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The Voice of Maria Dolens

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Centenary of the Bell

Abandoned Sudan

In the columns of the 'Voce', we have already had occasion to recall how the Russian-Ukrainian and Middle Eastern conflicts - the latter initially limited to Israel and Palestine and later extended to other countries in the area- although devastating in terms of loss of life and material destruction as well as disruptive in terms of long-term geo-political repercussions, are unfortunately far from being the only war sites currently open in the world.

Statistical surveys by an authoritative US non-profit organisation, 'Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Projects', have counted the exi-

stence, in the five continents, of no less than 51 situations in 2024 that could have led either to the use of weapons or to situations approaching military conflict.

On some sides - such as Afghanistan, Yemen, Myanmar (formerly Burma) and Ethiopia - the conflict has been dragging on for years now, without any foreseeable possibility of an end, and appears to constitute, to the increasingly indifferent observation of governments, public opinion and the media, a practically unchangeable element of the current international context.

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SEMINAR ON THE AGREEMENTS SIGNED IN 1992 IN MOZAMBIQUE

Peace is the result of a regional process

On 4 October, on the Miravalle Pass, at the Auditorium named after former Director Alberto Robol, a seminar was held on the theme '32 years since the Rome Peace Accords 4/10/1992 - 4/10/2024', on the anniversary of the signing of the treaty that ended the conflict in Mozambique. After an introduction by the Director of the Campana dei Caduti Foundation, Ambassador Marco Marsilli, the Honourable Mario Raffaelli, former Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, who represented the Italian government in the negotiations, took the floor. Some excerpts from his speech follow below.

There are a number of lessons for us to learn from the experience of the negotiations in Mozambique. The first one is that Peace is possible. Sometimes it may not seem that way, but it can happen.

If I had been told, back in 1983, '84, '85, '86, the years when I first went to Zambia as a representative of the Italian government, that my political experience would cause me to be part of the mediation leading to the end of the internal war, I may not have believed it, because I thought that the timeframe would be much longer. If they had told me back then that in my political experience I would see apartheid eradicated in South Africa, I would have said that they were crazy. And instead, it happened, because it is not impossible. It is not a matter of needing a miracle, but the will of Man. Concrete action is the element that can build the contexts of Peace.

The second lesson is that Peace is never the result of preaching. Good preaching is important, useful, it mobilises our conscience. But what really brings Peace is building political, institutional, and international internal guarantee frameworks that help the parties that shot at each other until the day before to begin to coexist differently.

Moreover, this is a lesson that we Europeans should already be very familiar with. Europe has a history of immense tragedies, of religious, civil and inter-state wars. Two world wars with millions of dead. So, why did we then have seventy years of Peace? Because we have become genetically nicer, more pacifist, or because we have set rules that have allowed the existing conflicts to be managed? Conflicts still exist, because countries do not all have the same ideas or interests, but when tensions arise, there are procedures in place to manage them. This is why we have had seventy years of Peace. And this Peace, which we take for granted, could be put at risk if this mechanism breaks down.

The third lesson we should learn from the Mozambican experience is that Peace can never be the result of one country alone, but is always the result of a regional process involving several states. A stable agreement cannot be reached in one place if the neighbouring states create tensions instead of playing an active part in fostering the dialogue process. This is what I experienced in Somalia where I worked for years, but without results because there are no such conditions there. Because there, the regional and international communities do not play the same game.



The last condition needed in order to reach an agreement is to have mediators with certain characteristics: they must be people who know the dossier, who have knowledge of the territory and what is going on, and they must feel involved, but remain impartial.

I remember once telling the parties that the objective of negotiation is not to become friends, but to build conditions that allow those involved to remain adversaries capable of confronting one another with words and not with weapons. The two years and four months of negotiations served this purpose. (...)

The negotiations began in June 1990. It was the right time because a number of conditions had changed. First of all, the Berlin Wall had fallen. The dialogue between Gorbachev and Reagan



Anni Campana dei Caduti

THE CENTENARY LOGO

On 3 October, the logo dedicated to the centenary of the Bell of the Fallen was presented at the Miravalle Pass. The symbol will accompany the initiatives related to this anniversary. You will find it on every page of this monthly magazine and in all the events organised by the Foundation until 4 October 2025, when we will celebrate the fact that exactly one hundred years have passed since Maria Dolens chimed for the very first time.



favoured missile disarmament and this had led to the end of the 'proxy' wars in Africa, particularly in Ethiopia, but also in Angola, where a peace process contemporary to our own, albeit with a less happy fate, was initiated. So the regional conditions changed, and what was difficult became possible. Not least because each round of negotiations was followed by a meeting with the ambassadors of the European Community, which guaranteed us international support.

After that it still took two years and four months to solve the problems. The first attempt foundered on the issue of mutual recognition. At that time we quickly made the law on political formations, which defined the characteristics a party had to have in order to be accepted as such. This was easy enough.

Then there was an article that I called 'the post-dated cheque', meaning that it was a commitment for the future. And this said that the government of the People's Republic of Mozambique pledged not to pass laws that conflicted with what would be agreed at the negotiating table. It was a huge step forward, because at that point the two sides recognised each other in the negotiations, and what was agreed at the table was a commitment for everyone. So much so that in the end, to make it effective, the Mozambican Parliament approved the agreement that became state law. Then we passed the electoral law and then the reform of the armed forces and the secret services. Finally, with the involvement of the United Nations, we moved on to disarmament and international integration. A Commission was created that in the two years between the signing of the agreement and the first elections had the task of monitoring the proper implementation of the agreements and had the power to intervene. This was a major concession by the government of Mozambique, which gave up part of its sovereignty for 24 months by giving the Commission overriding powers over the executive to verify the implementation of the agreements.

One of the reasons why many Peace agreements do not hold up or fail is that after they are signed, the negotiator ends the game and leaves the parties alone to manage the process. Instead, the opportunity to have two years of 'democratic gymnastics', guaranteed by an appeal centre where problems could be solved, was fully exploited. Tensions did occur and without that instrument the parties would have started shooting at each other again. An 'airlock' was needed.

But there were problems even after that, for the next twenty years. I would go to Mozambique often and I remember that once, after a particularly contested election, there were clashes. I had talks with the parties and they all told me that the choice of Peace was irreversible. That any crisis would be dealt with by diplomatic means.

But why did this happen? Because in the DNA of the political parties the method of negotiation has been internalised, the idea that every conflict can be resolved through mediation has been accepted. However, we must always remember that Peace is not a given forever, it must be constantly cultivated. This is the lesson we can learn from the Mozambique agreements, and we can also use it as an example to be followed in other crisis situations.

A STORY OF TRENTINI IN THE WORLD

Art as memory

We asked some descendants of Trentino emigrants to tell their stories in the first person, emphasising how their origin has directed and influenced them in life. This would not have been possible without the active and friendly cooperation of the Trentini nel Mondo Association, founded in 1957 with the aim of social solidarity and as a tool of aggregation and assistance for Trentino migrants and their descendants. The character we present in this issue is Debora Regina Daros, born in Brazil and originally from the Trentino region.

I am Debora Regina Daros, I was born in Blumenau, but I live in Gaspar, Santa Catarina, Brazil. I am 51 years old, a visual artist and art teacher in the municipal school network of Gaspar. I am also the mother of Enzo, an 18-year-old, and a collaborator in promoting and preserving the Italian language and culture at the Gasparin Trentino Circle.

During my childhood, I had the good fortune to have two grandparents, one Italian and one German, with little academic education but with a large cultural repertoire, who made me appreciate the little things in life, such as watching the stars, nature, listening to and singing folk songs, having faith, contemplating architecture, sculpture, painting, graphics, photography, and above all listening to the stories of our ancestors. Treasures that have undoubtedly influenced my repertoire and my artistic and cultural poetry.

As a child, I was always interested in manual activities. I am the daughter of a seamstress and in my mother's sewing workshop I spent hours playing and inventing things with scraps. I used to draw with my grandfather Domingos, who was a bricklayer, but had a remar-

kable sense of aesthetics. Later, already in middle school, I rediscovered my love for drawing, at first just for fun. Then I participated in a workshop at my school, and it was then that I decided to enrol in university to study art. I attended the visual arts course at the Federal University of Paraná in Curitiba, where I was fortunate enough to be taught by an excellent faculty. During that time, I decided to explore and discover my Italian roots. Through interviews with uncles, as my grandparents were already deceased, I discovered the Trentino origins of my great-grandparents: Vallarsa (Riccardo Gioacchino Piazza), Besenello (Domenico Giacobbe Gezzele), Borgo Valsugana (Elisa Marchi).

The first photo I saw of Trentino was in the magazine 'Trentini nel Mondo', which showed Vallarsa, the land of my great-grandfather Piazza. It was shown to me by my aunt. And it was passion at first sight. I decided to make my dream come true: I would speak Italian, as unfortunately my parents had not taught us dialect, and I would visit Italy.

In 2004, I set foot on Italian soil for the first time. I was overwhelmed with emotion. Being in Italy, a country my



Debora Regina Daros

parents loved deeply but never had the chance to visit, was a moment of gratitude to all my ancestors for preserving this love across generations. In 2005, I had the opportunity to participate in the Training Stay of the Autonomous Province of Trento, which became one of the most significant milestones in my career. It reinforced the poetic themes in my artistic style, focused on the possibility of uniting art with my personal memories.



Debora Regina Daros and her giant egg



Debora Regina Daros and 'Le nonne'

Since 2014, I have decided to expand my paintings. From small media I switched to murals, a way to democratise art and share it with a wider audience. I did my first mural on the Paulo Wehmuth Viaduct, entitled *Mirror of Memory* (2014), in reference to German architecture. In this case I used the technique of photography printed on glass mosaic. In 2015, with the support of the Trentini nel Mondo 'Memories' initiative and the Gasparin Trentino Circle, I painted a mural in tribute to

140 years of Trentino and Italian immigration to Brazil. The work covers an area of 15 square metres, using as its subject an immigrant couple with two daughters, as well as various figures symbolising immigration and the love of these immigrants for the new world. The mural was done with acrylic paint, spray and stencil techniques applied to the wall. In 2022, again with the support of Trentini nel Mondo and the Gasparin Trentino Circle, I created the 200 square metre mural *Le Nonne* (*the Grandmothers*), a tribute to the significance of women during the great wave of immigration and within the communities they helped establish, ensuring the continuity of Italian traditions. I used photographs of Trentino women from different communities engaged in various activities as a reference. Both murals were created near the Santo Antônio Chapel, which is part of the 'Villa d'Italia' tourist route.

In 2021 I created a giant egg (2.50 metres high and 1.80 metres in diameter) for the 13th Osterfest (Easter Festival) in Pomerode, on the theme 'Beauties of Italy for Eier Parade'. It was loaned to the Consulate General of Italy in Curitiba for exhibitions in various places and is now at Villa d'Italia.

I am very happy that all these artistic works related to the great Italian immigration have already been visited by thousands of people and students from the school network of Gaspar and the region, promoting the dissemination of this theme that is so important for our cultural memory. I am preparing new works for the 150th anniversary of Italian immigration to Santa Catarina in 2025, aiming to raise awareness about this issue so that new generations recognise, respect, and value their origins.



Debora Regina Daros and 'Le nonne' (detail)



The immigration mural (detail)

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS - P 12

The end of the war

The fate of the Bell was not to ring until the end of World War II, but Don Rossaro did not know this. On the contrary, like everyone else, he thought that the conflict would be brief and that the victory of the Axis was certain—indeed, inevitable. The attention was focused elsewhere. For example, on solving the usual practical issues, such as finding ferrous material to build a stable support on which to place Maria Dolens. Cement and sand were also needed, and not easy to find in wartime. Funding then had to be applied for directly in Rome. This was accompanied by contradictory messages from the priest, who, in a letter to Mussolini, boldly referred to the Bell as 'the exaltation of the heroism of war.'

The distortion is evident and can be attributed to the desire to obtain the promised aid. The request was also directly supported by the prefect of Trento, Italo Foschi, who personally went to the capital to ask for financial assistance.

The funds arrived, along with the growing realisation that the *blitzkrieg* was turning into a tragedy of enor-

mous proportions. Fascism was slowly waning, and the Director noted in the minutes of January 29, 1943, that 'in light of the bloody drama of the current war, which is erupting everywhere with far more terrifying proportions than the 1914-1918 World War, and so that so many heroes may receive worthy and lasting commemoration, serving as a perennial and salutary reminder of the "human beasts," he proposes that the Noble Bell of the Fallen, while remaining a memorial to the fallen of the World War, extend its noble mission to include the Fallen of the current war and indeed all future wars, henceforth to be called the "Bell of the Fallen in War." Article 1 of the Magna Carta will be changed to reflect this'.

Things were changing rapidly. After the fall of fascism on 25 July 1943, signs of unrest began to appear throughout Trentino. The supporters of the regime were deflecting. "In the factories," notes Don Rossaro in his Diary, "the 'leaders', who were once tyrants under the cloak of fascism, are now gentle, kind, and they are claiming to be anti-fascists! Cowards!" Intellectuals sought self-exculpatory formulas to justify





Don Rossaro and 'his' Bell

their adherence to the regime, or urged others to view future problems as if fascism had been a 'parenthesis,' according to Benedetto Croce's definition.

Meanwhile, the Allies arrived. On 2 September 1943, shortly after midday, two squadrons of British aircraft flew over Rovereto. A few minutes later, the first bombs fell in Trento. On the 9th, the day after the armistice, it was Rovereto's turn.

During the six hundred days of the German occupation, as we read in the Historical Record, work was completed on the plinth and the final fixing of the Bell on the iron support. It was 5 May 1944, everything was in place, but not safe. On 17 November 1944, German officers had a conversation with Don Rossaro, announcing that the Bell could be requisitioned to be melted down to make cannons for the war effort. A kind of return to the starting point, a mocking vicious circle of the madness of war. From cannons to Bell, from Bell to cannons.

The priest did everything possible to prevent this. To close this potential loophole, it was decided that the bell would henceforth be rung 'for all the fallen in present and future wars. (...) Since today's war has brought its front lines beyond the battlefield and into towns and villages,' the Director proposed that the bell should 'also commemorate the civilian fallen who perished in the bombings, thus dedicating 'November 2nd annually in perpetuity to their memory'.

The conflict was coming to an end, the occupation was nearly over. Don Rossaro describes the Germans' flight northwards with a certain compassionate tone,

comparing it to that of 4 November 1918. But before leaving, the occupying troops wanted to pay tribute to their dead. On the morning of 3 May 1945, the priest was ordered to ring the bell to honour the German dead. Don Rossaro held back until the occupiers, compelled by the unfolding events, abandoned the city. Again, Maria Dolens remained silent, and did not even sound when the British arrived.

The war was not yet over; it was necessary to wait for the first light of 4 May, when the American troops entered the city. The crowd invaded the streets and invariably a call was launched for the Bell to be rung. Don Rossaro agreed, but this wasn't the right time either.

Everything was in place, but the American commander raised a security issue, he feared that the people gathered in the square would pose a serious danger. Nothing came of it. The priest's comment was definitive: "It is fate that the Bell must ring in Peace! ... Once again: everything has gone haywire. There was not even time to warn the citizens. At 8 p.m. large crowds had formed in the Piazza. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the numerous and skilled military band of the Czechoslovakians arrived, travelling from Trento to Riva. Our good friend Major Stockar managed - to put on an impromptu performance - to keep it in Rovereto to celebrate the Bell being rung for the very first time. Everyone was hugely disappointed and disgruntled! ... The band stopped anyway: in homage to the Bell, it played a highly acclaimed concert featuring the Czechoslovak anthem, amid a festive display of fireworks. That was the first solemn tribute to the Bell'.



To be continued from page 1...

In short, quoting the title of a book by the famous Israeli writer Hannah Arendt, we are faced with a plurality of 'banality of evil', in which the existence of war, with its nefarious contour of recurrent massacres, indescribable violence and enormous deprivation, ends up being taken for granted, such as to nullify any attempt at peacemaking.

Alongside them, cases of more recent, less established conflicts also exist. We would like to comments on one of them, Sudan, below, as it seems to us emblematic of the extreme weakness (or some might say 'uselessness') of the system of multinational organisations created, since 1945, precisely with the noble intention of settling any future disputes between states by negotiation.

Although prone to bloody changes of power since acquiring independence in 1956, as well as separatist phenomena (which led to the creation of South Sudan a few years ago), even the African country was not prepared for the dramatic consequences of the struggle for territorial control that erupted, following yet another coup d'état, in 2023 between the regular armed forces (Saf) and some special units (Rsf). These were divided both by the political ambitions of their respective leaders and by considerations of inter-ethnic dominance.

In this theatre of war, too, it is possible to document both external military support (Iran and Egypt on the side of Saf, the United Arab Emirates on the side of the RFS, support that is obviously motivated, on both sides, by substantial economic interests) and the encroachments of notoriously unscrupulous militias from the neighbouring territories. These include, first and foremost, the 'Wagner', the feared armed wing of the Russian Federation, which is used to further expand Moscow's already considerable influence on the African continent, also gaining valuable support when voting at the United Nations.

But, of all the possible consequences, the most tragic concern the fate of the Sudanese civilian population of around 45 million people. So far, over 150,000 victims have been confirmed, while estimates suggest that more than two million people could ultimately fall victim to what is projected to be the worst famine on the African continent since the crisis that devastated Ethiopia in the 1980s.

The explicit acknowledgment of 'political impotence' by the new U.S. Special Envoy, Tom Perriello, is worryingly mirrored by the strikingly limited humanitarian support. If one gives credence to the estimates of Arif Noor, the local head of Save the Children—and there is no reason not to—then for every million invested in humanitarian aid to Ukraine, Sudan receives the paltry sum of only a few thousand euros from the combined efforts of governments, international financial institutions, and various NGOs.

Yet, setting aside any concerns for the fate of women, the elderly, and children, there are numerous compelling reasons to prevent Sudan from becoming another failed state, such as through a de facto division based on the Libyan model. We will mention only two of them here.

The first reason is security: Sudan borders the Red Sea for 800 kilometres, a crucial artery of global trade connected to the Suez Canal. This region is already threatened by terrorist activity, including Houthi guerrillas, making it a shared priority to safeguard it from additional threats to free maritime navigation

The second reason is related to migration, as a mass exodus from Mediterranean ports must also be avoided in this case, given that Sudanese refugees, alongside Syrians, Libyans, and Afghans, already constitute one of the largest national groups in refugee camps spread across various European countries.

As a final consideration, we must acknowledge that continuing to avert one's eyes from a crisis scenario so dense with repercussions on global stability is definitely not in the West's interest. In an era of more effective and cooperative multilateralism, given the extreme gravity of the situation, New York would have unhesitatingly deployed a peacekeeping mission to the region, aiming to de-escalate the violence and work toward a negotiated solution. Recognising the current decision-making paralysis of the United Nations, the pressing question of this early third millennium is whether a similar outcome can be achieved by alternative means, by identifying both the legal foundations and the available human and financial resources. Realistically speaking, it should be acknowledged, however, that we are not close to finding a solution to either aspect anytime soon.

Reggente Marco Marsilli, Foundation President