

# The voice of Maria Dolens

MONTHLY NEWLETTER FROM THE PEACE BELL FOUNDATION OF ROVERETO



## Terrorism: a new war

No justification, but a question yes: "Can you live in an enchanted Eden while there is war outside?" It seems not. The attacks of Islamic origin that have taken place in Paris and Vienna in recent days seem to confirm that if "distant" conflicts are not resolved, sooner or later the consequences will also be felt nearer to home, which is not heaven on earth, but is a place which is very comfortable compared to the rest of the world. Without getting too wrapped up in guilt, because the responsibility is never of those who suffer the attacks, we must begin to treat terrorism as a widespread and asymmetrical war, and bear in mind that like all conflicts this too has economic origins. There is no God who asks for unfaithful blood but rather there are pseudo-religious extremists who find fertile ground in situations of very serious social hardship. Poverty does not justify vi-

olence. It makes it possible, almost probable. Condemning attacks is just as well as necessary, but it's not enough. Shutting ourselves away within our borders doesn't work. The only means that have so far allowed a continent like Europe to have over seventy years of peace are dialogue, openness and the Union. However, the method is complicated to implement. To talk you need to have at least two people. How easy it is to shout at killers but how difficult it is to find a way to remove those social inequalities that facilitate the origin of distorted interpretations of sacred texts that fuel extremism. Such is the work of mediators and diplomats. One may begin with symbolic gestures, exemplified by Maria Dolens, while waiting to follow through with practical initiatives. In any case, after having condemned unjustifiable acts, we need to understand why they happen and try to intervene at the root of the problem.

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INTERVIEW WITH FOUNDATION PRESIDENT MARCO MARSILLI

# Territory and International Perspective

A NEW COURSE BETWEEN CONTINUITY AND INNOVATION

**T**he Bell has changed after 17 years. A new president has arrived, Ambassador Marco Marsilli who succeeds Senator Alberto Robol. The first thanks of the newly elected went to the Foundation Board. "My commitment will be to show myself deserving of the trust that has been placed in me", said Marsilli highlighting the intention to make use, within the scope of their respective competences, of the collaboration of Executive Committee members and aforemen-

tioned Board. The thought then went to his predecessor, capable in fulfilling a position for over three decades "during which the Foundation has seen its effectiveness and prestige grow considerably". The prospect, he continued, is "to start my mandate with the qualities of continuity with the recent past, in a vision that draws attention to the territory consolidated with an international perspective, thanks to the fundamental support of the Province of Trento and the Municipality of Rovereto »

## Let's start with the territory?

It is necessary to strengthen the already strong roots of the Peace Bell Foundation of Rovereto, and consequently of the Foundation, with the natural area of reference for Maria Dolens, consisting of Rovereto, Vallagarina and the Province of Trento, but without disdain for other Italian regions. It is a question of intercepting and conveying the wishes and expectations of all those who identify Maria Dolens as a

symbol of peace, respect for human rights and solidarity among peoples on the Colle di Miravalle. This implies a great willingness by the Foundation towards the civil, religious, cultural, sporting, educational and artistic needs that may deepen our knowledge. Wherever they are.

## And going abroad?

An international vocation is already present in Maria Dolens' DNA. It is the great intuition of the founder who



used the bronze donated by the 19 belligerent countries in the First World War in the first casting of 1924. The path was already marked and it is no coincidence that the Foundation benefits from a privileged status with the two major multi-lateral organizations operating in the field of human rights. I am referring to the partnership with the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, which has been underway since 2006, and that with the United Nations in New York, which began in 2009. These relationships do not represent formal recognition but translate into targeted participation by Foundation members at events and meetings of the two bodies in order to develop initiatives focused on the values represented by the Bell. Furthermore, the network of relationships woven through the presence in these international offices favours and strengthens the collaboration started some time ago with the foreign embassies in Rome, helping to create the conditions for new

affiliations to the Peace Memorandum. Up to now, 99 flags have been hoisted at the Colle representing countries and peoples. We are preparing to reach the symbolic number of 100, but this round figure must represent a starting point.

**The Foundation's core business is the promotion of the values represented by Maria Dolens, first and foremost peace. How do we act in this direction?**

Culture and diplomacy are two fundamental tools for mutual knowledge between people. They represent the structural basis necessary in order to gradually overcome crisis situations. I believe that the Bell must set realistic goals and I believe in symbolic gestures. In relation to this I wish to recall the initiative that saw two great chess masters, the Russian Vladimir Dobrov, and the Ukrainian, Valeriy Nevyerov, challenge each other at the

“Conveying the expectations of those who identify Maria Dolens as a symbol of peace on the Colle di Miravalle hill”

Colle hill, at the same time that the troops of Kiev and Moscow were engaged in fierce fighting in the Donbass area. This is a small example of how the spirit of the Peace Bell Foundation of Rovereto can help create a better climate even in objectively difficult situations.

**How does this hope translate into concrete action?**

Certainly ordinary activity needs to be strengthened, but I believe that in general, in order to take concrete action, we cannot ignore the context, and at this specific moment we need to creatively face the challenges that the pandemic poses. We are in a period in which it is very difficult, if not impossible, to travel and organize events in person. In 2020, for exam-

ple, all meetings in Strasbourg and New York were cancelled. The activity of the Bell did not stop completely, in fact I remember the recent adherence to the Peace Memorandum of Georgia and Ireland, but the difficulties cannot be denied. For this reason, it is advisable to equip oneself with tools that focus on new technologies to ensure an alternative offer to the traditional one, for example by allowing “access” to the monumental area and the Bell through virtual visits. This is an approach that would normally be complementary to face-to-face activity, but which in this period risks becoming prevalent. It does however open up to a new type of “access” that may be developed even after this emergency has passed.

**A new form of communication for Maria Dolens?**

It is a necessity and it must be done continuously. With this in mind, this same monthly newsletter has been introduced, which will contain a series of information on the life of the Bell and on the main international issues that the Foundation will be called upon to handle during its activity. But that's not enough. The presence on social networks must be potentialized since they can reach sections of the population other than those situated by the Colle di Miravalle hill with their agile and targeted languages.



“Reggente” Marco Marsilli

ART AND PEACE

## Imagination as power

One hundred years following the death of Gianni Rodari



Is it possible to attend the 'School of Imagination'? According to Gianni Rodari, yes, and perhaps it is the reason why he chose this as a title for one of his books. The great writer and journalist, born on 23 October one hundred years ago in Omegna, on Lake Orta, had an obsession with the education of children, who "need to conceive ideals and learn to love them above all else". The idea was to call children to share the driving force of passion with adults, understood as the "will to action and ded-

ication", "the courage to" dream big " and awareness of the duty we have as men to change the world for the better without settling for mediocre changes of scene that leave everything as it was before ». The idea is beautiful, if not for the fact that "thinking big" is a prerogative of the little ones. "You are born arsonists and you end up firefighters", declared Dino Segre, known as Pitigrilli to friends, but Rodari must not have shared this nihilistic vision and left a door open to hope. He did so with nursery rhymes, vehicle of the values of friendship and solidarity, and with fairy tales, capable of reinventing a humanistic heritage suitable for minors. Perhaps when he opened up to social issues such as the conquest of freedom, the need for work, the defense of peace in the time of the Cold War and atomic threats, he was not exactly speaking to children, but rather to the adults they would become. Maybe it was an invitation to remain "incendiary", to pursue a feasible utopia, not exactly the end of injustices but at least a somewhat fairer society. Being a "firefighter" is easy, the stuff of mature people, but art is for those who have not forgotten that they were once naive, who keep going off the beaten track and who continue to get dirty by lying down on the dirt. These are the ones who will sometimes find a smooth stone which could not be seen from the main road. Rodari was an artist and spoke to children as an equal.

## The Republic of Ireland joins

The 99th flag on the Colle hill

**F**áilte is written everywhere. It means "welcome" in Gaelic and is found constantly, from the entrance to people's homes to that of the pubs. The Irish are welcoming. On 20 October, the Peace Bell Foundation of Rovereto returned the favour and welcomed the Dublin authorities who have officially joined the Peace Memorandum. The flag of the Republic of Ireland was number 99 to be hoisted on the Miravalle Hill. The tricolour was presented by Ambassador Colm Ó Floinn who highlighted the fact that "since Ireland became part of the free nations of the world, our approach to international relations has been guided by the same principles that have inspired the philosophy of Father Rossaro and of all those who have worked to promote the Peace Bell Foundation of Rovereto since his time ». "Today's ceremony is held in one of the most significant and evoca-

tive places in terms of peace paths", the Government Commissioner for the Province of Trento, Sandro Lombardi, pointed out, while Foundation President Alberto Robol emphasized "our Bell is also a warning for what man does against man in the world, in the destruction of the climate, in the spread of inequalities". Maria Dolens' hundred strokes of peace concluded the ceremony.



Republic of Ireland Ambassador Colm Ó Floinn



DAL CONSIGLIO D'EUROPA

# PEACE AND JUSTICE

## an inseparable pair

**T**he absence of war is not always synonymous with peace. Indeed, when order reigns supreme, there is often a need to worry, even if the trains arrive on time. There is certainly an absence of conflict in situations of oppression, when the weak are subject to the arrogance of the strong and do not have the tools to react and oppose. Peace and justice do not exist one without the other, they feed upon each other. Which is not even a new idea, it is written in books spanning a thousand years, but it cannot be said that everywhere people have fought with the same ardour in order to put it into practice. Since the law was invented, "the law is the same for everyone", but "we are not all equal before the law," as apparently claimed by a successful lawyer who sold cars. It is equally true, however, that imperfect justice is always better than the law of nature, which completely ignores equality and is based exclusively "on subordination and dependence", as claimed by the Marquis of Vauvenargues, who was also a "moralist." But he was French, and when the French speak of equality they must be listened to carefully. It follows that in order to pursue the ideal of peace, judicial systems must also be improved.

For this reason, the seventh biennial report just released by the European Commission for the efficiency of justice by the Council of Europe (Cepej) is of particular importance. The data is relative to 2016 and for the first



Gustav Klimt, "Jurisprudence" (Destroyed in the Immendorf Castle fire, 1903-1907)

Published in  
Strasbourg the  
seventh biennial  
report on the state  
of justice in  
45 states

time the impact of migrants and asylum seekers on the system is taken into account. The study concerns 45 states and 850 million citizens (Liechtenstein and San Marino did not participate, as previously in the past, while Morocco and Israel provided data as Cepej observers). In general, the trend seems positive. Following

the 2008 crisis, the budget allocated to the judicial system increased, albeit to varying degrees in the various states, which had a general per capita increase of 10.88% in the two-year period 2014-2016. The figure demonstrates a reversal in the trend as a result of diminishing resources earmarked for justice spending in the two-year period 2012-2014, a period which had marked a worrying -7.34% decline compared to past numbers. Italy follows the trend and goes from 72.7 euro per person in 2014 to 75 in 2016. The European average is 64.5 euro, 6 more than in 2014, due to a notable increase from Andorra, Germany, Iceland and Monaco. Switzerland did best of all with € 214.8.

The report is extensive and analyzes personnel costs, the percentage of women among magistrates, the overabundance of lawyers, and the length of proceedings. There are many numbers to keep an eye on, but it must be done since peace also depends on how long it takes to obtain justice.

FROM THE UNITED NATIONS

# A 'blue' night

## WORLD DAY FOR THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UN

**T**wo olive branches and a world map on a blue background, the colour of peace. The flag of the United Nations leaves no doubts as to which path to follow. For further indications, reference can be made to the Sustainable Development Goals which, as the Secretary General António Guterres points out, "provide an inspirational guide towards a better recovery". For years, the Peace Bell Foundation has taken these guidelines as a model from which to carry out work that started before the UN even existed, thanks to the intuition of Don Antonio Rossaro who merged the Maria Dolens Peace Bell with the bronze of cannons offered by belligerent powers on opposite fronts during the First World War.

Since then the Bell, in honour of the Fallen, with its hundred daily chimes has commemorated the victims of all wars and reminded the living not to forget the horrors of conflicts, especially those still in progress. It did so on 24 October, by participating in World UN Day which was celebrated on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. A natural, consequential, desired and due gesture. Maria Dolens turned blue and the Foundation was opened, with free admission, from 6pm to 12am.

Against the backdrop of phrases spoken by Nobel Peace Laureates, those who climbed the Colle di Miravalle hill witnessed projections and readings of various articles from the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For the occasion, the "Human Rights?" #The

Future's Shape. Women will save the world " exhibition remained open, an exposition featuring works by 141 artists from 31 countries. In live streaming from groups of the "Trentini nel Mondo", (Trentino People in the World Association) authentic contributions arrived from Argentina, Paraguay,

Brazil, Uruguay, the United States and Belgium. Actual people, with their hearts divided between the land of their ancestors and that of their children, recounted the activity of the "embassies of the Bell in the world". At 9.30 pm on the Facebook page of the Bell the 100 strokes of Peace were shown in live streaming.

But that's not enough. Thanks to a proposal launched by the Foundation and immediately adopted by local institutions, it was not only the Bell that was coloured blue, but the whole city of Rovereto, also known as City of the Oak, gathered around the slogan "let's build our future together". It was the first time. Museums remained open with free admission from 6pm until midnight, all together to give life to a special night that is now known as "Rovereto, the culture for peace".

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The City of Oak  
joined around the  
slogan "We build  
our future together"  
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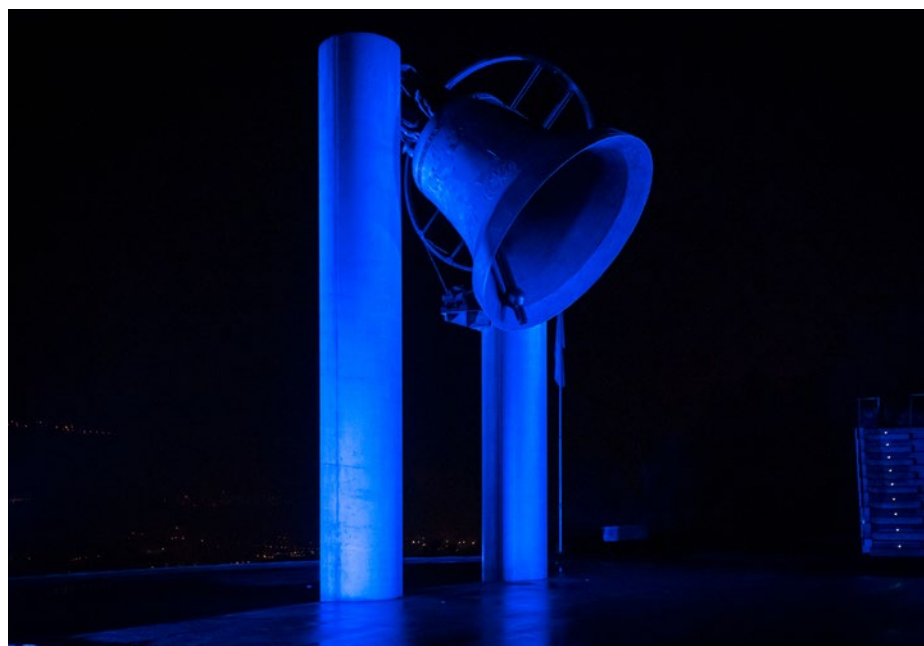


Photo by Graziano Galvan



HAPPENING TODAY

# Moments of history



The archive page that recalls the turning of the bell clapper carried out in 1955. Above right, Foundation President Father Eusebio Iori, with him representatives of the Foundation Board and the Bini company that carried out the work.



November 20, 2002, two moments of the closing ceremony of "Mountains of Peace - Peace on the Mountains, 10 peace proposals for 10 mountains at war". The Rovereto Children's Choir was already with us.



HAPPENING TODAY

# Ciampi at the Colle di Miravalle hill

VISIT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC



4 November, 2000: Visit to the Peace Bell Foundation of Rovereto by President of the Italian Republic Carlo Azeglio Ciampi. From the left: Foundation President, Pietro Monti, Minister of Defence, Sergio Mattarella and President of the Italian Republic Carlo Azeglio Ciampi. In the background, President of the Autonomous Province of Trento, Lorenzo Dellai.

The President of the Italian Republic Carlo Azeglio Ciampi pays tribute to Maria Dolens