

Original Articles

New Peace Ideas and Johan Galtung International Peace Prize

Nuevas ideas para la paz y el Premio Internacional de la Paz Johan Galtung

Information

Dates:

Received: 15/10/2024

Accepted: 18/12/2024

Published: 31/12/2024

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Conflict of interest:

Author declare there is not conflict of interest.

Fundings:

No fundings received.

Acknowledgment:

I am thankful to my friend and colleague Dr. Peter van den Dungen, a peace historian, peace museums expert and a leader of the Museums for Peace Movement for providing information, reading material and valuable suggestions, which helped me write this paper on international peace prize.

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How to cite this article

Mehdi, S. S. (2024). New Peace Ideas and Johan Galtung International Peace Prize. *Revista de Cultura de Paz*, 8, 380–399. <https://doi.org/10.58508/cultpaz.v8.229>

RESUMEN

A excepción del Premio Nobel de la Paz, la mayoría de los premios internacionales de la paz son poco conocidos; algunos ni siquiera se otorgan con regularidad; y varios de ellos, incluido el Premio Nobel de la Paz, muestran poco aprecio por el papel de los educadores e investigadores de la paz en la promoción y construcción de la paz en diferentes partes del mundo. La denegación del Premio Nobel de la Paz a académicos de la paz como Richard Falk, Elise Boulding y Johan Galtung, entre otros, es un reflejo de su sesgo contra los pensadores, educadores e investigadores de la paz. Tal muestra de falta de respeto hacia los tejedores de ideas de paz, sembradores de paz, plantadores de paz y promotores de movimientos de paz repercute negativamente en la creación, el flujo y el florecimiento de nuevas ideas de paz.

Al enfatizar la necesidad de construir una perspectiva de paz sin miedo en Gaza y en otros temas conflictivos, el presente documento destaca la importancia de las nuevas ideas de paz en estos tiempos peligrosos. Además, pide un papel enérgico de los visionarios de la paz, educadores de la paz e investigadores de la paz para hacer frente a los desafíos que surgen especialmente después del genocidio en Gaza. En este contexto, sugiere la creación de un nuevo premio de la paz, tan prestigioso como el Premio Nobel de la Paz, pero con más impacto. Además, sugiere que este premio se denomine Premio Internacional de la Paz Johan Galtung para conmemorar la contribución de Galtung como brillante pensador de la paz y prolífico estudioso de la paz y para mantener informadas a las generaciones futuras sobre la grave injusticia que le hizo el Premio Nobel de la Paz, que negó este galardón a uno de los candidatos más merecedores. Este documento, que incluye una breve valoración de unos pocos, muy pocos, premios internacionales de la paz que se conceden actualmente, intenta explorar las perspectivas de la institución de un nuevo premio internacional de la paz y busca respuesta a preguntas como por qué debería llamarse Premio Internacional de la Paz Johan Galtung, cómo puede instituirse un premio así y cómo puede este premio inducir a los educadores e investigadores de la paz a proponer nuevas ideas de paz en estos tiempos atormentados.

Palabras clave: Nuevas ideas de paz; Premio Nobel de la Paz; La Edad Oscura; Humanos globales y antihumanos globales.

ABSTRACT

Excepting the Nobel Peace Prize, most of the international peace prizes are little known; some are not even regularly awarded; and a number of these, including the Nobel Peace Prize, shows little appreciation for the role of peace educators and researchers in promoting peace and building peace in different parts of the world. The denial of Noble Peace Prize to peace academics like Richard Falk, Elise Boulding and Johan Galtung and several others is a reflection of its bias against peace thinkers, peace educators and peace researchers. Such a show of disrespect to the weavers of peace ideas, peace seeders, peace planters, and fosterers of peace movements negatively impacts the creation, flow and flourishing of new peace ideas.

Emphasizing the need to build a fearless peace perspective on Gaza and on other conflicting issues, the present paper highlights the importance of new peace ideas in these dangerous times. In addition, it calls for an energetic role of the peace visionaries, peace educators and peace researchers in dealing with the challenges arising especially after the genocide in Gaza. In this context, it suggests the creation of a new peace prize, as prestigious as the Nobel Peace Prize, but more impactful. It further suggests that this prize should be named Johan Galtung International Peace Prize to memorialize Galtung's contribution as a brilliant peace thinker and prolific peace scholar and to keep the succeeding generations informed about the grave injustice done to him by the Nobel Peace Prize, which denied this award to one of the most deserving candidates. This paper, which includes a brief appraisal of a few, indeed very few, international peace prizes currently being awarded, attempts to explore the prospects for the institution of a new international peace prize and seeks answer to questions like why should such a prize be called the Johan Galtung International Peace Prize, how can such a prize be instituted and how can this prize induce the peace educators and peace researchers to come out with new peace ideas in these tormenting times.

Keywords: New Peace Ideas; Nobel Peace Prize; The Dark Age; Global Humans and Global Anti-Humans.

Introduction

A strong case can be prepared with ease against the idea of instituting a new international peace prize. It may, for example, be said that the contemporary world is as anarchic and brutal as it was before the launch of peace prizes in the modern times; and the peace prizes don't change anything or they don't change much. After all, the first Nobel Peace Prize was awarded way back in 1901 and since then it is being awarded annually (with some exceptions), but the first world war, rise of fascism in Europe during the inter-war period, the second world war, the cold war, the Korean and the Vietnam wars, the Middle East wars and other wars in other regions, and the genocides and civil wars since the end of the second world war couldn't be prevented nor the flourishing arms trade contained. It may also be pointed out that the first peace award in the modern times was (probably) awarded in 1767 by the French Academy and it was received by J. F. de la Harpe for submitting the best treatise showing the advantages of world peace (van den Dungen, 1999, p. 795), but the recurrence of wars and violence couldn't be controlled during the period between 1760 and 1900 and even after. So what difference can be made by the creation of a new peace prize?

The argument may be stretched further. It may, for example, be said that besides the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded for more than a century, spread of peace studies worldwide as an applied human and social science especially from 1980s onward, and the launch and spread of powerful movements against wars, weapons, autocratic regimes and slaveries of all kinds, several international peace prizes were also launched during the second half of the twentieth century in particular. However, the twentieth century ended as the bloodiest and most destructive century in human history.

What is equally worrisome is the fact that the first quarter of the twenty first century is also a bloodied period. Such is the state of affairs even though a number of popular campaigns were launched during this very period against wars, violence, weapons proliferation, foreign military interventions, human rights violations and marginalization of global humans, and when a number of peace prizes were also awarded on a regular basis - mostly annually. Therefore, wouldn't it be fair to say that peace teaching, peace research and peace action, peace music and peace poetry, and museums for peace and peace prizes have acted only as pied pipers, alluring and roping in the global humans into fantasy lands or putting velvety covers on the savagery and brutality of the real world? What is the guarantee that the introduction of a new peace prize would significantly strengthen the campaign for the establishment and consolidation of stable peace in different parts of the world? Again, what is the guarantee that another Srebrenica genocide, another Rwandan genocide, another Rohingya genocide and another Gaza genocide won't take place in the future and foreign military intervention in another Afghani-

stan, another Iraq, another Ukraine, another Syria, another Gaza and another Lebanon would be prevented? Likewise, can another apartheid and other kinds of apartheid and murder of another Patrice Lumumba and another Salvador Allende, regime changes by force and through foreign intervention, and pillage of the resources of post-colonial Global South can be blocked by founding a new international peace prize?

New Peace Thoughts in Violent Times

Admittedly, the points raised above present a selective, pessimistic and alarmist view of the events and happenings of the contemporary times. After all, peace has also been happening in the twenty first century as it was happening in the past centuries. However, much of such happenings remains unnoticed, unremembered and uncelebrated today as in the past. This has to change. Peace needs to be much more visibilized as a beacon of hope, because, on the one hand, awareness has been growing worldwide that peace, freedom, justice, equal rights and wellbeing are the existential needs of all the humans and cultures of the world and, on the other hand, pessimism regarding the post-Gaza future in the Middle East and elsewhere is creeping like plague. As a result, the global humans, who are perhaps more vulnerable, threatened and insecure today than ever, find themselves caught in violent situations and feel totally helpless. The whole world seems to be rapidly sliding into a sort of global paralysis after Gaza. At such a stage, past achievements for peace need to be remembered and shared with others as David Swanson, author, journalist, activist, director of World Beyond War and the first recipient of the Real Nobel Peace Prize shared in his award acceptance speech delivered on 10 November 2024 in Oslo, Norway. In his address, he referred to several peace initiatives including the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross established in 1863 and the Arbitration process, condemned NATO, and declared: 'Our heroes should not be those who kill to enrich Lockheed Martin and Boeing and Kongsberg Gruppen. Our heroes should be those Norwegian teachers and others who refused to be occupied....We should remember the nonviolent movements in the Baltics that took apart the Soviet Union without the use of F35s' (10 November 2024).

Besides visibilizing and memorializing the current and past peace initiatives, peace events and peace heroes, new peace ideas, new peace strategies, new peace models and new peace hopes need to be brought into action in these hope - and peace - vanishing times. This is the time when the peace visionaries, peace educators and peace researchers should be encouraged to draw new roadmaps for the life, security, progress and wellness of the peoples of all the regions, religions and cultures, and initiate serious and unbiased research to study the causes of the great betrayal to the global humans especially since the end of the first world war. Fresh research is also needed

on the crafters, builders and beneficiaries of the contemporary violent world order and regional order, on the architects, guardians and beneficiaries of the UN System and the plundering and poverty escalating international financial system. Focused studies are also needed on the arms producing, arms selling and arms purchasing organizations and countries and on the warrior intellectuals, media groups and policy makers, who are acquiring official patronage and amassing enormous wealth and influence by spreading the poisonous idea that governance at international, regional and national level can be managed only through the use of ruthless political, economic, cultural and military power and human - centered and not power – centered governance at any level is unrealistic and tantamount to suicide bombing.

Indeed, a list of the beneficiaries of the power-based and state-centric world order is bound to be longer if it doesn't miss out the big business houses and the militaries involved in arms trade and use, the scientists, engineers, technologists and innovators involved in the production of all sorts of humankilling weapons, the big transport organizations involved in the shipment of weapons to different destinations, and the big businesses making themselves richer by reconstructing the war- and violence destroyed infrastructure and resources of the affected places and countries. The survival and flourishing of these and numerous other warrior constituencies depend on wars, conflicts and violence. That's why they are in the forefront ridiculing peace ideas and making peace academics insecure, ignoring peace happenings and events, underestimating the world changing power of peace ideas, keeping the world perpetually insecure, and projecting the helplessness of the masses before the powerful. It is clearly the time to imagine and build an entirely new kind of world order and regional order, challenge the traditional concept of power –and state-centric world order more vigorously, and begin seriously to look for its replacement by human – centric models for local, local (national), regional and global governance. What will be the salient features of such a world order, how can such a world order be established, and who will draw the roadmaps?

Clearly new, innovative and world changing peace ideas would be delivered by none else but the visionaries and philosophers of change like the peace educators and peace researchers. It is therefore important that they are encouraged and helped through all possible means to produce new ideas and new solutions to the protracting and emerging new challenges, provided proper platforms for debate and dissemination of their ideas, and ensure that their status is elevated in the corridors of knowledge and power. Suppressing information on Gaza, condoning forced regime changes and military attacks on independent states in the Middle East and elsewhere, fueling insecurities in the region and beyond to benefit the arms businesses in particular, and imposing a peace at gun point won't work in the long run. A different kind of world would emerge after Gaza. Depending on how Gaza is handled by the

world would decide whether the post-Gaza world will be more violent, more brutalizing and more divisive or less violent, less brutalizing and less divisive.

The New Dark Age and a New Beginning

Gaza is a huge challenge to the longing for global oneness and global peace and justice. It should be understood that whatever is done, the tragic events unfolding there and in the neighborhoods and beyond can't be erased from human memory for a very long time. The wounds would bleed for decades, perhaps centuries, if the peace thinkers, peace educators and peace researchers do not perform their duty, if the villains of peace and beneficiaries of wars and conflicts are allowed to prevail for long, and if the task of dismantling the murderous world order and regional order in the post-Gaza genocide period is not earnestly taken up. More than a year ago, on 7 October 2023, the Israeli-Palestinian war began when the Islamic Resistance Movement, abbreviated Hamas, launched an assault on Israel from the Gaza strip, causing the death of more than 1200 humans - mostly Israeli citizens, and making it the deadliest day for Israel since its creation as a state in Palestine in 1948. The next day, Israel declared itself in a state of war and hell was let loose on the human beings living in Gaza. By November 2024, more than 43,000 men, women and children of Gaza – about 2 percent of the territory's population – were killed and two-thirds of the buildings in the Gaza strip were damaged or destroyed (20 December 2024). Now the number of the dead has crossed 45,000. Despite being severally admonished by the UN and a number of its member states for committing heinous war crimes and issuance of arrest warrants in the name of the Israeli Prime Minister and Defense Minister by the Hague – based International Criminal Court, Israel remains unrestrained.

Nearly a year after the start of the genocide in Gaza, Israel has expanded its military operation in Lebanon, Syria and Yemen, defending its action saying that Iran-backed Hezbollah, generally considered to be the most powerful non-state militant group in the Middle East, was deeply involved in providing political and military help and assistance against Israel from different routes both before and after Gaza. As reported on 1st January by a senior editor and staff writer for *Common Dreams*, dozens of humanitarian groups warned on the last day of the past year- on 31 December 2024 that millions of Yemeni civilians were in danger as Israel and the US had begun new airstrikes on the impoverished country, already ravaged by years of sustained attacks from a US –backed Saudi-coalition. Referring to the destruction of infrastructure in Yemen due to military action taken in late December 2024, he quotes the aid groups' joint statement and says (Johnson, 1 January 2025):

"These attacks on vital infrastructure serve as a stark reminder of the importance of respecting international humanitarian law, particularly the need to protect critical civilian, air and maritime gateways that are indispensable

to the survival of millions of Yemenis," the groups said, noting that the airport Israel targeted is "a much-needed delivery point for humanitarian aid in a country where around half of the population (anticipated to rise from 18 million to 19.5 million people in 2025) are in need of assistance - 77% of whom are women and children."

As a matter of fact, the entire Middle East is being pushed into a deep dark age in the name of remaking the region. However, it is not for the first time that its remaking was resorted to at gun point (Fromkin, 1989). The latest will also fail because a change by sword cannot be kept by sword forever. However, for years and decades to come, the region would bleed as established borders may be redrawn, forced regime changes plotted, and the global humans including the Palestinians, other Arabs and Muslims, and the Israeli Jews and other Jews belonging to the region and beyond would continue to pay heavily to the beneficiaries of wars and conflicts in the Middle East, including autocratic rulers of the region, beneficiaries of war businesses and guardians of the power-based world order and regional order. What can be done? Should the region be kept divided on geopolitical, racist and religious lines and hatred and violence forced into the minds, hearts and history and memory of the succeeding generations of this and other regions or a new beginning is made to leap out of the dark age? How to make the global humans realize that they may be Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists or members of other faiths or non – believers and they may belong to the Global North or Global South, their needs are same and their rights are same, and they should identify their common enemy: the global anti-humans.

Gaza may be viewed as only a moment in human history, but it can be transformed into a world changing moment since the traditional world order and the regional order, the UN System, the international civil society organizations, the world media and academia could not prevent the tragedy unfolding there and in other adjoining territories and neighboring countries. They couldn't extinguish fire which is leaping into all directions and spreading fast. Gaza is a teacher, like Hiroshima, and it is informing the world that there is something fundamentally wrong with the global, regional and local (national) governance. It is, moreover, asking for new thoughts and strategies not to bring about cosmetic changes and cover the crimes against humanity but to take a strong and united position on foreign military interventions in independent, sovereign states and perpetration of violence on global humans by the global anti - human groups. Gaza, moreover, is pointing at a number of other factors contributing to global paralysis and asking for reaching out to the root causes. The following section attempts to discuss some major root causes, and suggests that new peace thoughts, new peace strategies and new road maps to peace can be offered by the peace thinkers, peace educators and peace researchers.

Global Humans and Global Anti-Humans

To begin with, a major issue is the ascendancy of power, mainly military power, and the privilege accorded to the global, regional and local (national) military powers to get away with the atrocities they commit on the weak. This has been going on for ages. In the recent times, for example, when the first and second world war and the cold war ended, when five hundred years of colonial era terminated and when the Covid-19 epidemic ceased, it was hoped that the arriving future would bring a real new world order with it (Mehdi, 30 January 2022). However, it was usually the brutal past which kept on returning in new costumes. Almost invariably, the arriving future rehabilitated the writ of the powerful over the weak and further strengthened the perpetrators and beneficiaries of the power-based world order, regional order and local (national) order. Even a cursory review of discussion on the arriving new world order after Gaza, covered by the mainstream international media and traditional strategic and international affairs research institutes and policy statements by the ruling power elites in different countries, would suggest that the main debate revolves around the US-China conflict, future of Russian- Ukraine war, remaking of the Middle East by Israel and USA and the response of regional and other powers, rise of populist leaders in the Global North and South and democracy's vulnerability everywhere. Such futuristic accounts rarely question the right of the powerful to aggress upon the weaker states, the sheer impotence of the UN in such crisis situations, weapon businesses, unlawful and brutal activities of the intelligence agencies in their own countries and in other countries, plunder and loot of the precious resources of weaker states and the control of the states by the unelected and invisible military officials, agents of big businesses, media groups, powerful judges belonging to higher judiciary, and warrior policy makers, warrior intellectuals and militant extremist groups. For such groups, Gaza is only a moment which would be forgotten soon, something that had to be summoned to defend the vital interests of the US and Israel in particular. However, Gaza can be converted into a moment to begin building a real new world, regional and local (national) order and confront the global anti-humans with determination and courage.

It is therefore the time that peace visionaries, peace thinkers, peace educators, peace researchers and peace builders come out with new peace thoughts and strategies to confront the challenges, many of which have been brought into fore to defend and further empower the beneficiaries of the killing and blood-sucking world order, regional order and local(national) order. In fact, a sort of understanding is already emerging that the real division in the world is not between the followers of different regions, religions, cultures and political systems, nor between whites and non-whites, neither between Global North and Global South, it is between the global humans and global anti- humans. The global humans include both the mourners of both Holocaust and the

mourners of Gaza, and many mourners of Holocaust may also be mourning Gaza and many mourners of Gaza may also be mourning Holocaust and their number may be in millions if not in billions. On the other hand, there are the global anti-humans whose number must be much, much less, who also belong to all the regions, religions cultures and political systems and who profit from wars and violence, weapons sale and weapons purchase, deprivations and slavery of all kinds, and from other holocausts and other Gazas that happened in different eras and on different locations as well as other holocausts and Gazas in the making in our times.

It is, indeed, heartening that a number of perceptive peace scholars have been writing on the challenges the global humans have been facing in the recent times and some are already actively involved in studying different aspects of Gaza tragedy. For example, Antonio Carlos da Silva Rosa, pioneer in peace journalism and founder-editor of the Transcendent Media Service, said it all when he famously observed: 'Governments are Vassals of Bankism and Military Capitalism, the Mafia that controls human affairs through Violence and Cyber Information Manipulation' (Transcend Media Service, 2023).

Again, it is not only the powerlessness of the UN System before military power in Gaza and Ukraine which is being vehemently criticized in the recent times, but also its failure to achieve sustainable development goals and lift the global humans out of economic and social wretchedness (Martin, 30 December 2024- 5 January 2025). Here one may also refer to the remarkable study of Robert Burrowes on the designs of the architects, guardians and beneficiaries of the anti-humans world order. According to him, what has been happening in the Mozambique conflict, war in Ukraine and the massacre of the Palestinians and other Arabs are manifestations of the 'multifaceted Elite Program to reshape world order, capture ownership and control of all key resources, kill off a substantial proportion of the human population and impose a technocratic dictatorship over these 'transhumans' left alive' (December 2024). It may be added here that Burrowes has published a series of very insightful papers in the *Transcend Media Service* in particular on how the contemporary world order functions and whom does it protect, promote and benefit. It is equally heartening that an international civil society tribunal on Gaza genocide has been established under the Chair of Professor Richard Falk, a distinguished peace scholar (Falk, December 2024). It is hoped that the deliberations of the tribunal will pave the way to prevent Gaza happening anywhere in the world. With the growing awareness about the crafting and working of the contemporary murderous world order, regional order and local (national) order and about the beneficiaries and losers, it is clearly the time that all possible efforts are made to confront the challenges of the present and future with clear roadmaps for journey to peace and justice for the global humans.

In this context, it is equally important that the peace thinkers, peace educators and peace researcher are provided maximum facilities, resources and space to focus their study and research on exploring ways and means to confront the challenges of the future and build peace models to bring the global humans on one platform to fight the global anti-humans. It is also important to make deliberate, conscious and sustained efforts to raise the status of the peace academics by highlighting their peace ideas in the mainstream international media, parliaments, policy-making circles and in the corridors of military and business power and disseminate their peace ideas, as fast as possible, in different parts of the world. Finally, in this regard it is important to critically evaluate the contribution and role of several agents and agencies for peace like peace-teaching and peace research, peace music, literature, paintings and museums for peace and peace prizes in promoting and building peace everywhere. Since this paper focuses on peace ideas and peace prizes, it briefly discusses below the impact of peace prizes and suggests how to enhance their impact and peacebuilding role in the future.

International Peace Prizes

There is a long history of offering awards to acknowledge and appreciate excellence achieved in a particular field and to encourage others to achieve similar excellence. In the modern times, peace prizes were instituted to appreciate the unique peace thoughts and peace actions by individuals, organizations and movements and inspire others. With a rise in the awareness about the devastating consequences of wars and violence, racism and extremism, unfreedoms and unpeace, and human rights violations and deprivations and slavery of all kinds, the number of peace prizes has considerably increased especially since the launch of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1901. Picked up randomly and not listed in chronologically here, the prizes include Sean MacBride Peace Prize, Sydney Peace Prize, Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, Gandhi Peace Prize, Felix Houphouet – Boigny UNESCO Peace Prize, UNESCO Prize for Peace Education, Carnegie Wateler Peace Prize, Gusi Peace Prize, Community of Christ International Peace Award, Advocacy- International Children's Peace Price, UNESCO Cities for Peace Prize, Guernica Award for Peace and Reconciliation, Real Nobel Peace Prize and many others. Excepting the Nobel Peace Prize, which enjoys media coverage worldwide, many international and national peace prizes have remained unknown or little known even to the peace constituencies of the world. Most of the prizes are launched, noticed and celebrated at local or national level only.

This invisibility clearly reduces the extent and power of their impact, considerably curtails their inspirational role, and provides an opportunity to the warrior constituencies to play down the importance of peace and belittle the role of peace thinkers and peace builders. A significant change can be effected if

the courses at school, college and university level include a section on peace prizes and the inspirational role of the recipients of such prizes. Besides the invisibility of the peace prizes which is a serious issue, the practice of usually ignoring the peace visionaries, peace educators and peace researches while taking decision to award such prizes is another worrisome issue. A review of the list of the recipients of most of the peace prizes would reveal that few, indeed very few, peace thinkers and peace academics have been awarded such prizes. Most of the peace prizes usually go to the peace activist individuals, organizations and movements - the courageous and glamorous peace warriors on the horses back, and not to those who threw peace seeds into the ground, nourished and nurtured the little and tender peace plants and helped them grow into big peace trees.

Take, for example, the Sean MacBride Peace Prize, a special prize to be awarded by International Peace Bureau (IPB) to 'a person or organization that has done outstanding work for peace, disarmament and/or human rights' (International Peace Bureau). This prize is named after a distinguished Irish statesman, who began his career as a fighter against British colonial rule and who served as Chairman of IPB from 1968 to 74 and as its President from 1974 to 1985. He was also a recipient of the Lenin Peace Prize and Nobel Peace Prize.

Though a non-monetary award, the Sean MacBride Peace Prize is one of the prestigious and fairly well-known peace prizes awarded annually. Since its launch in 1992, most of the prizes has been given to the individuals, organizations and movements actively campaigning against wars, violence, nuclear weapons, state terrorism and human rights violations, etc., and very few to the peace educators and peace researchers waging peace very courageously and spreading their precious peace ideas through their lectures, discussions and writings. The very few peace academics lucky enough to receive this prize include Achin Vanaik, former Professor of Delhi University in India, Delhi-based Fellow of the Transnational Institute, Amsterdam, and author of several books (2000); Betty Reardon, peace educator, founder and director of Peace Education Center and Peace Education Graduate Degree Program at Teachers College, Columbia University and author of several books on war and peace and gender issues(2009); and Noam Chomsky, an American Professor, one of the most radical public thinkers of our times and author of numerous studies on power systems, hegemony, Palestine, autocratic regimes, etc.

In contrast, the list of the recipients of peace prize awarded by the Sydney Peace Prize, Australia's International Prize for Peace, indicates that the selectors have graciously acknowledged the contribution of writers, teachers and scholars as apostles of peace, justice and freedom thoughts and as fosterers of movements for peace with justice. As a matter of fact, the first Sydney Peace Prize was awarded in 1998 to Muhammad Yunus, former Professor of

Economics at Chittagong University in Bangladesh, founder of the Grameen Bank and well - known worldwide for his pioneering concepts of microcredit and microfinance, an entrepreneur and civil society leader. Yunus was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, and he is currently serving as Chief Advisor to the Interim Government of Bangladesh since 8 August 2024. Furthermore, besides presenting awards to international movements like Black Lives Matter(2017), Mee Too Movement (2019), The Uluro Statement from the Heart (2021) and The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (2024) and political and social activists including Irene Khan (2006), Patrick Dodson (2008), Cynthia Maung (2013), Julian Burnside (2014) and Nazanin Boniadi (2023), a number of writers, teachers, and scholars have also been awarded the Sydney Peace Prize during 1998-2024. The list includes Hanan Ashrawi - Palestinian activist, scholar and former teacher of Birzeit University (2003); Arundhati Roy from India - novelist, essayist and political activist (2004); John Pilger – Australian journalist, writer, scholar and documentary film maker (2009); Vandana Shiva – scholar, social activist, author of more than 20 books and founder of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy (2010); Noam Chomsky – American Professor, prolific writer and public intellectual (2011); and Joseph Stiglitz – American Professor at Columbia University, economist and public policy analyst and social activist (2018).

It is, indeed, heartening to note that the Sydney Peace Prize doesn't underestimate the role of the peace thinkers, peace educators and peace scholars in promoting peace and building peace. The list of the Sydney Peace Laureates reflects the confidence the Prize reposes in peace academics. It asserts that remarkable people are around to prove that peace is possible and provides credibility to its claim that 'some of the world's most effective peacemakers', who 'champion solutions to the most urgent global challenges and inspire us to be the change we want to see'(Sydney Peace Foundation). However, most of the international peace prizes show little understanding of the crucial role being played by the writers, scholars, educators, novelists, movie makers, musicians and painters in promoting the idea of peace, justice, freedom and building peace movements against war, violence, arms businesses, human rights violations, autocratic governance and the world order and regional order which protects and benefits the strong and ghettoises the common people at gun point. What is more worrisome is the fact that even the Nobel Peace Prize doesn't have much appreciation for the world changing peace ideas of peace thinkers, peace educators and peace scholars.

Nobel Peace Prize – Not So Noble

The Nobel Prizes, including the Nobel Peace Prize, are widely considered to be the most prestigious and lucrative awards available in their respective fields.

These were launched in 1901. Ever since and barring a few exceptions, the prizes are being awarded every year in five fields: Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature and Peace. In 1968, an additional prize was established by an endowment from Sweden's central bank known as Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel. This prize is considered to be equivalent to the Nobel Prize and it is rated to be as prestigious as other Nobel Prizes are. All the six prizes are usually announced in the month of October every year and the ceremony for the award of all the prizes are held on 10 December, the death anniversary of Alfred Nobel, founder of the Nobel Prizes. While the award giving ceremony for Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature and Sveriges Riksbank Prize for Economic Sciences are held in Stockholm, Sweden, the ceremony for the presentation of Peace Prize is held in Oslo, Norway. Each prize is a global influencer in its own right and the announcement regarding the award in each field is covered by the mainstream media worldwide and celebrated, discussed and debated by the leading experts, teaching institutions and research centers all over the world.

However, the announcement regarding the award of Nobel Peace Prize is discussed and debated and welcomed, celebrated or denounced more than any other prize, because this prize concerns the powerful as well as the powerless, civil society organizations and corridors of power and the academia and media groups of both Global North and Global South. This prize has the potential to embolden and strengthen the movements against wars, violence, militarism, arms businesses and humankilling, autocratic regimes and human rights violations and slaveries of all kinds or divert global attention from major challenges like arms businesses military aggressions in other countries, powerlessness of the UN System, state violence and deprivations and slaveries of all kinds toward softer issues to maintain and protect the status quo at all levels. It is, however, clear that the Nobel Peace Prize has often been denied to those who deserved it most and offered to those who deserved it least. This is one of the main reasons for the inability of the Nobel Peace Prize to serve the cause of peace as positively and energetically as the founder of the prize might have expected. As the following data shows, during the period between 1901, the year when the prize was launched and 2024, the most recent year when the prize was last given, a lot of peace prizes were awarded to individuals, organizations and movements, but the major challenges like arms and corporate businesses, military aggression on other countries and frequent large scale humankilling around the world were rarely addressed by the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

According to the Nobel Prize Organization, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded 105 times to 142 Nobel Prize Laureates between 1901 and 2024. In total, 111 individuals and 31 organizations have received this prestigious prize. Among them, the International Committee of the Red Cross received the

Nobel Peace Prize three times (in 1917, 1944 and 1963) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees two times (in 1954 and 1981). This means that 28 organizations in total have received the Prize so far (Nobel Prize Organization, 2024). However, a closer look at the long list of the recipients of the award would indicate that a number of opportunities were missed by the Nobel Peace Prize to help building solid foundations of peace and dismantling the structures of war, violence and slaveries of all kinds. Fredrik Heffermehl calls it 'One hundred years of squandered opportunity' (2023, pp. 339-342).

Fredrik Heffermehl, who died at his home near Oslo on 21 December 2023 (only weeks after celebrating 85th birthday on 11th November), was a Norwegian lawyer and international peace activist. He served as the Vice-President of both the International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms and International Peace Bureau and as President of the Norwegian Peace Alliance. He was published regularly in top Norwegian and international media, and widely recognized as a brave peace scholar and activist. Among his published works, *Peace is Possible* appeared in 17 languages and *The Nobel Peace Prize: What Nobel Really Wanted* in 5 languages. His study on what Nobel really wanted was very critical of the Nobel Peace Prize doled out to undeserving candidates from time to time. After checking Nobel's will, which was signed in Paris on 27 November 1885, he discovered that the selection of the laureates was often not in accordance with Nobel's will and lamented as to 'how far the prize had deviated from what he must have had in mind when wrote it in 1885' (2010: XII). To illustrate the point, Fredrick devotes a full chapter on US President Barrack Obama (who received the prize in 2009) to explain why the conferment of the award on certain recipients can't be defended (141-162). In the last book authored by him and published only a year before his death, Heffermehl includes a lengthy chapter on those who won this award from 1901 to 2022 and on those 'who should have won' (2023: 43-272). This section identifies internal and external pressures and other considerations influencing the decision in favor of awarding a particular candidate or denying it to the most deserving candidate available., very often disregarding the conditions laid down in Nobel's will to qualify for the candidacy and win the prize (273-296). Heffermehl covers all the laureates from 1901 to 2022, mentions each of them by their names and the years when the awards were conferred and briefly reproduces the main reasons officially provided for offering the awards. In addition, he presents a brief on the achievements of each recipient and determines their suitability for the award which was supposed to be in accordance with the requirements spelled out in Nobel's will.

This will clearly says that the prize to be awarded annually will be awarded to 'those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind' and 'who shall have done the most or the best work for broth-

erhood between nations, for the abolition of or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses' (Heffermehl, 2010, p. XV). Maintaining that a number of peace laureates had little to do with co-fraternalization of nations, abolition or reduction of standing armies and holding and promoting peace conferences, he says that the prizes could have been given to more deserving candidates, but they were ignored (Heffermehl, 202, pp. 43-272). It may be added here that Heffermehl's list of dozens of those who could have been awarded the prize instead of the actual recipients includes a number of peace teachers, peace scholars and peace writers including Alfred De Zayas from USA for 2022 award - an academic researcher and a Professor at the Geneva School of Diplomacy, Klaus Schlichtmann for 2019 - a German academic and peace intellectual based in Japan; Jan Oberg from Sweden for 2012 - a peace educator, researcher, communicator and writer; Barry Sander for 2007 - a US Professor of medieval literature, creative artist and political thinker; Glenn Paige for 2004 - an American Professor and pioneer of non-killing political science; Carol Cohn for 1991- a Professor at the University of Massachusetts; Bruce Kent for 1986 - an outstanding educator and one of the most passionate spokespersons for internationalist ideas; Ruth Leger Sivard for 1981 - an economist and author from US; Gene Sharp for 1978 - a leading theorist on nonviolent political struggle based in Harvard University; Howard Zinn for 1975 - an American Professor of History; Richard Falk for 1973 - an American Professor and author of seminal studies like *No First Use* (1963), *The Shimoda Case* (1965) and *Legal Order in a Violent World* (1968); and Elise Boulding, Kenneth Boulding and Johan Galtung for 1969. All three of them were outstanding peace thinkers, peace scholars and peace educators.

A New International Peace Prize

Though very brief, the above discussion on international peace prizes indicates that by and large the prizes, including the Nobel Peace Prize, have generally been given to prominent individuals, organizations and movements active against injustice, unfreedom, weapons of mass destruction, human rights violations, and those actively involved in social welfare programs and in rescuing the people during humanitarian disasters and after. Among these, the Nobel Peace Prizes were generously distributed among individuals occupying high positions in the governments like Presidents, Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, elitist organizations like the UN and its specialized agencies, European Union and those involved in social and humanitarian works like Mother Teresa. Only few, indeed very, very few, were awarded this prize for the world changing peace ideas offered by the peace thinkers, peace educators and peace scholars, and by the peace teaching and peace researching institutions. Again, very few international peace prizes were offered to

the challengers and campaigners targeting the powerful arms businesses, the policies and forces responsible for causing inequality and slaveries of all kinds, military interventions of the powerful in independent, sovereign countries and raising voices against the massacre of human beings around the world in hundreds, thousands and hundreds of thousands. Should the peace prizes and especially the Nobel Peace Prize, go on making joyous rounds as they did in the past or should they begin to focus on the grave challenges the global humans face today? Such challenges include flourishing arms businesses, frequent large scale humankillings of the innocent, unchallenged military interventions and corporate world's pillage of the resources of poor countries in particular. How to deal with such challenges and what kind of future will be the arriving future?

It is feared that the worse is yet to come. President-elect Donald Trump will be sworn in as the 47th President of USA on 20 January 2025, and the world is getting prepared to face the far-reaching consequences of rising tension between the US and China when the tariff war will be unleashed, when he would be tough with the immigrants coming especially from Mexico, when he would pressurize the American allies in Europe and elsewhere to do more to serve the best interests of the US and when his populist policies would further embolden the far right in different countries. As if all this was not enough to scare the world, he made certain startling announcements recently. While addressing a news conference in Florida on Tuesday, 7 January, Trump, according to a news analysis published in *The New York Times* international edition, 'declined to rule out the use of force in a potential land grab for Greenland and the Panama Canal', 'vowed to rename the Gulf of Mexico the "Gulf of America" and declared that 'he could use "economic force" to turn Canada into the 51st state as a matter of American national security' (Cave, 10 January 2025). It is therefore not unlikely that Ukraine will not stop at Ukraine and Gaza will not stop at Gaza. If not resisted with imagination and innovative and bold campaigns against another Ukraine and another Gaza, Ukraines and Gazas will keep on happening in different parts of the world, a world which doesn't deserve to be so over armed and to remain so poor. A brief below on poverty in the world and the flourishing arms businesses strongly suggests that the parasites and octopuses the prevailing military, political and economic system produces and the paralyzed UN System and international civil society organizations, and underperforming peace promoting constituencies including international peace prizes have largely failed to bring about a radical and positive change in governance at any level and human situation in Global South in particular.

According to a recent World Bank report on inequality and poverty in the world, global poverty reduction has 'slowed to a near standstill, with 2020-30 set to be a lost decade'. It further says that 8.5 per cent of global population, almost 700 million people, live today on less than \$2.15 per day – the ex-

treme poverty line relevant to low income countries, and 44 per cent of global population, around 3.5 billion people, live today on less than \$ 6.85 per day. The report adds that the total number of people living under this poverty line has barely changed due to population growth. The report also informs that only 7 per cent of global population lives in countries with low inequality and about one-fifth of the world's population lives in economies with high inequality, 'concentrated mostly in Latin America and Sub – Saharan Africa' (World Bank Group, 2024).

In such a world where poverty is so widespread and where inequality is spreading so rapidly, the amount being spent on the arms and the militaries is just mind-boggling. Worse still, this amount keeps on increasing at a time when poverty, inequality and exploitation of all kinds keep on increasing and entrenching. According to a study on armament, disarmament and international security, the estimated global military expenditure rose for the ninth consecutive year in 2023 to surpass \$2.4 trillion, driven by the Russia – Ukraine war and rising geopolitical tension. The study points out that the 6.8 percent increase in total military spending in 2023 was the largest rise since 2009, and it amounted to \$ 306 per person. Furthermore, and as this study informs, the estimated military spending increased across all five regional regions for the first time since 2009 (SIPRI, 2024, p. 8).

To further illustrate the point, one may refer to the amount being spent by the nine nuclear weapon states on nuclear warheads and the missiles and the bombs in a world where millions of global humans are perishing because of poverty, hunger and deprivations of all kinds. According to a report of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) – a recipient of the Noble Peace Prize in 2017, in 2023 the nine countries spent \$91.4 billion on nuclear weapons, of which the private sector earned at least 30%. Taken together, the report adds, the nine states spent \$ 173, 884 per minute in 2023: USA \$ \$ 97, 983 per minute; China \$ 22,546 per minute; Russia \$ 15, 808 per minute; UK \$ 15, 331 per minute; France \$ 11, 531 per minute; India \$ 5057 per minute; Israel \$ 2,075; Pakistan \$ 1,924; and North Korea \$ 1,629.

There is a strong likelihood that further surge in global military expenditure will take place in the post-Gaza period as the remaking of the Middle East goes on and the drive for regime change in the region and beyond through economic and military means is intensified during the reign and rule of Trump and Netanyahu. As such, at a time when arms businesses and corporate world are already so powerful and when the military establishments all over the world almost seem to be on the driving seats of power, further militarization of the world would surely further endanger the future and future well-being of global humans. Waging struggle against the forces which have the historical experience of killing for profit won't be easy. It will be a tall order. Observing that the powerful forces have learnt the big lesson, Alberto Portugheis, an Argentinian born concert pianist, teacher and peace activist who

was nominated for Nobel Peace Prize in 2008 and 2014, says: 'It is incredibly profitable to set countries up in opposition to each other; divide people of one country into opposing groups; increase patriotic education;; increase religious bigotry and rivalry; promote dictators. The list goes on. Anything goes, just so long as we can continue to create wars and make money' (2014, p. 6).

How to deal with such powerful forces and who will show the way?

Conclusion

These are clearly exceptionally dangerous times, posing serious threats to the world, its regions and its citizens: the global humans. The struggle against wars, violence, military interventions, rising military expenditures and poverty and deprivations of all kinds has to be waged on all fronts. These challenging times call for new peace ideas and new peace movements. This is the time when the peace thinkers, educators and scholars should be brought into limelight and into the mainstream and their works and ideas disseminated through all possible channels and platforms. Keeping this view, this paper calls for the establishment of the Johan Galtung International Peace Prize.

Galtung was a brilliant, peace thinker, author of numerous ground –breaking studies, one of the founders of peace research as an applied human and social science, builder of world's first peace research institute in Oslo, Norway – the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), founder of the Transcend University – world's first all-online university, and a challenger of the world order and regional order based on military power and economic exploitation and coercion. He was clearly not appreciated by the international arms businesses, powerful military establishments and the corporate world. He was not forgiven for his peace thoughts and peace campaigns against militarism and military establishments and he wasn't awarded the Nobel Peace Prize whereas many like Henry Kissinger were awarded this prize (Mehdi, 2023)

It is important that the current generation and the succeeding generations are kept aware of the grave injustice done by the Nobel Peace Prize to Galtung and an international peace prize as prestigious as the Nobel Prize is instituted. This prize should be awarded annually. Further, the proposed prize should generally and preferably be awarded to the outstanding peace thinkers, educators and scholars, and the peace research institutes and peace- teaching programs conducted by the universities. Perhaps a coalition of universities with solid peace teaching programs, leading peace research institutes and unblemished peace prize awarding institutions may collectively take care of the organizational and financial matters.

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