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Gary K. Shepherd, Editor
401 S. Dixon
Carbondale, IL 62901

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UNITED WORLD/CDWG NEWS & VIEWS

Gary K. Shepherd, Ed.

Box 1363

Carbondale, IL 62903

< uwcdwg@yahoo.com >

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Editor's Corner: Same Song, Different Words

As this editorial is being written, the citizens of the new republic of South Sudan are celebrating their hard-won independence. One can hardly blame them. The western media did not pay as much attention to this enduring conflict as it did to the much less violent (in terms of total deaths) one between Arabs and Israelis. Decades of civil war between the Muslim north and the Christian and Animist south has resulted in what is estimated to be millions of deaths, filled surrounding nations with refugees, and left the country economically destitute. The peace process brokered by the international community has attained what the southerners have been fighting for all along: a chance to vote on independence, and a pledge by the government in Khartoum (under considerable pressure) that it would abide by the results of that plebiscite.

Now we can all breath a sigh of relief, correct? The war is over, and now the people of both northern and southern Sudan can return to their daily routine and live together in peace. Right?

Not much chance of that, I'm afraid. The new country is rich in oil, but in not much else. Already there is fighting over the ill-defined border between the old country and the new one. This was never a simple war (are there such things?) between one ethnic group and the other. The governments on both sides of the border face internal challenges. One time honored way of suppressing internal dissent is to focus public attention, and antagonism, on an external enemy. And an external enemy will not be hard to find.

So one would suspect that there is considerable incentive for new wars to break out. Given that there is oil involved, that fighting will almost certainly provoke intervention by outside nation-states which wish to have control, or at least some influence, over to whom and at what price that oil will be sold. The great powers will meddle, as they are wont to do in such

situations, sending in arms and advisors and possibly troops to make sure ‘their’ side succeeds. This is a recipe for disaster.

But one may ask, how we can be so certain that the worst case scenario will occur? Because, quite frankly, we’ve seen this before. The partition of India after the British relinquished control is a good example. By dividing the huge country into two (and later three) parts, it was assumed that the sectarian violence between Muslims and Hindus could be brought to an end. Instead, they created two antagonistic nation-states, each armed to the teeth by supporters among the other nations and both of which now have nuclear weapons. They have fought four hot wars over the decades, and have been involved in a simmering cold war, with constant shelling and cross-border raids, for their entire existence.

Or consider the results of the decision to divide Palestine between Jews and Arabs in 1948? Did that lead to peace between the protagonists? When the great Soviet empire fractured into its constituent states, did that lead to peace and freedom? Did dividing Greece from Turkey bring peace between the two? How about the separation of the various republics of the former Yugoslavia?

History has shown again and again that granting a specific ethnic group national independence is not the way to attain peace. The greater the divisions between people, the more causes for friction that exist. We could keep subdividing up the surface of the planet Earth until each individual human being was a nation-state, and it would not solve the problem. It is exactly the opposite of what we need.

The system of national sovereignty is an illusion, and it cannot provide the security it promises, nor the freedom that its citizens deserve. Only unity, true human unity can do that. On the day we attain Unification, when all human beings are free and equal citizens of a united Republic of Earth, then we will finally have the basis upon which a peaceful and just society can be built.

And that really will be something to celebrate.

Editor's Note: In the previous issue, we inadvertently failed to state that the article by David Oughton titled "Religions and World Federalism" originally appeared in the Spring 2011 issue of the magazine *Global Solutions News*. Our apologies.



Letter to the Editor

Fellow World Federalists,

Earlier this year, Martha Killebrew moved from her twice-burned-down residence in Oakland (during the fire and aftermath around 1991) to join her daughter in Hana on the island of Maui in Hawaii. Today, we learned from her trustee that Martha passed away on 18 February, 2011.

Martha was a generous World Federalist and had contributed over \$1,500 to us over the past decade. She regularly attended our Good Government Luncheon Lectures. With accounting experience, she was long-time Treasurer of the Association of World Citizens, and she helped out with some of the other groups allied with both groups, such as the Citizens for U.N. People's Assembly, and the Action Coalition for Global Change.

Martha was noted for her sharp sense of humor. Her telephone answering machine spoke out, "How do, Killebrew.". She was a lot of fun and a great help, and of course, will be missed.

John Sutter
Democratic World Federalists
55 New Montgomery St. #225
San Francisco, CA 94105-3421

Nuclear Reactor Catastrophy in Japan: An Open Letter to the World

by Judge C.G. Weeramantry

The earthquake in Japan and the resulting damage to nuclear power plants have sent shock waves and a dire note of warning to the world's entire population. Despite their obvious dangers, nuclear reactors are proliferating worldwide and sowing the seeds of pollution and congenital deformities for a thousand generations to come (the half-life of Plutonium 239, one of the by-products of nuclear activities, is 24,100 years).

Unborn generations are just as much members of the human family as ourselves but have no voice to speak for themselves. We take advantage of this and are damaging them catastrophically by our breach of trust of this environment of which we are the custodians, not the owners. Every single citizen is a trustee of the environment. All the more are Governments trustees, and in this particular the environmental ministers of the world bear a special responsibility in this regard. We are in default of our duties if we continue to keep open such possibilities and create more, despite our knowledge of their dreadful consequences. Our generation, and particularly those who are specially entrusted with the care of the environment will have to answer before the bar of history for our default and abuse of trust. Indeed, we are committing the gravest possible crime against future generations and are doing so with a full consciousness of the effects of our actions.

If people of the Stone Age had been able to cause damage to the environment and cause congenital deformities to our generation, we would have condemned them as savages, brutes and barbarians. Yet, even if they could have caused such damage, they could have had no idea of the irreparable harm they were causing to generations yet unborn. We, on the other hand, who are fully aware of the catastrophic damage we are causing to unborn generations, still proceed regardless, pursuing activities which, it is patently clear, will release these dangers sooner or later. We continue to build nuclear reactors all over the world.

Even a school child is aware that no power on Earth can insure against earthquakes, tsunamis, wars, insurrections, negligent management and other disasters. These will inevitably occur over a period of years and not only do we know this as a virtual certainty, but we know also that there is no known means of eliminating them. This makes us savages, brutes and barbarians several times over. In a supposedly enlightened age, we are, with total disregard of any sense of responsibility, proceeding to build more reactors, pursuing short-term advantages while being fully aware of the long-term perils we are inflicting on our own posterity. Solar and other renewable energy sources provide all the energy the world needs, but we neglect them, for there are greater profits for those few who are engaged in the nuclear energy enterprise, whatever the costs to the vast majority and the generations yet to come. As a result we have become the most destructive generation in human history, regardless of the fact that we are destroying the undoubted birthright of billions of human beings for whom we hold the environment in trust.

I take the liberty of addressing you on this matter as I have for over 30 years campaigned against the dangers of nuclear weapons, nuclear reactors and nuclear waste. As early as 1985, I toured the major cities of Japan at the instance of the Japan Scientists' Association, delivering lectures on the dire dangers to humanity resulting from nuclear weapons, nuclear reactors and nuclear waste.

Also, nearly thirty years ago, in *The Slumbering Sentinels: Law and Human Rights in the Wake of Technology*, pp. 139–141, I foreshadowed this danger, referring to leakages from nuclear reactors and the possibilities of major accidents threatening our very survival. I referred also to the possibility that, if the residents of a city were exposed to radioactive contamination through a serious nuclear accident, the national interest may demand their compulsory sterilization to prevent the birth of an unprecedented number of defective children, observing that “we are only a nuclear accident away from this.” I referred also to the fact that a major accident near a populated city could cause property damage and health damage which could not be estimated even in hundreds of billions of dollars, and for which insurance coverage would be beyond the realm of possibility. As early as 1982, the Nuclear

Regulatory Commission (NRC) released estimates of death and property damage from reactor accidents running to over \$300 billion in crowded city areas. The Harrisburg nuclear leak demonstrated, even then, how close we could be to a nuclear accident, the percentage possibility of a nuclear accident occurring somewhere in the world being assessable at between five and ten percent within the next few years. Such reasonable forecasts of possible catastrophes have somehow been completely submerged by the combined political and economic strength of those who advocate the extension of nuclear energy.

In my dissenting opinion in the case where an Advisory Opinion was sought from the International Court of Justice on the legality of nuclear weapons, I discussed the possibility of damage to nuclear reactors and the lethal doses of radiation to exposed persons 150 miles downwind, and the radioactive contamination of the environment more than 600 miles away. I also discussed the damage caused by the Chernobyl incident, for years after its occurrence, to all species of life for thousands of square miles in the vicinity, which necessitated the pouring in of medical personnel, supplies and equipment from across the Soviet Union in a manner which strained the resources even of that powerful nation. Smaller states could be completely crippled by such an accident, with a loss of income, loss of life, loss of jobs and loss of resources from which it would take generations to recover. Medical injuries caused included convulsions, vascular damage, cardio-vascular collapse, keloids, and cancer.

Having discussed these dangers in judgments, publications and lectures worldwide for so many years, I have been devastated at the thought that my worst premonitions have come to pass, and worse can follow if we continue with our betrayal of trust and abandonment of responsibility towards our children and our children's children.

Any plea for the abolition of nuclear reactors would be incomplete without reference to the problem of disposal of nuclear waste. Nuclear waste carries all the elements of radioactive danger to health and the environment and there is no known means of disposal of these toxic accumulations. Whether they are buried in the depths of the ocean or deep trenches or salt

beds, or wherever else, we cannot guarantee for twenty-four thousand years that they will remain safe in their repositories, and we would be inflicting this source of inter-generational, environmental and physical damage on future generations in a manner which is totally unjustifiable by any standards of morality or law.

Another danger, which by itself is sufficient to justify the total abolition of nuclear reactors, is that nuclear waste from hundreds of reactors cannot possibly be accounted for and it is well known that such records are not maintained, even by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This material is the raw material needed for the manufacture of nuclear weapons, and there is here an open invitation to terrorists across the world to interest themselves in the manufacture of nuclear weapons. This is particularly dangerous in a world in which the necessary knowledge for the construction of nuclear weapons is available on the internet, as I have been assured by eminent physicists.

In the result, the continuance and proliferation of nuclear reactors violates every principle of humanitarian law, international law, environmental law, and international sustainable development law.

The traditional wisdom of ancient peoples such as the Native Americans, used to ordain that no serious decision concerning the community should be taken without considering its impact for seven generations to come. Traditional African wisdom has decreed that any major decision affecting a community should bear in mind the three-fold face of humanity - those who came before us, those who are alive here and now, and those who are yet to come - without which the decision taken would be a lopsided one.

Our modern technological civilization disregards all such traditional wisdom in addition to disregarding the governing principle that we should tread lightly on the Earth, which underlies all environmental law (I have expanded on these aspects in *Tread Lightly on the Earth: Religion, The Environment, and the Human Future*, 2010).

It is not only traditional wisdom we disregard. We disregard also the wisdom of the great religions of the world, which are likewise united in their

concern for the people of the future. Jesus Christ warned that it would be better for those who place obstacles in the way of children to have a millstone around their neck and to be drowned in the ocean. The Koran states that the true followers of the Almighty are those who tread lightly on the Earth. Buddhism teaches that not even a sovereign is owner of the land, but only a trustee, and Hinduism prescribes detailed duties lying on the sovereign to look after every department of environmental protection. Judaism, likewise, in numerous teachings, elevates protection of the environment to the level of a primary duty.

All these are aspects which must necessarily engage the attention of ministers charged with care of the environment, in an age when the environment is being threatened as never before during the hundreds of thousands of years of humanity's existence on this planet.

I urge on you, as custodians of the environment, the need for immediate action to halt the construction of new reactors, explore alternative energy systems, and phase out the existing ones. Populations throughout the world need to be alerted to the dangers we are facing. The one-way flow of information on the benefits of nuclear reactors needs to be reversed.

Failure to take these steps will result in the commission of crimes against future generations and a gross betrayal of the trust we owe to our children and our children's children. You are in a position to play a leadership role in this crisis. This is an appeal to you, as those primarily responsible for the care of our planet, to do all within your power to avert the catastrophes that loom ahead. Time is running out. Please act now.

Judge Weeramantry is a former vice-president, International Court of Justice, The Hague, President of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, and Former Trustee of the Weeramantry International Center for Peace Education and Research.



National Sovereignty and the Creation of a Democratic World Parliament

A Short Analysis

by Jim Stark

Editor's Note: This essay first appeared in *The WorldVoter*, May 2010.

The great obstacle to the creation of a world parliament or government is an antiquated conception of what sovereignty is. Many people have not thought through or studied the concept. Most people find it surprising that the reality of “national sovereignty” dates back only to 1648, a few hundred years ago, to the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia.

Hundred of thousands of years ago, when our ancestors were cave-dwellers, every single human being was “sovereign” in that he or she could take whatever he or she wanted, kill whatever or whomever he or she pleased, in at least insofar as he or she could get away with it. Philosophically, sovereignty resides in and arises from the people, and that conception is written into the constitutions of many or most democratic nation-states. What happens is that we individuals (not always very democratically or willingly, at first) assigned the exercise of aspects of our sovereignty to other bodies – to municipal, provincial, and national governments and their agencies, like police, etc. We did this for our own good and the great majority of us insist on the permanence of this arrangement even if it displeases a small minority of law-breakers. So, the global democracy movement is not so much asking all nation-states to give up some of their sovereignty as we are seeking to get humanity to re-assign the exercise of some aspects of our sovereignty to a new body, call it a world parliament or a world government.

This debate, meaning whether the cure for what ails us globally is a world government or “just” a world parliament, is usually overplayed, and is somewhat beside the point in any event. However you slice this reality, we need enforceable world law just as badly as we need enforceable national, provincial and municipal law. It is simply naive, and arguably

suicidal, not to face up to this. We know that nation-states will protest loudly, but if the entire human race decides to set up a global political institution that will allow human life to survive and thrive for thousands of millennia into the future (by passing a referendum ballot authorizing the creation of a democratic world parliament) nation-states will surely continue on as before, operating within their jurisdictions, but “supranational” issues like climate change and war will be dealt with by a process that includes the world parliament. In other words, if humanity votes on that option, and the referendum result is a very clear “yes”, then we will surely build what we voted for (no matter who whines).

In short, you are as sovereign as you choose to be. No one should want to go back to the rule of the jungle, where it is basically eat or be eaten, as that is not in anyone’s interest, nor will it work when one adds in the power-expanding consequences of technology (an angry or insane Neanderthal with a big club is one thing – a barking mad Homo Sapiens with a nuke or an anthrax culture is quite another). But as a somewhat sovereign human being, you are entirely free to make sure that the global referendum is conducted, and you will be well advised not to assume that it will pass. I think its going to be a very tough fight, but I also think we can win it. I also think that if we fail to make all this happen, our species will be rendered extinct, by our own hand, and quite possibly in the next 100 or 200 years.

Jim Stark is the founder of Voteworldparliament.org, and the author of [Democratic World Government through Global Referendum](#), among others.



Hanna Newcombe 1922-2011

An Obituary by Daniel Durand

Hannah Newcombe of Dundas, a leader in peace research, has died. She was 89. The co-founder of the journals *Peace Research Abstracts* and *Peace Research*, the Research Institute in Dundas, and the Canadian Peace Research and Education Association, a Delegate of the People Congress, member of the Order of Canada, and 1997 recipient of the Pearson Medal of Peace, she died on April 10, after a short illness.

Born Hanna Hammerschlag in Prague in 1922, her family escaped to Canada in 1939 just ahead of advancing German armies. Although Canada had closed its doors to Jewish immigration, her father Arthur was able to obtain a visa with the help of contacts in the grain trade.

Newcomb met her future husband while both were students at McMaster University in 1945. Both went on to earn doctorates in chemistry from the University of Toronto. She is survived by three children and seven grandchildren.

In Memoriam by Rene Wadlow

Hanna Newcombe, who with her husband Alan were leading Canadian peace researchers, died on 10 April 2011. As an In Memoriam, I would like to highlight some aspects of her work. Hanna and Alan were long-time friends and colleagues in the world citizen/world federalist movement and in efforts at conflict resolution.

Hanna was born in Prague Czechoslovakia in 1922, but fortunately went with her parents to Canada in 1939 when war clouds were gathering. Much later, Hanna and I were in Prague together at a world federalist council meeting when the "hot issue" in the country was the possible split of the

state, and she was rediscovering the city. Both of us were pushing for a federalist approach that would have allowed Czechoslovakia to stay together, and we had seen some of the of the important figures on the world scene. As is so often the case, advice comes too late in the day, and the State split into two, but without the sort of violence which manifested itself in the break up of Yugoslavia.

In Canada, Hanna started university studies in Chemistry and received her PhD from the University of Toronto in 1950. During her studies she met Alan who was also studying chemistry and they married while still students in 1946. Alan was already active in the peace movement and jointed the world federalist in 1947. They quickly had three children and while Alan worked in the chemical industry, Hanna did scientific abstracting for a journal of chemical abstracts and started a translation service of chemical articles basically so chemists in Europe could know what was going on in the USA and Canada, and vice-versa.

Both Alan and Hanna were impressed by reading a mid-1950s book, Theo Lentz's *Toward a Science of Peace: Turning Point in Human Destiny* (New York, Bookman Associates, 1955). Lentz was a U.S. psychologist whose professional work was largely on the formation of attitudes. His theme in the book was that science "yet may do as much for harmony as it has done for our power...One of our dangers is that men will cling too long to values whose survival function is no longer adequate." Lentz was very concerned with the nuclear arms build up in the mid-1950s, and the amount of money and brain power of scientists that was involved in the arms race. He called for a scientific approach to peace with an emphasis on the exercise of rationality.

The Newcombes took his advice literally. As Alan told me, what struck him at the time was that there was very little cumulative development in writing on peace, little building on what others had already done. In contrast, as with Hanna's work of abstracting, if he wanted to know something about the reaction of a particular chemical, he would look up the chemical in the abstracts, and he would find a list of numerous articles dealing with that particular chemical. Likewise, in chemistry, he could look up easily the

list of PhD theses written on a particular problem which had not yet been published as books.

Thus, what the peace movement needed were abstracts of articles and books and the speedy publication of PhD level studies in an inexpensive format. In his book Lentz has stressed that peace research needed to be funded and searches must be salaried. "War preparations cost hundreds of billions and war itself trillions. Why should we expect peace at the price of a few paltry millions or less? No other bottleneck to peace research is at once so clear and realistic as the financial." While the idea is fairly obvious, financial issues remain a bottleneck.

With three children to raise, it was not until 1961 that Alan was able to give up working in industry to become a full-time peace researcher, and Hanna could shift from abstracting and translating chemical texts to working on peace literature. They first worked with the Physicist Norman Alcock in the Canadian Peace Research Institute and later, so they could work from their home, they created their own institution in Dundas. Thus, Peace Research Reviews – largely drawn from PhD thesis findings - and Peace Research Abstracts Journal was born. Both Alan and Hanna kept a good deal of their chemistry study approach in their own peace writings. The quotation on their Peace Research Institute-Dundas letterhead was from the Greek Epictetus, "Observe, this is the beginning of philosophy – a recognition of the conflicts among men, an inquiry into their causes, the discover of a standard of judgment and a condemnation of mere opinion."

Hanna had two major concerns: one was to build upon earlier research. The first published Peace Research Review in 1967 was "Alternative Approaches to World Government," where she analyzes 15 alternative approaches (although some are in practice overlapping). There is, as became the pattern, an extensive bibliography. A later issue, Vol. IV, No. 4 in 1972 in the same spirit was "Alternative Approaches to Peace Research."

Her other major concern was the analysis of events with objective criteria. Much of her early peace research concerned bloc voting in the UN General Assembly – which countries voted together and how often. Later,

the UN moved basically to a "consensus" approach, and votes had much less significance. The Lebanese-American sociologist Edward Azar worked with the Newcombes trying to build frameworks for the analysis of international events. The proper analysis of events – are they real? Are they meaningful? – is at the heart of the American psychologist Charles E. Osgood's Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension-Reduction (GRIT) of which Alan was a champion.

Much of Hanna's analysis is brought together in *Hanna Newcombe Design for a Better World* (Lathan, MD, University of America, 1983). Her own writings along with those of friends in the world citizen-disarmament movement are found in *Hanna Newcombe (ed.) Hopes and Fears: The Human Future* (Toronto, Science for Peace, 1992).

Although born the same year as Hanna, Alan died several years earlier, proof of the observation that women live longer than men! Alan was the more outgoing, an organizer and a networker, particularly active in the peace work of the Canadian Quakers and one of the founders of Peace Brigades International. Hanna was more quiet, perhaps shy. She would let other speak and would always find something useful in what had just been said. While some of her writings were the analysis of events now become history, her stress on values and the need for strong yet flexible world institutions will be an inspiration to many.