



# The voice of Maria Dolens

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Monthly newsletter from the Peace Bell Foundation

## Food genocide

The political, economic, financial and security repercussions that have been mainly analysed so far with regard to the ... Russian / Ukrainian conflict (the dots are intended to allow readers to choose the adjective deemed most appropriate), which by the time this editorial comes out will have well exceeded 4 months in duration, are inherent to the European area. What geographical configuration can the Ukrainian state assume? It seems difficult to imagine a return to the borders of 2014. How effective will the sanctions decided by the EU be against Moscow? Especially after the energy sector is, albeit only partially, included. What are the foreseeable consequences of the announced imminent accession to NATO of historically "neutralist" countries, such as Sweden and Finland? And the list could still get longer.

This focus is justified by the observation that it is precisely the "Old Continent" (once more one must unfortunately add) that becomes the negative protagonist of a tragic war event and, consequently, that is most directly affected by its harmful effects. By widening the field of observation to other "major players", the United States remains faithful to the traditional role of "majority partner" of the Atlantic Alliance. Without doubting the sincerity of their intentions to see full Ukrainian sovereignty over the disputed territories reaffirmed, they are at the same time committed, one might say in parallel, to the achievement of a second objective, from their equally vital point of view, namely a "structural" weakening (intended as irreversible) of the historical Russian rival / enemy.

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Editor  
Marcello Filotei  
marcello.filotei@fondazionecampanadeicaduti.org

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**PEACE BELL FOUNDATION OF  
ROVERETO**

Colle di Miravalle - 38068 Rovereto  
T. +39 0464.434412 - F. +39 0464.434084  
info@fondazioneoperacampana.it  
www.fondazioneoperacampana.it

**DESIGN**

OGP srl  
Agenzia di pubblicità  
www.ogp.it

## HAPPENING AT THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

# The “black man” in our homes

You can bar the doors, take all kinds of precautions, but the risk is that the “black man” is already in your house. Once upon a time children were warned against the risk of being lured: «Don't accept candy from strangers». An unconscious pre-globalization racism identified danger with the colour of the stranger par excellence. But the danger does not come from far away as most of the time the torturer lives in the next room, or in the same bed, and is male.

Domestic violence is more and more widespread. The laws that sanction it exist, but they are not always applied with rigor. For this reason, the Council of Europe has entrusted a group of experts with the task of verifying the state of implementation of the Convention on preventing and combating violence against

A group of international experts calls for more state interventions against domestic violence

women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), and results are not encouraging.

Grevio (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence) believes that many countries do not pay sufficient attention to the issue. In the recently published annual report, specialists describe the strengths and weaknesses of states with regard to the implementation of articles 26, 31 and 45, relating to victims of domestic violence and

decisions regarding child custody and visiting rights. The report indicates that, while noting that all states have taken satisfactory measures, «there is still a long way to go», as implementation of the regulations is inconsistent.

A female victim of domestic violence who abandons her partner-abuser, for example, is often alone in facing threats against her children, and the report notes an «alarming rate of murders of women and children».

Compared to the past, however, attention to the phenomenon has increased and the laws are adapting. In Montenegro and Italy, for example, Grevio observed that acts of domestic violence committed in the presence of children lead to more severe penalties, and in some cases are equated with child maltreatment. In Andorra and Montenegro, legislation maintains that witnessing this form of violence is equivalent to having suffered it directly. The legislation of the Principality of Andorra defines «victims» as women who suffer forms of violence based on gender or who witness the mistreatment of children. The aim is to acknowledge their right to social, psychological and medical support. The experts also expressed satisfaction with the recent amendment of Article 156 of the Civil Code of Spain, which eliminates the obligation to obtain the consent of both parents so that a child can benefit from interventions in psychological support and counseling. The abusive parent can thus no longer prevent their children from attending psychotherapy sessions.

Steps forward are therefore being taken. Women and children are not out of danger, but they have more means with which to try to escape from dramatic situations. The fact that the person who threatens their safety is often the one who should have protected them says a lot about human nature.



## HAPPENING AT THE UNITED NATIONS

# Nobody should feel excluded

## WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Some believe that to combat trafficking it is enough to close the ports. Then there are those who are convinced that smugglers and traffickers are one and the same. There is also talk that by removing the gangmasters, exploitation and enslavement might be defeated once and for all. Sometimes it seems that there is confusion between the executioners and the victims.

According to those who deal with trafficking professionally the issue is wider. It involves organized crime and it cannot be fought with local, partial measures that do not take the overall phenomenon into account. More than 60 years after the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which dates back to 1959, millions of children and juveniles continue to work in various countries around the world; in mines or mineral deposits where access for adults is difficult; very young girls are initiated into prostitution; armies recruit child soldiers; terrorist organizations force minors to "blow themselves up" in the name of some misguided ideal. Fighting all this by blaming those who

arrive on the boats is not only wrong but is also useless.

World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, which takes place every year on 30 July, serves to reflect on the fact that over 20 million people are victims of forced labour in our developed world. The data is provided by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and no one is excluded, since the phenomenon affects all countries of origin, transit and destination of the victims. And that means us. According to the report on human trafficking by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), almost a third of the victims are minors. 71 percent are women and girls.

Over the years, the UN General Assembly has promoted various initiatives, so things are moving but perhaps still too slowly. In 2010, a

Global Plan of Action was adopted which urges the governments of all countries to take coordinated and coherent action to defeat this scourge. In 2013, a high-level meeting was held to evaluate the results of the initiative and the date of July 30 was designated as World Day against Trafficking in Persons. The resolution underlines the importance of this day, with the aim of raising awareness of the situation of victims of human trafficking and promoting their rights. In September 2015, governments around the world joined the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, also welcoming the objectives and targets concerning trafficking. In 2016 with the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, all 193 member states of the United Nations made the historic commitment to arrive at a more equitable sharing of responsibilities regarding refugees around the world. Important changes have been implemented in several countries with regard to asylum legislation, policies and response actions.

The approach of the United Nations, by its global vocation, is necessary but not sufficient. There is a need for long-term policies by individual states, not just ideal positions. It does not seem particularly useful to blame immigrants as there are grave suspicions that they are in actual fact the main victims.

Over 20 million people around the world are victims of forced labour



8 JULY

# Accession of the Republic of Cyprus



Ambassador of the Republic of  
Cyprus Georgios Christofides



From left Reggente Marco Marsilli Foundation President, Government  
Commissioner Gianfranco Bernabei, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus  
Georgios Christofides and Rovereto Deputy Mayor Giulia Robol

**EVENING OPENINGS AND  
FRIDAYS AT THE BELL ARE  
BACK**

# Listening to Peace

**A**t school you learn, it's true. Even as adults. Going there by chance, or for one of those duties that occasionally bring the "grown-ups" back to the classrooms, you can come across work, research, drawings that remind us how we were, how we would like to be, how we have forgotten to be. «I painted Peace», you can read on a drawing. Written well, with care. It was a poster painted by a little girl who didn't have «red for the blood of the wounded», she didn't even have black «for the weeping of orphans», or white «for the faces of the dead». But she had «orange for the joy of living» «green for the buds» and «azure for the clear bright skies». She took what she had, she sat down, and she painted Peace.

Peace can be painted, played, and heard. At the Bell this is done all day, and until September 17 even every evening: the gates are open from 9 until 10 o'clock. Maria Dolens guarantees her hundred strokes at 9:30 p.m., as always, and on Fridays, starting at 8 o'clock, you can listen to a concert. The first was on June 17, an intertwining of popular music and acting depicting the life of St. Martin, written and directed by Michele Comite, choreography by Hillary Anghileri, featuring the 'Collettivo Clochart', the 'Collettivo Studentesco Rovereto' and the choir of Sant'Ilario directed by Federico Mozzi.

Next appointment on August 5th  
with Paolo Miorandi's "Lessico di  
Hiroshima"

But that's not all, for the programme of voices, instruments and people portraying Peace continues, as in the *Lessico di Hiroshima* by Paolo Miorandi



(Friday 5 August), or they sing it remembering Father Eusebio Iori, as in the case of "Bianche Zime" directed by Stefano Balder (12 August), or they play it all together as will happen on 21 September for the UN International Day for Peace with the concert of the "Felice e Gregorio Fontana" Band from Pomarolo directed by Mattia Grott. The Rovereto "Minicoro" Children's Choir directed by Gianpaolo Daicampi, which constantly brings a breath of joy and enthusiasm to the Colle is a must. This time with *Baldino, the Prince of Baldo*, based on an idea by Maurizio Marogna, a text by Mauro Neri and with the theatrical direction of Michele Comite.

And what can we do? If we are far away, we can follow the live stream every night. If we are close by, we can leave the house with somewhere to go. We can bring the children, hoping they will want to teach us something, drive slowly thinking up ways to resolve the problems we have with our neighbours without resorting to lawyers, walk slowly along the *Viale delle Bandiere* avenue, staring for a few moments at the flags of the countries that are still experiencing bloody conflicts. We can remind ourselves how lucky we are not to have seen any bombs go off in our schools. We can sit down, listen, and think about peace. It is a small thing. It is a seed. Like the one thrown by the little girl. That of the school. The one who drew Peace.

IT HAPPENED TODAY

# Peace in the Balkans



26/07/1995: Ceremony for the initiative «Peace in Bosnia - Peace in the Balkans»



01/07/1991: International meeting of the «World Conference on Religion and Peace»

IT HAPPENED TODAY

# Peace Pilgrims

20/07/2014: First edition of the pilgrimage along the path of Peace



*To be continued from page 1...*

As far as China is concerned, it draws significant benefits from bilateral cooperation with Moscow, sealed by the agreement signed by Presidents XI Jinping and Putin on the very eve of the Russian attack in Kiev. In this phase, the Kremlin has, so to speak, "condemned itself" to an uncomfortable position of dependence on the Chinese market, which has totally substituted relations with the Western world, no longer complementary as until a few weeks earlier, but now frozen by embargo. The fact that the Russian Federation risks paying a very high price already in the medium term, and not only in the economic field, due to this excessive alignment with Beijing, is a discourse only hinted at here and deserves more in-depth analysis elsewhere.

Against this background as a whole is the more recent phenomenon that government circles, media and international public opinion have begun to record the existence of devastating repercussions on a global level caused by the "European war". Such repercussions are the result of a hardly justifiable oblivion furthermore connected to the absence of prospects for a "reasonable" solution to the conflict.

These consequences take on a profile of authentic drama in the food sector, since Ukraine and the Russian Federation in a normal situation are jointly responsible for 30 per cent of exports of wheat and corn. A large percentage of the needs of the poorest markets depend on these supplies, above all those in Africa, traditional buyers of food from the ex-Soviet territory. According to reliable sources, the quantity of grain blocked in Ukrainian ports, in particular in Odesa, Mariupol (or what remains of it) and Kherson, current-



ly amounts to approximately 25 million tons. This already massive volume is set to double once the new harvests are completed, stored in the warehouses and, as a final step, loaded onto the freight ships.

Senegalese Macky Sall, President-in-Office of the African Union, recently met his counterpart Putin in Sochi to express widespread concerns among member countries without being able to obtain little more than general reassurance on an operational level. Two-thirds of the 700 million people directly exposed to what UN circles have already described as "food genocide" live in Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, while extending the survey to areas with a lower degree of exposure, the number of people at risk due to a shortage in wheat and other cereals is estimated to double (1.5 billion).

Until navigation can resume safely (a mine clearance will be necessary in the Black Sea as well as an agreement with Russia on the identification of "safe routes") dire consequences in terms of human lives appear inevitable. The alternative solutions proposed so far, in particular rail transport through Poland with the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda as the final destination, together with river solutions, are not, and will not be able, should they be strengthened in the future, to solve

the problem, considering the much smaller quantities of foodstuffs that may be transferred in such ways from Ukraine to consumer countries.

Returning to the current conflict, the absolute priority, is to reach a cease-fire with the utmost urgency. There is little doubt that central aspects of the future negotiation such as (in no particular order) the fate of the Donbass, the status of Ukraine with regard to both the European Union and NATO, or the re-examination of the series of sanctions in relation to Russia, will take months (and perhaps years) before finding a shared solution.

The potential victims of famine certainly do not have much time. In relation to this, the West is notoriously unwilling to deal with the resumption of massive migratory flows and the strengthening of political movements that pursue destabilization, both internally and internationally. Both find, moreover, easy escape from the devastating legacy left in the last two years by a pandemic which, beyond the millions of victims, has brutally accentuated the inequalities inside and among countries (a topic on which our Foundation has recently dedicated a Seminar, which will be referred to in the next issues of the publication).

Consequently, it is essential that the "question of bread", in the simple but effective definition coined by Pope Francis, is placed on the fast track, and as such should be removed from the risk of political / military negotiators. One would hope that the United Nations, also thanks to its wide network of specialized agencies, would be able to carry out this task in a coordinated and effective way, finding once more, at least part of the credibility within its world membership which was seriously compromised after 24 February. From this point of view, Turkey for geographical and legal reasons (functions of control of the straits) will inevitably be destined to play a prominent role in harmony with the well-known personal ambitions of President Erdogan.

Rapid action is also required in order to avoid - so that injury is not added to insult - the Russian Federation becoming the promoter of a "pseudo humanitarian" initiative. On closer inspection, the African continent, with just under half (22 out of 55) of the States which abstained in New York from condemning the invasion of Ukraine, and a not very different number of loyal customers of their military supplies, represents a geographic area decidedly less hostile than others for Moscow. As such, it would be justified as the potential recipient of some kind of gesture of "goodwill". If this should actually happen, the obligatory reference is to Bucha and other places in Ukraine, the scenes of the horrors of mass graves. That scenes should dispel any form of doubt regarding the Kremlin's absolute lack of value in safeguarding human lives.

Reggente Marco Marsilli,  
Foundation President