



# Peace by Peaceful Means

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Johan Galtung (2009), *Mirnim sredstvima do mira (Peace by Peaceful Means)*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik.

## Book Review

*Peace by Peaceful Means* is Johan Galtung's, the founder's of peace studies, first book that was published in the Serbian language. In this book that he wrote in 1996, Galtung provides a comprehensive analysis of nonviolent conflict resolution. Looking at peace and violence from a number of different perspectives, he points out that they are multidimensional and that a holistic approach is required to analyse them. In this book the author elaborates on his ideas through four theories – the theory of peace, the theory of conflict, the theory of development, and the theory of civilisation.

In the introductory part, Johan Galtung points out that there are three types of violence – direct violence (there is a perpetrator), structural violence (arising from the very structure of society and human beings), and cultural (legitimising the above two types of violence through religion, ideology, language). Negative peace would therefore mean the absence of direct violence, whilst positive peace would mean the absence of indirect violence, i.e. bliss and contentment of body and mind.

Comparing peace studies with health studies, Galtung suggests that the diagnosis– prognosis–therapies triangle should be used in the process of achieving peace by peaceful means. Diagnosis would involve analysis of well-state and ill-state, namely peace and violence. Galtung believes that their causes, conditions and contexts are to be sought in a number of different spaces – Nature, Human, Society, World, Time and Culture, considering that any narrower approach would be doomed. Then follows prognosis, within which it is established whether the system is capable of self-restoration or intervention by a third party is required, that ends in prescribing a suitable nonviolent therapy.

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Addressing the peace theory in the first part of his book, Galtung first defines peace not only as the absence of direct violence and lessening of structural and cultural violence, but also as a nonviolent and creative conflict transformation. According to Galtung, minimum consensus on how to define peace is necessary in order to be possible to establish communication; on the other hand, maximum consensus is undesirable since it leads to dogmatism and intolerance.

But the studies themselves will not end violence and build peace; this is done by the people who have skills, namely knowledge, imagination, compassion and persistence. Galtung says that peace cannot be established if only elites take action but by concerted action of all parties involved in the conflict in question and all the parties interested in finding a creative solution for it.

Gender issue plays an important role in the process of conflict resolution and transformation; namely, men are the perpetrators of direct violence in as many as 95% cases, which can be explained by biological, psychological, cultural, and structural factors. Still, gender issue does not count much in the existing structures and cultures since even women in power become less compassionate in such environment. To decrease violence is therefore possible only if the structure is reorganised from vertical into horizontal one and inclusive culture is created.

Galtung then rejects the thesis about the peaceful character of democracies. He considers them to be belligerent and belicist, ready to use violence to maintain their powers and privileges arising from their high ranking in the global pyramid. *Status quo* is what suits them best.

How then to make the today's system of states become less violent? Galtung sees a solution in establishing a confederation in which it would be easy to reach unity, where cooperation is not something that is imposed from outside and options for reorganisation and exit from this system of states are always on the table. There remains a stability problem and that is why the mechanisms for establishment of equilibrium are necessary.

In the second part of the book, Galtung elaborates on the theory of conflict. Presuming that the core of the conflict is a controversy /problem, the author distinguishes between two main elements of the conflict – a dispute and a dilemma, leading to (self)destruction. In order to transform the conflict, it is necessary to channel the pertaining energy in a constructive manner, which involves the external, rather than only internal, dialogue among



the actors. Here it should be kept in mind that the conflict is dynamic, that the changes take place all the time, and that the transformation of the conflict is a never-ending process. To reach a stable situation is only a temporary goal and the key task is to manage the transformation in an acceptable and sustainable manner.

Galtung sees conflict as a three-level structure consisting of behaviours, attitudes, and controversies. With regard to the level of conflict articulation, we distinguish between a manifest level and a latent level. Whilst in direct violence the actors are aware of their attitudes and controversies, in structural conflict these exist only at the subconscious level. For the conflict to be transformed it is therefore necessary to make the parties to the conflict become aware, namely to have their attitudes and controversies elevated from the latent level to the manifest level. The articulation and awareness must be accompanied by the simplification of the image of conflict, with avoidance of its polarisation leading to the disregard and suppression of controversies and with de-escalation of violence. Important steps in overcoming structural violence are to face the violence, to fight using the nonviolent means, to decouple (cut the structural tie with the repressor/exploiter) and reconnect by building horizontal, more inclusive and less violent structures.

Essential segment in conflict resolution is to remove non-compatibility, which means that it is necessary to define new formations, structures and institutions. The parties should come out of the conflict having not only better societal relations, but also better character, capable of approaching the subsequent conflict in a nonviolent manner. Nonviolence must become a part of the daily discourse, particularly a part of less violent political sciences.

As regards the theory of development, Galtung in the first place points out that there are different definitions of development – from the perspective of culture, needs, and growth. This means that the development can be discussed only in the plural considering that advocating an idea about a type of development produces cultural violence. Western civilisation, perceiving itself as being universal, strives to impose, on the rest of the world, its own view of the development which it equalises with modernisation and economic growth.

Wishing to obtain an economic model which is most suitable for achieving the development, Galtung first identifies six economic schools that provide their views of the manner for econom-

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ic organisation – Blue (USA), Red (USSR), Pink (EU excluding Great Britain, Canada), Green (greater part of the Third World), and Yellow (Japan, Eastern Asia). Analysing the economic models offered by these schools, and combining the Pink, the Green, and the Yellow school, Galtung comes to the Eclectic or “Rainbow” school as the most acceptable model. He believes that by combining different elements, economy becomes more elastic and less vulnerable. The Eclectic model requires a decentralised distribution of production factors to all, making everybody a potential participant in some production, not only in consumption. The products which are closest to nature and basic needs should be produced locally, and those requiring an immediately higher level of processing should be produced at national level. Galtung highlights that he is not against the world trade, but only for the reduction of its share in the overall trade and advocates that every country in the world should have a role in the horizontal and fair division of labour. Galtung warns that, even it proves not to be downright fruitful, the process of building an eclectic model should by no means be given up!

To better understand the economic activity, it is important to identify the externalities (side-effects) that appear in economic systems. If they are seen in a holistic manner, a synergy of cultural and structural violence can be identified between the predominant streams in economic theory and practice which, by uneven distribution of the internalities’ and externalities’ effects in an economic cycle, result in exploitation or inequality. In this case, Galtung advocates a dialogue between the parties in the economic cycle, with a goal to reduce the negative and share the positive externalities.

In the last part of the book, Johan Galtung discusses the theory of civilisation; his wish was to point out the in-depth postulates, roots, and causes of different perceptions of peace, violence and nonviolent resolution of conflicts. By doing that, he gives primacy to culture; for the units of analysis he uses the civilisations and not the states, or economic or political systems.

Galtung sees cultural violence in different aspects of culture - religion (God – Satan, Chosen People, Male Dominance), ideologies (divisions: I – Others, Chosen Ones – Unchosen Ones), language (use of the same word for male and female gender in some languages that are based on Latin vocabulary), art (manifestation of so-called oriental despotism in Europe), empirical sciences (the doctrine of comparative advantages), logic (either – or).



Roots of violence, however, can be seen at even a deeper level, in collective unconscious which defines normal and natural reality. Knowledge of a cosmology of a civilisation is necessary for gaining the understanding of collective human behaviour. These deeper layers of culture may explain why some characters such as Hitler or Stalin appeared natural, normal, and enjoyed large popular support.

The author identifies six different cosmologies – Occident I (Greek-Roman, Modern), Occident II (Medieval), Indic (Hindu), Buddhic (Buddhist), Sinic (Chinese), and Nipponic (Japanese). Whilst, according to Galtung, Occident I is energetic and innovative, but basically a bully, Occident II is too withdrawn from the world, Indic and Buddhic civilisations are passive, Sinic resembles Occident I in arrogance, but it is less violent, whilst Nipponic civilisation is impressive, arrogant and withdrawn. Analysing the relations among these civilisations and their interactions, Galtung identifies Occident I and Nipponic civilisations as most problematic, because of their expansionism. The change of these civilisations is hardly plausible since radical changes are not made through conscious planning but rather through many historical circumstances.

Nevertheless, the question is whether there exist any therapies for the cosmologies whose basis is made of the CMT-complex, namely the choseness – myth – trauma complex that is present both at the level of a society and that of the personality. Galtung suggests socio-therapies (restructuring of relations), soma-therapies (targeting the person that should be changed), and psycho-therapies (targeting the society in general).

In this book, Johan Galtung has exhaustively presented his view of peace as a creative and nonviolent transformation of conflict. In this process, which is not a simple one, there is no room for unilateralism, exclusivity, division to 'Self' and 'Other'. Openness, cooperation and dialogue are needed to maintain, achieve and build peace. Even though some of Galtung's theses may be disputable, in this book the author doubtlessly gives a great contribution to gaining the understanding of the essence of peace and conflict. Regrettably, the question remains whether, in many regions of the world, there exist organised political forces which can realise all those efforts that must be made to transform a particular conflict. The agreement between the elites is only a small part of the solution since, as Galtung asserts, peace is a revolutionary proposition that takes place all the time – the only question is whether we can live up to it.

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