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“Building peace and reconciliation through the creation of a Ministry of Peace”

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“A Strategy for the Ministry for Peace”

Ladies and Gentleman,

After WW2 the will of all peoples of the World for Peace obliged States to establish the UN in order to oppose to past warmongering that characterized international politics. In December 2016 the UN Assembly approved the declaration concerning the right to enjoy peace (Resolution A/RES/71/189). Thus Peace is no longer a monopoly of states which make peace subject to their *jus ad bellum*. It is also a right that should be enjoyed by each person, which means therefore that social institutions can be rebuilt for peace beyond and outside the traditional defense policy pursued by states, with its reliance on a catastrophic arms' race.

How to build Peace anew? Peace is a principle on which the same constitutional Charter may be founded, since it is a more important principle than those expressed by individualistic notions, like happiness (as in USA case) or freedom (as in France) or even social notions (like work in Italy) since peace concerns directly the the most perilous situations in social life, ie conflicts. By conceiving human nature as *Homo homini lupus*, Hobbes suggested transferring individual violence to the State, which like the Leviathan, establishes social peace with punishment and deterrence, and behaves in the international arena by claiming its full right of the *jus ad bellum* (one can say: *Status Stato Lupus*). But Gandhi's non-violence, which led India (10% of the population of mankind of his time) to political independence and the around 100 non-violent revolutions carried out by peoples in the World during the 20th century (in particular the non-violent revolutions of the year 1989 which changed fundamentally World politics), proved decisively that not only human relationships but also international politics may be based on non-violence.

It is therefore time to abandon the pessimistic and cynical philosophy of Hobbes in order to start to constitute each state on the right to peace. A long period of transition from a pessimistic to an optimistic philosophy regarding human nature is necessary. We have to accomplish a great historical conversion process, called 'transarmament', characterized by the co-existence of opposing philosophies of conflict resolution, it will be democracy that will establish which solutions are the best.

But, if at present an entire State founded on peace is premature, at least it is necessary to establish a Ministry for Peace, devoted to mediating present conflicts, bringing about a reconciliation regarding the traumas of past violence, and *constructing a more solid peace for the future*.

Does the institution of a Ministry of Peace within a State require a constitutional reform? No, because peoples' horror of the past wars have already led States to abandon the traditional words

‘Ministry of War’; this Ministry became the ‘Ministry of Defense’; this is a first historical step in the long march towards obtaining a conversion of the social institutions of war to those of peace: defense instead of aggression.

Yet what kind of defence? The experiences of both the about 100 non-violent revolutions of the 20th century and UN Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding operations have provided us with considerable means of prevention, control, management and extinction of conflicts also by means of civil interventions. It is therefore time for states to introduce a dual defense, armed and unarmed. For this reason, every State must establish a Ministry for Peace, or at least a State component that approximates to it, even as a mere component of the present Ministry of Defense.

In Italy a first experience of this institution was accomplished. It started thanks to art. 11 of its Constitution: "Italy repudiates war as an instrument of offense against the freedom of other peoples and as a means of resolving international disputes", and thanks to ten resolutions of the Constitutional Court which have established that the defense of the homeland without arms is equivalent to that with arms. Yet, this experience started mainly because a National Campaign for conscientious objection to military taxes was launched in 1984 and numbered up to 10.000 adherents; its target was to create a state institution that would be responsible for a part of national defence using non-violent means.

In the year 1998 law 230 art. 8 e) introduced the "education [of the young of the Civilian service] and experimentation of unarmed and non-violent civil defense". Moreover, a new State Office, i.e. a first approximation of a Ministry for Peace, was instituted: the National Office for Civilian Service (UNSC), whose task was to manage the Civilian Service according to the aims of its law, in particular the aim of preparing unarmed defense.

But governments chose to privatize this task: 1) the contract with those doing civilian service is not public, but private (one of the worst private contracts); 2) the State supports the Civilian Service by only giving financial funds; 3) this service is performed through activities which are planned by private Associations, which pursue their particular interests (apart from the Association APG23 and a few others which intervene abroad to promote peace in conflict sites).

Since forced by a conflict of competence with the Italian Regions, the State took a least initiative about the unarmed defense; it instituted a Committee to promote a “Civil non-armed and non-violent defense” (Devnanv) with a budget which raised 1 million euro in five years. Unfortunately the Civilian Service Associations (although most of them had previously supported the Campaign for conscientious objection) were opposed to promoting a new national defence; the result was that the Committee’s activity was inconclusive and its entire budget was not spent. In the year 2013 one more law (no. 147, comma 253) established a Civilian Service of peace with a budget of 9 million euro in three years; but, except for APG23, this kind of service was reduced by the same Associations to activities of mere international cooperation).

What are the lessons?

1) A grassroots movement can start a first State institution dedicated to peace, including the sensitive subject of an alternative defense;

2) The Army does not oppose the novelty, because also it incorporates a civil component (eg, NATO calls it CIMIC); therefore it is necessary to decide how to deal with them in order to avoid that “all is changed in order that nothing is changed”.

3) Once a favorable law is obtained, we need a political force which adequately manages our political objectives; it has - as Galtung put it – “what Amnesty International has been for human

rights, as the extended civil society arm of the law, while at the same time critical of its application.”

4) Government’s policies on peace may slip into privatization, which dissipates energies and leads to the public aims being forgotten.

5) The first State’s institution for Peace has first to include the Civilian Service by involving the Civilian Service Associations in a decisive Peace politics by also counteracting pressure groups promoting their self-interests masked as activities for “peace”.

6) last but not least, inside the international relationships the word “Peace” undergoes the monopoly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. That means that a civilian servant cannot intervene in sites of war for promoting peace, unless it is protected by the national Army. This connection between two kinds of at all different ways of approaching peace, through arms and without arms, appears ambiguous to the local population and at last it is counter-productive for achieving peace. In addition this Ministry for Foreign Affairs concedes only the tourist visa to these civilian servants, not the official visa for State international activities. Hence, present interventions of civilian servants cannot develop the entire potentialities of a Peace action inside the population. A Ministry of Peace has to include the Civilian Service as its specific competence.

7) Moreover, within the international relationships the word “Peace” is contested by two main political actors: on one hand, the superpowers acting as independent and absolute States, and on the other hand the UN, the unique political actor founded on and aimed to Peace. A Ministry of Peace has to decisively choose UN politics at the cost of opening a national debate on its divergences with the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs about which kind of peace politics has to be followed, in particular, the politics of the Civilian service. In addition, it has to manage State’s contribution of personnel for UN civil interventions, in particular the national quota of entrances into UN Volunteers. Moreover, it has to orient Civilian Service towards the fulfillment of public functions, first of all a collaboration with the United Nations civil missions and particularly with UN Dept. of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) located in Brindisi, South Italy. This collaboration is particularly important because it would create an international precedent, which would favor a first implementation of the art. 51 of the UN Charter, i.e. devolving to UN a part of the defense forces of each State. I discussed this collaboration with the UN representative in Rome, who discussed it in New York; I obtained their approval two times, in 2005 and in 2014. How much more effective would the UN be if the States applied Art. 51 of the UN Charter by transferring to it a part of their Armies? In other words, if a State begins to allocate to the UN part of its defense forces – ie the young people performing the Civilian Service -, this initiative would constitute the beginning of an international peace policy permanently performed by States and UN together .

However, even before we get close to obtaining the Ministry for Peace, we have to build within the society political forces that support peace politics in this direction. We have to start from the clear starting point of everyone's right to peace, then to build within society a *bottom-up* policy within society. This means to build the Ministry for Peace not only from the top, by claiming a State concession, but also from the bottom, ie on a voluntary basis. I suggest the following initiatives:

1) To claim the right of every citizen (in particular the c.o.s) to be registered by the State as A VOLUNTEER FOR PEACE, with the condition that he/she can be called by the State to take part in unarmed defense exercitations and in national rescue operations.

2) To obtain the right of CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE in all States that would be included in the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

3) To obtain A LAW PROVIDING FOR A PEACE OPTION by which one could choose to finance expenditure for peace with one's taxes rather than for military expenditure, in the same way as one has the right to choose to finance one Church rather than another.

4) To multiply the LOCAL LAWS ON "PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS" within the statutes of Municipalities and Departments of a State.

Let us revert the arms race into a peace race beginning through the birth of a new State institution for Peace!