

UNITING for PEACE

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Report: Online Joint Conference, "Building Peace, Security and Justice through the Rule of Law and Global Governance"

A Report of the online conference, "Building Peace, Security and Justice through the Rule of Law and Global Governance"

'**Building Peace, Security and Justice through the Rule of Law and Global Governance**' was the urgently relevant theme of the Uniting for Peace (UfP) Autumn Conference on 29 October 2021, held online and co-arranged with the World Federalist Movement (WFM), with seven expert speakers. It was chaired by Sandra Coyle, Consulting Executive Director, WFM.

Keith Best, WFM Executive Chair and former UK MP, traced the development of institutions aiming to prevent or limit war from the League of Nations and United Nations, through the Nuremberg Trials to the role of the International Criminal Court.

As modern weapons systems were too costly for most nations, "the machete and small arms have become the main killing weapons in many current conflicts", while terrorists have added a new dimension of threat to world peace. Setting up a North Asia Nuclear-Free Zone, embracing USA, Russia, China, Japan and the two Koreas, would be a major step for global security. The view of China and Russia that internal human rights issues were not a UN Security Council responsibility, showed differing perceptions of its role among its permanent members was now a problem. Democratisation of major global institutions was now a pressing issue: there needed to be a "people's voice" at G7, G20 and UN. An assembly of international parliamentarians established within the UN system would be a step forward.

Continue to page 3

Archbishop Desmond Tutu – Conscience of the World

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Anti-Apartheid and human rights activist, world's moral compass, a Nobel Peace Laureate, a rebel rouser for peace and racial justice died at the age of 90 on 26th December 2021.

I had the privilege of meeting him twice, once at the Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for 21st Century Conference in 1999 and again in 2009 when he invited my daughter Renu and myself to a reception at Number 10 Downing Street hosted by then Prime Minister Gordon Brown and his wife Sarah Brown. After the reception, a few of us went to dinner at a nearby restaurant. I said to Desmond Tutu that in two week's time, I was going to address a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Britain and Ireland at Belfast and requested for his advice and guidance. He came up with a few suggestions including some anecdotes of his own Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa which he chaired. He also advised me to see a BBC documentary on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. My speech at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Ireland and Britain was published next day in the Belfast Irish Times. Tutu said that the purpose of any truth and reconciliation commission is to remove injustice from the experience of the majority community of that country and reconcile ethnic divisions. He showed the way in which enmities among different communities can be broken for living together in peace.

Desmond Tutu's blunt honesty in speaking truth to power was his hallmark. He fiercely opposed the 2003 invasion of Iraq, calling it "immoral and unmitigated disaster," and suggesting that George W Bush and Tony Blair be tried by the international Criminal



Vijay Mehta and Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Court (ICC). He outspokenly supported the Palestinian cause and drew parallels between Apartheid South Africa and Israel.

He was also quick to condemn transgressions of the new ANC led governments of Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma for their corruption and once quipping that the parties leaders had, "stopped the gravy train just long enough to get on themselves."

Martin Luther King's daughter, Bernice King, said that "**Tutu was a global sage and powerful pilgrim on Earth.**" The Nelson Mandela foundation said that "**Tutu was larger than life. His contributions to struggle against injustice locally and globally, are matched only by the depth of his thinking about the making of liberal futures for human societies. He was an extraordinary human being, a thinker, a leader, a shepherd.**"

World peace is not a utopian dream. It can be realised by overcoming forces of destruction, violence and warmongering. Uniting for Peace, incorporating Action for UN Renewal and World Disarmament Campaign, is a civil society organisation helping to do just that.

Chair: Vijay Mehta * Vice President: Rev. Brian Cooper

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Editorial: Building Human Security, Peace and Justice in 2022 – Not War

2021 was a very difficult year with the global pandemic, devastating climate crisis, and rising tensions among major powers. Current flashpoints are in: US/China's mounting threat to Taiwan, Russia-NATO troop build-ups around Ukraine and rising propaganda about Iran's nuclear programme. Any of these confrontations could erupt into an ugly war. Furthermore, with ongoing conflicts in Ethiopia, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Israel-Palestine still unresolved, 2022 has all the hallmarks of being a dangerous year.

In face of the above challenges and to help mitigate them, Uniting for Peace [UfP] has an ambitious 2022 programme. Our AGM and Spring Conference on Saturday 2 April at Wesley's Chapel, City of London [13.00-17.00] focuses a theme overlooked at COP26 - "**Climate Change, Militarisation and World Peace.**" Following this a UN Symposium on "**A Dangerous Looming War and Arms Race Threaten Humanity - What Can UN and Civil**

Society Do?" will be hosted at Houses of Parliament in summer/September. The Annual Conference follows in November/December.

Also, UfP will be present at Peace Stalls at the Labour Party Conference in September at Liverpool and Green Party Conference in Harrogate in October 2022. UfP, an affiliate of GAMIP [Global Alliance of Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace], will start a new campaign for Ministries/Departments for Peace to open a European Alliance in 2022. Through all our campaigning, UfP is taking positive actions to overcome feelings of fear and hopelessness, working to build shared values of peace and justice, and against war. Please join us, participate in our events - and if possible - send a donation to help us build a more peaceful world.

Vijay Mehta, Chair UfP and Rev. Brian Cooper, Vice President UfP

Building Bridges in the Shadow of Afghanistan Hinduism's Vision for Building a Non-Violent Peaceful World

This speech was given by UfP Chair Vijay Mehta at the CCND conference at the Quaker Meeting House, Oxford on 20 November 2021.

Introduction

Chair, distinguished speakers and respected audience, Patricia, Michael and Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CCND), thanks for hosting and inviting me to Eggleston's Memorial Lecture on Building Bridges in the Shadow of Afghanistan.

I will, in my talk today, explore how faiths in general and Hinduism in particular can promote peace, nonviolence and work in cooperation for a better world. In short, how we can have a strategy between hostile communities and faith traditions for peace building, conflict prevention, dialogue and diplomacy.

I will also be talking about core beliefs of Hinduism and how faiths working together can build a non-violent peaceful world.

Core Beliefs of Hinduism – Peace, Non-violence, Love, Compassion, Unity and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (The World is One Family)

Hinduism's vision is for building a nonviolent peaceful world. In the Hindu religion, Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu the Preserver; Shiva the Destroyer exist simultaneously and represent the multiplicity of God. The mystic experience of Hinduism is a sense of oneness with All Being – whether that is described as God, Nature or the Real. Hindu teachers have always made clear, there's only one spiritual reality. Brahman is the One Reality which is the principle of All Beings. Brahman is described as Being, Consciousness and Bliss (Sat, Chit, Ananda).

India is a nation of more than 1.4 billion people with 1 billion Hindus also close to 200 million Muslims, 25 million Christians, 20 million Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Bahai's and Jews and others – a diverse world getting along with its secular constitution, plural society but witnessing pressures and threats as more than 500 million people are illiterate and live in absolute poverty, more than 600 million lack basic sanitation and more than 200 million lack safe drinking water.

Dear Friends, India is the only world culture influenced by four leading religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. In that respect, its history is unparalleled. What other people can

claim the likes of Gautam Buddha, Mahavir, Vivekaanand, Sri Ram Krishna, Shankracharya and Mahatma Gandhi.

The saint Rama Krishna often described different religious experiences as different melodies of music. The Rig Veda, considered to be the oldest book on earth, have described the reality of the world as:

Truth is one: paths are many

Reality is one: sages call it by various names

Gandhi believed in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. He said that we should read the scriptures of different faiths from the standpoint of the followers of these faiths as we should find that they were at the bottom one and all helpful to one another.

Interfaith meetings like today and around the world increase understanding and cooperation with other faiths for peace, social justice and the common good of the humanity. On a positive note, religions of the world have been source of major social, economic, political changes and advancement. The concept of nonviolence, enhanced capacity for empathy, tolerance, forgiveness and compassion have their roots in religions of the world such as respect of other faiths. Religion is an instrument which defines one's mind, for inner development for building a peaceful society. Throughout ages faiths have been the very bases of our understanding. The very origins of nonviolence were given to us by religion - that we should not harm any creature, even the humblest, as we are all interconnected.

The ultimate goal of Hindus refers to separateness, that universal peace or peace in the society and nature. It is through unity and giving up ones separateness, universal peace can be attained.

Traditionally, Hinduism has adopted an ancient Sanskrit phrase Vasudhaiva kutumbakam, which translates as "The world is one family." The essence of this concept is the observation that only base minds see dichotomies and divisions. The more we seek wisdom, the more we become inclusive and free our internal spirit from worldly illusions or Maya. World peace is hence only achieved through internal means – by liberating ourselves from artificial boundaries that separate us all. As with all Dharmic religions (Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism), ahimsa (avoidance of violence) is a central concept.

Continue to page 5

Uniting for Peace

Continue from front page

Vijay Mehta, Author and Chair, UfP, in his contribution, he said how can strong institutions achieve peace, when a very small body of decision-makers controls the fate of the world's population, with regard to wars, nuclear proliferation, global inequality, climate change crisis, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity? Global institutions have come to constitute an elite club, disconnected from the people and not operating morally. Consequently, global governance is ineffective: key institutions are out of touch, and leaders pursue national agendas rather than the global interest. UN is too weak to prevent conflicts, nuclear proliferation and war crimes - because world military expenditure now tops \$2 trillion, and dangerous military alliances - NATO, China & Russia, and now UK, US, Australia - all cause arms races and threaten world peace.

In the face of all this, how can Rule of Law be strengthened? UN reforms should include setting up an International Anti-Corruption Court. Ministries and Departments for Peace, promoting Continental Unions on model of EU, and giving all Continents a special UN seat at Security Council would be important reforms. Public opinion should no longer accept the misuse of resources for war purposes.

David Swanson, Executive Director, World Beyond War, outlined a range of international treaties outlawing war, which were routinely ignored by governments bent on war. There was general ignorance of the illegality of war. States defended war by speaking of "defensive war" and "laws of war". It was hypocritical for US and allies to speak of a "rules-based global order", when US was world's leading non-ratifier of international treaties, leading promoter of interventions and wars. The military should no longer be excluded from climate treaties. He urged a range of civil society peace actions, from support of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as a universal jurisdiction and 'going beyond' just war theory. Public opinion must pressure major powers to commit to peace-building.

Stephen Hockman, QC, of Six Pump Court Chambers, spoke of the movement to set up a new International Court for the Environment, to help the fight against climate change. International treaties should be regarded as inter-national legislation. In some countries, laws had been passed dealing with climate change issues [eg. re carbon reductions], but there was very little legislation at international level concerning "trans-boundary harm". Poor nations suffering from the emissions of major powers have no redress at law - ICC would enable that. Flooding caused by high emissions was a good example of "trans-boundary harm". ICC would first declare the relevant fundamental principles concerning such a concept, and subsequently act as a world court on environmental issues.

Jennifer Trahan, Professor at New York University's Center for Global Affairs spoke on the arguments in her book "Existing Legal Limits to the Security Council Veto Power in the Face of Atrocity Crimes." The premise of her book is that the veto power of the permanent members is being read in isolation to the rest of the requirements of international law. She argues that a veto cast in the face of genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes (or the serious risk of these crimes occurring) needs to be considered in light of: (1) protections of peremptory norms of international law (Jus Cogens); (2) the UN Charter's Purposes and Principles; and (3) treaty obligations such as those contained in the Genocide Convention and Geneva Conventions. She argues that the vetoes we are seeing -- blocking measures when at least nine members on the Council agree to take action to stop or curtail the commission of such crimes -- are out of line with those legal obligations. States and NGOs should raise these issues and make clear that the veto needs to be used in conformity with international law and the obligations of the UN Charter.



The General Assembly should also consider either issuing a resolution on this topic or sending a request for an Advisory Opinion to the International Court of Justice.

Marjolijn Snippe, Executive Committee Member, World Federalist Movement in her contribution stated – In an incomprehensible universe, humans have organised themselves politically on planet Earth in some 200 sovereign nation-states. These separate nation-states - of which some are more powerful than the other - pursue their national interests. They are captured in a vicious circle of rivalry and war.

Alongside the political system, the privatised economy in its quest for the profit of a greedy few, plunders the planet at the expense of nature. Every day we receive alarming messages about the state of the Earth and loss of biodiversity. This situation needs to be changed.

This present political and economic system has been invented by the human mind. So, another structure could be invented too. A new political and sharing economy model could be created. The voice of the peoples must be effectuated in a world parliament. Concerted group work by civil society is needed.

A growing awareness of unity, interconnectedness, and interdependency of all life on the planet, could ultimately give the insight to create a new form global governance in service of the whole of humankind and with due respect to Mother Earth and all life upon her.

The practice of meditation will be helpful in speeding up this process.

Jojo Mehta in her contribution emphasised the fact that criminalising ecocide is becoming a global movement tool to combat climate crisis. It is now generally accepted that climate crisis is happening and is apocalyptic as weather-related disasters and destruction of the environment is on the increase and should be treated within a legal framework. It is no longer OK to damage the environment as taking people's lives and mass murder is a crime. Similarly, Ecocide and destruction of nature should be considered as crime against humanity. We need to expose the political and corporate actions and practices destroying the planet. We need to propose laws to eradicate ecocide as destroying ecosystems are harming the health and wellbeing of the species including humans.

There is a real potential for change for policymakers and corporations to start examining and shift from discussion to action. We need to act and create a momentum going forward to involve the people and change the world and public opinion to pass legislation of ecocide as a crime against humanity. We should demand from government to implement legal sanctions for actions and crimes against environment (including ecocide) especially those coming from big corporations and fossil fuel companies.

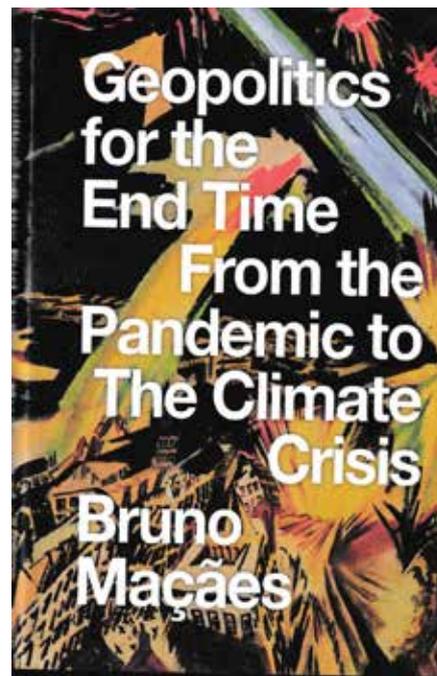
Report prepared by Brian Cooper, UfP Vice President and Vijay Mehta, UfP Chair.

Confronting the post-Covid Global System

Bruno Macaes, former Portuguese minister now world affairs analyst, reflects in depth on the Covid pandemic's impact on the global order. North Asian states' response - especially China's - was swift, drastic and successful, readily backed by populations more accustomed to disasters and life's fragility than their US and European counterparts. Mentally unready for a catastrophe, the latter states initially showed complacency, too little seriousness or speed, and their individualistic societies too little discipline. The contrast with North Asian duties-based societies' ingrained collectivism was stark, the superiority of their socio-political models in face of impending doom, obvious.

Macaes sees this having world-changing significance: the assumed superiority of Western liberal values and systems, promoted worldwide as ideal universal model, has undergone a huge setback [he wrote before the Afghan collapse]. China and Modi-led India were already asserting their distinctive 'civilisational' models; economic nationalism - prompted by shortages of healthcare essentials - sharpens the trend. Non-Western peoples "increasingly see the concept of Western civilisation...as one among many, with no particular claim to universality." [p.113]. Pandemic gave "shape to geopolitical competition": between different civilisations and states, with global institutions weakened [except scientific ones], all in a context of 'neither war nor peace', tension between nationalism and inter-dependence, and an over-arching trade war between USA and a China set to become the world's dominant economy by 2028.

Yet all states share an increasingly hostile natural environment: climate change threatens to claim far more victims than Covid's seven to ten million - it demands "a new concept of humanity as a collective actor" for change. The challenge now is for states to suspend their power competition to prioritise cooperation for necessary technological advance, investment for a sustainable future, and big-scale societal change, to meet the existential climate danger.



Bruno Macaes - Geopolitics for the End Time - Hurst £18.99
ISBN: 978-1-78738-554-2
Brian Cooper, UfP Vice-President

Uniting for Peace at the Green Party Conference Birmingham, 22 – 24 October 2021 United Nations: 21st Century Global Challenges and Prospects for Peace

Uniting for Peace had an exhibition stand at the Green Party Conference in Birmingham and also hosted an event, jointly sponsored by Uniting for Peace and UNA Birmingham.

The event's which was held on Friday 22nd October, was on "**United Nations: 21st Century Global Challenges and Prospects for Peace**". It was a physical event and a virtual event together. The distinguished speakers included **Vijay Mehta**, Author and Chair, Uniting for Peace, **Molly Scott-Cato**, Former Member of the European Parliament, **Jo Berry**, the Founder of Bridges for Peace, **Ravi Kumar**, Chair, UNA Birmingham.

The event was chaired by **Rita Payne**, President Emeritus Commonwealth Journalists Association. The event was attended by the Green Party delegates, Members of UNA Birmingham and four of Uniting for Peace Committee members – Liliias Cheyne, Ravi Kumar, Jo Berry and Vijay Mehta.

Speakers emphasised the need for UN Reforms but agreed that we do need a world body to meet the challenges facing the world in the 21st Century. A vibrant discussion and Q/A session followed the event. It was a good event hosted by UNA Birmingham and Uniting for Peace and it is an encouragement to host events with other organisations.

The Green Party conference was packed with workshops, fringe meetings, and speeches by the newly elected leaders – Adrian



Left to right - Molly Scott-Cato, Rita Payne, Vijay Mehta, Jo Berry, Ravi Kumar

Ramsay and Carla Denyer. Uniting for Peace exhibition stand was minded by Liliias Cheyne, Vijay and Shanti Mehta. We were all busy with Test Your Knowledge of Peace Questionnaire with the delegates who visited our stand and we collected a large number of names and addresses which are being added to our database. Our stand was visited by Baroness Jenny Jones, previous Green Party Leader Siân Berry, the present leaders, Adrian and Carla and many well known delegates. We were able to sell 5 books of How Not To Go To War by Vijay Mehta.

Report prepared by UfP Chair, Vijay Mehta

Continue from page 2

From the Hindu perspective, to move human beings towards truth through unselfish, open minded thoughts and behaviour which encourages people to act and live in harmony.

One of the root causes of violence is lack of inner peace. There are five obstacles to inner peace which are aptly described in the Indian scriptures in various ways in Vedic culture, Bhagavad Gita, Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism. They are Kam (lust), Krodh (rage, anger, fear and hatred), Lobh (greed of wealth, power and fame) – excesses of capitalism and corporate power, Moh (attachment, delusion, ignorance or obsession) and Ahankar (Vanity, pride or ego) destroyer of the tranquillity of the mind. These are five basic causes of violence leading to suffering of human existence. The self-control of all these five evils is the key to inner peace and also the core contribution of many major religions of the world.

Inner peace comes from within and it is futile to seek it elsewhere. It radiates from within and our behaviour will be its own manifestation. What you do towards people is a reflection of who you are and what you feel inside.

Emperor Ashok (304BC - 232BC) who, when Romans were busy killing each other, created an exceptional doctrine of life in which subjects of all faiths in his kingdom were protected under his code. He was one of the first Emperor to put the doctrine of nonviolence into practice to the extent that even deer hunting was banned by him in his kingdom. The teachings of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, promoted that there is no Hindu or Muslim, "All beings and creatures are His (God's). He (God) belongs to all" – Guru Granth Sahib 425

Hindus believe that life is a series of beginnings, not endings. Creation is an ongoing process and when we aim to create a perfect world, where love and compassion are shared by all for suffering to cease, is the ultimate goal of Hinduism

Like all great religious traditions, Hinduism is complex and multi-faceted when it comes to the question of peace and war, violence and non-violence. Although many critics claim that violence is also part of Hinduism, others argue that Hinduism is essentially a religion of peace like Judaism, Christianity and Islam, leaving unsettled whether religious sanction of violence is essential to each religion in question or a departure from its primary message.

Can religion show the way for co-existence, heal the wounds and bring peace, reconciliation and harmony in the world? Religion often has been misused for divisive political purposes, but the essence of true faith is to motivate and inspire for peace and harmony.

Gandhi stated Hinduism's unique contribution as "Non-violence is common to all religions but it has found the highest expression and application in Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. Hinduism believes in the oneness not of merely all human life but in the oneness of all that lives. Hinduism is a practical application of the belief in the oneness and therefore, sacredness of all life.

Faiths Working Together for a Better World – A New Initiative – Department / Ministry for Peace

Dear Friends, faith in essence bring unity and compassion in everyday life reaching everyone whoever they may be Jew, Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists without reservation or exception. Brothers and sisters in all as St. Francis saw it.

Uniting for Peace (Edinburgh and London) and many more faith organisations are sharing wisdom, understanding of different religions for co-existence, peace, religious pluralism and tolerance.

Another way of working together is to celebrate and participate in festivals of different faiths which can enhance understanding of other religions - an uplifting experience for all.

In 2019 I wrote a book, "**How Not To Go To War**" in which I proposed that every country should urgently have Ministry / Departments for Peace at Governmental Level and also appoint a

Minister for Peace and Disarmament. It will create Infrastructure for Peace and the Peace Department will promote a culture of non-violence both at home and abroad and by seeking common ground through dialogue, diplomacy, negotiations and alternatives to war. Departments for Peace will institutionalise peace in the same way that war has been institutionalised by Department for Defence / War as it used to be called before.

The book also advocates opening **Peace Centres (like Ashrams in India)** to act as training community and educational hubs for peace builders and community leaders hosting interfaith dialogue, multi - cultural activities and seminars on reducing violence, knife crime, shootings and murders. These centres will create a vibrant local community and will be engines for cultural transformation. They will also promote Culture of Peace and non-violence for addressing conflicts and divisions in the society.

Conclusion and Way Forward

In yoga, according to its founder Patanjali, one of the first precepts of Ahimsa (nonviolence) is do not kill, do not hurt or harm anyone, do not think ill of others.

In other words, The Hindu ethos permits co-existence, mutual respect and harmonious living of different groups as this world view is based on emphasising the origin of all existence in one truth, God or Brahman.

We all want to see a world free of pain, cruelty, free from violence and barbarity that perpetuates suffering on earth and revalidate the power of love, compassion and forgiveness.

Holding meetings like today to foster values of oneness, harmony, multiculturalism and diversity brings a sense of our common humanity, at its deepest, which flows from a mystical experience of oneness. This is why the growth of inner peace, advocated in Hinduism is a vital contribution to the peace of the world. Nonviolence is nurtured by inner peace, unity and spiritual development leading to universal peace.

Spiritual and religious leaders should pledge to do all to end wars and violence that has been plaguing mankind for too long, especially the wars that have an element of religious and ideological disagreement and help remove any possible religious justification for these wars and violence. Instead of killing one another, we encourage one another towards personal and universal enlightenment and pledge to work towards this end. Peace requires the spiritual transformation of mankind and as faith communities, we should be prepared to answer that call.

Let me say that, civilisation in the long run can only prevail if a society is based on moral and ethical values and standards. What we need is more faith, more inner peace to rectify the dire situation of the universe. I think that is the essence of Hinduism and all faiths. We as spiritual followers of all faiths have the widest, largest and deepest reach. We can make a huge difference for us and future generations. Hope is all about determination and believing that your actions are going to make things a little bit better. Let's do it, our work starts right here, right now. To follow the line of Hinduism's vision to build a nonviolent peaceful world, we should invoke the strength of Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver and pray for the powers of Shiva, the Destroyer to remain dormant. In essence the message of Hindu religion is to work for building a peaceful world.

Dear friends, in conclusion let me say that dreams never get fulfilled, commitments do. Changes must be transformative not gradual. They require bold vision and courage. It is protest and activism which brings change and always have. The publication of my book, *How Not To Go to War*, and establishing Departments for Peace and Peace Centres worldwide, are steps in the right direction, which will spread non-violence and a culture of peace. This will ultimately put an end to a culture of militarism, violence, war and build a non-violent peaceful world. This is an aspiration for which I am willing to devote the rest of my life.

Thanks for listening. **Vijay Mehta** – vijay@vmpeace.org

Labour Party Annual Conference, Brighton 2021

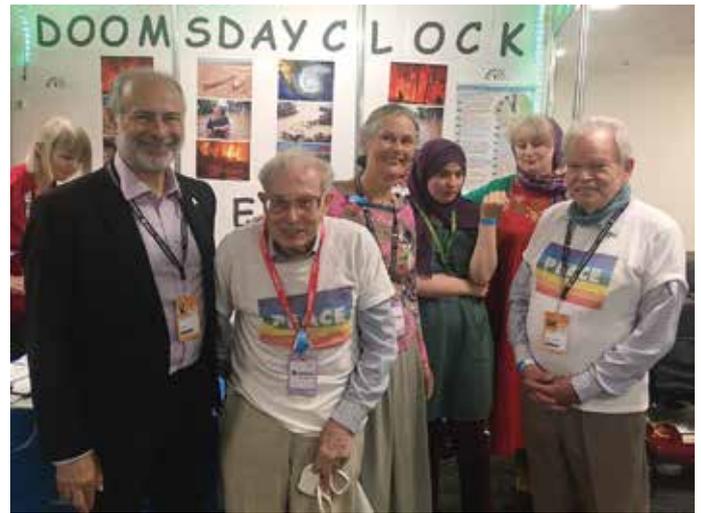
After an online only conference in 2020, the Labour Party returned to an in-person event in 2021. Uniting for Peace, together with its usual partner, Labour Action for Peace, exhibited under the banner of Peace and Disarmament Centre. The theme focused on the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists' metaphorical "Doomsday Clock".

The Doomsday Clock was created by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists in 1947, when the Cold War was burgeoning, and it was realised that the atom bomb was not just another weapon – albeit by far the most powerful ever – but one capable of destroying the whole of civilisation, literally an existential threat. It was set then at 7 minutes to midnight and the clock logo was created to be the most graphic image of this. It is currently set at 100 seconds to midnight, the latest it has ever been, later than even at the height of the Cold War.

This judgement is based on the continuing failure of the nuclear weapon powers (NWS) to fulfil their obligations under the NPT to negotiate the reduction and eventual abolition of nuclear weapons, while in fact "modernising" them, combined with the more recently recognised threat of climate catastrophe, global overheating, exacerbated by the COVID pandemic, destruction of the environment, extinction of species, and more.

A display was created showing some of the extreme events – wildfires, floods, droughts, hurricanes – which are becoming more frequent and more intense as a result of global over-heating, with the clock logo and the current assessment of the overall situation emphasised.

While focusing on these global issues, a petition was also promoted opposing the new Australia, UK, US (AUKUS) nuclear-powered submarine pact, which gained wide support. In the Conference itself, an Emergency Motion proposed by Labour CND, making similar demands, was carried by a large majority of both local Party members and trade unions. Regrettably, the Party leadership refused to accept this result. The Peace Movement still has a mountain to climb in its aim to make Labour the



Left to right - Fabian Hamilton, Frank Jackson, Liliya Cheyne, Luci Carolin and her daughter, Colin Bastin

Peace Party. But we can only continue with our best efforts until we succeed.

Uniting for Peace exhibition stand at the conference was busy with delegates interacting and answering the Test Your Knowledge of Peace Questionnaire and appreciating excellent display of the photos and banners of Doomsday Clock. UfP stand was visited by Fabian Hamilton MP and Shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament among other dignitaries.

Among the volunteers, helping at the stand were Frank Jackson, Colin Bastin, Helen Watts, Luci Carolin, Roslyn Cook, Liliya Cheyne, Shanti and Vijay Mehta. A lot of signatures were collected from the delegates at the conference, UfP newsletter and other literatures were distributed and we were able to sell a few of Vijay Mehta's book, How Not To Go To War.

Report of the conference UfP Vice President Frank Jackson and additions by UfP Chair Vijay Mehta

COP - A 26 Year Marathon – Success or a Failure

The 26th UN Climate Change Conference took place in November 2021 the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) in Glasgow. Below is a report by a peace activist and film producer Kasha Sequoia

Hi Everyone

Cop26 is over. Emotionally, it's been a difficult week. Including having drafted a pretty long update to make up for my absence, only to lose it after my computer shut down unexpectedly. Frustration has been a keyword on so many levels during COP26 which was a circus for corporate and country level greenwashing. The fossil fuel delegates which were amongst the largest of delegations to attend, larger than any single country. Get where this is going?

Also, there was virtually NO MENTION of the military impacts on the environment throughout the whole week. Nothing in the meetings, high level plenaries or even amongst environmental organizations. That part was surprising. Just a sprinkling of banners in the marches but nothing inside the great halls of power where the discussions and decisions were being made. Yet, a reduction of even 10% of the trillions of dollars spent annually would contribute greatly to the annual climate fund needed to tackle the climate crisis.

Notice there is no mention of peace on a mural being painted at the entrance to the conference, so we approached them and asked why not since the military is a huge polluter. They agreed and said it should be included, said they would but when we went back on the last day, there was nothing. The question still remains - why are



these issues still so siloed?

The final document agreed by all delegations to phase out coal and fossil fuel subsidies did not give any firm date and no targets were set either. And, the developed nations' pledge of \$100 billion annually to the climate fund was not met either. Big on promises and short on delivery! Yes, more blah, blah, blah.

What part of 'there's no money on a dead planet' do these powerful leaders not understand? Such disregard for all life on the planet, especially the ones suffering the most as a result of a problem they did not cause in the first place. I heard many heartbreaking stories.

Continue to page 7

Uniting for Peace

CCND Event Builds Bridges of Faiths for Peace

An interfaith event in Oxford's Quaker House on 20 November looked at the ways in which teachings of Peace and Nonviolence in sacred scriptures writings can build bridges between different faiths and cultures. Organised by the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CCND) on the theme, 'Building Bridges for Peace', it is an annual event to remember Barbara Eggleston, CCND's first coordinator.

Steve Hucklesby, of the Joint Public Issues Team, chaired the 'Campaigning for Peace' part of the day. He explained that JPIT brings together policy and parliamentary work of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church into one place. He posed the question, "How can we better work together across faiths to bring about learning or change?" And he gave examples where churches have been influential in such issues as banning cluster munitions and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. A multifaith initiative has surveyed the policies of the major UK banks and financial institutions regarding the funding of companies involved in nuclear weapons. There were calls for peace education programmes and divestment from companies producing weapons of war.

Dr Maria Power, a Senior Fellow of Blackfriars Hall, Oxford, where she is a Senior Research Fellow in Human Dignity at the Las Casas Institute for Social Justice, examined the causes of structural violence from a Christian perspective. She highlighted Poverty, Injustice and Racism as among underlying causes of conflict and how Catholic Social Teaching suggests ways to build bridges for peace and read the "signs of the times".

Muslim scholar Dr Kamel Ait Tahar, who memorised the Quran at the age of 17 and is Muslim Chaplain to the High Sheriff of Oxford, told the gathering that the word 'Islam' means 'peace'. "The Quran recognises the vital need for society to live in peace and security," he said, and pointed out that more than 250 verses highlight peace. "Peace needs to be aligned with justice," he added. In his conclusion he said: "Peace in a society is a need not a luxury. In the holy Quran, as in previous sacred texts, the importance of peace within a community and between communities is paramount. To achieve peace and harmony, communities are encouraged to reach out to each other, learn from each other and enrich each other."

Vijay Mehta, a Peace activist and Chair of 'Uniting for Peace', whose notable books include 'The Economics of Killing', 'Peace Beyond Borders' and 'How Not to Go to War', voiced his belief that

Continue from page 6

Typically I'd like to remain optimistic but honestly a huge wave of dread and fear came over me as the conference was winding down. The leaders did not take this emergency for what it is - an EMERGENCY.

Thankfully there were many youth safe spaces created where we could connect and talk about our anxiety, grief, fears and just about anything else that weighed heavily upon us.

The only true and meaningful leadership was taken up by civil society organizations, indigenous groups, youth, women, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and Other People of Colour) and LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer), who for the most part were shut out from the negotiations. I have to say that in response, the boisterous and loud demonstrations which erupted in some of the sessions was exhilarating. Especially the People's Plenary with speakers from UN constituencies representing movements and organisations from across the globe.

When these civil society groups left the plenary with red lines in a parade out of the conference centre, I've never seen so many



Left to right - Ellen Teague, Maria Power, Kamel Ait Tahar, Vijay Mehta and Roslyn Cook

faiths must work together for peace. He felt religions "should be the first to raise a voice against nuclear weapons and the propaganda of deterrence". He suggested that, "Departments for Peace and Peace Centres worldwide are steps in the right direction, which will spread non-violence and a culture of peace and this will ultimately put an end to a culture of militarism, violence, and war."

Buddhist speaker Roslyn Cook spoke about being a member of Soka Gakkai International, a global community-based Buddhist organisation accredited to the United Nations and strongly anti-nuclear. She is also a CND Council member and has lobbied internationally for the abolition of nuclear weapons and for climate justice. At a macro level she has called for Ecocide to be recognised as a crime in international law and, more personally, highlighted the need for an inner transformation which would bring enlightenment.

Around 50 people attended the day in person and online among them members of Pax Christi and other organisations from Oxford. The International Prayer for Peace concluded the event and organisers Patricia and Michael Pulham of CCND were warmly thanked.

Vijay Mehta met some long standing peace activists, sold and gave complimentary books to the speakers and the chair. It was a good networking event in which Uniting for Peace literature was given to the delegates and How Not To Go To War Books were sold. Liliias Cheyne, UfP Executive Committee Member attended and helped minding the UFP stand at the event.

Report by Ellen Teague, London-based freelance Catholic journalist and additions by Vijay Mehta, UfP Chair

media and social media videos being shot at any given time! I ran ahead so I could film it. This, and the marches, were amongst some of the most inspiring parts of the whole week - to witness the power of people united. And did we ever get loud and make our voices heard! In the streets they joined the Fridays for Future strike and this was where I gathered my strength once again.

I was honoured to have met many young people working on the frontlines. Hearing their courageous stories was humbling. What's clear is there's huge work ahead that requires every person on the planet. There literally isn't much time to wait. We're currently on track for 2.4 degrees not 1.5 degrees and at this rate my generation is going to be facing horrible climatic impacts for decades to come if we don't find a way to demilitarize, decarbonise and decolonize now!

Warm wishes,

Kasha Sequoia, Film Director, 1.5 Degrees of Peace Film

Here is the link to the original article which includes more pictures <https://cutt.ly/SUgh7NJ>

1.5 Degrees of Peace – a film about Climate Change

Youth are searching for hope, as our rapidly changing climate and increasing global tensions are an ever-present threat, leaving us feeling uncertain of what the future holds for our planet and all living beings. Gen Z activist and award-winning director, Kasha Sequoia Slavner, will explore stories of young people, especially those most affected by climate change and conflicts, who are working to break down the obstacles between peace and climate justice movements. Their journeys to find positive solutions and hold leaders accountable, while challenging their own fears and anxieties, - ignite courage within us to take action alongside them, and unify a movement for peace and climate justice for all.



Link to our website: <https://www.1point5degreesofpeace.com>

The film is produced by Kasha Sequoia, Director, and Marla Slavner, Producer of the film 1.5 Degrees of Peace.

Uniting for Peace AGM and Spring Conference 2022 Climate Change, Militarisation and World Peace

Venue: Wesley's Chapel
49 City Road
London EC1Y 1AU

Date: Saturday, 2 April, 2022
AGM Time: 13:00 - 14:00
Conference Time: 14:15 - 17:00

Chair: **Rita Payne**, President Emeritus,
Commonwealth Journalists Association

Speakers:

Lord Meghnad Desai, Professor Emeritus at London School of Economics

Assad Rehman, Executive Director, War on Want (TBC)

Fiona Harvey, Environmental Correspondent, The Observer (TBC)

Vijay Mehta, Author and Chair, Uniting for Peace

This is a physical in person event.

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