

CIL'S MISSION

CIL provides an international forum for local grassroots groups to participate in dialogue across social, economic, religious, and ethnic boundaries. This kind of dialogue enables local groups to analyze their own situations from an international perspective and encourages new possibilities for mutual understanding and cooperation. The center was founded in 1985 by people from the Philippines, the USA and Germany.



CIL/USA dialogue
A CIL Newsletter

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How Do We Get Security?

The following is based on a talk given by Betty Reardon, Director of Peace Education at Columbia Teachers College, at a June, 2003 Living Room Dialogue. This dialogue launched the current cycle of CIL's Communities in Dialogue project around the theme "Security: How can we all have it?"

Our society is based not on security, but a systematically created insecurity. We are supposed to feel insecure. We are manipulated to feel insecure in order to support what is called "The National Security System."

The National Security System is in essence a war system. It requires us to believe that war is necessary and inevitable. We're told, "you gotta give your sons, your taxes" because it is the only way you can be protected from attack. Money is taken out of our pockets for weapons testing, manufacture and deployment, while we are being convinced that we have to have them to be safe.

But the military might of the United States did nothing to protect us from the events of September 11, 2001. Furthermore, the military response to that tragedy has not made us safer, but more vulnerable.

There is another way to think about security. Some time ago, I was asked by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to go on a speaking and listening tour called "Listen to Women For a Change." As we went around the country, we found that women were working on four major areas to take care of their families and communities.

These four areas were: the environmental movement; addressing poverty to assure that people's basic needs for living in dignity are met; human rights issues such as discrimination on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity, religious or sexual preference; and protection from avoidable harm.

Women were focusing on over-all well being. When they thought about protection, they were interested in making sure that the fire stations were properly staffed and equipped and that there was adequate provision for predictable emergencies. They understood that nobody has full security: you can't be invulnerable and also alive. Vulnerability is built into living systems. But they were looking close- to- home for practical ways to prevent harm.

The United Nations has recently issued a report called "Human Security Now." It identifies such problems as AIDS, hunger, and women's safety that need to be addressed in order to create security. However, it has a flaw in that it calls these kinds of security "a compliment" to state security.

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In my view, state security is the main problem. State security is the system that makes the people in control of the state secure. I was raised to believe that this country was about a fair shake for most people. I no longer believe that. We have to ask: What is this system doing to us?

I think we need to get people to begin to question and reach out beyond our own circles. Some questions might be: 1) How do aspects of security relate to one another? 2) What is the government doing? 3) Who benefits? 4) Who pays?

We have to create a substitute for the kind of patriotism that lets people think that some lives (ours) are more important than others, and that some groups are worth protecting while others are not. The positive aspect of patriotism is that it gives people a larger identity and relates them to lots and lots of other people. What unifying ideas can we call upon that are not bound-up with nation and war? What spiritual impulses can we call upon?

The monster of militarization is casting a shadow on our present and future. So-called "full-spectrum dominance" envisioned by some in government, involves control over petroleum resources, military bases all over the world, control of space, and control us all. It is crucial to act now. We have to create an alternative.

Obstacles to Security in New York

"What do you see as obstacles to your security?" Betty Reardon asked a group of New Yorkers at a CIL Living Room Dialogue. Here are some of their thoughts: Being watched over too closely. Armed guards in the subways. Economic insecurity. Scarcity of jobs. Fear. Surveillance. Being at the mercy of changes and not having a voice. Knowing that anybody can be detained.

Obstacles to Security in Ethiopia

-- by Peggy Ray

During CIL discussions about the concept of security, we decided to ask Sister Tibebe Maco for her thoughts about it. Sister Tibebe is the founder and Director of HIWOT, a community-based care and support program for AIDS victims and AIDS orphans in Ethiopia.

We asked Sr. Tibebe a question that was posed to a group of New Yorkers in a recent CIL Living Room Dialogue. What does security mean to you and what are the obstacles to security in your community? She immediately thought of three obstacles, all connected with the AIDS epidemic.

First, poverty. "We need assistance to help poor people," she said. "For example, I have one patient whose husband has died. She is bedridden with four children. Her children say, 'Mother, give me bread,' but she has none. She needs medication for TB, but she also needs milk and food."

Second, access to care and support. Poor families carrying the burden of care for the dying go from poverty to destitution. Grandparents who expected their children to care for them in old age find they must instead care for their orphans. They

can give love and affection, but financially, they have nothing. With little support, the kids are drawn into street life.

Third, the existence of stigmatization. "It is more difficult to deal with the stigma than the virus, and it affects children as well as the HIV victims," Sr. Tibebe said. A person who is known to be HIV positive is ignored or made the subject of gossip. In religious institutions, they are often believed to be suffering an unalterable curse from God.

Sr. Tibebe, a nurse trained in Ethiopia, founded HIWOT with her own savings and help from her friends. Her organization is being honored at CIL's recognition night Oct. 29 for its work.



Human Security Discussed At UN

By Peggy Ray

Two thousand delegates to the annual conference of nongovernmental organizations accredited to the United Nations met Sept. 7-10 to discuss "Human Security and Dignity: Fulfilling the Promise of the United Nations."

What did NGO organizers mean by "human security?" According to the conference brochure, "The traditional concept of security, viewed in national and military terms, is tied more to relations between States than between people. However, true human security, as defined by the report of the Commission on Human Security, flows from the aspirations of people seeking a sense of well-being and dignity in their daily lives and for the future."

There was much discussion about threats to human security: poverty, hunger, disease, unclean water, internal violence within countries, degradation of the environment, lack of education, lack of human rights, and gender inequity to mention a few. One thing that became clear to this participant was that WAR is a major threat to human security in that it exacerbates all those things!

M.K. Mohini Panjabi, at a forum on security and spirituality, defined dignity as feeling accepted and accepting others, and said that "out of your dignity, you have security." Presenters at a session on psychology and security spoke of the damage to human dignity when some people are seen as "children of a lesser god," as Giandomenico Picco put it. Professor Joerg Bose spoke of the great difficulties of repairing a person's sense of self-worth after it has been broken by traumas such as war or poverty.

In her opening remarks, Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette urged delegates to work for implementation of eight Millennium Goals to improve living-conditions for the most vulnerable people world-wide. Although the goals were agreed upon by all 191 member nations three years ago, progress has been deflected in a world "shocked by violence and beset by division." Achieving these goals would contribute to conflict prevention.

CIL Theme for the 2003-2004-2005 –2006 International Dialogue

Security: How can we all have it?

This is the topic which partner groups in CIL's Communities in Dialogue (CID) Program will pursue. The partners are groups of 5-20 persons connected to a larger group or gathered particularly for this discussion who will interact over a period of years with their international partners in reflection, communication, and action.

To learn more about this kind of international learning or to form a partner group contact Virginia Dorgan at CIL. See phone # and e-mail on the cover of this newsletter.

Also follow the ideas and the discussion on the website in the Dialogue section at www.cil-usa.org.

What people have been saying about CIL.

"CIL provides opportunities for people to communicate with each other, exploring new alternatives and solutions to local and global issues." -Bobi Keenan

(Speaking of the International Workshop 2002) "Our dialogue went full circle and began to break down social concerns and barriers." - Sara Thomas

I remember some women visiting us from Africa. What an educational treat for me! Just listening and sharing the cultures was truly wonderful. It shows that we can all get along if one would take the time to listen." - Dorothy McWhite

Youth's Struggle For Dignity and Respect

By Kathleen Kanet

The first meeting of Youth Practicing Democracy was in September at the Incarcerated Mothers Program to consider a child's right to education. Eight energetic girls ages nine to fourteen read articles 28 and 29 of the United Nations **Covenant on the Rights of the Child** and then told stories about some of their days at school.

These youth whose mothers are incarcerated suffer from the trauma of loss and shame. In many cases they suffer exclusion and the violence which poverty produces. In addition, in schools with unprepared teachers, they then suffer from the lack of understanding of people who have power over them. Listening to their stories, one sees that many of their rights are denied.

Even with that they struggle to achieve dignity and respect. Unfortunately, they can get into trouble and get a reputation of being "disturbers of the peace." They also told how hard it is to change their reputations once they are formed. This makes the situation more difficult for them. Unfortunately, some who teach and make decisions have not been prepared to understand and to deal effectively with their anger and hurt. What can they do?

Two Swedish filmmakers from Children's World, an organization sponsored by UNICEF, videotaped the dialogue for a publication on the effects of incarceration on children's lives. UNICEF is dedicated to promoting the rights of children to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

This meeting was held on September 11, when so much attention was given to the trauma produced by those terrible crimes in 2001. Dealing with the trauma caused by violence and chaos is vital to us as we seek to ensure collective security. We must pursue this need with our youngsters.

Coming Up

October 7 - CIL Board of Directors meeting.

October 29 - CIL Recognition Night

December 5-6-7 - CIL Board of Directors retreat.

Meanwhile, the Youth Practicing Democracy, the Crossing Boundaries and the Communities in Dialogue programs are progressing. If you would like to participate in any of these, call 212-426-5818.

Needed at CIL



Space

Office space for 4-5 workers, storage space for supplies and files, and a room for meetings.

Volunteers

An archivist to arrange our files for storage.

An accountant to conduct an audit

One who will track CIL's development work on a consistent basis.

People to help with occasional mailings.

A printer who will print this newsletter as a gift.

and, always, financial contributions to keep it all going.

Recognition Night

October 29, 2003



Honoring

Betty Reardon

Betty has dedicated her life to furthering world peace through education of adults and children. As the Director of the Peace Education Program of Teachers College, Columbia University, she has guided hundreds of educators in consideration of issues and processes that will lead to peace. Active for many years in the development of peace education, she was one of the founders of the Peace Education Commission of the International Peace Research Association and has done extensive consulting with various international and national organizations and educational institutions world-wide. Her writings on peace education, disarmament education, human rights, and women's issues have been widely published in the United States and abroad. Her books include: *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective*, *Sexism and the War System*, *Comprehensive Peace Education: Educating for Global Responsibility*, and *Women and Peace: Feminist visions of Global Security*. Betty has been a long-time inspiration, advisor, supporter and friend of CIL.

Hiwot HIV/AIDS Prevention , Care & Support Organization (HAPCSO) Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia has the third largest HIV-positive population in the world. HAPCSO has worked since 1999 locally in Ethiopia's capital city to:

- Build a society motivated to save its generation from HIV/AIDS by protecting itself from all forms of HIV transmission.
- Bring the message of responsibility to young people and the community at large.
- Teach the community that they have the power to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- Provide care and comfort to those already afflicted with the disease
- Care for orphans

The award will be received by Sr. Tibebe Maco, Executive Director and Founder who left her nursing position to build this program. CIL considers this a model local program addressing the pandemic of AIDS in Africa.

At the Recognition Night we will have:

- * the CIL silent and live auction with many international items. There will be hand-made baby clothes and framed Ethiopian art. A grand opportunity to shop for the holidays.
- * Delicious refreshments
- * Live Jazz

Call CIL at 22-426-5818 to reserve your space.

Suggested donation \$75

Thank you in advance.

CIL is a 501c3 organization.



Kathleen Kanet and Peggy Ray represented CIL at a United Nations conference for nongovernmental organizations (NGO's), called "Human Security and Dignity, Fulfilling the Promise of the UN." See story on Page 3.

Kathleen met CIL supporters Sr. Rita Arthur, RSHM and her sister, Loretta Land. When the conference was over, Loretta presented a Living Room Dialogue for CIL on her work with women in Armenia, Uzbekistan, Georgia and Ghana.



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