

## Peace News May 2009

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## 1. From the National Co-Convener

May 16, 2009

Dear Psychologists for Peace,

This is a busy time of the year for several PFP state groups, as they gear up for their annual or biennial awards. In South Australia, the 11<sup>th</sup> Children's Peace Literature Award (CPLA) is underway, with entries due by 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2009. Judges will be looking for books published since 1 July 2007, in which the book's theme or main character(s) encourage the peaceful resolution of conflict and/or promote peace at the global, local or interpersonal level. For further information about the award, go to: <http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/awards/literature/>.

The Western Australian Peace Art Prize for Secondary students is also building momentum, with registrations due by the 14<sup>th</sup> August, and artworks completed by 3<sup>rd</sup> September, after which they will be exhibited. This year, the theme asks students to consider: inner peace, peace within the family, peace within the neighbourhood & the community, peace within & between nations. Four prizes are being offered. For details, go to <http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/awards/art/>.

This year, changes have been made to the conditions of the PFP research award, to encourage more students to apply. Entries are now due on the 4<sup>th</sup> December, and 4<sup>th</sup> year psychology or masters students are now invited to submit a summary of their completed project, rather than their research *proposal* as in former years. Winners will be notified in January. For details go to: [http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/awards/peace\\_project/](http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/awards/peace_project/).

We also have a few important changes in PFP steering committee members and personnel. I would like to thank and farewell Cath Ryan, who has been our PFP administrator for several years and provided tremendous support to our poster sales, newsletter, organization of meetings, and general administration of the group. We are very sorry to say good bye to Cath, but are delighted that she is off to have a baby! Best wishes for the future, Cath, and thank you for the enormous contribution you have made over the years.

And last, but not least, I'm very pleased to introduce you to Dr Winnifred Louis, from University of Queensland, who will be sharing the role of National Convenor of the group with me, as of this month. Winnifred has been the convenor of the QLD PFP group for the last couple of years, and I am delighted to share the role of national convenor with her. She is a dedicated peace researcher, enthusiastic teacher, ardent supporter of the peace process, and a wonderful asset to the group. Thank you and welcome, Winnifred.

Yours in peace,

Dr Susie Burke

National Co-Convener, Psychologists for Peace

## 2. Howdy from Winnifred

Hi folks! A quick word to say hello and to introduce myself. I'm a social psychologist working at the University of Queensland and I have a website there at <http://www.psy.uq.edu.au/directory/?id=529>. My research focus is on decision-making in conflict. I'm particularly interested in how social influence and identities impact on peoples' decisions to get involved vs stay on the sidelines, and decisions to choose confrontational vs cooperative tactics. At UQ, I'm a research associate of the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. I also have been a peace activist for many years, and am a member of Just Peace here in Brisbane and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. (I'm a lot less active now that I'm shouldering the fun yet demanding senior lecturer duties, though!) I look forwards to helping Susie with the convenor's role at PFP, and to meeting many of you at this year's APS conference in Darwin.

## 3. Call for technically-savvy volunteers

The Queensland/Northern Territory branch of Psychologists for Peace seeks tech-savvy volunteers prepared to spend a few hours every 2-3 months to help out creating peace podcasts. If you know how to record .mp3 files (or are willing to learn) and are interested in helping, please contact Dr Winnifred Louis on [wlouis@psy.uq.edu.au](mailto:wlouis@psy.uq.edu.au).

## 4. Inquiry into Nuclear Non-Proliferation

Earlier in the year, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced a Parliamentary review of all treaties relating to nuclear weapons, with a view to strengthening their effectiveness. This was a key opportunity for civil society to influence the Federal Government to take a lead role for nuclear disarmament. Psychologists for Peace National Convenor, Susie Burke, worked with the APS to prepare a submission to the inquiry. In the submission we looked at the serious risks of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The psychological issues underpinning nuclear proliferation must not be underestimated and the Australian Government has the opportunity to advance peace education in schools to better equip society to resolve conflict by peaceful means rather than through weapons of mass destruction.

The APS submission can be seen at: [http://www.psychology.org.au/community/public\\_interest/#s5](http://www.psychology.org.au/community/public_interest/#s5).

## 5. The International Network of Psychologists for Social Responsibility (INPsySR)

INPsySR is an international network of organisations that use psychology to understand and address pressing social issues. It was founded at the European Congress of Psychology in Prague in 2007 by U.S. Psychologists for Social Responsibility, Finnish Psychologists for Social Responsibility, and the German Forum Peace Psychology.

Psychologists for Peace are one of the 6 member organisations. The website can be viewed at:

<http://www.friedenspsychologie.de/inpsysr/?menu=organisations>

INPsySR are holding its 2ND ANNUAL MEETING and hosting several other events at the European Congress of Psychology, "A Rapidly Changing World: Challenges for Psychology", July 6-10, 2009, in Oslo, Norway.

INPsySR will convene three symposia at the ECP:

Sym082: "Preventing Violent Conflict: Psychological Dimensions" (chaired by Ferdinand Garoff, July 9, 10.00-11.30, Plaza Hotel, room Madonna).

Sym084: "The Human Costs of Human Rights Violations" (chaired by Miriam Schroer, July 9, 11.45-13.15, Plaza Hotel, room Madonna).

Sym106: "Peacebuilding: Psychological Perspectives" (chaired by Paula Green, July 10, 10.15-11.45, The Nobel Institute).

## 6. Women's human rights

The Australian Human Rights Commission and the Australian Government Office for Women released Women's Human Rights, an educational kit of fact sheets about the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Women's Human Rights education kit provides people with a clear and basic understanding of international human rights, particularly as they relate to women. The Women's Human Rights kit will increase community understanding about how to use the human rights standards enshrined in CEDAW. The kit can be downloaded from the Australian Human Rights Commission website at

[www.humanrights.gov.au/sex\\_discrimination/publication/CEDAW/](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sex_discrimination/publication/CEDAW/)

## 7. National human rights consultation

The National Human Rights Consultation Committee is interested in hearing the public's views on human rights in Australia. People are invited to make a submission on their website, or send a written submission to: National Human Rights Consultation Secretariat, Attorney-General's Department, Central Office, Robert Garran Offices, National Circuit, BARTON ACT 2600. Alternatively, people can register to attend a Community Roundtable session, or organise their own Community Roundtable. The deadline for submissions is 15 June 2009. For more information, ring or email the National Human Rights Consultation Secretariat:

- 1800 086 134 (freecall, available between 10.00am and 4.00pm)
- [humanrightsconsultation@ag.gov.au](mailto:humanrightsconsultation@ag.gov.au)

## 8. Psychologists express concerns about resurgence of violence in the Gaza Strip

Like many Australians, psychologists working with the APS were dismayed at the resurgence of violence in the Gaza Strip in January this year. The media focus and public commentary on who was at fault, whilst not a helpful response, illustrated well the psychological dimensions of how conflict escalates. As psychologists we understand the key factors that lead to an escalation of conflict, and we have all seen this unfolding so often in the past as violence resurges in troubled parts of the world. The situation rapidly arises in which each side believes that the other side is the aggressor and acts in what they see as 'defense', thereby justifying their own aggressive actions. What we call a defensive spiral emerges, and 'enemy images' are created - each party sees the other side as simply evil, therefore ignoring the other side's legitimate interests or concerns. The most important intervention at this stage is often one in which the violence is stopped through international pressures for a ceasefire. Then, it can be possible for the conflicting parties to seek solutions using diplomatic processes such as mediation and negotiation. Psychologists for Peace helped to draft a letter from the APS to Julia Gillard, who was acting Prime Minister in January during the period of intense conflict. The letter can be viewed at: <http://www.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/APS-letter-Gillard-Gaza-07112009.pdf>

## Understanding conflict, violence, war and peace in the Middle East

It's easy to see the ongoing problems in the Middle East as intractable and unsolvable, and to feel an overwhelming sense of helplessness at the situation. At these times, it is also easy to feel disempowered and dispirited, adding to the burden of stress, anxiety and depression in our community. But we believe that it is particularly important not to throw away the resolve for peace just when it's being most sorely tested. We need to remember that peace is possible. We've seen this demonstrated repeatedly in other parts of the world (e.g., Northern Ireland), where deep-rooted conflict went on for many generations, and the prospects of peace seemed faint. The well-developed processes of peace-building, diplomacy, and negotiation have the potential to resolve disputes and rebuild peace in seemingly impossible situations. Much has been written and researched about the psychology of peace, and psychologists can play a useful role by informing themselves about this material and using the knowledge to make contributions at various levels. The recent article by Christie, Tint, Wagner and Winter (2008), for example, was written expressly to inform and invite psychologists into this field.

In Christie et al.'s article, the authors revisited an important distinction between "direct violence" and "structural violence" (Galtung cited in Christie et al., 2008). Direct violence manifests in armed conflict and the kind of bloodshed and destruction we have seen in Gaza recently. Structural violence refers to the socio-political institutions that disadvantage certain groups and contribute to suffering because basic human needs are not met. The geohistorical context in Gaza has to be understood and resolved because it has long been the root of structural violence. One of the key reasons for conflict between groups or states is real, or perceived, competition over resources. This is a prevalent dynamic in the Middle East and involves not only land, water, food and mineral resources, but also competition over national and religious rights.

### Approaches to resolving conflict

Christie et al. assert that psychology and psychologists have much to offer international peace efforts. Although macro level analysis and political intervention are central, so too are the human, micro level understandings that underpin conflict, violence and peace. There are a variety of well-articulated approaches to resolving conflict between groups and states. Typically these require flexibility, mutual understanding and win-win solutions. Usually, violent episodes undermine such possibilities as the resurgence of cultural narratives, criticism, blame and trauma support established enmities.

A useful distinction for people to understand is that between "peacekeeping", "peacemaking" and "peacebuilding" (Galtung cited in Christie et al., 2008). Peacekeeping involves efforts to bring armed conflict to a halt and to ensure that violence does not continue to erupt. Peacemaking involves agreements to settle the issues that have contributed to conflict. Peacebuilding is the ongoing process of reconciling the past and constructing social and political institutions that redress "structural violence".

Christie, D. J., Tint, B. S., Wagner, R. V., & Winter, D. D. (2008). Peace psychology for a peaceful world. *American Psychologist*, 63(6), 540-552.

## 9. Psychology Beyond Borders Seeking Proposals for 2010 Mission Awards

Psychologists Beyond Borders (PPB) are offering funding of \$5000 - \$15000 USD for selected projects with an expected duration of one year commencing in 2010. Projects will be assessed in terms of how well they address at least two of the five key areas listed in PBB's mission as follows:

1. **Research** to contribute to the body of knowledge about what psychosocial strategies heal (or harm) in prevention, preparedness and response to large scale disaster, armed conflict or terror attacks.
2. **Psychosocial service delivery**, including partnerships with response teams in communities impacted by large-scale traumatic events.
3. **Education** programs to raise awareness about the psychosocial impacts of disaster, armed conflict or terror attacks and build community competencies in best practice methods of preparedness and intervention.
4. **Public policy** recommendations to assist in community preparedness, response and recovery associated with large scale traumatic events.
5. **Building a network** to enhance international collaboration, knowledge sharing and systems for prevention, preparedness and response to disaster, armed conflict or terror attacks.

### APPLICATION DETAILS

For application details, see [www.psychologybeyondborders.com/MA2010application.aspx](http://www.psychologybeyondborders.com/MA2010application.aspx)

Please direct any questions to [awards@pbbmail.org](mailto:awards@pbbmail.org)

## 10. ICAN Event Invitation

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is inviting supporters to an event where they can meet other supporters and hear about the latest campaign developments. As well as refreshments, the evening will feature music by ICAN supporter Abby Dobson and speakers will include ICAN Chair Associate Professor Tilman Ruff as well as ICAN Board Members Dimity Hawkins and Dr Ruth Mitchell.

The event will be held on Wednesday June 3 from 6 – 8pm at 60L Green Building 60 Leicester Street Carlton. RSVP is essential by Monday June 1 to [teri@icanw.org](mailto:teri@icanw.org) ; phone 9347 4795.

## 11. Talks between Dalai Lama and Chinese Scholars

The Boston Globe (5 May, 2009) reported that recently the Dalai Lama met with more than 100 scholars from China in an event which highlighted the power of direct discussion to overcome prejudices.

The meeting, which was held in Cambridge (Massachusetts) was organised by Lobsang Sangay, a senior fellow at Harvard Law School. The meeting ground rules were simple:- civil discourse and no photographs to be taken during discussions. In addition, moderator Tu Weiming, Harvard Professor of Chinese History and Philosophy and Confucian

Studies asked that all sides allow a genuine exchange of ideas, celebrate their differences and refrain from trying to convert others.

The participants embraced these guidelines and what followed was a respectful and open-minded exchange of ideas with the Chinese scholars frequently acknowledging false impressions they had originally held about Tibet-related issues, and the Dalai Lama talking about his historical meetings with Mao Zedong and his views on Communism and China's role in Tibet.

The event was considered a success as the Chinese scholars clamoured for photographs of themselves with the Dalai Lama afterwards and were able to contrast their experience of talking with him to the figure which has been depicted in Beijing's propaganda.

## **12. Ultimate Frisbee for Ultimate Peacekeeping**

In April 2009 American organisation Ultimate Peace conducted their first project in conjunction with the Peres Center for Peace. Central to the project was the use of Ultimate Frisbee, a sport which has no referees, thus requiring the players to engage in instant conflict resolution. Project co-founder Dr David Barkan describes the game thus: "It's a non-contact, non-violent sport that builds accountability and responsibility". The project was conducted in Israel and brought together both Palestinian and Israeli youths from disadvantaged backgrounds.

For more information and footage of the project see [www.ultimatepeace.org](http://www.ultimatepeace.org).

## **13. YouTube Video Collection – 'Create Peace'**

The Peace Support Network recently conducted their first annual YouTube video contest. The theme of the contest was "Create Peace", and there are over 50 entries from all over the world – see link below.

[www.youtube.com/group/peacesupport](http://www.youtube.com/group/peacesupport)

**14. M Sc in Political Psychology at Queen's University, Belfast**

The staff of Queen's University Belfast are inviting applications for their MSc programme in Political Psychology which was launched in September 2008. Political Psychology is a growing field studying the overlap between Psychology and Political Science. The program is recommended as being suitable for both academically-oriented people as well as practitioners in areas such as NGO and political organisations. More information is available on: <http://www.psych.qub.ac.uk/CResPP/>.

## **15. Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Studies – Scholarships**

The Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Studies at Coventry University, UK offers a range of courses focusing on concepts such as peace, justice, reconciliation and transforming violent relationships by non-violent means.

Applications for this year's round of MA scholarships close on May 29.

[www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/peacestudies](http://www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/peacestudies).

## **16. Peace Education Research Project: Your Input Needed**

The International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE) are planning to develop a comprehensive multi-lingual peace education bibliography and also to update the publication "A Review and Projection of Peace Education". They are seeking submissions identifying what you would consider to be the most significant peace education publications over the past five to ten years. Please send responses to [research@i-i-p-e.org](mailto:research@i-i-p-e.org).

## **17. Survey on Peace Psychology Courses**

The Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict and Violence: Peace Psychology Division of the American Psychological Association is conducting a survey aimed at establishing the number of peace psychology courses currently taught throughout the world. If a university with which you are associated currently offers what you would consider to be a course in peace psychology, please send information to Linden Nelson at [LLNelson@Calpoly.edu](mailto:LLNelson@Calpoly.edu).