

# A World Without Violence

## Conference Report Barcelona 2004

### OPENING REMARKS

Cora Weiss

Towards a world without Violence seems utopian at a time when violence- the violence of poverty, the violence of hunger, of hatred, of terrorism, and of war seem to be everywhere.

Violence is not inevitable, it is not part of our biology, and we do not have a DNA for violence. Sweden has not gone to war for 200 years, yet their Viking ancestors were plunderers.

So, we have every right to dream, because nothing happens unless first a dream. We have a social responsibility to work for a world without violence, or there will be no world for our children and grandchildren.

We ask if more women were engaged in decision making at all levels would nations rush to war so easily? If children were taught to participate more actively in school, to learn to question, to think for themselves, to learn to respect basic human rights, to practice gender equality, to respect the earth, to understand the force of law, wouldn't that be a contribution to the prevention of war?

We look at the economy and war and challenge the obscenity of a world spending \$1 trillion a year on war while billions lack clean water, health care and basic education. Should the military have more money than health and education combined, in any country?

Why can't we get rid of the massive number of weapons, thousands of nuclear weapons, guns, small arms, and those cluttering our beautiful heavens.

We will demonstrate that human security, supporting people's needs, is possible, not national security, supporting the military's needs. I do not come to this position as an ideological pacifist, for I supported the war against Nazism in Germany and the armed struggle against apartheid. But the toll war takes, human, economic and environmental leaves many doubts in the minds of civilians and soldiers alike.

No longer can we consider war a necessary evil, it is proof that most necessary evils are more evil than necessary.

I firmly believe that we must become exhausted from exhausting all non-violent options before resorting to war. We, the people, have never done this.

So we ask if war as an institution, supported by laws, paid for by taxes and fought by our sons and daughters is a necessary, a legitimate institution? Dr. Martin Luther King said of war, "...this way of settling differences is not just". Bishop Desmond Tutu asks, "If we could get rid of apartheid in South Africa, why not war?"

Our children deserve a world without end, not a war without end.

I thank you the conferees for being, for doing and for dreaming, and called on you never to give up.

Photo of Signing – Cora and Fakri

### BARCELONA 2004 CONFERENCE STATEMENT

Cora Weiss and Fakhri Karim Ahameaed

Meeting at the Barcelona Forum 2004, the leaders of the International Peace Bureau and the new Iraqi Council for Peace and Solidarity issued the following statement:

- The continued presence of occupying forces will only perpetuate and escalate the circle of violence in Iraq;
- Complete sovereignty is the only basis of democracy, We call for the Iraqi people's control of their own country;
- We share with pride the initiative of Iraqi civil society which has organized regional and national congresses for independence and democracy in order to influence the preparation of a democratically representative government;
- We look forward to an exchange of contracts between our member organizations to support the growth of democratic institutions in Iraq.

Cora Weiss - President, International Peace Bureau  
Fakhri Karim Ahamad - President, Iraqi Council for Peace and Solidarity

Cora Weiss, President of the Hague Appeal for Peace and International Peace Bureau is the first recipient of the William Sloane Coffin Award for Peace and Justice offered by the Yale Divinity School 2003. She is leading a campaign dedicated to the abolition of war. It seeks to re-focus our minds on the vision of a world in which violent conflict is publicly acknowledged as illegitimate, illegal, and fundamentally unjust. To implement that vision, the Hague Appeal for Peace has launched a Global Peace Education Campaign. [www.haguepeace.org](http://www.haguepeace.org)