

This Letter is totally devoted to our “*peace, disarmament, cooperation*” activity. We have brought together several short versions, summaries of presentations or excerpts from documents which can be consulted on our site¹. These texts stem mainly from discussions at our latest Executive Council in Barcelona.

Before I let you see these texts, I would like to stress one of our main responsibilities, a responsibility of our Federation as well as that of organizations of scientific workers: we absolutely must defend rational thought, critical thought in our role as citizens as we do in our professional activity. Emotion, which is normal and legitimate in the face of horror, motivates our determination to act. But let us make sure that we are not guided by emotion in our choices. Let us cultivate thought rather than simple reflexes.

This appeal to reason, to the search for causes was at the heart of our declaration² after the series of attacks in October and November.

Most of our societies are in crisis because they lack prospects, because of inequalities and injustices, political manoeuvring aimed only at staying in power at the cost of exacerbating “*communitarian*” reflexes.

The Prime Minister of France dared to assert that “*explaining is a little bit like excusing*”. What hatred of reason in the country of Voltaire and Diderot !

The year 2015 was declared “*the year of light*” by UNESCO, symbol of the development of knowledge.

What an epoch of contradictions ! Let us hope that in the political realm our epoch has not opened a cycle of obscurantism and widespread recourse to violence and war due to the lack of will to tackle the main challenges that deserve to be met : the challenge of peace among men, the challenge of the environment and - this is becoming an urgent one - the challenge of justice. We do not dissociate these battles from the search for truth of which science and philosophy give us an example.

Jean-Paul Lainé
President WFSW

¹ www.fmts-wfsw.org

² <http://fmts-wfsw.org/issues/disarmament/condemnation-of-the-series-of-attacks-perpetrated-by-daesh-solidarity-and-lucidity/>

The WFSW and the reform of the UN

The United Nations Organization does not fully play the role for which it was created. The role of the United Nations concerns the scientific community: not only are scientific workers also citizens, their professional expertise may be called upon. The WFSW must therefore be able to give its opinion or take a position on the role of the United Nations in general and on the questions of principle at the base of the necessary reform. The WFSW takes a position on the following points in particular:

I.- Authority, efficacy, unity of structure, means of action

The General Secretary of the UN must have the necessary resources to implement effectively the resolutions of the General Assembly and the decisions voted by the Security Council. In particular, he must have military and financial resources, and resources of information. The objectives of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization must be defined by the General Assembly of the United Nations. These organizations should be placed under the real authority of the General Secretary of the United Nations Organization. In the event of crisis or conflict any action not within the framework of the resolutions of the United Nations must be explicitly considered as illegitimate.

II.- The Security Council

All the regions of the world must be represented on an equal footing among the permanent members of the Security Council, with no consideration of economic weight. If new permanent members are included, all permanent members must have the same powers. There cannot be two categories of permanent members, for example those who have the right to veto and those who do not have the right to veto. The number of permanent members must nonetheless remain sufficiently limited so as to be effective.

III.- Sanctions and intervention

The decision to carry out armed intervention inside any country must necessarily be taken with the agreement of all permanent members. It is essential that the intervention be decided upon and managed by the Security Council, and only by the Security Council. This principle must be abided by whatever the origin of the problem, whatever the place in which it is carried out, and must aim at preventing a war or acts of aggression, and at reestablishing peace and security in the troubled region. In this context, the existence of political-military blocks should be prohibited, and the existing blocks should be dissolved.

IV.- The WFSW opens a debate on three questions

Should the General Assembly of the United Nations have real legislative powers? Should an «*Assembly of Peoples*» be created with powers equal to those of the General Assembly of the UN? If so, what should its composition be, what role should it play? In fact, the role in this case is that of civil society. Is the entrance of regional organizations into the Security Council of the United Nations desirable?

The Executive Council, January 2016

P.S. These avenues which we have opened are not exclusive. Their purpose is to develop the debate by stressing the urgency of restoring and developing international law on the territory of our spaceship «*Earth*», whereas everything, pandemics, from the economy to resources as well as the climate requires justice, negotiation and cooperation, and no longer armed and/or financial confrontations that aggravate inequalities and threaten world peace.

Outer space : letter to Ban Ki-Moon

Paris, March 10, 2016

Dear Secretary General,

The World Federation of Scientific Workers requests that you give your attention to the need to call for compliance with and broadening of the Treaty on Principles governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space, which went into effect on October 10, 1967, as well as to the different resolutions of the United Nations derived from this treaty, in particular Resolution 51/122.

Indeed, the exploration of space, with the development of lunar projects by the space powers or even private groups or persons, shows that although the challenge is immense, greed for the rich resources discovered is also immense.

This new interest in space must not be mercantile or a cause of conflicts, but must be placed in the service of all human beings.

This is why we believe that it is necessary that this Treaty and the resolutions deriving from it be ratified by all the member states of the United Nations so that any possibility of space conflict be eliminated, including through the ban on new space arms, so that international cooperation prevails and broadens, in particular in the scientific and technological field, and so as to reassert the principle of common heritage of mankind as defined in article 11 of resolution 51/122 for the exploration of the resources of the moon and all heavenly bodies.

Sincerely,

Jean-Paul Lainé

President of the World Federation of Scientific Workers (WFSW-FMTS)

WFSW statement on the threat of nuclear war and the possible consequences of the use of nuclear explosives

Since the foundation of the World Federation of Scientific Workers in 1946, just after Hiroshima and Nagasaki destruction, the dangers associated with the use of nuclear explosives in warfare have been one of our major and permanent concern.

The detonation of a nuclear explosive can lead to massive destructions both of living beings and of inert structures. Through a range of different effects it may cause immediate death but also long term time delayed health damages due to the direct exposure to radiations and to the environmental contamination caused by the fallout of radioactive dust. As a consequence of the deflagration, temperatures of several thousand degrees can arise in large areas surrounding "ground zero" as well as wind speeds that can exceed a thousand kilometers per hour. These effects lead to enormously destructive firestorms.

Notwithstanding the several agreements and multilateral treaties aiming at the total ban of nuclear tests, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and global nuclear disarmament, the fact is that the threat of nuclear war is still present in our days.

Under the New START Treaty that entered in force in February 5, 2011, the aggregate number of nuclear warheads on Deployed ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile), on Deployed SLBMs (Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile), and Nuclear Warheads Counted for Deployed Heavy Bombers, was 1643 for the Russian Federation and 1642 for the USA, as of September 1, 2014. The term "deployed" appears to be equivalent to "ready to launch". The total number has significantly increased since the previous exchange of data between the

parties (March 2014) so that the current figures are already in violation of the limit prescribed by the treaty signed in 2010.

The magnitude of these numbers is a very serious source of concern especially if one is aware of the fact that a mere one percent of the total explosive yield of the deployed warheads if deflagrated, would be sufficient to put an end to the very possibility of survival of higher forms of life on the planet including that of our own species. According to a variety of sources the possibility of a preemptive nuclear strike by one nuclear power so that the opponent's arsenal is destroyed to such an extent that makes retaliation by the adversary impossible or ineffective, is seriously considered in high level circles both military and political.

The equilibrium that existed during the cold war between opposite sides is being gradually eroded in important aspects. There is strong evidence that both the USA and the Russian Federation appear to be preparing for a direct military confrontation, a scenario that has been carefully avoided during the period of the "cold War".

Students from all over the world should be normally taught about nuclear weapons. Scientific workers should campaign to change this situation in secondary and higher Education and in every other possible way contribute to achieving the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Executive council

On chemical weapons

*Abstract*¹: January 2013 marked the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction. Known as the Chemical Weapons Convention, it is the outcome of an intergovernmental agreement that was negotiated in the context of the so-called "Conference on Disarmament", a body that was established in 1984 outside the United Nations system but is recognized by it. The text of the Convention was submitted to and adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1992². The Convention came into force in April 1997, after it had been signed and subsequently ratified by 65 states.

The present article deals with aspects pertaining to the history of the development of the different classes of chemical weapons, their characteristics and their utilization for military purposes.

Attention is given to the progresses attained in the destruction of the once vast stocks of chemical weapons accumulated by a number of parties that are signatory of the Convention as well as to the circumstance that several states have not adhered to the Convention until the present day.

Reference is made to the Convention on biological and toxin weapons that was signed in 1972 by the USA, UK and the Soviet Union and came into force in March 1975, as well as to the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

The importance of the revision and combination of the two conventions in a single instrument is stressed. It is suggested that these issues be debated within the scientific community, and in particular between chemists and biologists, whose social responsibility is particularly at stake in this matter.

Frederico Carvalho

¹ On the WFSW website, the complete version.

² See Resolution A/RES/47/39, adopted on 30 November 1992 at the 47th session of the UN General Assembly, in New York.

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