Towards a world in peace

Ideological proposal of FundiPau

FundiPau

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Assumptions

1. The future is open and always unfinished.
The past and the present condition the future, but they do not determine everything. We can and want to influence the construction of this future. The dream of a fully humane society is a horizon that, even if we never fully achieve it, guides the direction of our progress and encourages us to move forward. We must constantly maintain the dignity and the endeavour to refashion and build this ever open and unfinished future.

2. Important historical changes are always a long process and and never occasional episodes or demands that can be achieved all at once. They are often the result of the sustained work of several generations. But they need to be initiated, maintained and grown. Along this path, throughout history, humanity has achieved major challenges that have changed life on earth (the disappearance of slavery, the transition from the feudal system to the democratic one, universal suffrage, the feminist revolution, the environmental movement...).

3. Public opinion is the most important tool for bringing about any change. A well-informed, organised and active public opinion has an unbeatable power. In the end, it is not governments that transform societies, but societies that transform governments.

Building peace

4. Peace is a result, it is not a random event, nor can it be achieved directly. Peace must be built, which means working on the conditions that will make it possible. Wanting peace and not considering these preconditions is naïve or even hypocritical. This work to build peace, at least, must be addressed to:

I. Situations:
Building peaceful societies.

II. Convictions:
Promoting the Culture of Peace and Non-violence.

III. Instruments:
Establish mechanisms for dealing with conflicts in a rational and constructive way.

I. Building peaceful societies

From structural violence to positive Peace

From structural violence...

5. There is structural violence, less visible but much more deadly than the direct acts of violence themselves. It is the social structures (economy, politics, laws, customs...) that provoke serious imbalances and violations of fundamental rights and liberties, which hinder people's development and a dignified life.

6. Structural violence is the source of many forms of direct violence. An unbalanced and unjust society will always be a conflictive and potentially violent society.

...to positive Peace

7. The building of a peaceful society (positive peace) requires to reverse the situations of structural violence and to advance towards global justice. This, in addition to an urgency for the well-being and dignity of people, is an unfailing responsibility to any model of security and peaceful coexistence. Working for justice, freedom and human rights is working for peace.

8. Distribution of resources. The growing inequality to access to the resources needed to live and the accumulation of enormous wealth in fewer and fewer hands leads to poverty, hunger, underdevelopment of a large part of humanity and, consequently, serious conflicts and forced population migrations. It is therefore essential to move towards an economy at the service of people, with fair taxation, capable of redistributing wealth, guaranteeing and protecting the social and economic rights of the entire world population (food, housing, education, public health...). Initiatives such as ethical banking, fair trade, social and solidarity-based economy and others are a step in the right direction.

9. Progress towards a fuller democracy is also a requirement for peace. Democratic liberties must be respected and extended. Democratic practice must evolve towards a more direct participation of citizens, which must go far beyond the election of a few representatives, and must include criticism, dissidence and minorities as a normal part of it. It is unacceptable that more and more decisions are being taken on the fringes and beyond the legitimately elected political power and are being imposed against the democratically expressed will of the people. Democratically elected political power must always be above economic power and must regain control over all powerful lobbies.

10. Scrupulous respect for all Human Rights is an imperative condition for a peaceful society. No discrimination based on origin, social class, ideology, religion, gender, sexual orientation or any other cause can be condoned or silenced. All human beings must be able to feel that their identity is respected, welcomed and protected, and to live it fully on an equal footing with other citizens. We must also work for the fulfilment and extension of social rights.

11. Learning to live in balance and with respect for the environment is essential to make life on earth possible. The severe aggressions of the last decades caused by a predatory economic system, which only seeks immediate profit, have already begun to generate climate problems, desertification, forced migrations, accumulation of waste and toxic materials, health problems, etc., which always affect first and foremost the most vulnerable populations and the most depressed areas. Peace also implies a relationship of respect for the environment and the awareness of being part of an ecosystem, which we do not necessarily have to dominate.

12. It is essential to think globally and to collaborate with other peace organisations, but also with global justice, development, human rights, defence of the environment, etc. Along the way we have met and we need each other. None of them can advance in their objectives without the work of the others. The sum of thoughts and collaboration is essential, even if each one of us specialises in what we know how to do best.

If you want peace, work for justice!

II. Promoting the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence

From the Culture of violence to the Culture of Peace

From the Culture of violence...

13. The culture of violence, so far dominant in our world, consents to, legitimises and glorifies the use of violence, at least in specific circumstances. This is borne witness to by history books, the myths and heroes of each people, art, the names of our streets, public monuments, military university studies, institutions, games and a long, long list of other things. In this cultural environment, it is not surprising that violent acts and deeds arise.

14. Cultural violence undermines, discriminates and marginalises people and human groups, especially those it does not consider "its own". In so doing, it justifies and encourages structural violence and acts of direct violence. It is essential to uncover and eradicate, also in us, this tendency, which, sometimes in a veiled way and sometimes explicitly, is always behind all other forms of violence.

...to the Culture of Peace

15. The Culture of Peace stems from the horror of war and the rejection of violence. Violence is the explicit desire to do evil. It always causes pain and suffering, often greater than that which it seeks to avoid. It is cruel, inhumane and degrades people's dignity, both for those who experience it and for those who practice it. The Culture of Peace is based on a fundamental ethical choice: no-one has the right to do harm to others in order to achieve their goals. The end does not justify the means.

16. The Culture of Peace calls for a profound transformation of values and criteria. It proposes a different way of looking at the world, of presenting history (for example, highlighting as positive events not military victories over other peoples, but those that have brought about an improvement in living conditions on earth), of analysing conflicts and ways of dealing with them, of working for the present and the future. Historical and fictional heroes, models of identification, dominant values, etc. must be revised from the standpoint of nonviolence. Gender perspective, feminism, environmental sustainability and climate justice or the anti-racist and decolonial perspective, among many others, provide essential elements to this cultural change.

17. Nonviolence is at the core of pacifism and the Culture of Peace. It is both a way of life, a way of relating to one's environment, as well as a method for action and struggle. The search for Truth, Justice, Respect, Love and Freedom, also for the adversary, makes it possible to act differently when faced with conflicts, both personal and collective. Nonviolence requires critical thinking and constant inner work to strengthen the will and transform convictions, values and attitudes that will end up being turned into behaviour and actions. Working for peace also means moving forward along this path.

18. Nonviolence is, above all, non-passivity. Passivity is incompatible with the ethical demand for justice. In the face of suffering and injustice, especially of others, the first thing to do is to revolt, to react. Afterwards it will be necessary to modulate, civilise and humanise the reaction. Nonviolence is never a middle, tepid way between passivity and violence but goes far beyond violence because it overtakes it. It is more radical because it goes to the roots.

19. The dilemma between passivity and violence is false and misleading. We are not condemned to choose between "doing nothing" or "doing wrong". There are always other options, especially if we prepare them: the ability to resist in the face of the ability to do wrong, the ability to build in the face of the ability to destroy, inner strength in the face of brute strength.

20. Education for peace for the whole population, the path to the establishment of a culture of peace. Education for peace, with all that it entails in terms of transforming values and critical spirit, is an essential undertaking to promote the cultural change that we propose. But education for peace is not exclusively a school subject for children. It is adults who are responsible for taking the steps that will bring us closer to a peaceful world. We should not burden children with problems that adults do not know how to solve or do not want to solve.

If you want peace, pacify your inner self!

III. Establishing mechanisms for dealing with conflicts

From armed security to human security

From armed security...

21. Conflicts are inevitable, where there are people there are conflicts. No matter how perfect societies become, no matter how accepted the values of non-violence are, conflicts will continue to arise. Life involves needs and evolution and, therefore, the agreements reached one day are no longer useful in new and changing situations.

22. Violence is what needs to be eradicated, not conflicts. Conflicts are difficult and troublesome situations that generate tension and discomfort, but we must not confuse conflicts with violence. Conflicts express the need for change and, if we are capable of dealing with them appropriately, they offer an opportunity for progress and improvement. However, they can also be a source of violence, which is what must be avoided. This makes it essential to prepare structures and mechanisms that make it possible to confront conflicts, individually and collectively, in a constructive way.

23. Violence is an absurd criterion for resolving conflicts. There is no rationality in gambling the outcome of a conflict on violence. With violence, the strongest wins, not the fairest. There is no relationship between being stronger and being more right.

24. Violence is ineffective because it does not resolve conflicts. We must not mistake victory with a solution. A solution imposed by force can only be maintained by force, and when the balance of power changes, the conflict re-emerges with added virulence and resentment. History offers us a multitude of examples of conflicts that reappear periodically.

25. The exclusively militaristic concept of security is expensive, ineffective and ends up creating more insecurity. The obsession with eliminating risks ends up leading to a neurotic state of chronic anxiety that generates new risks. World military expenditure has not stopped growing in recent years and now exceeds two thousand million dollars a year. With 2% of this amount, it would be possible to feed the entire world population properly. This huge military expenditure will at best be useless, because if it is used, its effects will be devastating: we have the capacity to destroy the earth many times over! We must ask ourselves whether this enormous economic effort makes us feel more secure.

26. Arms production and trade fuel and exacerbate conflicts. The causes of conflicts are often complex and diverse, but the arms trade prolongs them and aggravates their consequences, if not directly provokes them. It is an intolerable scandal that conflicts are exploited for private enrichment and that states allow and promote this arms trade.

27. War is an intolerable mass crime, professionalised and prepared in cold blood. It is not a fatality. Unlike other great catastrophes that afflict humanity, war is prepared, decided and carried out by people. It is an option that is taken when there is no conflict and when it is decided to prepare armies and weapons, with the maximum destructive capacity, as an instrument to confront them. When conflict arises, we are more likely to use what we have prepared.

28. War is terrorism on a large scale. The advent of aircraft, the bombing of cities and weapons of mass destruction have meant that in today's wars almost 90% of the victims are civilians. The design, manufacture and use of these weapons are massive terrorist acts, the only difference being that the perpetrators are officially recognised states. If terrorist acts are radically condemnable, how can we still accept the mass terrorism of states?

...to human security

29. There are alternative models of conflict resolution. It should be pointed out that most conflicts are not resolved through violence. The functioning of modern states is based on the refusal of their citizens to use violence, which they delegate to the state. The state, in return, offers protection and a system of arbitration when facing conflicts (police and judicial system). With all its imperfections, this is a more rational and civilised system than the law of the strongest. All we need to do is ask the states to do among themselves what they demand of their citizens.

30. The substitution of the armed security model for the human security model, already proposed in 1994 by the United Nations, is centred on people and their needs, with a progressive change in the priorities for the use of economic and human resources. The concept of security must be demilitarised, thereby gradually freeing up resources that will be more useful and create more security when invested in meeting people's needs.

31. The internal security that we propose must be based on social cohesion, which will make societies freer, happier and less conflictive. An equitable and fair social system, equipped with reinforced and reformed civil protection bodies, a police force that respects fundamental rights and is under strict democratic control, and an agile, efficient, transparent and fair judicial system are essential instruments for dealing with conflicts in a rational and fair way.

32. We do not want **external security** based on threats and deterrence, but on international cooperation, non-aggression, trust, empathy and diplomacy. The renunciation of an army equiped with the capacity to act outside its own territory would reduce international mistrust and tension. We propose moving towards a system of control of our own territory and borders organised on the basis of specialised units of the civil protection bodies and police forces, with appropriate instruments and with emergency and non-violent civil defence plans.

33. From private security to shared security. In terms of security and international conflicts, progress must be made in the cession of sovereignty and competences from the state to supra-state bodies. These would be steps in the right direction:

- Enforcement and compliance with international law.

- The creation of new International Courts of Justice or Arbitration with binding sentences.

- The transfer of human and economic resources from state armies to single global intervention forces, with adequate training and instruments and the capacity for rapid intervention in conflict zones, on the way to the creation of Civil Peace Corps.

This process must meet two requirements:
1) Respect for the principle of subsidiarity (what can be resolved in a smaller area should not be resolved in a larger area).
2) Accurate regulation of its control (one can just note the different meaning of the police in a democratic country or in a dictatorship). This is why it is indissociable from the following point.

34. Advancing in the construction of global governance structures. Improving the structure and functioning of the UN. The limitations and lack of effectiveness and transparency of some of the UN's actions are obvious. However, its existence is an important step forward and, without it, many things would probably have gone worse. However, for the UN to be able to assume the above points with guarantees, it is necessary to make progress in its representativeness, democratisation and provision of human, economic and legal resources.

35. From solution to conflict prevention.
Resources must be allocated to the creation and maintenance of a network for the detection and prevention of conflicts. In the same way that preventive medicine does not mean stocking one's cupboard full of medicines, conflict prevention should not imply arming oneself more than others or paying attention only to military issues. We must pay attention to the economic, political, social, cultural, ethnic, border, ecological, etc. factors that precede the outbreak of violence and are its cause. Intervention is much easier and more effective in the early or initial stages of the conflict than when the conflict is already raging in all its virulence. It is essential to promote and implement far-reaching public policies for peace.

36. From military investment to investment in social development. A world with great inequalities and flagrant injustice can only be endured with the use of force, with strong police and military apparatus. On the contrary, the more cohesion, justice and harmony there is in a society, the less it will need force to stand up for itself. Making decent living conditions possible for everyone in their own place of origin would avoid many conflicts. Investment in justice, in development, in social security, in solidarity, in ecology, is much cheaper and creates much more security than military investment. What is more, it is useful, as it improves living conditions on earth.

37. From research for war to research for peace. Progress needs to be made in conflict analysis and prevention studies, in mediation training, in the search for alternative instruments of conflict resolution. If only a small part of the resources devoted to research and war preparation were allocated to this area, it would surely achieve great progress in this field.

38. Control of arms production and trade. Making illegal and eliminating weapons of mass destruction, progressively restricting the manufacture and trade of conventional weapons and moving towards the total reconversion of the military industry into a more socially useful and efficient civilian one are undeniable steps on the road to peace and human progress.

39. Conscientious objection to any form of collaboration in the preparation of war. Objection to military service, refusal, fiscal, labour and scientific objection, opposition to the presence of the army in educational establishments, condemnation of military demonstrations and parades, prohibition of the establishment of any arms industry in the territory, etc., as well as any way of dissociating oneself from militarism, arms race or violence are invaluable contributions to the peace that we promote and defend. We call on the public authorities to establish legal measures to support them.

40. Nonviolent struggle is the most powerful

and effective tool when it is necessary to fight to transform situations of injustice and abuse, where structural, cultural and direct violence attacks the fundamental rights and the dignity of human beings. Its potential for transformation is multiplied when it is not only undertaken as a method but emerges as a consequence of nonviolent convictions and attitudes. The only acceptable form of struggle must be based on these convictions. The specific forms may vary greatly depending on the situation and include a whole gradation: attempts to dialogue, public denunciation, demonstrations, civil resistance, disobedience, obstruction, construction of alternatives and a long, long list of and/or the like.

If you want peace, prepare peace!

Conclusion

We know that the changes we are proposing involve a long historical process that cannot be completed in a few days.

But, today and every day, we may choose between continuing along the same path we have been following or starting to walk in the opposite direction, reversing the trend and initiating the process of change. It is not a matter of all or nothing, but it is necessary to stir change.

In all the lines of reasoning outlined in this document there are steps that can be taken now, both on a personal level and on a collective and social level.

We call on all people and all public and private sectors to initiate them.

Barcelona, April 2023
40 years of FundiPau

FundiPau is a NGO founded in 1983 that works for a world in peace.

Through an increasingly informed and active public opinion, it promotes all those cultural and structural changes that make possible the eradication of violence as a form of relationship between people and communities.

FundiPau