipation to the adventure of living for a year with a family in the United States. Moreover, if one of the children went to the US, there was one less person to feed – a significant help for the family.« (Cup, p. 155-156)

»It was a learning experience for everyone.« Describing their arrival in New York, then to on to Maryland: »They were amazed at the varieties of food available other than potatoes and cabbage. They were included in the activities, games and singing of the Brethren Volunteer Service orientation. They saw their first American football game, enjoyed peanuts and popcorn, and visited high schools… Most host families came to Maryland and took their exchangee home from there… The initial understandable lack of trust was quickly overcome by the genuine acceptance and generosity of the host families… Basically, they were immersed in farm families, high school and church life. They were amazed to be asked to speak to clubs and groups in the USA, having thought they didn't have anything to offer, but were told »we expect to learn just as much from you as you will from us.« (Cup, p. 156)

The first year was a great success. Problems emerged though when half wanted to stay another year but were »firmly informed that one of the purposes of the program was for them to take what they had learned back to their homeland for application there… And upon return learning that »it was not over,« that people wanted to hear about their experiences. (Cup, p. 157-158)

Thus the Church of the Brethren sponsored all 90 the first year, and a majority of the 486 the second year, but other churches, farm organizations, AFS, Rotary and others sponsored students in following years.

From John Eberly's memoirs again: »Into the 50s we continued to receive a great deal of financial aid and other support from the State Department, which actually managed the program. They were largely responsible for finding the young people, arranging their travel, so that all we did was to meet them in New York and take them back to New York at the end of the year. But in 1953 they began to say that they were going to withdraw from administration of the exchange and that we would have to continue on our own, though the State Department would continue with some financial assistance.«

In 1956, the US government did withdraw financial support. The Brethren Service Commission therefore attempted to set up its own program. This was a new beginning. Eberly: »We succeeded in getting only twenty eight students. We began to think that if we were going to have a program of our own, maybe we ought to have a name. So the program was called the **ISE – International Student Exchange**. In a very short time we became aware that this was more than the Brethren alone could handle. So early in 1956 we began serious discussion of making this an ecumenical program. 1956–57 was the last year the program was operated under Brethren auspices (after eight years the program had brought 703 German youth to live with families in the USA). At the suggestion of BSC, an ecumenical organization – ICYE – was formed and »once again the CoB contributed an idea and a program to the larger Christian community.« By »transforming the

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CoB enterprise into an interdenominational one – Brethren, Methodists, Disciples of Christ, Reformed, Episcopals, and others – so that far more people could benefit.« Brethren continued to be involved in the administration of the program and provided host families. BSC headquarters in Kassel and Linz facilitated selection and orientation for German and Austrian students. BVS volunteers in Europe worked with selection committees, and visited exchangees who were going to go to or had been in the USA.

Bill Perkins was a former director of ICYE USA and put together »An Incomplete Story« in 1999 about the early years: »It is perhaps hard to realize what it must have meant in that postwar year for German parents who were brave enough to send their children to unknown people in a land far away that had been so recently an enemy country and for those American families who opened their homes so warmly to the first young Germans. ICYE's origins were like this, in experiences of reconciliation.«

Perkins continues: »It is important to recognize the generous role of the U.S. government in supporting the Church of the Brethren – and later ICYE and other exchange programs. The State Department and the Cultural Affairs Department of the occupation government in Germany considered this kind of exchange worthy of support and believed in it as an investment in the future. Though this might be considered to be paternalistic altruism, it represented funds well invested and well used.«

»Tight housing and the economic situation in Germany prevented sending American students to Germany for some years after the war,« (p.159, A Cup of Cold Water) but in 1952 BSC was able to obtain permission from the military authorities for a direct exchange of high school students. Esther Nies was the first, going to a family in Bocholt, while their daughter went to the USA. Other high school students went to Germany and Austria in 1955-56.

From an interview with John Eberly in 1985 in »ICYE: Fostering service 40 years« in a *Messenger* article from 1989: »M.R. *(Zigler)*, in our simple Brethren way of thinking, pictured that here were young people who hadn't had much of a balanced diet for a long time and needed some good food.« And describing the USA side of things, »BSC recruited host families, oriented the students, arranged travel, and provided supervision. … Families provided room and board, 100$ to BSC, and $10 a month to the student. Families were also urged to understand the background of the youth, which a BSC flier explained: »These young people have known hunger, privation, and homelessness. In some instances, it may have encouraged bitterness and cynicism. We would suggest that you not overdo your kindness. This would create a condition which would be so far removed from anything they have ever experienced, or will go back to in Germany.«

Peace cranes, Source: Vecteezy.com

And from »A True Gift Exchange, Brethren Program for Students Aided Reconciliation in Post-War Germany« by William Eberly, the son of John Eberly, in a *Messenger* article from 2007: »As these German jugend and their parents gathered in Bremerhaven… It had only been a few years ago that when anyone in the USA talked about Germans, they were 'those awful people,' and anywhere in Germany when they talked about the US, they were referring to enemies. … To begin with, said John, »it was simply nothing more but the objective to bring two different people together so they could learn to understand and appreciate the other and to exchange ideas, whatever they were. … We are concerned primarily in taking these young people into our homes and communities for one year under the best influences we have to offer and sending them back to Germany to become leaders in their communities and no doubt in the entire nation.« William Eberly related the story about Gerhard Weiser from Baden-Württemberg, one of the first ninety students, who came to live with a family in rural Indiana, and quoted what Weiser wrote during the year, talking about his reconciliation with a former US army veteran. Eberly seemed proud that Weiser went on to become a politician back in Baden-Württemberg in West Germany.

A *Gospel Messenger* article from John Gwidis in February 1951 is titled »Returned German Students« and relates: »The first group of German high school students have now been back in Germany for several months« and describes their task as »ambassadors of good will« even though some Germans were skeptical about the program, asking »was this whole thing just a political trick in order to Americanize these youngsters? Or was it really an honest effort by the American people to bring about a better mutual understanding between our two nations.«

Stephan Langenberg wrote in 2016 that the ICYE beginnings were »*Begegnungspazifiszmus*« or pacifism through encounters or meetings. Is that negative or positive? He quotes John Eberly: »I don't know where the purpose of the exchange came from. It just seemed as though it was present. The Brethren Service Commission just acted to meet needs.« In his historic document, Bill Perkins describes the Church of the Brethren as a »people of stubborn faith who saw what needed to be done and went and did it.« And »the idea was startling; it was also attractive. One of the major purposes of the exchange program is to provide the German people with the democratically trained youthful leadership which they now lack but must have.«

I found a file of correspondence from the 1950s when BSC transformed ISE into ICYE and into an interdenominational organization. The Brethren Service director in the USA wrote to the Brethren Service director in Geneva in 1957 that »I believe the ICYE development is a good thing. I know that you had some concern about it at various points along the way which I shared. At the same time it seemed obvious that if the international exchange of Christian youth was to grow as it ought to do, the other churches would need to have some way to participate more actively in the program without feeling they were becoming subsidiaries of Brethren Service. … In the case of international volunteer services it seemed to be required from the standpoint of the government in order not for the government to be accused of dealing with the one sectarian group. … From July 1st ICYE is to stand on its own feet and will be responsible for its own budget and its own policy. There will be a fairly clear-cut change from Brethren Service to ICYE.«

Another letter that amused me was from the Brethren Service office in Austria to the CoB headquarters in the USA during that transition: »As soon as these more difficult days of clarification are behind us and ICYE sees clearly what it must do if it will have a program regardless of BSC beyond its normal contribution as a member, will make the program a significant venture for world understanding and peace. This is so important and needs to be carefully worked out in advance because the program involves human life rather than as in Heifer Project animal life.«

5) The Church of the Brethren disengages from ICYE.

Lamar Gibble, based at the Church of the Brethren headquarters in the USA, was responsible for the peace & international affairs portfolio in the church from 1970 to the late-90s and told me that ICYE eventually became a lesser priority than in the 1950s and 60s. His international focus was on the agriculture exchange programs, on BVS volunteers for Europe and the Middle East, general peace and justice advocacy in the US, Vietnam concerns and programs, and ecumenical assignments. He was active on the ICYE board in the US with other churches, but said that the US ICYE organization was a »well-oiled operation and ICYE wasn't a high priority other than our denominational promotion and information dissemination.« He did not remember formally withdrawing from the organization.

My own experience with ICYE in and after 1974-75 was that Brethren were very involved regionally in the USA, and some of my friends had been and were exchangees at the same time that I was.

I found a memo from Lamar Gibble about ICYE from 1983: »Over the years we have decreased our level of involvement with ICYE because we have felt that it was not the high priority any longer that it had been earlier on in its history.«

6) What other peace and volunteer activities are we Brethren involved in?

As stated above, the Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) program was born in 1948 as an initiative of youth in the church and since then about 7300 have volunteered worldwide.

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Our Brethren Polish agriculture exchange started in 1947, stopped, re-started in 1957 and continued until the mid-1990's. This involved bringing Polish agricultural scientists or orchardists to universities or farms in the USA, and sending BVS volunteers to teach English at agriculture institutes in Poland. (John Eberly directed this in the USA from 1957 to 65.) This exchange was one of the only such opportunities available during the Cold War period.

We have sponsored peace caravans and peace teams; we still hold Christian citizenship seminars and world-wide workcamps; we helped create organizations such as EIRENE, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and Church & Peace. We have our own agency called On Earth Peace as well as peace & conflict studies institutes at the Brethren colleges and universities, and we have an Office of Peacebuilding and Policy in Washington, D.C.

And yes, we are a very small peace church. Our peak membership may have been about 300,000 at one point in the USA but it is currently only around 81,000. Created from Church of the Brethren mission work a hundred years ago, the Brethren in Nigeria (EYN) number close to one million members.

Kristin Flory

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Film:

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXbDq8PZbgs (primarily the first 17 minutes until the part on the beginnings of the student exchange.)

Jan Gildemeister

Input on 75 years of ICJA »Peace Policy Developments and Consequences for Peace Work«

I would like to begin by explaining two central concepts. From the AGDF's point of view, peace is more than just the absence of war. Peace is understood as a comprehensive concept that is closely linked to justice, the Christian understanding of the preservation of co-creation, and freedom. Universal human rights and international law are particularly important in this context. The Peace Service refers to voluntary work for peace, justice and human rights as well as against the causes of the climate crisis. The adjective »international« in front of Peace Service refers to the cooperation with civil society partners worldwide who pursue the same goals and support each other.

In recent years, the number of armed conflicts has risen worldwide, with the wars in Sudan and the Middle East in particular claiming many civilian victims. It is especially striking that external states are involved in many internal conflicts. On February 24, 2022, Russia's imperialist war of aggression against Ukraine showed how strong the desire for power of some states can be, so that negotiations no longer offer a solution. This war also has an impact on the economy and social situation, notably in countries of the Global South, which have already been severely affected by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the war in Ukraine represents a further escalation in the conflict between NATO and Russia.

Simultaneously, nationalism is on the rise and the foreign policy strategies of many states are increasingly aligning with their own short-term interests. This leads to the weakening of international institutions; and the western, democratic states are also contributing to this. As a result, armaments are on the rise worldwide and billions are being spent on armaments programs; resources that are urgently needed for social justice and climate issues. The war in Ukraine is also intensifying refugee movements, as more and more people are forced to leave their homes due to war and the climate crisis. Instead of combating the causes of flight and helping refugees, these are being fought in a variety of ways.

Another worrying trend is the increasing number of authoritarian states in which citizens are denied their civil rights. This goes hand in hand with an ever-decreasing freedom of action for civil society actors who campaign for human rights and democracy.

The impact of these negative developments on international cooperation and on international volunteer services in particular is considerable. There are country bans, restrictions on freedom of travel and general destabilization. The situation for partner organizations in the Global South is becoming increasingly difficult. At the same time, the financial framework conditions for civil society programs in Germany are becoming increasingly difficult due to rising costs and uncertain government funding.

Despite these negative trends, there are also positive developments. Many countries and societies in the Global South are increasingly emancipating themselves from their former colonial powers and demanding justice. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and international agreements to combat the climate crisis provide global guidance for good government action. In addition, there are globally networked social movements that are campaigning for justice and action against the climate crisis. Although these movements are struggling with difficult framework conditions, they are continuing their work and are developing and practicing alternatives such as an ecological and solidarity-based economy.

These developments have also strengthened civic criticism of neo-colonial power structures and racism,

Peace Initiatives Across Europe – transform!europe. Source: Wikimedia Commons

as well as climate-damaging programs and structures. The difficult conditions are also having an impact on peace work in Germany. There is an increased uncertainty as well as frustration and a lack of prospects. Conspiracy theories and right-wing ideas are also progressively widespread in the middle of society. Peace policy issues such as disarmament and civil conflict management have fallen out of focus, especially among the younger generation.

What does this mean for peace work in Germany? Firstly, we should remain realistic: Direct influence on global peace policy developments is limited for us as civil society, but we can achieve a lot together at various levels. A profound transformation is necessary to meet the challenges of the climate crisis and wars. In our peace work, we must continuously address the consequences of the crises and, above all, ask critical questions. Transformation must come from civil society and be driven forward worldwide.

Despite the difficult framework conditions, we must not forget the successes and progress. Peace services and international exchange have become more effective; and change is also possible through small steps in the social environment. However, this raises the question of how we can become more resilient as actors for peace, justice and climate protection. This requires not only resistance against political opponents and state repression, but also against hopelessness and a lack of prospects.

Peace work is more than a commitment against war and armament. The crises and challenges we face worldwide are interlinked and require a shared awareness and willingness to cooperate. This also applies to cooperation between different political strategies and actors. It is vital that we continuously monitor and adapt the desired and undesired effects of our strategies.

Honesty, learning from our mistakes, and aligning our internal structures with our substantive goals is essential for the credibility of our work. Peace work will only be convincing and gain acceptance if we acknowledge reality and, if necessary, distance ourselves from outdated positions.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that cross-border face-to-face encounters are important in order to win over multipliers and strengthen international civil society movements. Although digital communication is likewise important, it is not enough, especially in peace work.

Jan Gildemeister is a political scientist and has been managing director of the AGDF, Action Group Service for Peace, since 2000 and of Protestant Peace Work since 2009.

Dr. Christine Schweitzer
»Non-violence and Alternative Security – a Basis for more Peace?«

Peace is under threat – from conflicts such as the war in Ukraine, armament, tensions between superpowers and climate change. The Doomsday Clock shows 90 seconds to midnight, the closest it has been since its inception in 1947. To prevent escalation, we need a radical rethink and a focus on non-violence.

Nonviolent conflict resolution is socially accepted, but receives little international and media attention, even though it is often successful. Studies show that non-violent movements create democracies more effectively and sustainably than violent movements do (see Chenoweth & Stephan, 2024). Examples such as the peace movements of the 1980s or the »Women in White« in Liberia prove the effectiveness of civil conflict management (Schweitzer 2014). Nonviolence also offers alternative security concepts that focus on civilian means rather than military strength. Conflicts can be resolved peacefully through prevention and a variety of methods – an essential perspective for a safer world.

Non-violent approaches have the potential to make a decisive contribution to peace and reconciliation, as two examples show: In Liberia, the »Women in White« led to peace negotiations being taken seriously and a ceasefire being reached through their determined protest. They locked hotel rooms, confronted the negotiating parties and thus exerted political pressure through civil courage and social support.

Another example is the Center for Non-Violence in Bosnia and Serbia (see https://deutsch.wikibrief.org/wiki/Centre_for_Nonviolent_Action), which brings together former warring parties. Joint memorials are being created there to build a bridge between the warring parties. The work with veterans, who use their personal experiences to actively campaign for peace, is particularly impressive.

Civilian peacekeeping, the unarmed engagement of local groups or international organizations in conflict areas to protect the civilian population without weapons, also shows that non-violence is not just a vision, but can be an effective means of sustainable peace work. These examples illustrate that both civil society and individuals can have a major impact on conflict resolution.

The concept of social defense is based on the idea that no aggressor or ruler can achieve their goals without the cooperation of the population. It uses methods such as general strikes and civil disobedience to fend off military attacks or coups – non-violently and by refusing to cooperate. There have been examples of this in dictatorships that were overthrown through civil resistance and mass demonstrations, often despite massive repression.

Ruben Hartmann (ICJA)
»Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.”«
Nelson Mandela

The Federation of Social Defense was founded in 1989, inspired by discussions about the abolition of the military and the policy of détente at the time. While the topic of social defense lost attention in the 2000s, it came back into focus in light of current conflicts such as the war in Ukraine. Social defense offers an alternative to military resistance and is a special case of civil resistance in which long-term cooperation is crucial.

Demonstration in Bonn, 10. October 1981. Source: Alexander-Klier (CC BY-CA)

The idea has historical roots, for example with Gandhi or in rudiments after the First World War, and was explored more intensively after the Second World War in view of the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

The book Winning the War in Peace by Basil Liddell Hart, a British officer and politician, was a milestone in the discussion about alternative security concepts in 1958. It argued that a nuclear war could not be won, and that military defense would inevitably end in total destruction. Liddell Hart saw non-military defense as the only solution. This central argument was taken up by peace researchers and supplemented by historical studies. Since 2014, but especially since 2022, interest in social defense has increased sharply again.

To summarize: there are numerous non-violent alternatives to war and violence. The variety of examples and stories is so great that one could spend days recounting them. Ending wars and securing peace requires the joint efforts of all levels of society. The example of the »Women in White« shows that social defense can be successful in civil wars or as an alternative to military defense. Although there is no guarantee of success, the consequences of failure are far less devastating than those of a lost war.

Peace work begins in times without conflict: solidarity, support for conscientious objectors and the organization of spaces for dialogue can create important conditions for conflict transformation. These approaches offer hope and concrete ways out of violence and destruction.

Dr. Christine Schweitzer was Managing Director of the Federation for Social Defense until 2025 and is furthermore a research associate at the Institute for Peace Work and Nonviolent Conflict Transformation. Her focus areas are civil conflict management, social defense, non-violent intervention in violent conflicts and civil peacekeeping. She has been active in the peace movement since her studies in the 1980s. Among other things, she was co-founder and first coordinator of the international Balkan Peace Team and worked for the INRO Nonviolent Peaceforce as research and later program director.

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Ziviles Peacekeeping, Dossier 83 der Zeitschrift Wissenschaft & Frieden, access here: https://soziale-verteidigung.de/produkt/ziviles-peacekeeping-wf-dossier-83/
Materials on social defense can be found here: https://soziale-verteidigung.de/soziale-verteidigung/

Jochen Neumann
»Conflicts as a Source of Social Transformation«

Conflict is an everyday concept that everyone knows and associates with their own, often emotional experiences – both positive and negative. Conflicts are not negative per se, but unavoidable side effects of social coexistence, as Norbert Ropers defines them: they arise from tensions and incompatibilities between two or more parties with regard to their needs, interests, or values. It is crucial that conflicts are resolved constructively rather than through violence in order to promote social change.

A second definition by Friedrich Glasl adds that a conflict is a process in which parties clash due to different or presumed different positions, interests, values, or needs. Conflicts therefore offer potential for development and change if they are approached constructively.

There are various theoretical approaches to conflicts, ranging from positions and needs to values or social structures. Different perspectives – for example from the critique of capitalism or philosophical traditions such as Marx and Weber – shape the way conflicts are dealt with. It is important to view conflicts not just as a dispute or loss, but as an opportunity for dialogue, cooperation, and transformation. In everyday life, we already deal with many conflicts constructively and use them for positive change.

Before conflicts can be dealt with, it is crucial to first understand them. This applies to both private and social conflicts. People often react impulsively, driven by emotions, instead of pausing to look at the situation from a meta-level. There are various models and tools available to better analyze conflicts.

A central model is the **conflict phase model**, which describes the ideal-typical course of a conflict. It begins with a latent phase in which the conflict remains subliminal before developing into tension and confrontation. The climax is the crisis, which is often accompanied by violence or escalation. This is followed by de-escalation, ideally again followed by sustained work on the causes of the conflict in the post-conflict phase. It is important to recognize where the conflict is in its course so as to be able to take targeted action. However, not every conflict is linear; there are often relapses or renewed escalations that jeopardize long-term solutions.

Another helpful tool is the **onion model**, which depicts the different levels of conflict. First, the **positions** – the demands or statements of the parties – are visible. A deeper analysis reveals the underlying **interests**, i. e. the motives behind the positions. Beneath this lie the fundamental **needs** that often drive the conflict. A well-known example is the argument between two sisters over an orange: both want the orange, but their interests differ – one wants the juice, the other the peel for baking. By understanding their needs, a solution can be found that satisfies both of them.

Such models help to systematically analyze conflicts and understand them not only as problems, but also as opportunities for change and understanding.

The example of the orange illustrates how different approaches to conflict management can lead to different solutions depending on the level of analysis. A simple solution would be a **compromise** in which the orange is cut in half so that each sister receives one half. This avoids violence and leads to a superficial win-win situation. However, with a deeper analysis, better results can be achieved.

By understanding the **interests** behind the demands, it becomes clear that one sister wants the flesh to eat it, while the other needs the peel for baking. In this case, both can fulfill 100% of their needs: One gets all the pulp, the other gets all the peel. This goes beyond a compromise and allows for complete satisfaction.

Going even further, the analysis of **needs** shows that it is not just about food or self-preservation, but also about interpersonal relationships. If the sister who

wants to bake the cake does so to make her mother happy, the sisters can recognize that they have a common goal. They could bake the cake together and give it as a gift. This not only resolves the conflict but also strengthens the relationship between the sisters.

This example shows how analyzing **positions**, **interests** and **needs** can not only lead to a better understanding of conflicts, but also to creative and cooperative solutions that go beyond simple compromises.

The third part is about how we deal with conflicts once we have a better understanding of them, both on a personal and societal level. Everyone has different types of conflict behavior, e.g. some tend to avoid, others to confront or to cooperate. It is important to consider both the issue and the relationship when dealing with conflict. A cooperative solution is about working together to create a win-win situation rather than just getting your own way or preserving the relationship.

Christine Schweizer defines conflict transformation as the resolution of conflicts without violence, taking all interests into account. In a broader sense, civil conflict management means the use of non-military means to prevent and resolve conflicts. The role of civil society below government level is particularly important here. Civil conflict management is often emphasized as a non-violent solution.

A complex overview by Wolfgang Heinrich shows various methods of conflict management, organized according to conflict phases and social levels, from international to state level. The choice of method depends on the phase of the conflict. Peace-building seminars are less effective in hot phases, as people in acute conflicts have no time for such training.

Mediation and negotiation play a central role in the context of conflict management (see article by Jan Sunoo in this issue). A third party acts as a mediator between the parties to the conflict so as to find a solution. In arbitration, the third party can issue a binding ruling, which can be enforced under certain circumstances. However, mediation and negotiation are not the only methods. There is a wide range of approaches that require different roles for third parties depending on the phase and intensity of the conflict.

At the beginning of a conflict, when tensions are latent, humanitarian aid or training in conflict management skills can be important to reduce tensions. If open conflicts arise, it makes sense to use mediators or arbitrators to clarify the interests of the parties. In escalated conflicts, the documentation of human rights violations or the presence of peacekeepers is necessary to stop the violence.

Civic conflict transformation aims to influence power relations using non-violent methods. Conflicts often arise due to an unequal distribution of power, which leads to discrimination and oppression. In these cases, a non-violent counter-power can be built up to change the balance of power through strategic actions and ultimately lead to negotiations on an equal footing.

With regard to the Ukraine conflict, it is argued that non-violent methods and the establishment of countervailing power are more effective than immediate negotiations, especially if one side dominates the negotiations. In this context, violent clashes can be seen as an attempt to establish countervailing power so as to achieve something later at the negotiating table.

Jochen Neumann is Managing Director of KURVE Wustrow – Centre for Training and Networking in Nonviolent Action, mediator and trainer for civil, nonviolent conflict transformation, including training as a peace specialist. He supported mediation and reconciliation projects in South Africa and was responsible for the mainstreaming of the Do-No-Harm approach at a human rights organization.

Source: UN Office for Disarmament Affairs

Jan Sunoo

The simple magic of mediation

Mediation is a process that anyone can learn, even school children, and it has the power to transform conflict resolution. Conflicts can be resolved through power, rights or laws, and interests. Power struggles result in one side winning and the other losing, with little control for the impacted party. Rights or laws involve judges or arbitrators deciding the outcome, often seen as a win-lose process.

Interest-based resolution, such as conversations, negotiations, or mediation, allows for win-win solutions by addressing both sides' concerns. This method gives the impacted party the most control. In stable societies, decisions are mainly based on interests and the law, while in unstable societies, this priority is often reversed.

Mediation involves a structured conversation led by a mutually acceptable mediator, with all decisions made voluntarily. It is intuitive, easy to learn, effective, and satisfying. Mediation encourages people in conflict to share their stories and work on mutual solutions in a safe environment.

For over 30 years, mediation has been taught and practiced by diverse groups, including school children, professionals, and even soldiers. At the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), mediators often continue working because they love the job, leading to one of the oldest average workforces among federal agencies in the US.

Here's a quick overview of the important steps in a mediation session:

1. Preparation: The mediator gathers background information and arranges a neutral, comfortable space to promote mutual problem-solving.

2. Mediator's Introduction: The mediator explains the process, sets ground rules, and clarifies their role as a process expert, while the disputants are the content experts. Ground rules include speaking to the mediator first, not interrupting, avoiding name-calling, and taking breaks if needed. Mediation is voluntary, and either party can leave if uncomfortable.

3. Disputants' Opening Statements and Mediator's Feedback: The mediator lets the more upset party speak first, allowing each disputant to explain their view, concerns, and interests without interruption. The mediator uses active listening to ensure understanding and respect.

These steps create a foundation for a productive mediation session, enabling both parties to share their perspectives and work towards a mutually acceptable solution.

In mediation, I summarize each party's statements without interruptions, allowing both sides to express their views. I take notes and create an agenda, confirming it with both parties before moving to negotiation. Negotiation involves asking questions to uncover underlying interests and concerns, encouraging joint problem-solving. If an impasse is reached, I may speak to each party separately to gather more information. Finally, I summarize the agreement to ensure both parties understand and accept the terms, detailing who will do what, when, and how the plan will be implemented.

Mediation is used in many areas and has grown globally. In Korea, it is expanding in commercial disputes, school conflicts, community versus government disputes, and family conflicts. The benefits of mediation, such as cost efficiency and quick results, are widely recognized. Many US courts refer disputes to mediation first, as it often leads to successful resolutions.

Mediators believe in the intrinsic goodness of people and their ability to make beneficial choices when given the right opportunity. This belief fosters a

positive atmosphere in mediation. Mediation programs in schools promote values like understanding and reduce violence, helping to develop better future leaders.

Mediation is just one of many conflict resolution tools, and it's crucial for the mediator to evaluate whether a conflict is suitable for mediation. Some conflicts are not appropriate for mediation, such as when a union wants to strike to demonstrate its strength or when a civil rights group aims to establish a legal precedent in court. These groups are not looking for a compromise but rather to achieve specific goals through other means.

For example, an armored car company trying to break its union had no interest in making compromises. In this case, mediation was not effective, and the conflict ended in a strike.

Successful mediation requires certain conditions, such as the willingness of both parties to work together and build a relationship. Mediation can foster mutual respect and problem-solving, but the mediator must guide the parties to their own solutions rather than imposing ideas too early.

The mediator's role is to promote respect and optimism, keeping hope alive for a resolution. Mediation is often the last resort for frustrated parties, so the mediator must remain positive and supportive throughout the process.

In summary, mediation is effective when the right conditions are met, and it helps build relationships and mutual understanding. However, it is not suitable for all conflicts, especially those where parties have goals that cannot be achieved through compromise.

Active listening is a valuable skill that can be used in mediation, negotiations, and even family arguments. It is the most effective way to calm an angry person and has many personal benefits, such as making you appear smarter, improving your emotional intelligence, and enhancing your relationships.

To practice active listening, use body language to show you are listening, such as maintaining good eye contact and directing your body towards the speaker. Ask open-ended questions to allow the other person to share their story and suspend judgment. When giving feedback, acknowledge both the emotions and content of what the speaker is saying. Reframe concerns and options to help the parties think about the problem in a different way. Finally, summarize key points and check with the speakers to ensure accuracy.

Active listening is not difficult to understand or use, but it requires mindfulness to know when to engage it and to do it naturally. Mediation and active listening are skills that can be practiced and improved over time, making you more confident in resolving conflicts.

Jan Sunoo grew up in San Francisco in a Korea family. He is an ICJA Alumni since 1962. Jan has worked as a mediator, facilitator and trainer for multiparty win-win negotiation techniques and intercultural communication in various places around the world for institutions such as the ILO (UN) or the U.S. Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service and for trade unions.

Materials

Collection of materials to be found here:
https://1drv.ms/f/s!At95coM4qpHuh7ARVhomHJyWxkTakA

1. Empathy in Mediation. Short article going more into Active Listening techniques.

2. Useful Short Articles on Mediation. over 50 pages of »short« articles, but useful for browsing the index to find what exactly might be of interest.

3. Making Mediation a Universal Life Skill and Core Value. A keynote speech I gave in Vietnam several years ago at the Asian Pacific Mediation Forum. Basically me promoting mediation/conflict resolution as a critical skill we should make required coursework in all our schools for a more peaceful world.

4. Facilitating a San Diego Multiparty Interest-based Negotiation. An inspiring successful case study of a community facilitation that lasted a year and resulted in a win-win solution among many different interest groups regarding putting together a fire plan for the electrical company of San Diego.

5. Multi-stakeholder Facilitation Indian Self-Determination. Another inspiring story of a yearlong facilitation/negotiation which we led to resolve a 10-year-old stalemate between the 200 tribal nations and the US Federal Govt. to negotiate the regulations for the Indian Self-Determination Act.

Julian Wortmann

Degrowth/Post-Growth – Change in the Economy for Fairer, Sustainable Peace?

The topic of degrowth deals with the problems of the current economic system, in particular the ecological limits and social inequality. Economic growth poses a major challenge, as it often goes hand in hand with increased resource consumption and higher CO2 emissions. These two factors are closely linked: economic growth leads to a delayed increase in the material footprint and CO2 emissions.

Since the 1970s, when the limits to growth were first recognized, CO2 emissions and resource consumption have only fallen in exceptional cases, mostly during economic crises. Examples include the oil crises of the 1970s and 1980s, the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, the global financial crisis in 2010 and the economic crisis resulting from the 2020 pandemic. These crisis years were the only times when CO2 emissions actually fell.

Despite international efforts to reduce CO2 emissions since the 1990s, it is clear that sustainable reductions have only been achieved in times of crisis.

Economic growth undoubtedly leads to higher CO2 emissions and resource consumption. One solution that is often proposed is the decoupling of economic growth and environmental impact, known as »green growth« or »sustainable growth«. A distinction is made between relative and absolute decoupling. Relative decoupling means efficiency gains, such as at Lufthansa, where transportation performance is growing faster than fuel consumption. Absolute decoupling, on the other hand, requires an actual reduction in consumption with simultaneous economic growth, which, despite all efforts, has never taken place on a global level.

Another important aspect is the rebound effect, in which efficiency gains are offset by increased consumption. One example is the VW Beetle from 1955 compared to the VW New Beetle from 2005, which still consumes a similar amount of fuel despite being more efficient but is heavier and more powerful.

Technical innovations often do not lead to lower resource consumption or CO2 emissions, as efficiency gains are eaten up by increased comfort, greater weight, and higher speed. In addition, politicians‹ pursuit of growth undermines the decoupling of economic growth and environmental impact. One example is German policy, which supports weaker CO2 targets for cars at EU level so as to promote economic growth, despite climate targets.

Jan Schröter (ICJA)
»Peace comes through understanding, not agreement.«
Arabisches Sprichwort
(I think it fits particularly well with the work and objectives of the ICJA).

Gross domestic product (GDP) measures economic growth, but not all valuable activities. Volunteer activities such as coaching a youth soccer team do not contribute to GDP, even though they have high social value. In contrast, an ecological disaster such as the Deepwater Horizon oil spill can boost economic activity even though it causes great damage. These examples show that economic growth does not always go hand in hand with positive social or environmental impacts.

A bus driver also contributes to the gross domestic product (GDP), which shows that GDP is not a good indicator of the actual prosperity of a society.

Zen Stones. Source: Vecteezy.com

Another important aspect is human needs, which, according to Argentinian economist Manfred Max-Neef, comprise nine equally important categories: participation, affection, freedom, understanding, creativity, leisure, identity, protection, and basic needs.

Our current economic system, with its 40-hour week and the dissolution of work boundaries, is often at odds with these needs, especially leisure and identity. Many people identify strongly with their work, which becomes problematic when they are unemployed.

Participation is difficult to implement in today's economy, as markets require quick decisions and hierarchies. Freedom is restricted by dependence on wage labor and the dismantling of social systems.

In addition, power interests, particularly those of the military-industrial complex, threaten the fulfillment of these needs. Weapons manufacturers in Germany have a strong lobby that influences environmental and social policies.

The argument of job security continues to appeal to arms manufacturers, even if this is at the expense of other regions of the world. Arms exports remain a relevant economic factor, also supported by political actors who want to promote economic growth. However, this pursuit of growth undermines human needs.

Degrowth or post-growth, a concept from the 1970s, is aimed at the global North and offers a vision for an alternative economy. It aims to enable a good life for all, with greater equality, preservation of livelihoods, time prosperity, lived democracy, and global justice.

In order to achieve a socio-ecological transformation of the economy and society, major redistributions and the preservation of livelihoods are necessary. This could include the dismantling of industry and the elimination of entire economic sectors such as the advertising industry. Time prosperity could be achieved by reducing working hours to between 28 and 30 hours per week. A democratized economy and society require new visions of development and an understanding of which countries are considered developed.

In the area of peace, this means international disarmament, including stopping arms exports. Projects

such as the »Handbook of Future Issues« and »Building Blocks for Climate Justice« develop measures for a more climate-friendly society. Degrowth is not aimed at shrinking everything, but at a transformation towards a good life for all.

Degrowth and peace are closely linked, as the military is a major emitter of greenhouse gases. Interestingly, the military is excluded from international agreements such as the Paris Agreement. Military emissions are excluded from international climate targets, even though wars tie up considerable financial resources that climate protection measures lack. Wars also prevent international cooperation, as the Russia-Ukraine conflict shows. There is a risk of a vicious circle: climate crisis leads to more wars, which in turn exacerbate the climate crisis.

The Syrian civil war is often referred to as the first »climate war«, as a drought fueled by climate change led to an agricultural collapse and internal displacement that sparked protests against the Assad regime. The Syrian government blamed climate change, while peace and conflict researchers emphasize that the government's lack of response to the drought was a key trigger for the protests.

The responsibility for crisis responses lies with governments, not the environment. The scientific consensus is that natural disasters caused by climate change can increase conflict risks, especially in countries with large populations, political marginalization, and low levels of »development«. The climate crisis exacerbates existing conflicts but does not directly lead to wars.

Another point is the »securitization« of climate change, where the military sees climate change as a security risk. If climate change is recognized as a security risk, military action can more easily be seen as legitimate. This could lead to more military conflicts. Jürgen Scheffran from the University of Hamburg emphasizes that preparing for climate wars makes them more likely. A podcast by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, »dis:arm«, deals with this topic in detail and is highly recommended.

Degrowth and peace have shared challenges and goals, such as the climate crisis and the need for international cooperation. Both movements need to find answers to key challenges and could make common demands such as disarmament and the dismantling of the military. International coordination is crucial, as unilateral measures have little effect.

The question arises as to who is being addressed politically by degrowth and peace movements. Do they address national governments that are involved in international contexts or people outside their own sphere of influence? Global social movements for peace, ecological and social justice could be a way forward.

Julian Wortmann studied environmental sciences and human ecology in Germany and Sweden and has been working at Laboratory for New Economic Ideas as an educational consultant on the topics of degrowth and socio-ecological transformation since 2016. He is driven by the question of what the effective levers and obstacles are for social change towards greater justice.

Materials:

Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie: Future for all. Project to develop positive social concepts for the year 2048, including perspectives on climate justice

Podcast dis:arm. Peace Talks by the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, episode 4: Climate wars and the »securitization« of climate change (I had already referred to this in the lecture)

Timothée Parrique: Put the brakes on growth or perish. How we can save the world with degrowth: https://www.fischerverlage.de/buch/timothee-parrique-wachstum-bremsen-oder-untergehen-9783103976069

short video with Jason Hickel from the BBC: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HckWP75yk9g (otherwise, as far as I know, there are only very long lectures by him on YouTube)

Dr. Edna Martinez
Decolonization and decolonial perspectives on peace

When I received the invitation to participate in this discussion, I was plagued by doubts. Among other things, I was concerned about the attitude of German society, which does not recognize the situation in Gaza as a result of colonial structures. It seems cynical to me to talk about peace and non-violent liberation while many countries are being bombed with the support of the German government. Here too, violent repression is exercised and legitimized, especially against those who criticize the colonial wars – not only in Gaza, but throughout the global South.

After careful consideration, I nevertheless decided to take part in the Peace Dialogues series. This discussion poses a threefold challenge for me.
Firstly, because as a Colombian I am tired of war and destruction. Colombia has not experienced a single peaceful day in its entire history. Even today, although a peace process has been concluded with the guerrillas, my country still suffers from numerous violent conflicts. The question remains open for me: What needs to be done to end the cycles of violence and destruction in my country?

Secondly, there is the question of the role of Europeans and what strategies are needed to jointly end colonial-induced conflicts. It is crucial that these discussions are held in order to recognize historical injustices and find solutions.

Thirdly, my academic background motivates me. The opportunity to develop a new social theory inspires me. I not only want to analyze the current problems, but also actively work on developing solutions.

This discussion offers the chance to ask profound questions and to look for answers together. It is an opportunity to break the cycles of violence and create a fairer world. This is how I would like my contribution to be understood.

To prepare this contribution, I re-read classic texts by famous anti-colonial authors and thinkers. In doing so, I have again intensively studied my favorite texts by Franz Fanon, such as The Wretched of the Earth and Dying Colonialism. Discourse on Colonialism by Aimé Césaire, Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality by Carlos Mariátegui and Walter Rodney's How Europe Underdeveloped Africa were also back on my reading list. I recommend these works for your reading, as well as the writings of experts who explain the violent foundations of modern colonialism.

Re-reading these texts, along with conversations with friends working in the field of anti-racism and decolonization, has made me realize that there is little new to say about colonialism from the perspective of the victims. Numerous theories have already been formulated and there are thousands of courses and seminars that offer different approaches to analyzing and understanding what colonialism means to the land, lives, minds and souls of the colonized. For over 500 years, strategies for liberation have been conceived, discussed and implemented in Abya Yala and the rest of the global South. All paths have been tried at least to some extent: from the most radical who justify direct and merciless violence, to the moderates who believe in cooperation and coexistence between colonizers and colonized, to the pacifists who believe that the colonial

Horácio Ernesto (Hbonny) Changa (ICYE Mozambique)
»Peace is not just the absence of war, but the presence of harmony, justice and development.«
Joaquim Alberto Chissano, President of Mozambique (1986–2005)

Anti-racism demonstration, Source: Vecteezy.com

power will return the occupied lands without resistance and end the structures of exploitation.

I have come to realize that we have nothing fundamentally new to say about colonialism. Perhaps we can construct academic terms or add older ones, such as neo-colonialism, epistemic colonialism or colonialism of power or knowledge. Anything new that describes colonialism only adds more detail to its map – a map that we, and very likely you, know in part by heart.

Or better formulated: Details of one part of this map, the other part of which is still missing. This missing part describes the colonial power, the colonial society and its agents and actors. Who are the colonialists? What motivates their actions? Why and how is the categorization and exploitation of populations legitimized and carried out? What effect does colonialism have on the individual and the colonial community?

Colonialism is a dialectical relationship. Fanon and other authors have written academic works on the understanding of the colonized individual and society and the role of violence in the liberation struggle. But colonialism is a dialectical relationship in which victims and perpetrators influence and shape each other. The question arises as to why there has been little interest in analysing and understanding the colonial community, as well as the geopolitical and economic impact of decolonization on the global North.

My proposal is to start with an analysis of colonial society and its individuals and structures, and to look together at the role of violence in colonialism. At the end, we can discuss the possibilities of non-violent, decolonial liberation.

Dr. phil. Edna Martinez positions herself as a woman and Afro-Colombian, academic, political activist and boxing coach. In her work and research, she focuses on the fields of political economy and political ecology, racism, feminism and social movements. She holds a PhD in Sociology from the Free University of Berlin, where she wrote her thesis on the palm oil industry and the continuation of primitive accumulation in Colombia

and Ecuador. At the same university, she completed a post-doctoral position during which she researched the political self-image of women who fought in the former guerrilla organization FARC-EP. In 2022, she received the »Emma Goldman« Snowball Prize from the Flax Foundation, which honors outstanding research on feminist and other inequalities.

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Miriam Betancourt

Buen Vivir: A cosmovision for a different way of living together

It is not easy to talk about peace when we live in an unjust world. Especially in a country like Germany, which is partly responsible for conflicts in other countries.

Today we will be addressing several key questions: Am I in tune with social inequalities and colonial structures? How does climate justice relate to social justice? What proposals for the relationship between humans and nature does the concept of the Good Life offer?

A picture I found on Google illustrates the concept of the Good Life in an urban environment. It shows people separating garbage, planting trees and doing community work. An important concept in indigenous communities is the »minka«, a communal work that serves the common good. This can be compared with similar communal work in Germany.

The concept of the Good Life comes from the Quechua and Aymara languages spoken in Latin America, also known as Abya Yala. In Quechua »Sumak Kawsay« and in Aymara »Summa Kamaña« means the Good Life. This concept is enshrined in the constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia. »Summa« stands for balance and 'Kawsay' for life – life in balance.

The concept of the Good Life offers valuable approaches for harmonious coexistence and a fairer world. It challenges us to rethink and actively shape our relationship to social structures, nature and justice. The concept of the Good Life is a philosophy of life that is understood as a common goal and world view. The focus is on the question of what people are and what they do, not what they own. This is in contrast to the capitalist system, which is strongly focused on material possessions.

The good life does not only mean the satisfaction of concrete needs and cannot be understood as an analogous concept to development. It also includes the management of local ecological and spiritual livelihoods and the autonomous resolution of local needs in relation to the environment. Necessities are essential for basic survival, while needs are often based on individual desires and social affiliations to improve the quality of life. In our system, we are strongly characterized by needs.

The good life also means the search for life alternatives. In the current systems, we usually only know one way of life, which is based on Western standards. However, there are other ways of life around the world that also strive for the good life. Indigenous communities have maintained this way of life for a long time. There are conflicts within these communities, but there are also valuable lessons that we can learn from them. For example, indigenous communal knowledge forms the basis for the Good Life. Community work, such as the »minka«, is a practice that has existed for thousands of years and is important for the common good of the community.

The human individual must be integrated into his or her community, because as social beings we need a community. Loneliness can make us ill. It is therefore important that the individual cultivates harmonious relationships with nature and strives for a sustainable life for all. A sustainable life means that at least the basic needs of all are met. At the moment, we live in a world where this is not yet the case everywhere. Some countries may succeed, but in many others poverty still prevails.

Peace and the good life have some things in common, such as justice, equality and human rights. The thinker Alberto Acosta emphasizes that peace with the earth also creates peace among people. For indigenous populations, such as in Ecuador, territory is an important part of their lives and has great significance.

When mining or oil companies come and expel people from their territory, these people know that they may end up on the streets or in the cities and have to live there as beggars. They therefore have a strong connection to their territory, which, according to Alberto

Acosta, also has to do with peace. They protect their territory because they know what it means to lose it. The good life has to do with justice and the balance of people. In rich countries, this individual balance is often lacking, which leads to many psychological illnesses. The Good Life emphasizes the balance of how people feel in relation to nature and their community. It is about harmony with nature and how we interact with it.

The concept of the Good Life encompasses four dimensions: the ecological, social, economic and political dimensions. It is an ongoing process and not a fixed recipe. It is based on respect for Mother Nature and principles such as equality, unity, inclusion, dignity, freedom, solidarity, reciprocity, respect, social and gender equality, the common good and social justice.

The relationship between humans and nature shows that nature cannot be viewed as a means of production, but as a component of social existence. Humans are part of nature and cannot reduce it to an economic matter. The exploitation of nature is not compatible with life. If we destroy nature, we destroy ourselves. The mechanical and unlimited exploitation of resources is often justified with the term progress, but this is not compatible for nature and humans.

Humans cannot live outside of nature, as nature has biophysical limits. Nature must be interpreted as a social construction and freed from its function as a commodity. If nature is granted rights, it can be transformed from an object into a subject. The rights of nature are enshrined in the constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia, which is a step forward, even if it is not yet fully implemented in reality. The anthropocentric view must be changed to a biocentric one. Capitalism is based on anthropocentrism, but we need to move to a biocentrism. This philosophical and ethical perspective puts life in all its forms at the center. All humans, animals, plants and other organisms have intrinsic value and should be respected and protected.

Anthropocentrism is often represented by a pyramid in which humans stand at the top and determine everything. In contrast, biocentrism shows a circle in which people, regardless of gender, are seen as part of the whole. The left-hand side of the pyramid illustrates the structures of power and domination that prevail in our current system. To overcome these structures, we need to shift to biocentrism, which is based on a cycle and dismantles power structures.

The concept of the Good Life strongly criticizes conventional development theories. Economic development is often measured in terms of production directions, forms of exchange and the size of the economy. Economic size describes how productive and prosperous an economy is and is measured by indicators such as gross domestic product or gross national income. In our society, we are consuming more and more, which means that we need more resources than our planet can provide.

Property relations are a central component of the capitalist system. They influence the distribution of resources and the structure of social power and economic inequalities. These relations often create social and economic hierarchies that persist for generations. In Latin America, particularly in Ecuador and Bolivia, community property is also enshrined in the constitutions, as indigenous communities had no concept of private property before colonization. Everything belonged to the community, both in organizational, political and social terms. Land and territory have always been communal property. Economy also has to do with technical developments, economic systems and statistical data. Data is very important for the capitalist system, as are structural change and quality of life.

»Without social and environmental justice, we won't achieve lasting peace.«
Anja Stuckert
(ICYE International Office)

After the Second World War, a new world order emerged, known as the Bretton Woods system, which was established at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944. Countries were divided into rich and poor countries, better known as developed and underdeveloped countries. Institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have a major influence on the economic policies of countries in the global South. The economic dependence on these institutions is very strong. World integration and economic growth should actually create peace and security. This understanding of development is based on the assumption that a free market works for the benefit of all.

Modernization theory is a part of this developmental history. A well-known theorem is the trickle-down effect, which suggests that the poorest should benefit from the gains of the rich. A criticism of modernization theory is that the export-import model caters to the needs of rich countries (the center) while disadvantaging poor countries (the periphery). These asymmetric economic relationships lead to inequalities, as the economic conditions in countries like Ecuador are not comparable to those in Germany.

The economic differences between rich and poor countries are enormous. The standards of living and consumption in Germany are not comparable to those in South America or Africa, although there are also wealthy people there. Technological advancements and the knowledge about them are also incomparable, which affects productivity in poor countries. Most investments in South America come from foreign companies, and the profits mostly flow abroad, leaving little in the national states.

The development models in Latin America have failed, which is why development aid was used to combat poverty. Neoliberalism, introduced in Latin America in the 1980s, led to a reduction in investments in social areas such as education and health and to the privatization of many services.

The concept of »Buen Vivir« (Good Living) criticizes these Western development models. In indigenous languages like Aymara or Quechua, the term »development« does not exist. Indigenous life philosophy moves in a circle and not linearly as in the Western model. Rationality is often taught at universities, but people are also emotional, which is often neglected in these models.

The concept of Good Living criticizes the exclusive focus on rationality and calls for a combination of rationality and emotionality. It questions economic aspects, the market, and consumption, as well as the notion of constant progress that must be achieved quickly. This development thinking is an expression of modernity and has colonial roots that still persist.

Wealth is often limited to material consumption and natural resources. Despite rising GDPs and exports, social and ecological conditions have not improved, and development benefits only a few. Ecological criticism states that current generations are restricting nature for future generations.

Growth models are also criticized because financial markets are moving away from the real economy and taking speculative risks. The growth of recent years has come at the expense of social justice and has led to unequal power and trade relations between the North and the South. Unlimited consumption can ultimately lead to the collapse of the planet.

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Buen Vivir

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The rising sun, Source: Vecteezy.com

Dr. Dani*el*a Pastoors

On the Connection Between Inner and Outer Peace Work – Peace Work as Shaping Socio-Ecological Transformation

»Let's imagine a world in which all living things can live and thrive. A world where all living things can not only survive, but even have a good life. We know that this requires a profound shift towards viable (human) societies on this planet, where the well-being of all is at the center.«

What comes up in you when you read this, when you imagine it or when you look at a picture of the little blue planet?

Psychosocial processes are precisely about how we react internally to the »outside« and what interactions there are between the inner and outer worlds; this is what my research is about, and it is what the approach of »work that reconnects«, which is also called »Active Hope« or »Deep Ecology«, is about.

I would like to begin by introducing two concepts that Joanna Macy uses to explain some of the basics of the »work that reconnects«.[1] The first concept is that of narratives, the stories we use to understand the world, and which determine how we see the world and how we access it. When we look at the world, we always look through different perspectives or »lenses« that influence our perception of the world. Depending on which lens we use to focus on what, we direct our focus and perceive the world and its challenges differently.

[1] Joanna Macy is one of the main founders of this approach. There are various books in which the concepts are explained. It is also worth taking a look at the website https://workthatreconnects.org/ , where all the works are listed, and many resources and exercises are available.

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On the Connection Between Inner and Outer Peace Work

The »business as usual« lens is a widespread lens in the modern age. It sees economic growth as essential, nature as a supplier of raw materials and everything must go higher, faster and further. With a different lens, called the »great unraveling«, we mainly see destruction: war, violence, species extinction, social inequality, climate crisis and much more. This lens can often be found in social movements, non-governmental organizations and in science.

But there is another »visual aid« that sometimes acts as binoculars and sometimes as a magnifying glass and helps us to focus on the »great turning«. In a world full of challenges, we often overlook the many small initiatives that bring about positive change. With the magnifying glass, we can see (and hear!) the proverbial forest that continues to grow – even if trees are falling to the ground at the same time. All the efforts to preserve, develop and shape life deserve our attention and become visible with the magnifying glass. At the same time, we can use this tool as binoculars that enable us to think long-term and see a good life for living beings of the present and the future. Thinking at least seven generations back and ahead reminds us of our interconnectedness and the responsibility that comes with it. The binoculars also stand for the longing for a better world that enables a good life for all, and this vision drives many people to work for the necessary change. By using both the magnifying glass and the binoculars, we can recognize the small steps and long-term visions that together make up the socio-ecological transformation or, in Joanna Macy's words, initiate the »great turning«.

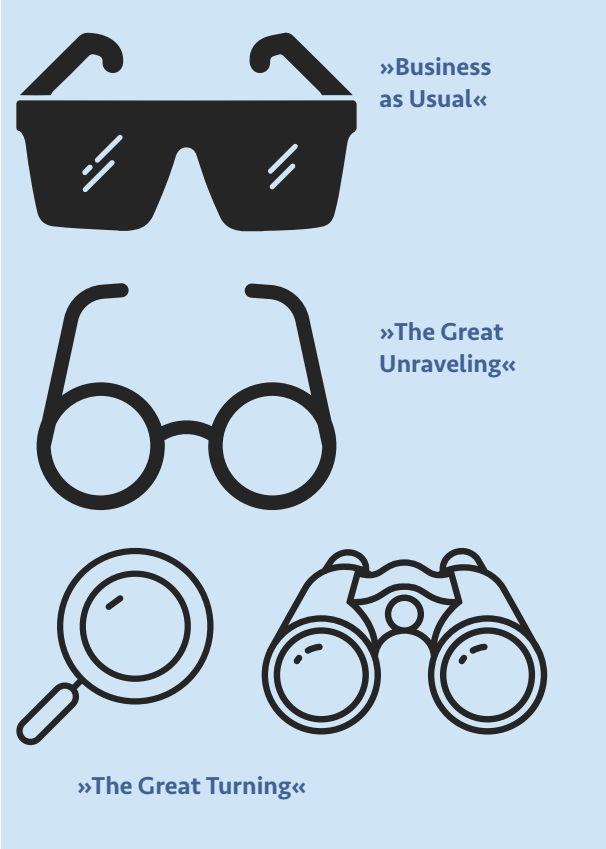

Fig.1: Three stories of our time, symbolized as different »lenses« through which we look at the world.
Icons by Marcus DeClarke, Genius Icons, verry poernomo, jk Lim from Noun Project (CC BY 3.0)

In the »work that reconnects«, this understanding of the different stories that exist simultaneously and illuminate and describe the world so differently is central. How we see the world depends on which of the lenses we are currently using. In many cases, one of the narratives is dominant in our environment and the view of the »great destruction« in particular can paralyze people and ensure that the trees crashing to the ground (not only metaphorically) overshadow everything else. The »work that reconnects« invites us to listen to the story of change – the big change and the many small changes – and to take a closer look at the various initiatives that contribute to it.

The contributions to the necessary socio-ecological transformation can be divided into three areas and referred to as »Block«, »Build« and »Be«. »Block«, the »Holding Actions«, is about resisting (natural) destruction and preserving life (e.g. symbolized by outstretched hands saying stop). In »Build«, the focus is on developing and building structures that promote life, so-called »Gaian Structures« (such as solidarity-based farming) (e.g. symbolized by heads dreaming up alternatives). And the change in »Be« is a »Shift in Consciousness«, which aims to initiate a change in consciousness to recognize that everything is interconnected (e. g. symbolized by hearts connecting through compassion). Ultimately, change is needed in all areas, and the contributions are particularly effective when »heart, head and hand« (in the spirit of Pestalozzi's holistic education) work together.

All of this can also be described as peace work: All efforts to stop violence and destruction, to preserve and develop life in all its forms and to promote attitudes that make this possible in the long term are efforts for peace, justice and the preservation of life. Many people think of peace work in terms of the major challenges we face in the violent world today. Civil conflict transformation and programs such as the Civil Peace Service are responses to violent conflicts in the world. First and

foremost, these are external conflicts: conflicts between people or groups, in societies and states. But at the same time, every conflict also has internal dimensions, and conflict transformation is often about exploring the internal facets – fears, emotions, desires, needs, etc. – and addressing them there (e.g. in mediation). Seen in this light, the interactions between inner and outer dimensions are always part of peace work.

In my research, I look at the connection between inner and outer peace work on further levels as well. I ask what happens in all of us internally in the face of what is happening in the world (or in the face of an idea of the world that we wish for). Creating and maintaining spaces for these psychosocial processes is also part of peace work. In my doctoral thesis, I explored the question of how professionals in the Civil Peace Service are supported and how they are psychosocially accompanied – i.e. where (among others) such spaces for emotional engagement with world events exist and how these are designed by the professionals themselves, by the peace organizations and by supervisors, trainers and coaches. I have condensed the central findings of my research into a story about a fictitious peace expert named Kim who finds herself in a deep crisis of meaning.[2]

Only when a space is created in a peer counseling session in which all the difficult feelings, her pain and her despair due to the state of the world are allowed to emerge, does a turning point arise for Kim. On the one hand, she connects with these inner parts and, on the other, with other colleagues in an empowering, supportive and healing way. Kim experiences an inner transformation, begins to explore the connection between inner and outer peace work and embarks on her own inner and outer transformation journey.

A quintessence of my dissertation is that personal, collective and planetary well-being are inextricably linked, and that a culture of peace and a culture of care merge in the pursuit of this. My current research is concentrated on also supplementing the approaches of environmental peacebuilding with aspects of Buen Vivir and psychosocial aspects in order to pursue the necessary change as a comprehensive socio-ecological transformation that also includes internal and external dimensions of change. In addition to change at a systemic, structural and cultural level, internal change is also crucial to establish a sustainably viable and therefore regenerative culture on planet Earth. When the different levels are brought together – also in the sense of »work that reconnects« – I refer to this as »regenerative peace work«.

Since the »work that reconnects« is such a powerful approach for me, enabling me to deal with my own despair and as »Active Hope« is always an encouragement in these adventurous times, I would like to end with a quote from Joanna Macy:

»In this work, I have come to the realization that our pain for the state of the world and our love for the world are inextricably linked. They are two sides of the same coin.«

Eesha Kheny (ICJA)
»The last of one's freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given circumstance.«
Viktor Frank

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[2] The story has so far only been published in its first version in English, but the new version will soon be published in German and will then also be freely accessible. All my publications (incl. links) can be found here.

Prof. Dr. Josef Freise
How can voluntary services be peace services?
Six theses

1. Voluntary service is always peace service if it is conceived against the background of peace policy and peace ethics issues and if it is reflected upon accordingly

Such peace services should include the following aspects:

a. Reflection on social contexts with a view to humanization: what is the social significance of the volunteer work that is carried out here? Does it take place in a context that is intended to make a socio-critical contribution to changing and improving human living conditions?

b. What professional, at least pre-professional, knowledge and skills do volunteers need to have in order to make a meaningful contribution and do no harm (cf. the »do no harm« approach)?

c. How are the attitudes and lifestyles of those involved promoted and reflected upon from a peace education and spiritual perspective?

2. Volunteer services always have a peace service component if the volunteer service experiences are critically reflected upon in the context of structural, cultural and personal violence, development and peace. Experiences only become experiences through reflection. Young people should be encouraged to shape their own form of communication in a non-violent way and learn how not to treat people in a discriminatory manner. If they reflect critically on their deployment in terms of social and peace policy, their voluntary service can have a peace service character, at least in the sense of a peace service component.

3. Volunteer services that want to be peace services are called upon to reflect on and review their own structures and modes of action in terms of ecological sustainability, social compatibility and their own power structures – particularly with regard to their partners abroad. The ecological aspects also include questions about the frequency and form of travel. Issues of social justice include the discussion of reciprocity in voluntary services. Aspects of power include the question of decision-making structures with regard to financial budgets.

4. A peace service organization should always keep an area free that can be shaped without grant routines and dependencies on the state and public donors. Today, voluntary services are so strongly integrated into the institutional state subsidy system that the freedom necessary for socially critical initiatives may be lost. Reference should be made to Wilfried Warneck's definition of peace service: »Peace service […] is work performed voluntarily without the intention of material gain and as independently as possible of large public institutions, which contributes to the realization of peace (or also to raising awareness of this task)«. This is not about rejecting state subsidies in principle; AGDF Managing Director Jan Gildemeister rightly emphasizes that state subsidies are not money graciously given, but tax money that belongs to us, the citizens. But a peace service should always retain this anarchic trait of enabling peace service initiatives even without and against any public funding. In this way, they may pave the way for new forms of service that we do not even see today. I am thinking of small initiatives: In one parish, an African family has been granted church asylum and is then deported after all. It is feared that the family is threatened with state repression in their home country. A peace and development service is supporting partner organizations in the family's home country, to which they are being deported, where German volun-

teers are also working, and now a young volunteer is being assigned to accompany the family after their return and to monitor whether human rights violations are being committed against the family here. This is a peace service that initially does not fit into the standardized forms of service, but which can be of very concrete significance for the family.

5. International volunteer services that want **to be peace services must be more than just volunteer placement agencies. They need reliable partners with whom they share a common concern** – e. g. working with a disadvantaged social group or a common objective such as the fight against climate change. The partnership, even through conflicts, creates relationships of trust in which power differences can also be addressed and ways can be sought to change structures of cooperation so that power differences are reduced.

6. Organizations that organize peace services need a constant and stable positioning and a network

- ➜ with places of scientific peace research,
- ➜ with places of current youth research,
- ➜ with places of ethical peace reflection and
- ➜ with places of spiritual humanistic and (inter-)religious peace exchange.

Paint your world; Source: Olga Mosman / iStock

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»He who seeks peace
will seek the other
will learn to listen
will practise forgiveness
will give up condemning
will leave behind preconceived ideas
will take the risk
will believe in the change of man
will inspire hope
will meet the other person
will stand by his own guilt
will remain patient
will live from the peace of God –
Are we seeking peace?«
Schalom Ben-Chorin, 1913–1999

(It expresses for me that peace cannot be taken for granted … That peace demands and challenges ME, that I have to jump over my shadow … But also that the work of the ICJA, which for me has a lot to do with CONNECTION, with LISTENING, with CURIOSITY, with HOPE, with personal DARING, is very relevant peace work).
Sven Albers (ICJA)

»ICJA volunteer exchange worldwide contributes to practical peace work and supports societal and political involvement through international exchange and intercultural education.«
(current ICJA Mission Statement)

»I want to hear what God has to say about it. The Lord speaks of peace: Goodness and truth come together. Justice and peace kiss each other. Truth grows up from the earth. Righteousness shines down from heaven.«

Psalm 85:9a.12+12
Basic Bible 2021

To explain why I chose this text: It is about God's world, in which goodness and truth, justice and peace meet. These four »basic values« are arranged in two pairs, which are mutually dependent and need each other so that the individual values remain in the right balance and do not degenerate (for example, true, genuine and lasting peace cannot be achieved without justice). The spiritual blessing of justice from above and the earthly-material yield from below are said to belong together.

Peter Lesch (ICJA)

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ICJA
Freiwilligenaustausch weltweit