

Dr Leo Rebello(Ed.).

World Without Wars

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Leo Rebello, a ‘patriot of humanity’ and a holistic healer, here deals with the most deadly of diseases: war, poverty, and the frontiers which divide humanity into hostile units. This collection of essays, poems, drawings and cartoons was prepared, in part, for the ongoing World March for Peace and Non-violence (2 October 2009 – 2 January 2010). He encourages the march in his introduction “Let your journey begin to Love and Light.” The journey is to achieve the common desires of all people to live in peace and harmony with each other and with nature. The book deals with pressing world problems beyond the march itself. There is a moving photo of a group of activists with the banner “One Earth, One Sky, One Humankind. Together we work to slow down climate change” — a goal for the Copenhagen climate conference starting on 7 December. The United Nations system has helped to draw attention to such urgent problems as the protection of the atmosphere, freshwater resources, biological diversity as well as consumption patterns, demography, human settlements, combating deforestation, the sound management of biotechnology, toxic chemicals and hazardous waste. Many of these problems are inter-related and require concerted efforts by governments and civil society at the world, national and local levels.

There are also essays on current conflicts such as those in the wider Middle East and the ongoing tensions between India and Pakistan. There are calls for new leadership from political leaders with the strength and prestige to allow them to overcome the burdens of the past and to create new partnerships of cooperation. There is also an emphasis on the abolition of nuclear weapons and the abolition of other weapons of mass destruction.

In an essay presented at the start of the collection, “A Future of Possibilities”, the Gandhian Vinoba Bhave is quoted saying “Change can happen in a society by any of three methods, *Katal* (killing), *Kanoon* (implementation of the law), and *Karuna* (kindness), and the path of *Karuna* is the most powerful one.” If society is to eliminate *Katal* (killing and the threat of killing), then we are left with two other change agents: law and kindness. The book is largely organized around these two themes of the rule of law and positive attitudes such as *Karuna*.

The oft-quoted preamble to the UNESCO constitution can serve as the framework for the importance of working on attitudes, values, visions, and goals: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace should be constructed.” Many of the essays deal with the need for new values based on compassion, universal responsibility, and non-violence. There is an important essay by Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi stressing the application of non-violence to attain a life of fulfilment and happiness for all.

Many of the same themes are taken up in a different style by US Congressman Denis Kucinich in his talk “Spirit and Stardust”. Clinton Callahan deals with efforts to reach higher consciousness and its impact on local level change, and Professor Tatjana Volkova of Latvia develops the need for diversity and freedom of choice.

Brad Pokorny, editor of the Baha'i newsletter *One Country* is the bridge between the emphasis on a necessary change in attitudes and the need for the rule of law at the world level. Horace Henderson, formerly secretary-general of the World Peace through Law Center sets out clearly the need for world law and the possibilities of strengthening world legal institutions such as the World Court. He stresses that the world community is in a period of vast transformation being brought about by powerful economic, political and cultural agents to cope with the challenge of growing interdependence between all peoples and the growing impact of people upon the natural environment. Structures of law are needed to provide the framework for this transformation. There is hope as we see the growing recognition that peace, law and justice are so closely intertwined that none of them can survive when the others wither away. Slowly but surely, the United Nations plays the key role in the articulation of the values, norms, and laws of the world community. These efforts are part of a trend of building and strengthening a world peace structure composed of international law and international institutions which command such general acceptance that resort to law will replace unilateral actions of states based on narrow domestic political considerations. Governments, corporations and transnational movements are increasingly convinced that they all possess a stake in an orderly world society which can be endangered by any unrestricted resort to force.

Terrence Paupp of the Association of World Citizens in his essay "Ending Militarism" deals clearly with the emerging concept of "human security" based on new attitudes, institutions and policies. Rasmus Tembergen underlines the need for a World Parliament in order to make world law and outlines some of the avenues for the creation of such a Parliament. There is a strong presentation of the need for world law and respect for human rights by the world citizen pioneer Gary Davis, who also stresses the thinking of Mryes McDougal of Yale Law School and his important book *Human Rights and World Public Order*.

Professor Sohail Mahomood of Pakistan in his essay "A Global Peace Movement" sets out some of the steps needed for translating this ideal of a non-killing society into a politically significant movement. There follows a list of 111 non-governmental organizations working to be bridges over troubled waters.

This is a rich collection of ideas and tools for those active in constructing the defenses of peace.

Rene Wadlow



Drawing: Cecile Wadlow