

# A Brief History of TRANSCEND

by Dietrich Fischer

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In 1966 Nicholas Sombart from the Council of Europe asked Johan Galtung to do a study of how countries in the Cold War viewed the future. They had very little money; had they had more the approach would probably have been a traditional public opinion study in many countries, and a TRANSCEND method would have waited still some years for its formulation. Instead of a sample a dialogue became the approach, about predictions and possibilities of cooperation, but only with one person in each country: the head of the political department in the Foreign Office. But then in as many countries as possible. Thirty in Europe and two in North America, and I had dialogues in nineteen of these 32 countries during the summer of 1967.

In Washington the dialogue was with Zbigniew Brzezinski, in Moscow with Jurij Vorontsov. Both of them were outstanding statesmen in foreign affairs, for better or for worse. The level of the nineteen was, of course, uneven. The most interesting answers came from the Warsaw Treaty Organization countries outside the Soviet Union. They had done a lot of thinking about the future, they knew that they wanted peace, independence and cooperation, and they were less tied to the thinking in Moscow than the NATO people to the thinking in Washington. This was to be expected for the simple reason that the US Army came as liberators in the West and the Red Army as an occupation in the many axis countries in the East (and in addition to that in Poland).

Three small discoveries impressed Galtung very much, trivialities for more experienced people, but new and important for him.

The first was how such well-known, public personalities who could give the impression of being dour, unimaginative, almost stupid when appearing in public became charming, imaginative and highly gifted when they were alone with only one other person present. Incredible what an effect it can have not to be playing for the gallery.

The second was the difference between dialogue and debate. Galtung had of course prepared himself well for the general theme and for the country he was in. He never argued, he only put questions (today he would say: to liberate their and his own creativity). His task was to understand their world from the inside, not to have a verbal duel in order to try to convince them of this or that, nor to engage in that much-hyped socratic way of camouflaging a debate as a dialogue.

The third was the experience from Charlottesville once again: Suddenly he was there, early fall 1967, with more insight into their insights than anybody else; He will believe better than NSA/CIA because they are not asking questions but are only sneaking in on people to listen. Galtung placed their maps of reality on top of each other like one could do with many music scores, some of them for only one instrument, some of them showing only one tone, in order to find a tune, a theme, or at least one tone that could fit them all.

About this jump much can be said. Words like intuition, art, creativity, rather than research come to mind. But that is also to go a little bit too far. First of all, such ideas can also be a part of the professional baggage. Thus, Galtung always recommend a minimum of 500 good examples of successful conflict transformation as a part of the baggage of any conflict worker. "That reminds me of..., could this be an idea?" All conflicts are unique and all conflicts have something in common with other conflicts, just like the diseases of human beings. And creativity is also something one can learn. There are general formulas, and this is of course part of the curriculum in TRANSCEND's main training courses around the world.

Arising from these dialogues during the Cold War came an idea: a United Nations Security Commission for Europe, where all parties could sit together and discuss the problems rather than planning nuclear mass destruction. A report was finalized, and the work continued the spring after at PRIO with the very nice and very gifted Sverre Lodgaard as an assistant.

Early May 1968 the report was discussed at the parliamentary gathering of the Council of Europe. Galtung was up in the gallery and had to choke his own laughter when the very conservative French spokesman for the committee said: -- A Mr. Galtung suggests that we should sit together with Communists and discuss the problems. I have the following comment: -- Anybody who suggests anything like that is himself a Communist!

But the real thing happened in Prague. The report had of course been sent to all nineteen with my gratitude and to many others, and Galtung disappointed some by saying that there was no confidential annex only for them (his task is open research, not to try to deceive people). This paved the way for invitations from foreign offices in some countries and/or to the officially financed research institutions who live off public commissioned research (with highly predictable results).

In Prague he presented the content of the report to about seventy foreign office people and others, particularly emphasizing the Security Commission. The Foreign Minister said that the idea was excellent, but added that "the time is not ripe". He sensed what was coming (the Soviet invasion of August 1968) and became himself a refugee in Paris. On the other hand Galtung very much believes in Gandhi and his thesis that the time is always ripe, that the place is *here* and the time is *now*, and that the person who shall do something is *you, I, we*. But some think they are certified to issue certificates about the degree of ripeness of time, ripe/not ripe (delete what does not fit). But apart from that Antonín Snejdarek was a great man.

Way at the back of the room was a young man Galtung did not see, there is a limit to how many people one can pay attention to. So let us hop 25 years in time to 3 February 1993, and in space to Luxembourg. There was a conference about the world after the Cold War. The first speaker was Samuel Huntington with a presentation of his well-known, wrongly titled, book *The Clash of Civilizations*. The article and the book are not about culture and civilization at all, there is no analysis of culture. It is about regions, and as such a traditional political science analysis with the usual parade of tired

concepts and no solutions. Solutions, that was Galtung's task as the second speaker.

After that there was horrible champagne, and a tall man approached Galtung:

-- Jaroslav Sidevy, he said. -- Czechia's ambassador to Paris. You don't know me, Professor Galtung, and you aren't easy to find, but I have something to tell you that I think you will find interesting. Many years ago you gave a talk at the Foreign Office in Prague, I was a young assistant at the time and was seated way back in the room. You presented a proposal for a UN Security Commission in Europe and the Foreign Minister said that the time was not ripe. After that came the spring of Prague 1968, I was a dissident and after the invasion was sent to the countryside, like Dubcek. I was a teacher, and that lasted until the end of the Cold War in 1989. At that time the Communists were wiped out and I was called to the foreign office as deputy minister.

The staff was small. But we had actually only one problem. And that was to get the Soviet troops that came August 1968 out of the country! So we wrote a letter to Eduard Shevardnadse, the Soviet Foreign Minister: "Please withdraw your troops from our country". The answer was disappointing: "No, we want to modernize the Warsaw Treaty, the Soviet Union will become less domineering, there will be more dialogue, more democracy".

We had a crisis meeting and I said: "Maybe the time is ripe for the Galtung plan from 1967?"

We found the plan in the files, sent it to Shevardnadse, and got as an answer: "The plan is excellent, I am coming next week".

He came and said that what mattered to him was a "successor system" to the Cold War, not military alliances. If it were possible to discuss the problems and make decisions together that would be much better. We agreed that he should pull out his troops and that this "successor plan" could be a common position in the Paris negotiations fall 1990, the negotiations that would mark an end to the Cold War.

And thus it was. The troops were withdrawn, and the communique went in that direction. -- You, Professor Galtung, were the father of the idea, and I was its executor, he said.

Of course thousands have been talking about such things. Finland had managed the Helsinki conference 1972-75, with preparations and the "Final Act". (Galtung had very good contacts in Helsinki at the end of the 1960's.) But for Sidevy this was the concrete document that served as a point of reference. To be there when the time is ripe one evidently has to be there ahead of time. I admired his honesty. As Schopenhauer says, a new idea will first be ridiculed, then looked at with suspicion and then comes a person who says: -- It has always been my opinion. But maybe Schopenhauer omits the most important, silence. Countless are the proposals dying by being silenced to death; that is why we need peace journalism. Moral: Put forward proposals but they should be well prepared, well thought through, not mere slogans. And do not expect any gratitude!

Of course that was encouraging. A score of visits to DDR to spread some knowledge about non-violence and the proposals about defensive defense were perhaps more important as contributions to the peace millions were working on. A glittering example of people's diplomacy was headed by the Norwegian Professor of Education Eva Nordland. She had marches to Paris 1981 where they were welcomed by Olof Palme and Galtung at UNESCO (and the cynical French made a mockery of them); to the Soviet Union in 1982 where they had very productive dialogues about nuclear weapons in general; to USA in 1983, where common people at Princeton said: *Nuke them!* Considerably better, and considerably less expensive, than Norwegian diplomacy. And producing a considerably more honest image of where the core of the conflict was located.

The proposal about a Security Commission which was to play some role in the work after the Cold War expired that autumn evening in Leipzig was based on a method that brought in all the parties. By 1993 Galtung had had corresponding experience with about twenty conflicts, such as:

- Israel-Palestine starting with a visit to Gaza in 1964, dialogues in Israel and as Visiting Professor in Cairo. The proposal about a two-state solution came in 1971.
- Northern Ireland since 1970, a concrete proposal put forward in Dublin 23 August 1997, and in a committee meeting in the British House of Commons 12 March 1998.
- Kashmir, Galtung was Visiting Professor in New Delhi and one evening the daughter of sheik Abdullah, the leader of the independence movement, came by and invited them to dinner; he was under house arrest. Dialogues, proposals to top politicians.
- Korea since 1972, filled with dialogues with Koreans North and South and in Japan, with proposals about national unification in a two-state confederation and countless very concrete proposals after that. At a meeting in Seoul in 1975 where an American theoretician of democracy (Rummel) was celebrating South Korean democracy (!) while Galtung was deceiving the Korean CIA by jumping a fence in the main street on his way to visit Kim Dae Jung, also under house arrest. 18 May 1980 came the massacre in Kwangju, probably of about 2000 persons, under the dictator Chun. The responsible person in the State Department was Richard Holbrooke, in other words clearly qualifying for the task as a mediator in Yugoslavia and his "solution" with dictators administrating "peace" from above (Dayton), and to become UN ambassador with clear method: to use local dictatorship in order to administer United States peace.
- Yugoslavia since 1991, countless proposals, but all of them at odds with US and German foreign policy and, by implication, also Norwegian foreign policy. In January 1997 there were non-violent mass demonstrations against Milosevic, actually two of them, one organized by citizens, one came from the university. In

the first demonstration there were no old people and no workers -- both of them regarded Milosevic as some kind of protector. The second demonstration was conducted from the senate room in the Faculty of Philosophy. And there was Galtung, as a consultant.

This has added up to about 50 conflicts over time, most of them related to the tension between state and nation, a tension the United Nations -- an organization of states -- is not capable of handling. Clearly knowledge about one conflict can be transmitted to another. Imagine, for instance, that USA could do the same with its troops in South Korea as England now is doing with troops in Northern Ireland, cutting them down 50%, as a starter.

In Korea there is nobody very knowledgeable about Northern Ireland -- that means that there is a demand for a comparison of that type on television, in the print media, and into the politicians and their minds. And in Northern Ireland some weeks later Galtung could tell them about the sunshine policy of Kim Dae Jung in his cooperation with TRANSCEND's man in Belfast, Professor Terry Duffy. All we can hope is that the Nobel Peace Prize Committee is not going to repeat the giant error of 1998, with a prize only to a protestant and Social Democrat and not to the far more important catholic Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Fein (however, they did!). But Gerry Adams was anti-London like Gandhi, in other words clearly disqualifying in a country suffering from *anglophilia cronica*. Transferred to *americaphilia cronica*.

TRANSCEND was founded in 1993 as a network for peace by peaceful means, with members who were both scholars and peace activists. It is interesting to compare what happened with what happened 35 years earlier when PRIO was being conceived. Obviously there should be a house. Galtung should have a corner room with a secretary and assistants, and then there should be a room for researchers, a board, funding and electricity bills. And thus it was.

Galtung's office is one square meter, wherever he happens to live, with well-known equipment, computer/printer, telephone/Fax, photocopier. We can act quickly anywhere within our 21 programs and four forms of peace work: *action, education/training, information and research*.

Johan Galtung founded TRANSCEND in 1993 as a network for peace, development and the environment, with members who are both scholars and practitioners. Today it has over 500 members in about 70 countries throughout the world. When he founded the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in 1959, it seemed obvious that there should be a building where the members meet and work together. With the emergence of the internet, it has become possible for people around the world to stay in contact and cooperate, without the need to be physically in the same location.

TRANSCEND (which means, 'going beyond"', overcoming a contradiction) has four main fields of engagement: action, education/training, information and research.

o Action involves mediation in conflicts, from the personal to the global level, done by the TRANSCEND Peace Service, founded in 2010, but practiced already for over five

decades before that by Galtung.

- For education and training, there is the TRANSCEND Peace University (TPU), which Galtung founded in 2000. He serves as its Rector and Erika Degortes is Executive Secretary. It offers courses online and onsite, in many places around the world. It is the first global online Peace University. Its faculty is drawn from leading scholars and practitioners in their fields internationally, and it has students on every continent. The participants are not only students, but also professionals seeking to improve their knowledge and skills. Galtung personally teaches on-line courses on Advanced Conflict Transformation, Peace Economics and Advanced Peace Theory, with participants from around the world. He is also a frequent guest professor at many universities around the world. He fascinates his audiences with original theories, and many concrete illustrations from personal experience, which make his theories come alive.
- For information, there is the TRANSCEND University Press (TUP), founded in 2008, which has so far published 14 books; TRANSCEND University Press Popular (TUPP), which has so far published 8 pocketbooks. The Director who prepares books for publication is Dietrich Fischer. The TRANSCEND Media Service (TMS), founded in 2008, publishes every week a number of articles dealing with peace and development, including an editorial by Johan Galtung. The editor is Antonio Carlos de Silva Rosa. The articles are examples of "peace journalism", which focuses on understanding the underlying causes of conflicts and proposals for solutions, not the traditional 'war journalism', which is limited to reporting how many were killed that day and who is 'winning'. The articles satisfy 5 C's: constructive, concise, concrete, creative and compassionate.
- Research is done by members around the world, and is coordinated mainly at the Galtung Institute for Peace Theory and Peace Practice in Grenzach, Germany, bordering on Basel, founded in 2011. Its Co-Directors are Naakow Grant-Hayford, Karoline Weber and Erika Degortes.

TRANSCEND has regional centers throughout the world and a number of action programs in which its members are engaged, including peaceful conflict transformation, peace-building, peace-keeping, nonviolence, reconciliation, peace education, peace journalism, peace business, peace and gender, peace and the arts, and peaceful foreign policies. TRANSCEND members are also engaged in research on federalism, self-determination, conflict transformation and psychological assumptions, the dialogue process, local and subsistence economics, models of global economic crises, understanding genocide, preventing terrorism and state terrorism, an early warning index of possible violent conflicts, and an index measuring and suggesting ways of transforming conflicts by peaceful means.

The work of TRANSCEND is done mostly on a voluntary basis. Any modest income for a few staff members has so far come from fees paid for courses and the sale of books. Not being paid by any sponsors gives TRANSCEND independence, without anyone restricting its freedom of expression.

Education/training takes place via TPU, TRANSCEND Peace University ([www.transcend.org/tpu](http://www.transcend.org/tpu)) and essentially in two ways, *on-line* as Internet courses possibly leading to an M.A. in Conflict and Peace Studies, and *on-site* as training courses a number of places around the world. In addition to that there is also *on board*, on the ship *PeaceBoat* organized by a Japanese NGO, circling the world twice a year visiting conflict arenas.

And who pays for all this? Apart from an inheritance from Galtung's beloved Aunt Tupsi and uncle Jens Fredrik Galtung in Moss, practically speaking nobody. We are working as volunteers, are poor, but independent, get paid for education/training but not for giving advice in conflicts. There is no way of paying for that. "Prophylaxis is more than half the therapy" he learned from his father.

Through many years of research and practice, Galtung (1998, 2000a, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2010a) has developed the TRANSCEND method of peaceful conflict transformation. He has observed that "bringing the conflict parties to the table" for direct negotiations, as most mediators try to do, can be counterproductive, because it tends to lead to a stream of mutual accusations and a shouting match, and can often exacerbate a conflict instead of resolving it. He has found that it is more effective to apply a three-step approach, the TRANSCEND method:

1. Through individual dialogues with all the many parties involved directly and indirectly in a conflict, also those the mediator may dislike, seek to understand their goals, fears and concerns and win their confidence.
2. Distinguish between legitimate goals, which affirm human needs, and illegitimate goals, which violate human needs. Whatever we demand from other parties, we must be willing to grant to others. For example, self-determination is a legitimate goal, ruling over others is not.
3. Bridge the gap between all legitimate but seemingly contradictory goals through mutually acceptable, desirable solutions sustainable into the future, which embody creativity, empathy and nonviolence, building a new reality.

Two examples may illustrate this approach. The first is an interpersonal conflict: A husband and wife grew increasingly apart. The husband, a businessman selling bicycles, brought his accounting books home and pored over red and black figures in the evening. His wife, who had become increasingly interested in her spiritual life and was fascinated with Buddhism, felt disgusted by her husband's materialism. She blamed him, "Why are you only interested in money?" He retorted, "If it were not for these black figures, you would not live so well. Look at your good food and fancy clothes, and our nice house that you enjoy!" She protested, "I don't need all those external luxuries. I prefer a rich inner life." There was a risk that the marriage could end in divorce. Both had developed affairs. Johan Galtung was asked for advice. He found that both had some legitimate goals, such as providing an income for the family, and an interest in spirituality. What was illegitimate was that both tried to convert their spouse to become like themselves, to adopt their own value system. How to bridge the

legitimate goals? The best is a 'joint project' that combines the interests of both partners. He suggested that they open a Buddhist bookstore together. It took only one week until the wife began to develop an interest in red and black figures. And after about a month, the husband for the first time read one of the books he was selling. They are still happily married.

A second example deals with an international conflict: In the peace treaty of Rio de Janeiro of 1942, after a border war in 1941, Peru and Ecuador had failed to draw the border high up in the Andes Mountains. Later, they agreed that the border should run along the watershed in the upper Amazon basin. But depending on rainfall, the watershed shifted back and forth. They then tried a river as the border, but it came and went, depending on precipitation and glaciers' melting. Since 1942, Ecuador and Peru have fought three wars over this barely inhabited 500 square kilometer territory and were about to engage in another round of war. The Peruvian air force had already made plans to bombard Ecuador's capital city Quito.

At a peace conference in Guatemala in 1995, Johan Galtung was invited to meet with Ecuador's chief negotiator in the border talks with Peru, a former President. Galtung patiently listened to him complain about Peru's inflexibility and stubbornness. But he also always carefully listens to what people do not say. The negotiator never said that each square meter of territory must belong to one and only one country, because he assumed this to be obvious. That was a principle built into the peace treaty of Westphalia in 1648. So Galtung asked him what he thought of the idea of making the disputed border territory into a jointly administered 'binational zone with a natural park', attracting tourists to bring additional income to both countries. The Ex-President said, "In 30 years of negotiations, I have never heard such a proposal. This is very creative--but I am afraid it is too creative, it will take at least 30 years to get used to such an entirely new idea, and another 30 years to implement it. It does not help us now." But out of curiosity, he proposed it to Peru in the next round of peace negotiations, and to his surprise, Peru accepted it with some minor modifications. This led to the Peace treaty signed in Brasilia on 27 October 1998. This zone has since been implemented, and free trade zones, where merchants from the two countries can exchange goods duty-free, have been added.

Galtung pointed out that this initiative cost only \$125, \$25 to extend a ticket from Bogota and \$100 for one night at the hotel and a dinner. By comparison, the 1991 Gulf War to expel Iraq from Kuwait cost \$100 billion, not counting the destruction it caused. Most of all, peaceful conflict transformation before violence begins can save many lives.

Most governments wait until a conflict erupts in war and then intervene with military force, instead of seeking a peaceful solution long before it leads to violence. Such a policy is comparable to driving a car with closed eyes, waiting until we hit an obstacle and then calling an ambulance, instead of anticipating dangers and avoiding them.

We need many more trained mediators who can help transform conflicts peacefully before they lead to violence. Violence is to an unresolved conflict like smoke to fire. To get rid of the smoke, it is necessary to extinguish the fire. And to prevent or end violence, it is necessary to transform the underlying conflict.

There are two approaches to mediation. Some insist that a mediator should only play the role of facilitator and conciliator, without offering any suggestions; the parties alone have the right to propose solution. The mediator should only ensure that the parties do not deviate from the agreed topic and that they focus on solutions instead of accusations about the past.

The second approach about mediation, advocated also by Galtung, recommends that the mediator ought to help the parties by informing them how similar conflicts have been successfully solved elsewhere, and by offering sensible proposals that meet the main goals of all conflict parties, but leave it to the parties to decide whether or not they accept the proposals. If a doctor who was aware of a cure were to insist that the patient discover it by herself, that would be unethical.

Johan Galtung has made many accurate predictions, based on keen observation of factors that others tend to ignore.

Based on a theory of synchronizing and mutually reinforcing contradictions, Galtung predicted in 1980 the end of the Soviet Empire within ten years, beginning at its weakest point, with the fall of the Berlin Wall. In the Soviet Union, there were five main contradictions: the working class wanting trade unions, the bourgeoisie wanting something to buy, the intellectuals wanting more freedom of expression and impression, minorities in search of autonomy, and the peasants wanting more freedom of movement. Very few believed him at the time, but it occurred on 9 November 1989, two months before his time limit 1990.

Based on a series of 14 growing contradictions, principal among them the contradiction between reality and the American Dream, he expects an end of the US Empire by 2020 (Galtung 2009), with a likely blossoming of the US Republic, once it is freed from the albatross of empire, now with a military budget almost equal to the rest of the world combined, and 830 military bases in 150 countries.

By seeing state terrorism and terrorism dialectically as breeding and nursing each other, he predicted a major terrorist attack on the US like 9/11. What "Blowback" sees as "unintended consequences" was highly foreseeable, given the last two centuries of the West unleashing enormities of violence on the muslim world. How naive to believe it would be absorbed and forgotten; how naive not to see the possibility of nonviolent revolts against Soviet and US repression in client regimes, the German Democratic Republic and others in Eastern Europe, the "Arab spring" in the Middle East!

By comparing the real economy of products for end consumption and the finance economy of products for buying and selling, he predicted economic crises such as those

of 1987, 2008 and 2011. If the finance economy has a Dow Jones Index growth of 83% in the two years 2009-10, and the real economy a GNP growth of 4-6%, the ratio 83:5 spells an asynchrony, with a crash as obvious prognosis.

Based on the contradiction between a finite nature and GNP growth measured by processing-trading natural resources, he predicted the ecological collapse. Focusing instead on health and education, with very little cost to the environment, would make people, not "systems", grow.

Based on the contradiction in the age-old colonial formula between suppliers of cheap resources and labor, and the Center demand to live off the value-added, he predicted the 1973 "oil crisis"? That system had cracked politically in 1960 with massive decolonization and in 1973 it cracked economically at its weakest point, oil, the demand being highly inelastic.

Based on the contradiction between an overwhelming – and mainly impoverished – shia majority and the Shah's regime based on Westernization, installed by the CIA-MI6 coup of 1953 against the popularly elected President Mossadegh, he predicted the 1978 Iran revolution.

Brilliant Japanese social "both-and" engineering overcame such cherished Western contradictions as State vs Capital, Capital vs Labor and Labor-intensive vs Capital-intensive production. That worked well for Japan, but they forgot contradictions in Japanese society at large, like men vs women, top universities vs all others, state-capital vs nongovernment-nonprofit, and indeed, the contradiction with the rest of the world. Galtung predicted that their push would produce counterforces: US limitations on imports, Third World protests, and imitations in China and the four Asian tigers, leading to a decline of the Japanese economy.

By seeing China's three cultures, a daoist yin-yang dialectic between a confucianism legitimizing growth, and buddhism legitimizing distribution, Galtung predicted the changes that seem to take place about every 9 years, with a four years confusion break 1976-1980.

As an outcome of the contradiction between the age-old Chinese class structure, shi'h-nung-kung-shang (intellectuals-rulers, farmers, artisans, merchants) and Deng Xiaoping's 1980 policy favoring farmers by marketing their products, and merchants by putting their capital to use – leaving behind intellectuals and workers, Galtung predicted the Tiananmen uprising of spring 1989. Students and workers were both at Tiananmen. The workers were worst repressed. And the students won: the Party is now dominated by intellectuals.

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York University (1976-86), a MacArthur Fellow in Peace and Security Studies at Princeton University (1986-88) and a Professor at Pace University, New York (1988-2003). This article is partly based on Johan Galtung's (2000) autobiography.

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