

PEACE STUDIES: BASICS AND ISSUES¹

by Egon Spiegel

Although¹ questions of peace are different in context, for specific questions today, we need a science of peace in a universal sense. It is true that sometimes talking about peace is too unspecified and therefore too general. The term *peace* in its common sense has passed its peak. Instead of talking about peace we prefer talking much more concretely and bindingly for example about (racism and) intercultural learning, (violence in family and) nonviolent education, (exploitation and) fair economic structures, (war and) nonviolent conflict transformation, (patriarchalism and) gender awareness, (ecological destruction and) animal protection. Developments of differentiation are positive. We can meet questions of peace on different levels of living together and in different parts of our life and therefore in a lot of terms describe special problem areas. Anyway we have to reflect on the universal dimensions as well as the principles of peace. Using the term makes sense furthermore.

¹ Dedicated to D. Glenn. Paige and his unique Center of Global Nonkilling, Honolulu.

With the UN-Decade “Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World”² (2001-2010) peace science or peace studies respectively are oriented positively: the perspective is forward-looking as well as a resource-oriented one. In contrast with this, the Decade of the World Council of Churches, created parallel to the UN one, is determined by the motto “Overcoming Violence”³ (2001-2010), a comparatively negative program because its perspective is directed backwards: as it is orientated on violence and the overcoming of violence (instead of building a culture of peace).

In relation to the aforesaid UN-Decade, the following outline of peace studies is a future-oriented as well as a realistic one. It depends on what is going on, what we can, what we are able to do. It depends on the culture of peace, we are allowed to find, on culture of peace like a net of peace zones⁴ in the world, they exist, or layers of peace, they are given. The introduction to peace studies is based on what we achieved in peace building and the potential we can find in what we could realize. Therefore the sketch is an empirical one. The corner pillars of peace science I outline in the following article mark the concept of Peace Studies I use to offer in seminars and lectures I have given and I am giving in my German University of Vechta as well as in Chinese, Brazilian, Korean, US(-American), and Polish universities. The kind of peace studies I represent is consolidated especially by experiences in cooperation with my Chinese colleague Cheng Liu in peace research as well as in common lectures about conflict transformation and peace building.⁵ He, who is the Nestor of Peace Studies in China,⁶ has invited me to his Nanjing University and other universities in China to give lectures there for the past three years in a row.

² See the report in http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/2010_civil_society_report.pdf (01.08.2012).

³ See the report in <http://gewaltueberwinden.org/fileadmin/dov/files/Overcoming-Violence.pdf> (01.08.2012).

⁴ See D. Senghaas, *Zum irdischen Frieden. Erkenntnisse und Vermutungen* [To Earthly Peace. Cognitions and Presumptions], Frankfurt a.M. 2004, pp. 162–181, with reference to Kenneth E. Boulding and the term of *stabil peace*, he created.

⁵ See our coming soon book Cheng Liu, E. Spiegel, *Peace Building in a Globalized World. An Introduction to Peace Studies with 200 Illustrations and Comments*.

⁶ Cheng Liu, Professor of British History at the Department of History, Nanjing University, Nanjing/China, is influenced by the peace research of Johan Galtung and Alan Hunter.

Focusing the UN-Decade „Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World“, my special attention is directed to peace as non-violence. Furthermore my approach is regarding especially globalization as a very special condition of peace building and therefore it involves a concept which is basically determined by the recent transcultural and transnational networking especially of the youth and the positive effects of the worldwide economic network.⁷ At the center of my peace making concept are concepts of conflict transformation with the goal to make war and violence taboo.

Peace Studies and Peace Sciences in the form of Peace Research, Peace Education, and Peace Activism⁸ are motivated by the things which are going wrong in our world. Violence in all its phenomena causes deep wounds among humans. Peace Studies are essentially motivated by this. Usually they pick out these phenomena and discuss possible solutions against this background. My approach contrasts with this concept. It is explicitly not deficit, but resource-oriented. This means that I try to isolate violence and overcome it not by pointing out its phenomena and attacking it directly, but by bringing out the opportunities and possibilities that are obviously given to us by a lot of spectacular nonviolent activities as well as of our daily practicing nonviolence.⁹

My positive perspective is mainly fed by my optimistic assessment of the human capability to learn, by the discovery of human beings becoming more and more sensitive and human, and at least a worldwide connectivity by economy and digital-based communication. In this world violence does not have any place. What we need is a responsible federal administration of the world based on politics (“conflict politics”) which do not only appreciate the nonviolent conflict transformation but is familiar with the principles, practices and perspectives of nonviolence.

⁷ See J.R. McNeill, W.H. McNeill, *The Human Web. A Bird's-Eye View of World History*, New York–London 2003.

⁸ I publish an appropriate book series together with Liu Cheng and our colleague Michael Nagler, Prof. em. of the University of California, Berkeley/USA, in the German publishing house LIT, Berlin.

⁹ See M. Nagler, E. Spiegel, *Politik ohne Gewalt. Prinzipien, Praxis und Perspektiven der Gewaltfreiheit* [Politics without Violence. Principles, Practice, and Perspectives of Nonviolence], Berlin 2008.

1. GLOBALIZATION AND PEACE

In globalizing the world, Peace Studies are given not only new conditions of an efficient peace building. Peace building is already partly realized because of the new worldwide structures they are included in the imagination of peace how long humankind is anticipating, expecting, and postulating peace. Not overnight but under the conditions of continuous international activities of universities, the sustainable support of this by politics and economy, a very internationalized business and trade, worldwide tourism, a lot of global cultural events (sports, music, arts and so on), the spread of common fashion and taste, not least the creation of the digital social net, peace is realized in an essential part. Therefore we may think peace, and the chance to build peace in this world always anew and as perfect as possible under the new, recent conditions. That the world is becoming One World in a cultural sense is already a kind of peace: all representatives of peace research, peace education, and peace activism must be happy about this. This does not mean that there is nothing more to do. On the contrary, cultural unification is only a good frame in which peace can develop.¹⁰ A special task is given to religions. By their intercontinental existence they are naturally inter-cultural and inter-national brackets on the one hand. On the other hand, they do not only obstruct peace building, but stabilize a world which is separated within the frame of globalization and cultural unification by the existence of different, partly mutually hostile religions.

2. CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE

Although our life is fundamentally determined by nonviolence, we usually think our life is mainly a violent one. One of the reasons for this is the fact that life is permanently threatened by violence and therefore we have to pay attention to the dangers we are living in. The media confirm

¹⁰ See also: E. Boulding, *Cultures of Peace. The Hidden Side of History*, Syracuse, NY 2000.

our feeling and intensify it by concentration on chiefly bad news. Peace Studies form part of the medial reports and use the information they can get to bring down violence in all its manifestations with an interest to overcome it by supporting mankind in building a culture of peace (non-violence). The necessary attention towards threatening violence obscures our view of nonviolence which happens in our life. In contrast to this, Peace Studies have to point out the bright side of life and the potential of peace which is given to us. Peace Studies have to help us change our perspective of life and shape the world on the basis of peace, in other words: on the basis of nonviolence. They have to deliver us with concepts of peace education and peace activism on the basis of a high complex peace research and to give us the adequate skills. In principle, Peace Studies change our perspectives from the classic violence-based attempts of conflict resolution to the alternate nonviolence-based strategies and methods of conflict transformation and from the primary (deficit-oriented) critic of violence to the primarily (resource-oriented) reinforcement of nonviolence, including the critic of all phenomena of violence and as the decisive answer to the challenge of violence. Peace Studies are responsibly looking for realistic conflict resolutions by thinking “out of the box”.

3. PEACE STUDIES

Peace Studies are a relatively young interdisciplinary science, existing in several variations. More than 200 universities all over the world offer Peace Studies as a study, which you can often find under the denomination „Peace Studies Program“ and integrated in political science as a special field of it. In combination with mainly psychological questions and concepts (of for example mediation) you can find them usually under „Peace and Conflict Resolution“. In some universities you can study them to get a BA-degree, in others an MA-degree or both, sometimes a PhD. Very often the study is based on what individual professors offer in different disciplines of the universities. Sometimes the Studies touch upon only some questions of peace and are not highly specialized in peace. Peace Studies Programs like this are led by one of the participating professors. The

universities offer the special program without establishing special jobs. The initiatives to create Peace Studies (often linked with the name Johan Galtung) can be found in corresponding study programs dating back to the 1960s, culminating in the 1970s and 1980s. Doubtless the Second World War and the following Cold War with especially the danger of an atomic war were the main motivation for this. Today Peace Studies have to cover a huge area of questions around conflict resolution by conflict transformation, not only in the political dimensions. Peace Studies reflect the whole social cosmos, in our special case particularly with regard to build a global culture of nonviolence.¹¹

4. CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Very often you can find the word combination „peace and conflict research“. Actually we would place *conflict* before *peace*, because peace follows conflict (resolution). You might as well say that peace is the goal towards which we have to solve conflicts, and therefore it is right, to place *peace* before *conflict*. Nevertheless, conflict is both as a term and as a content a central part of peace, basically its starting point, and therefore we have to define it. Conflict means a (cross cultural) clash of opposite needs, feelings, interests, claims, goals, persuasions, ideas, values, norms, roles (and expectations on roles), systems or activities. Conflicts are caused by the difference of social subjects, the plurality of human existence, the force to a cooperative acting, limitation of material resources (conflicts of distribution), psychological disposition, and ethical standards. Concerning their complex historical and situational conditions of origination, and diverse causes, conflicts are multidimensional and multilateral stress ratios. You can differentiate conflicts by duration, frequency, participants, intensity (for example theoretical antagonism, war), and causes (for example emotional, developmental, interpersonal, structural, political conflicts). Conflict is an indispensable dynamic, creative, and integrative element of

¹¹ See also W. Dietrich et al. (ed.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Peace Studies. A Cultural Perspective*, New York USA, 2011.

living together. Peace Studies reflect on conflict(s) and explain how we can solve them. The key is conflict transformation.

5. TERMS

Everybody uses the term *peace*, and everybody uses it in the sense of his or her own understanding. This makes the discussion so difficult. We think we are discussing the same, but in fact we are discussing different subjects. *Peace* is not *peace*. The same holds true for *violence* and its opposite: *non-violence*. If we discuss the problems of conflict resolution and peace building, we have to define the terms at first. For quite a long time, peace was not much more than the absence of war, today it is much more the status quo defined by universal justice. Relatively easy was also the discussion about violence. Violence was something which happens between two or more persons or groups (personal violence), visible and direct. Since Johan Galtung differentiated from this the so-called structural (invisible, indirect) violence the discussion proceeded in a much more complex way.¹² When Gandhi started to discover nonviolence he had to deal with a misunderstanding regarding the term passive resistance (passive because of absence of violence). The nonviolence he represented was the opposite of passive resistance, it was active resistance. Over all there are a lot of other misunderstandings in the context of the use of non-violence till today. Peace Studies have to work out an adequate terminology (not least concerning aggression and aggressiveness or power, especially under the aspect of the relationship of power and violence). In the academic discussion peace and nonviolence need not only different terminology but also a different reflection.

¹² See J. Galtung, *Strukturelle Gewalt. Beiträge zur Friedens- und Konfliktforschung* [Structural Violence. Contributions to the Peace- and Conflict Research], Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt 1975.

6. MOTIVATIONS FOR PEACE BUILDING

Global peace building is essentially motivated by the danger and the reality of violence on the one hand and the potential and the reality of nonviolence on the other hand. A lot of circumstances and facts are forcing Peace Studies, especially peace research, peace education, and peace activism (even in form of governmental peace policy or in form of peace movement). One of the central givens is the high suicide rate of soldiers, respective veterans. War as a videogame is not the same like war in reality that the young soldiers have to experience. Significantl people and societies are becoming more and more sensitive (including their behavior to animals). Therefore, young people are especially stressed by a big discrepancy between ethical developments on the one hand and the brutal challenges of war on the other hand. Soldiers are returning from war being lifelong traumatized. Additionally, and not least, there are the incredible costs of war respectively deterrence systems. Some of the reasons for peace building are the dynamic of the arms race based on the so-called military-industrial-complex, strategies based on using antimissile missiles, and the danger of a nuclear war (including the proliferation of nuclear weapons). Besides conditions like these, there are countless activities which target the realization of a „culture of peace“ the United Nations postulates in its decade given out in the year 2000. The Global Peace Index ranks more than 120 countries concerning their climbing or descending peacefulness.

7. MAKING WAR A TABOO

In 1982 Daniel Shechtman discovered five-fold-crystals. Nobody could or would follow him. His own research group fired him, a scientific journal rejected his article about his discovery. In 2011 he got the Nobel Prize for Chemistry. 40 years after the beginning of resistance against nuclear energy by the antinuclear movement the government in Germany decided to renounce this technology to the future. The decision was not made after „Chernobyl“ (1986), also there was a crucial debate about the danger of nuclear energy, but after „Fukushima“ (2011). What at first nobody believed

happened, suddenly and sustainably. A decision was made, for which well-informed, censoriously-anticipatory people fought continuously. Suddenly something is made taboo, what shortly before was still accepted by a majority of the people. Concerning war and abolishing war, hopefully we do not need a last big one (for example: a conflagration in Asia and the Middle East because of a nuclear attack by Iran by Israel). We changed the geocentric world view to a heliocentric one, we know that the earth is a globe and not a disc, we abolished slavery (at least by law), we declared human rights and children rights, we will be punished, when we beat our wife or force sex on her, we abolished bullfighting in Catalonia and smoking in public buildings, even in restaurants, we learn more and more to protect animals ... A lot of people did not believe all of these cases could happen. But abolishing war (latest in 2075, child soldiers that are only 10 years old) is like changing ice into water: it needs only 0.1 degree and the ice melts. Perhaps we need a little bit more than 0.1 degree, but not much more. The time is ripe.¹³ Especially the economic situation and constellation do not allow making war any more. We will make war a taboo like we tabooed murder long before.¹⁴ Also by tabooing we will abolish violence more and more.

8. ECONOMIC CONFLICTS

In the future we will have no more territorial, military conflicts between nations, but intensive economic conflicts between different social classes or layers. These conflicts you cannot solve by military activities. The conflicts will be caused by a high concentration of money in a very small upper-class (partly in an upper middle-class), and the absence of the biggest part of this money in the (middle and lower) middle-class and the lower-class („We are the 99 %“). In the past the middle-class felt itself linked with the upper-class, today the middle-class, more exactly the lower

¹³ See also J.E. Mueller, *The Remnants of War*, Ithaca, NY 2004.

¹⁴ See also the path breaking study of Paige, D. Glenn, *Nonkilling Global Political Science*, OCLC 50711626 (2002).

middle-class, finds itself much more in the same boat as the lower-class. The economic tension, you can find all over the world, will cause an upheaval in the middle-class. The situation and constellation are determined by an unlimited dynamic of accumulating wealth of a very small group, the lack of paying tribute to the necessity of "acceptance costs" by the rich people, the world wide increasing pauperization and the involvement of the middle class in this, the upcoming connection between lower-class and (parts of) middle-class, the explosive mixture of (very) poor, but also well-educated and digitally connected people affected by the richness of a small group. About 50 million US-American citizens are poor, each fifth child lives below the official poverty line. Because middle-class and lower-class are affected by the same fate, the middle-class could support the people of the lower-class in articulating their protest by professionally analyzing the situation and looking for an appropriate way of dealing with it.

9. NON VIOLENCE

According to the theory of mirror neurons I probably tend to copy the behavior of my opposite. If it is a nonviolent one, I tend to react nonviolently. If it is a violent one, I am inclined to react with violence. Therefore, I am responsible not only for my own actions, but also for the (re-)action of my counterpart. Fortunately we are allowed to emancipate ourselves from the neuronal reflexes by reflection and can act nonviolently, although our opposite acts violently.¹⁵ Furthermore we have a big spectrum of exemplary nonviolent activities (Gandhi, Martin Luther King). But much more, we are all experienced in daily nonviolence.¹⁶ According to the doctrine of nonviolence the target of our dealing decides the means (is

¹⁵ See A. Niermann, *Gewaltfrei in die Zukunft – die friedenspädagogische Relevanz der Spiegelneuronen* [Nonviolent into the Future. The Peace-Paedagogical Relevance of Mirror Neurons], Münster 2012.

¹⁶ Our life is mainly a nonviolent one. Peace Studies have to work out especially this (from its very beginning in the Kindergarten). Like the discovery of nonviolent action as a revolutionary practicable political means, we need another revolution: the discovery

our goal nonviolence, naturally our means have to be nonviolent). Basically are the nonviolent interpersonal dealings with our enemy,¹⁷ the parts and phases of a nonviolent action,¹⁸ especially the steps of dialog¹⁹. Problematic temptations for nonviolence are centralism, leadership, and the crowd. Nonviolence (as the highest ethical level of acting compared with passivity and violence) demonstrates that conviction (the clean hands) and responsibility (the strong hands) cover each other.²⁰ A lot of examples show that nonviolent actions against totalitarian regimes are practicable.²¹ Nonviolent actions are differentiated in subversive and constructive actions and several escalations' steps.²² Last but not least nonviolence in

of nonviolence in our daily life. There we've a huge field of experiences which are important concerning our postulate solving conflicts by using nonviolent methods.

¹⁷ Fundamentally are furthermore the differentiation of role and person concerning the opponent, the relevance of dialog and compromise, the producing of an atmosphere of confidence (by transparency), the function of public, the strategy of dramatization and fractionizing, and the relevance of suffering.

¹⁸ We distinguish (1) situation analysis, (2) awareness raising, (3) preparation of the direct action, (4) performance of the direct action (confrontation), and (5) evaluation of the action.

¹⁹ According to the classical definition of Hildegard Goss-Mayr the following steps are essential: (1) discover the truth of the enemy, (2) discover and confess the own complicity, (3) express the injustice and vouch for the truth, (4) make constructive proposals for solving the problem.

²⁰ See the difference between *ethics of conviction* and *ethics of responsibility* according Max Weber and the remarkable congruence of both in the *ethics of active nonviolence* (nonviolent action). Because of this we can see in nonviolence a *third way* between doing nothing and acting with violence.

²¹ A good example is the nonviolent protest in the Rosenstraße in Berlin during the rule of National Socialism 1943; see the movie directed by Margareta von Trotta (2003) and Jochheim, Gernot: *Frauenprotest in der Rosenstraße Berlin 1943. Berichte, Dokumente, Hintergründe* [Women's Protest in the Rosenstraße Berlin 1943. Reports, Documents, Backgrounds], Berlin 2002. Here you can study concretely that nonviolence does not mean non-resistance. See generally G. Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Boston 1973.

²² Therefore, we have to differentiate between *protest* and *functional demonstration* (escalation step 1), *legal noncooperation* and *legal innovation of roles* (escalation step 2), and *civil disobedience* and *civil usurpation* (escalation step 3). The first one (for example: protest) is part of subversive actions, the second one (for example: functional demonstration) part of constructive actions. See T. Ebert, *Gewaltfreier Aufstand. Alternativen*

its interpersonal as well as structural dimensions is the expression of a lifestyle and spiritually based on the trust of a Third Might and searching for the truth.

10. RELIGIONS AND PEACE

In the Bible, which is for Jewish like Christian and Muslim believers a holy book, you can find this remarkable sentence: "... we will not ride on horses; and we will say no more 'Our God' to the work of our hands." (Hosea 14,4)²³ Later Jesus rides demonstratively on a mule, not on a horse (= war horse) into Jerusalem. Both tell us that there is a big difference between trust in weapons (a horse could be a weapon, a mule not) or trust in God and his mediative powers. According to this understanding God is a peacemaking power between the people, between two hostile parties. He exists in the "inter". In a part of the picture of Barna da Siena "The Mystical Marriage of Saint Catherine" (Italy, 1340) you can discover a larger than life-sized Angel standing behind a black clothed soldier and a white one, surrounded by fallen weapons, giving hugs of reconciliation. The Angel is the personification of the peacemaking Third Might. In a famous Latin word the connection is expressed as "ubi caritas et amor, ibi Deus est". The spirituality of nonviolence focused in a kind of Third (peacemaking) Might you can find in all religions. It is the basis of a worldwide ethos of peace.²⁴ The religions have to realize the spirituality of nonviolence in their own community as well as among themselves. In the horizon of this they are allowed to postulate a peace-oriented, nonviolence-based action of politics. Remarkably secular youth all over the world is

tive zum Bürgerkrieg [Nonviolent Uprising. An Alternative to Civil War], Frankfurt a.M. 1970.

²³ In other similar sentences in the Bible the people is challenged by the alternative: *trust in horses* (it means weapons and military) or *trust in God*. See E. Spiegel, *Gewaltverzicht. Grundlagen einer biblischen Friedenstheologie* [Renunciation of Violence. Basics of a Biblical Theology of Peace], Kassel 1987.

²⁴ See also H. Berndt, *Non-Violence in the World Religions. Vision and Reality*, London 2000; P. Schmidt-Leukel, *War and Peace in World Religions*, London 2004.

realizing that religions are postulating: a worldwide community, here in the form of a worldwide net of communication and consumption, of fashion and taste, of political thinking and acting. More and more they are living in a TRANS (the realization of eschatological expectation).

11. PERSPECTIVES

Peace building is a postulate of egoism, more precisely: of a „synthetic egoism“, of the knowledge that the results of my acting will return to me like a boomerang. Good deeds cause good results, evil deeds cause negative consequences. Therefore, peace building with the perspective of a worth living life is actually a kind of egoism, a realization of self-love, not altruistic self-abandonment. Nevertheless young people ask themselves skeptically if they are able to engage for peace. They are not only able to build peace, but they realize peace daily, very often without knowing it. Next point: it is not necessary to create big things. Each deed makes sense. If a swarm of bees is willing to leave the branch where they are hanging, one bee after the other has to fly away. That is the last straw that breaks the camel's back. Nobody knows which was the last one. Anyway, each straw is just as worthy as the other. Therefore, each engagement is indispensable. A lot of initiatives, movements, and organizations intertwine and push us to peace. Also the network of the phenomenon of McDonald's is a kind of social network and create a community, even if it is the community of common consumers. Last but not least there is a worldwide net of international exchange programs of for example universities, which bring people together, and special facilities to study peace. We will not abolish violence completely, but we can reduce it substantially. The basis is our daily positive experiences, on which we have to focus. For the youth especially looking forward is existential.