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of the Western evolution of intellectual  
non-violence: from subjective non-violent  
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to eclecticism**

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## Johan Galtung as the best representative of the Western evolution of intellectual non-violence: from subjective non-violent thinking to structural and then to eclecticism

Antonino Drago\*

### Abstract

This paper illustrates Galtung's intellectual life against the background of the birth and development of non-violent thinking in Western society. His impressive ability to suggest decisive ideas for a theory of peace and non-violent conflict resolution pioneered structural non-violent thinking. However, after 1989 he did not complete his innovations, choosing instead an eclectic vision. Nevertheless, he was able to predict the fall of each of the two superpowers that dominated the world at his time<sup>1</sup>.

**Keywords:** Johan Galtung, non-violence, two kinds of peace, three kinds of violence, conflict as A-B-C, development models, eclectic attitude, political prophecies.

### Abstract

Questo articolo delinea la vita intellettuale di Galtung sullo sfondo della nascita e dello sviluppo del pensiero non violento nella società occidentale. La sua straordinaria capacità di proporre idee decisive per una teoria della pace e della risoluzione non violenta dei conflitti ha aperto la strada al pensiero strutturale non violento. Tuttavia, dopo il 1989 non ha portato a termine le sue innovazioni, optando invece per una visione eclettica. Ciononostante, è stato in grado di prevedere la caduta di ciascuna delle due superpotenze che dominavano il mondo al suo tempo.

**Parole Chiave:** Johan Galtung, non-violenza, due tipi di pace, tre tipi di violenza, modello ABC del conflitto, modelli di sviluppo, atteggiamento eclettico, profezie politiche.

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<sup>1</sup> I am trying to illustrate Galtung's intellectual life not because I have read and analyzed the 270 books and thousands of articles he wrote in his lifetime; rather, because for forty years I have followed his outstanding effort to achieve a better understanding of theoretical non-violence.

## **1. The birth of a new political theory**

In Tolstoy's time, non-violent people dared to radically criticize Western progress, which was based on the relentless arms race and capitalist accumulation of wealth at the expense of the poor people and colonized countries. Such criticism, however, was social blasphemy, because Western progress (and for philosophers, the progress of the Absolute Spirit guiding human history) was the backbone of Western civilization to which the “primitive” peoples of the rest of the world had been colonized: Relentless Western progress was *par excellence* the support of the highest values in human history.

Gandhi shared this minority struggle against Western progress. His life, marked by the utmost simplicity, demonstrated that everyone could live by relying on the work of his or her own hands and that, thanks to the resulting economic freedom and deep spirituality, he or she could fight powerful institutions (the British colonial empire) without weapons, that is, by resorting to those human relationships that Western progress crushed in the pursuit of absolute goals. He was guided by the Hindu teaching of non-violence, which he extended from personal relationships to the conflicts of social and political life.

## **2. Reception of Gandhi's non-violence in the West**

At the time of Gandhi's struggle against the British Empire, Western assessments of him ranged from “the new Christ” (Fuelop-Miller, 1928) to “an idealistic Indian rebel” (assessment of British colonizers; see Brown, 1990). The first Western writer on Gandhi was the 1915 Nobel laureate in literature, Romain Rolland. He extolled the historical novelty of Gandhi's struggles, “I have seen a tide rising from the East whose fall will not come before it has covered the whole West” (Rolland 1924, end of “Preface”).

In 1929, in Pisa, Aldo Capitini and Guido Calogero discovered the “revolutionary” nature of non-violence. Then in 1930, first in Europe, Capitini actualized this idea by refusing to join the Fascist Party, at the cost of being removed from his professional job as vice-director of the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa. He then devoted his life to elaborating the notion of

non-violence; he understood it as a proto-religion of interpersonal relationships aimed at the renewal of society (Altieri, 2009).

In 1937-38 Lanza del Vasto (LdV) traveled to India to ask Gandhi to be accepted as a disciple<sup>2</sup>. He illustrated his meeting with Gandhi in a famous book about his trip to India (LdV 1943). He then returned to Europe to found Gandhian non-violent communities (which he called the “Ark Community”); in 1948 he started a first community that later formed a solid reference point for European and South American non-violents. Although he was Catholic, his type of non-violence was faithful to his teacher's guidelines and he improved on them until he built an intellectual system that combined spirituality and politics (Drago 2015a).

After World War II, the young Johan Galtung, having chosen a non-violent stance, wrote a book on Gandhi together with his fellow citizen and philosopher Arne Naess (Galtung and Naess 1955)<sup>3</sup>. They separated Gandhi's non-violence from his Eastern religion and spirituality (but not from ethics). The same attitude was again manifested by Galtung in his next book on Gandhi<sup>4</sup>.

This attitude was preceded in 1934 by U.S. citizen Richard Gregg, who, moreover, was among the first to assimilate Gandhi's message to the dominant Western culture (Gregg 1934): to objectively report Gandhi's facts, he was the first to separate Gandhi's non-violence from his faith and spirituality.

In the United States, in the face of Hitler's rise to political power in Germany, the debate between the two Niebuhr brothers, both theologians, was famous (Barbour, 1984). The first, Reinhold, was a political realist: there was no room for a policy of peace during an armed confrontation. In contrast, the other, H. Richard, held a Gandhian view; he argued that an appeal to the humanity of warriors was always effective. Later, in analogy with their

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<sup>2</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer also planned to visit Gandhi in India in 1933. However, he was asked to be in charge of the first Protestant community and preferred to embrace this new historical experience. Subsequent events in Nazi Germany did not make the realization of the initial goal possible.

<sup>3</sup> Naess demonstrated that non-violence can be rationalized academically through reflection on the most important problem in contemporary international politics, the threat of nuclear war (Naess 1965).

<sup>4</sup> The influence of Gandhi's life and teaching on Galtung is emphasized by Weber (2004).

positions, Gene Sharp theorized two types of non-violence: “pragmatic non-violence,” which assumes non-violence to achieve certain political goals, and “principled non-violence,” well known in the United States as the tradition of the Protestant denominations of Quakers, Mennonites, and Amish, all of whom reject war to obey religious principles (Sharp, 1973).

This distinction is reminiscent of Max Weber's more famous distinction between “ethics of responsibility” and “ethics of conviction” (Weber, 1919, last section); the former answers an ethical question by taking due account of the complexity of social institutions and the latter answers by obeying commands from subjective, preconceived values. In fact, Gandhi's life presented both a pragmatic attitude and strict obedience to firm religious convictions (foremost of which was non-violence). This shows that the distinctions of previous scholars derive from dichotomies rooted in the Western cultural tradition (e.g., the separation of church and state after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and thus the separation of politics and faith); but these dichotomies are not intrinsic to the true meaning of non-violence. However, the introduction of non-violence into Western societies created this split, which persists even at the present time. Indeed, at present one must consider a variety of meanings of the notion of non-violence, ranging from religious ones to the Machiavellian assumption of non-violent means to achieve any political goal (such as the recent CIA-led so-called “orange revolutions”).

### **3. The entrenchment of non-violence in Western society**

The introduction of political non-violence within Western circles occurred mainly through individual actions such as the one undertaken by Capitini.

After World War II, the few Western non-violent people who were convinced and therefore opposed to enlisting in armed national defense worked to obtain state recognition of their full right to national citizenship. These were the days of imprisonment for conscientious objectors. Johan Galtung was one of the most distinguished; in 1955 he was imprisoned for six months. A few decades later, in almost all European countries this struggle

achieved legal recognition of conscientious objection to military service. This struggle exalted a subjective non-violence in every country.

Meanwhile, the objective meaning of the notion of non-violence was emerging from unprecedented public actions and demonstrations: collective declarations by conscientious objectors, public fasts, upside-down strikes, meetings, marches, referendums, etc., and many non-violent communities, among which the Ark community represented an exemplary initiative. In Europe the first public demonstrations were those organized by Danilo Dolci in Sicily; in 1956-57 the young Galtung was his collaborator. In addition, beginning in the 1970s environmentalist organizations emerged in the West that challenged Western progress. They were able to mobilize populations and lead large demonstrations, for example, against national energy planning based on nuclear power plants. In every country, non-violents were the majority of demonstrators against nuclear planning; they opposed a national planning based on renewable energy sources. In all Western countries this opposition has been so strong that several countries (Austria, Sweden, Italy, etc.) have banned nuclear power through national referendums.

Non-violents have thus become a social force that has proposed a new irrepressible policy on the national political scene. In many countries, non-violents founded green parties together with ecologists. For the first time they played a role in the political life of the world.

#### **4. The birth of a theoretical non-violence**

The growth of non-violent politics in social life was accompanied by the growth of a theory of non-violence: Aldo Capitini, Jean Goss, Lanza del Vasto, Johan Galtung, Gene Sharp, Don Lorenzo Milani, J.M. Muller independently founded the notion of non-violence on religious and political, historical and rational grounds. In the different non-violent thinkers the conceptions differed, but all opposed the idea and the bases of Western progress and built an alternative to the traditional intellectual world.

The early masters of non-violence conceived alternative politics on subjective values. For example, Gandhi's conception of non-violence was based on his ethics. Capitini based his non-violence on the deification of human relations.

In 1958 a former CIA spy, Joan Bondurant, began to theorize about objective non-violence. She studied four major campaigns promoted and led by Gandhi in India. Devoid of any idealization, this report was very close to an academic study (Bondurant 1958).

In 1959 Lanza del Vasto (LdV 1959) recast Gandhi's notion of non-violence by basing it on Christian sacred texts. Moreover, inspired by them, he produced an interpretation of the history of Western civilization. In order to eliminate its negative aspects, he presented as a decisive act a total conversion leading to the assumption of a new spirituality aimed primarily at non-violent conflict resolution (LdV 1959, ch. 5, §§. 25 ff.). As an alternative to contemporary society, he theorized a non-violent community, constituted as a laborious Order and based on a Rule; whose first point is work on oneself along with work for economic self-sufficiency; and whose political purpose is both to fight the main negative social institutions and to build alternative ones. This non-violent community was conceived as the representative cell of non-violent society among the four possible types of political society: self-reliant village, monarchy, party state, democracy (LdV 1959, V, sect. 60; LdV 1978). In the history of non-violent thought, its theorization was the first structural in the religious, social and political sense.

Later Sharp made a fundamental contribution to the objective conception of non-violence. He found that in past history non-violent actions were numerous; out of simple naïveté people applied 198 non-violent techniques of social action and these were mostly successful (Sharp 1973). In the face of these historical facts that proved the effectiveness of non-violent techniques, the new idea of non-violence could no longer be discussed in abstract or absolute terms; facts are facts. Therefore, non-violence gained potential relevance for all.

In his efforts to theorize non-violence and peace, Galtung made a great contribution by suggesting many decisive new ideas. First, he criticized Western science because, as

Gandhi taught, science is detached from ethics. He suggested that science must include values in an essential way (Galtung 1972).

Then, Galtung clarified that the meaning of the word peace is divided into two types of peace; that is, he distinguished between negative peace, understood as the absence of overt conflict (or rather the absence of structural violence), and positive peace, understood as collaborative and supportive relationships, ranging from personal to national ones (Galtung 1964). Furthermore, Galtung clarified that violence has three independent aspects: direct, structural, and cultural (where the cultural one supports the structural one). Each of these aspects requires different and appropriate non-violent responses corresponding to three types of non-violence.

Moreover, he clarified the social context in which non-violence makes full sense: conflict. By proposing a definition of it, he greatly improved the millennia-old Western culture, which had never conceived of a method for resolving conflicts without, as a last resort, suppressing the opponent and hence was prepared to fight conflicts not to rationalize them: a conflict is an

A-B-C triad; that is, a conflict is composed of three independent dimensions: Assumptions, Behavior, and Contradictions, respectively (Galtung 1969; Galtung 1996, sect. 2.1). Through their recognition, a conflict can be resolved as easily as it is easy in elementary school to learn to write by starting with the first letters A, B, C, etc.; however, to achieve a resolution requires a full awareness of the three dimensions of personal and social life (without excluding the future), and furthermore, during a conflict, a maturity in balancing them with the goal of “transcending” the original situation. Consequently, the non-violent method of conflict resolution is not a technique to be blindly repeated. The same tripartition was suggested by Galtung at the level of world peace work: peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding (Galtung 1976).

Galtung also has the great merit of having proposed a scientific notion (because he applied sociological parameters) of four models of development (MoDvs; they correspond to Lanza del Vasto's four types of societies mentioned above, which he called sovereignties) in both the political and scientific spheres (Galtung 1977): the Blue, led by USA, the Red, led in the past by USSR, the Yellow *grosso modo* corresponding to Arab

states, and the Green which is the non-violent model, initiated by Gandhi, who, in order to gain India's independence, promoted economic and cultural self-sufficiency in the Indian people. Galtung's four models of development imply four models of intellectual production, including four different ways of producing and organizing science. The notion of these MoDvs is of great importance for political life, because for the first time they define the typical non-violent theory of politics, that is, a *pluralist theory*, both nationally and internationally<sup>5</sup>.

All this offered theoretical support for the non-violent political people of Western societies, who had now grown to the point where they were considered in Europe a national political force. In particular, the notion of MoDv appeared as an indispensable notion for all people who planned a new kind of society, who particularly wanted to eliminate the great problems of humanity (wars, capitalism, pollution, etc.).

The social relevance of non-violent intellectual thought peaked when major non-violent thinkers focused their attention on the three social sectors most at odds with a non-violent society.

*The educational system.* In the early 19th century, philosopher Johann Friedrich Herbart founded the bourgeois educational system by conceiving of the pupil as an empty sack to be filled with actions resembling mechanical forces. His disciple, Tuiskon Ziller, invented a guide for students consisting of ten commandments, the nine of which began with the words "Obey...." The forerunner of non-violence, Lev Tolstoy, masterfully analyzed the bourgeois school as a system, which primarily aims to dispossess people of their traditional culture and replace it with the culture imparted by the central political power (Tolstoy 1904). Against the bourgeois educational system Tolstoy founded the first anti-

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<sup>5</sup> The interactions of the four MoDvs suggest the relevance of the Gandhian-Green MoDv, specific to resolving conflicts without suppressing the opponent. If this type of MoDv did not exist, every conflict would become a conflict between two antagonistic adversaries (e.g., Marxism and liberalism) that would eventually lead either to the destruction of the adversary (and, in the case of a nuclear war, of the aggressor as well) or to the monopolization of social life by an oppressive ideology. The Green-Gandhian MoDv is the only international actor that can find non-violent ways and methods to overcome the conflict of the other MoDvs and thus emerge from this political nightmare. As a historical fact, this happened exactly in 1989, when the cold war between the different MoDvs of the two antagonistic blocs was overcome by the peoples of the Eastern countries who surprisingly enacted the non-violent revolutions of the fourth MoDv.

authoritarian school based on the challenge between pupils and teacher to invent the funniest stories.

Later Gandhi promoted the *Nai Talim* movement based on the three H's (Head, Heart, and Hand). Later Don Milani analyzed the violent operation of the system of pupil selection through culture imparted by the state. Don Milani also applied the model of the alternative school organization to the bourgeois one: he recovered the model of the so-called Lancasterian schools that were born at the time of the French Revolution and spread throughout Europe, despite the facts that the Church excommunicated them and all repressive regimes persecuted them (Drago 2000). Within this school, the educational process is developed through reciprocal teaching: each pupil teaches what he or she has already learned to less educated pupils, while the teacher operates primarily as a cultural expert. Through two letters (to a teacher and to military chaplains), don Milani's Barbiana school achieved the historical goal of the long popular search for a specific pedagogy for the subordinate strata of a population; these letters showed how this underprivileged population can not only learn self-awareness of the historical time, but also how to resolve in a non-violent way, i.e. through dialogs, the conflicts it suffers from the upper strata (Drago 1984).

*National energy planning.* As an alternative to national planning based on nuclear energy, some scholars proposed plans to rely entirely on renewable sources of energy based on a principle of the specific physical theory of energy, thermodynamics (Lovins 1979). In this case, for the first time the non-violent alternative to the progress of Western civilization was based on a scientific theory. Thus, what was previously the highest source of trust, science, split into one scientific thought (nuclear theory) that supported the dominant social structure and another (thermodynamics) that supported alternative planning. In the end, the non-violent struggle over national energy planning achieved the first historical defeat of Western progress, which had invested enormous capital in the development of nuclear power plants. (The defeat was absorbed by the denial of laws governing alternative energy).

*National defense.* During the Cold War the superpowers and other states sponsored a national defense based on the use of nuclear weapons that in an initial strike could have produced 200 million casualties in Europe. In the 1980s there was a flourishing of

proposals for an alternative defense to this catastrophic nuclear strategy. Galtung, Sharp, and others offered unprecedented suggestions for a non-violent national defense capable of coping, through strong and responsible cooperation, with a nuclear threat (e.g., Galtung 1984; Galtung 1986a). These proposals and the simultaneous huge peace demonstrations indirectly prepared for the non-violent revolutions of the peoples of Eastern Europe that ended the Cold War and its catastrophic nuclear strategy in 1989. These revolutions represented a stunning defeat for Western progress in the arms race and, in general, ballast for the idea of Western progress as a whole.

Through the analysis of the above three social sectors, which play crucial roles within Western society, non-violent thinkers have been able to recognize evil social structures and new alternative structures to be built. Therefore, in addition to the subjective or objective theorization of non-violence, non-violent thinkers have obtained structural theorizations of the above three social sectors.

Note that Galtung added to great intellectual work a restless activity for peace. In 1959 he founded the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO) in Oslo. Dissatisfied with the overly diplomatic attitude of the Pugwash movement of peace scientists, in 1964 he founded the *Journal of Peace Research* and the International Peace Research Association, whose purpose was to promote peace research, peace education and peace action. The Association promoted a biennial conference attended in a few years by peace scientists from all the major countries of the world. In 1969 it founded the first chair of peace studies in Oslo, and in 1972 it promoted a summer school in Dubrovnik<sup>6</sup>.

However, outside influences pushed IPRA in equivocal directions. So that despite his age of more than 60 years, in 1993 an indefatigable Galtung again chose grassroots action for peace; he founded a new International Association, "Transcend International," whose name represents what he sees as the crucial step of non-violent conflict resolution. A weekly online magazine (*Transcend Media Service*) and a publishing house followed. This activity was hampered by the withdrawal of funds by a Zionist backer who challenged Galtung on a negative proposal on Israel policy (Wikipedia English ed. "Johan Galtung").

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<sup>6</sup> Where I first saw him and was fascinated by his intellectual power to make it easy to answer any big question; he was the greatest intellectual I knew in my life, after Lanza del Vasto.

In his lifetime he was called upon to mediate more than 150 international conflicts and contributed to dozens of universities around the world. He has received 13 honorary degrees from universities around the world.

### **5. 1989: historical confirmation that non-violence can make a radical policy worldwide**

The events of 1989 occurred because fortunately the peoples of Eastern Europe also perceived how insane a nuclear war is and reacted precisely through the non-violent policy that was despised by Western political leaders as childish and illusory. It was indeed a non-violent policy that in 1989 wisely directed the peoples of Eastern Europe to carry out revolutions without weapons, while fighting both against harsh national dictatorships and, globally, against the nuclear-weapons-based Cold War. Their actions overthrew those dictatorial regimes that the great socialist movement had previously regarded as the most advanced types of societies in humanity, despite their dictatorships. These revolutions also ended the Cold War and finally changed the world political map. In the history of political theories, they have shown that the best political goals must never justify dictatorships, even in the aim to achieve a new type of state.

In conclusion, in 1924, Rolland's prophecy about Gandhi's tide falling on Europe came true: first, Gandhi's tide non-violently liberated the Indian people (one-tenth of humanity) from British colonialism that dominated one-third of the world (1947); then (1989) it sparked non-violent revolutions in Europe.

However, Lanza del Vasto recalled Rolland's prophecy referring to the fall of the tide not over Europe, but over the whole world (Lanza del Vasto 1959, ch. V, sec. 36, p. 393). In 2005, an initial, rough study of the striking non-violent revolutions that had occurred in the previous forty years showed hard facts: their successes were not due to chance; in fact, they were more numerous and more successful than the violent ones in this time frame (Ackerman and Karatnicky, 2005). Later, two scientific researchers constructed a data base of all revolutions (about 300) that occurred in the entire century. About 100 revolutions were non-violent. Through statistical tools, these researchers showed that the

latter grew in percentage and were more successful and more likely to prepare stable regimes (Chenoweth and Stephen, 2012; Drago, 2010).

A graphic representation (from Chenoweth and Stephen, 2012) illustrates the historical growth in their numbers.

No greater confirmation of the power of political non-violence could be given in human history. Truly, Gandhi's tide has rebounded on the whole World, as LdV predicted, and moreover it has given full meaning to the following words written by LdV in 1959:

Two are the greatest discoveries of the century: non-violence and the atomic bomb... When speaking of non-violence as a discovery of this century, it should be made clear that non-violence is not the revelation of a new spiritual value or a religious revelation [because it is similar to Christian love for enemies], but of the entry, in the history of peoples, of a revolutionary and innovative force (Lanza del Vasto 1959, ch. V, points 34 and 36).

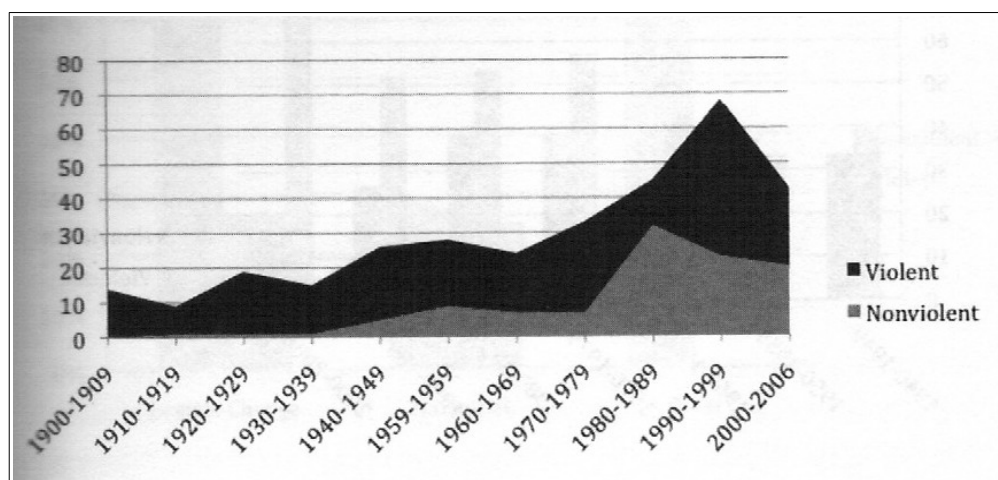


Figure 1: **Frequency of non-violent and violent campaign end years**

## **6. 1989: the end of a historical cycle of political non-violence**

At the same time, the revolutionary events of 1989 concluded a historical cycle of Western non-violence, at the operational and intellectual levels. Starting almost from scratch, in a period of half a century non-violents became an international political force with its own

political theorization. Since 1989, the picture of the Chinese man stopping four lined-up cars has been etched in the minds of all peoples as a symbol of a historical novelty: non-violence is possible and practicable even against terrible powers.

But once it has reached the pinnacle of political growth, non-violent politics has encountered great and frustrating difficulties.

1) Fifty years after Gandhi's death, a broad movement of simple pacifists has emerged in the warmongering Western countries. However, this movement is radically divided into four main groups: legal pacifists (e.g., Norberto Bobbio), individualist pacifists (especially Anglo-Saxon pacifists and women for peace), collective pacifists (acting according to a trade union policy of simply pressuring political institutions), and Gandhian pacifists. These groups diverge considerably in motivations, tactics, and strategies.

2) In human history, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) represents a continuation of a fundamental achievement of the French Revolution. It enshrines a set of rights acquired by every individual from his or her birth. This declaration is the basis of legal pacifism, which more generally appeals to international law (though to be renewed). Undoubtedly, the Declaration provides a reference point for improving the lives of peoples in difficult situations and even under dictatorship. Therefore, since its inception, the Declaration, supported by UN political authorities and state institutions (tribunals), has gained increasing relevance in the world. It has also been extended to ecological conflicts, i.e., those between humans and nature, through a specific tribunal that protects the rights of nature and animal species. In general, legal pacifists argue that their rights resolve conflicts more effectively than the non-violent method, which relies only on personal resources. In our artificial society, the use of non-violent methods involving only personal relationships seems a primitive technique of conflict resolution.

But this UN Declaration on Human Rights is accused of corresponding only to a Western view of society. It starts from the individual to then conceive of society as an accumulation of individuals. The implementation of every right is delegated to a state, which is also the sole guarantor of their improvements; thus, it leads to an a priori dependence on a state and its courts. Moreover, no role is attributed to intermediate social groups and religions.

Of course, world politics needs both a common international law and its highest political body, the UN, constitutionally aimed at regulating and eventually eliminating all international conflicts. But at present, UN policy is hindered by the superpowers; in the past, there has never been a collaborative policy among all states. Moreover, impersonal laws cannot guarantee peace in a world where there are so many different peoples, cultures and ideologies; only the ethics of human relations can respectfully overcome all these differences. This competition between human rights and non-violence was clearly theorized by (Galtung 1994). He pointed out that the historic Helsinki process (1975) was an adequate preparation for the revolutions 14 years later, but the decisive events were provoked by the non-violent actions of Eastern peoples. However, in popular culture the cultural conflict between the two approaches to peace is unresolved.

3) In 1989, the peoples of the Eastern countries carried out non-violent revolutions without having any relationship with Western theorists of non-violence (with the exception of Sharp, whose theorizing was taken up at that time by some leaders of the revolutionary peoples of the East). In other words, the extraordinary achievement of 1989 was achieved by a spontaneous outburst of the people, without a maturing process on the meaning and importance of non-violent politics. Thus, the Eastern peoples, who made momentary political revolutions, and the Western non-violent people, who were formed by mainly intellectual and spiritual experiences, are characterized by two distinct historical experiences. Dialogue between these two groups has not been easy; only Vaclav Havel (1978) has built a bridge. Even more difficult was the dialogue with the people of the later “orange revolutions” (i.e., those supported by the CIA). The only common reference was again Sharp's pragmatic non-violence.

4) Theoretical contributions to an intellectual non-violence come from many masters who are inspired by radically different motivations. These divergences emerged as early as the 1950s; Sharp proposed an initial classification of them according to his objective point of view (Sharp 1956). But his analysis did not initiate an effort to link the different approaches.

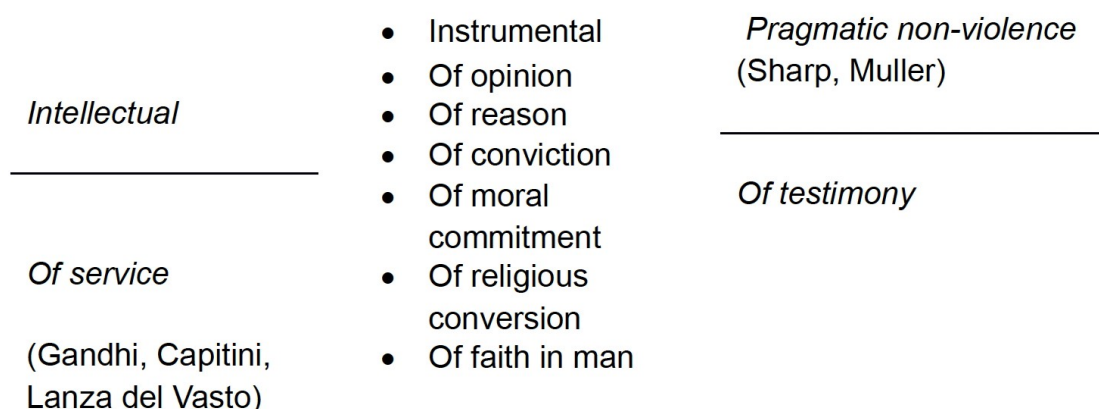


Figure 2: **The variety of positions of the masters of non-violence**

In the figure above the different motivations of the main non-violent teachers are distributed along the vertical line represented in the center by a few dots. On each side of the figure a horizontal line separates two groups of motivations and their main representatives.

This line, seen from the bottom up, seems to represent a historical progression of all the masters of non-violence, that is, a progressive detachment of non-violent thinking from religiosity and ethics, to eventually become only pragmatic non-violence. Many in the West have understood this progression as a repetition of the process of secularization by which the population of Western civilization has become increasingly detached from religions and even from specific ethics. In fact, many non-violent groups have reduced the novelty of non-violence to a set of techniques in support of a purely pragmatic strategy; non-violence should be chosen because it is effective for a particular political objective, regardless of the personal and structural aspects of non-violent thinking.

This attitude was theorized by Sharp and currently represents the dominant attitude among non-violent people in the world (Weber 2003). Sharp reduced the content of non-

violence to objective techniques of political importance; followers must apply them according to a strategy devised by certain leaders; they must adapt their guiding ideas to the situation, with no ties to religious conceptions. Sharp added a rough political analysis of society; it is based on the notion of social power, that is, he sees a society as composed of certain social institutions that represent power relations with people. Sharp's overall goal was to change the world's political systems from dictatorships (which at his time were the majority of regimes) to democratic regimes, according to the political principle of self-determination<sup>7</sup>.

The variety of motivations illustrated in Figure 2 is very wide. In addition, the group of pragmatists rejects dialogue with other non-violent groups because they feel that they are the only valid representatives of non-violent politics. On the other hand, non-violent people who are inspired by spiritual values feel that they are a minority compared not only to ordinary people but also to the group of non-violent pragmatists; unfortunately, they have not been able to initiate a dialogue for better mutual understanding.

In Figure 2, one cannot be precise about Galtung's motivation. It is definitely not Sharp's motivation and it is not faith in a God; it lies between moral commitment and religious conversion. For him, the ethical aspect of non-violence is the most important; however, this motivation could not refer to a universal ethics because the world's various ethical systems have insurmountable differences and the various Western theories of ethics have very little in common. Rather, he approached a Buddhist-Taoist ethical system, eventually taking an "eclectic" position (Galtung 1996, p. 4).

## **7. The incomplete theory of a structural non-violence**

The great current problem of non-violent politics is the same as that encountered by all peoples who have carried out successful non-violent revolutions; exactly in the aftermath

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<sup>7</sup> But Sharp does not realize that this pragmatic non-violence can be of four types (see Figure 1): instrumental, of mere opinion, of reason, and of conviction; and that people motivated by the first two can easily change their minds; if along the development of a collective action these motivations change, then the success of the entire planned action may be compromised. For a critical analysis of Sharp's theory see (Martin 2013).

of victory it was necessary to rebuild the state according to that non-violent politics that had been successful against previous states (a similar problem occurred after also the Arab springs). Gandhi had already suggested a clear idea of a non-violent state: many self-sufficient village-cities united in a federation (similar to the structure of the Swiss state), with a minimum of bureaucracy and technology, aimed at universal justice<sup>8</sup>. Yet these characteristics are light years away from those of the traditional Western state (which is the heir to the Hegelian philosophy of the Absolute Spirit). The suggested non-violent theorizations of society lack completeness because non-violent theoretical analyses of social structures cover only a few areas of society; for example, there is no convincing analysis of the social structure of the economy<sup>9</sup>. How to start from the above analyses of three sectors of society (education, energy, and defense) to build a general analysis of the whole society and then detail what kind of state non-violents want to build at present? There is still a lack of suggestions on this crucial political point.

## **8. The leading theoretical role lost by Galtung**

The year 1989 also represents the end of the period influenced by the many “intellectual masters of non-violence” (Aldo Capitini, Lanza del Vasto, Jean Goss, Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, etc.) Only a few masters, Galtung and Gene Sharp (in addition to the French rationalist J.M. Muller) survived until recently. Since his type of non-violence received wide acceptance by many groups in the world, Sharp exhausted his personal task of promoting non-violence in his program of devising plans for non-violent revolutions seeking to overthrow dictatorships around the world.

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<sup>8</sup> Ecologists have also understood this dramatic problem; they have increased the number of current non-violent communities with their ecological communities, villages and towns, which could prepare an essentially non-violent state.

<sup>9</sup> The German Greens tried to solve the problem of a new state by starting with the national economy; they called for withdrawing deposits from banks. But too few people responded. The Greens lost heart and in 1992 leaders Petra Kelly and Gert Bastian committed suicide (so did also Italian Green leader Alexander Langer in 1995). The German Greens, divided into two factions, the Fundis and Realos, then entered the German government (Joschka Fischer as minister, 1998-2005) but slowly the Fundis left the party and the Realos lost a radical political program.

“Master” Galtung was the best person to take stock of the past historical cycle. But he was not a historian. Rather, only he, who had suggested the earliest and most important structural ideas on non-violence, could go further along this path by providing a complete structural system, that is, a complete theory of non-violence in all its aspects: subjective, objective and structural. Unfortunately, Galtung ignored this task, which represented a great expectation for non-violent people.

Personal events (his new marriage to a Japanese woman) and new philosophical attitudes (advocating the fall of all ideologies and major systems of thought) have led him to distrust a structural way of thinking. (Most feminist leaders also share this distrust)<sup>10</sup>. He tried to take on Eastern culture (and particularly the process of thinking through Taoist yin/yang) and assume an Eastern “cosmology” (Buddhism and Taoism) as if it were the most appropriate non-violent thinking.

As a result, he abandoned the previous striving for structural thinking, even though he had sought support from science (e.g., mathematical techniques, notions of entropy and invariance breaking, chemistry); rather, he theorized without any characteristic premises (apart from the intuitive notions of peace and non-violence), and without seeking dichotomies, now considered abstract from human life. Rather, he assumed only extemporaneous categories to present intelligent classifications and analogies. In total, in his writings, descriptive overviews prevailed over in-depth exploration of basic ideas, and informal vision prevailed over formal theorizing.

Galtung's last effort to improve a non-violent theory of societal structures was to address the fourth sector of society, the national economy (Galtung 1996, ch. III). According to non-violent thought, this sector represents the dominant one after the military. Its analysis is inevitable in view of the conception and construction of a non-violent state. His attempt is based on the structural idea of MoDVs, which has also been adopted by the ecological movement and has spread in contemporary culture. However, there is currently no common agreement on the definition of this notion (reduced by many to an undefined new model; see the slogan expressing only a hypothesis: “Another world is possible!”).

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<sup>10</sup> But traditional Western thinkers regard it as backward; that is why there are very few university courses on non-violence in the world.

While in 1977 Galtung conceived the notion of MoDv by crossing two broadly defined subjective dichotomies (vertical/horizontal, uniformity/diversity)<sup>11</sup>, in 1966 he defined a MoDv through a long list of characteristics, without dichotomies. His attempt to theorize the economy blurred into a multiple classification: the resulting MoDvs are six, of which the last one unifies and encompasses all the others, and its nature was called “eclectic” (Galtung 1996, Sect. 3.2); thus, without a structure. Therefore, he abandoned the 2,500 years of Western intellectual “progress,” i.e., dichotomies, formal deductions, models and systems.

In conclusion, his effort to build a bridge between Western non-violence culture and traditional Eastern culture was unconvincing: no follower of this attempt is known. Moreover, due to the above flaws and his Buddhist-Taoist philosophical stance, Galtung lost the leading role in advancing the theorization of structural non-violence, while the transition of non-violent thought to full structural thinking has not yet been achieved.

It is therefore no accident that, for example, he deliberately did not want to precisely define the terms “peace” (Galtung 1996, § 1.6; see also § 5.1) and non-violence; and he did not accurately define his distinction between direct, structural, and cultural violence (the latter, in my view, requires a more accurate definition; for Galtung it is conceived of as supporting structural violence; instead, the cultural power of science and technology independently determine people's culture and lives because they are independent powers within society).

The definitions of the A-B-C scheme may vary in its different writings. Therefore, in my opinion it is necessary, as a first step, to formally affirm the independence of the three dimensions of a conflict; furthermore, to carefully define each of these basic dimensions in a more appropriate way than its presentations; thirdly, not to multiply in all possible ways (cultural, objective, direct, manifest or otherwise, etc.) this A-B-C scheme. (In my opinion,

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<sup>11</sup> Instead, it is possible to relate this definition more accurately to the two corresponding structural dichotomies of non-violent politics (similar to those suggested by Science: Drago 1991): one dichotomy is the well-known traditional one, freedom/justice, represented by the parliamentary arc; the other dichotomy is the new one: either progress toward absolute goals (capitalism, arms race, nuclear society) or the unlimited development of personal relationships. Clearly, the latter dichotomy is independent of the former. Then the two political directions are mutually orthogonal and can be crossed; they form a compass of four quadrants representing the four MoDvs.

a better definition of the A-B-C triad is as follows: structural, objective and subjective; and a trinitarian thinking of conflict resolution should be developed)<sup>12</sup>.

## **9. A crucial shortcoming of current non-violent thinking**

In my opinion, at the root of so many difficulties in non-violent politics is the lack of a well-recognized definition of the word “non-violence,” because no known definition has been presented unambiguously<sup>13</sup>. Galtung suggested the word “transcend” as the main process of non-violent conflict resolution. But he never explained his idea in detail or related it to philosophical traditions.

It is therefore scandalous that after a century and more since Gandhi's invention (1909) the notion of “non-violence” lacks an accurate definition and thus a common agreement on its meaning. The problem is so great that at present the elementary question of how to spell the word “non-violence” has not been resolved: “non-violence”? Or (as has been suggested by Capitini) “nonviolence”, the merit of which is to blur the unsympathetic “not”? A seriously negative consequence of this lack of a common definition is that people follow it only because of an inspiration that cannot be expressed objectively (recall the words of M.L.

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<sup>12</sup> In particular, he never observed that in Western culture an A-B-C has already been suggested by the Christian notion of God as Trinity (as represented by Masaccio's painting in S. Maria Novella in Florence). This suggestion is very relevant to non-violence. The Father motivated a struggle against structural sin, which continually organizes evil social institutions within society (e.g., wars); the Son, as a person, faced this conflict with evil social institutions, which he resolved through his behavior: 1) his teaching and practice of love for his enemies, even when the latter ones are supported by social institutions; and then 2) his death followed by his resurrection operated by the Holy Spirit; this resurrection gives the pledge of victory both on Earth and in Heaven to anyone who behaves as he did in a non-violent manner (e.g., his defence in the Garden of Gethsemane) against evil social institutions. In this sense, the three dimensions A, B and C of a conflict are represented by the three Persons of this God. Therefore, the essence of this Western religion is non-violent conflict resolution and thus non-violence. This kind of religious non-violence overcomes Sharp's distinction between principled non-violence and pragmatic non-violence, because this religion does not represent a political duty or calculation, but the way to improve human life at the highest level through the exercise of conflict resolution. This possibility of linking Christian faith to non-violence was lost on Galtung, perhaps because of his belief in rather a universal ethical-religious attitude.

<sup>13</sup> After some decades of reflections on this definition, LdV concluded: “Non-violence is simple thing but subtle. / If it is difficult to apply it and even to grasp [with the mind] it, it is because it is completely stranger to common habits. / But the difficulty becomes insurmountable when one is convinced of having fully grasped it [as a passive attitude]...” (Lanza del Vasto 1962, first propositions of the section “De la non-violence active”). Last but not least, note that no son of a non-violent teacher (including Gandhi) was a notable non-violent; therefore, even within a family, communication on this topic was difficult.

King: “I have a dream...”; it is a suggestive expression, but it is not the result of rational discourse). Therefore, it is not possible to reason collectively about non-violence. Or rather, one person's reasoning cannot be clearly linked to another person's reasoning. As a result, from the outside, non-violent people appear to be a sect because of the lack of a constitutive definition.

In my opinion, Lanza del Vasto came close to this definition when he stated that the proposition “Thou shalt not kill” should be considered “absolutely” valid, that is, valid at all times and in all situations (Lanza del Vasto 1959, ch. V, sec. 44, p. 303). Then he adds a parallelism: just as Gandhi extended the validity of the Hindu teaching of non-violence from a short-range ethic to an ethic for social life, so Jesus extended the above proposition from interpersonal relations alone to social and international relations, i.e., even with “enemies”. In other words, while Gandhi extended the traditional notion of non-violence from an individualistic method to a guiding idea for a collective politics, Jesus extended the application of the proposition “Thou shalt not kill” from times of peace to times of war. This parallel makes clear the importance of the word “non-violence”: it is an internalized attitude toward all people, whatever the type of interaction, good or bad, with them.

This parallelism also illuminates the common logical nature of the two teachings, “non-violence” and “Do not kill [at any time]” (or even “Do not react [with evil] to evil”): both are doubly negated propositions.

It is half a century that intuitionist logic has been accepted on a par with classical logic (though not by the educational system). In the first logic, two negations do not affirm, that is, the law of double negation fails (as in the court's ruling, “Acquitted for insufficient evidence of guilt [ $\neq$  fair behavior]”). Through it, the mystery, unresolved by Gandhi himself, disappears, whereby the word “non-violence” is a double negation that cannot be translated into a single affirmative word. It is no accident that “non-violence” is an Eastern word, not a word in the Western tradition (born perhaps from Plato onward) that represents the world only through affirmative words. Then it is clear that the content of the word “non-violence” does not represent a thing (concrete or ideal), but a *method* on how to perform a *process* (of conflict resolution). This method suggests: act as you wish, but avoid negative (= violent) situations. This definition says nothing about the affirmative

content of the word, even in an ideal situation; therefore, non-violence is not an axiom from which to derive behaviors to actualize, or universal rules to follow and insistently reiterate. Thus, non-violence leads one to abandon theories based on abstract ideas and rather deal with a conflict by focusing on avoiding all negative effects. In this light, it is not surprising that every attempt to find a positive substitute for this word has failed; moreover British colonialists did not grasp Gandhi's politics<sup>14</sup> and Western academia, based on affirmative practices, does not give relevance to non-violence.

Note that some scientific theories (e.g., classical chemistry) also make essential use of doubly negated propositions. An analysis of these has shown that they reason by linking these propositions together in arguments *ad absurdum*. This implies an organization of theory that differs from classical deductive theory (such as Euclid's geometry); this new organization is aimed at solving a problem (e.g., in classical chemistry: how many are the elements of matter) by seeking a new method to find its solution (e.g., the new experimental method of analysis and synthesis). A crucial logical step in this organization is the final one. The doubly negated proposition that is the conclusion of the last argument *ad absurdum* is a proposition that expresses a hypothesis for the solution of the problem, but at the moment without any certainty. Therefore, it is translated into the corresponding affirmative proposition, the only one that can be tested with reality and thus can lead to deciding whether the whole theory is valid or not. This logical translation does not belong to a particular logic, because it changes the proposition from intuitionist logic to classical logic. In fact, it is an application of the universal principle of sufficient reason: in fact, after reasoning about the subject through doubly negated methodological propositions for a long time, the author decides to appeal to the rationality of the world; he gives confidence that what he has intuited by reasoning through doubly negated propositions that make up rational arguments must correspond to reality. In philosophical terms, translation is an act of faith about the world: corresponding to the rationality of our mind, it is assumed that there is always a specific rational behavior in reality.

It is easy to translate this logical process into non-violent conflict resolution. The non-violent method is based on an act of faith; for example, an oppressed person is inclined to

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<sup>14</sup> The most celebrated academic book on Gandhi is entitled: "Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope" (Brown 1990); this title denotes a lack of understanding of Gandhi's spirit.

act gently toward his oppressor because he believes that the oppressor is also a human being who can understand what the oppressed can communicate about what is deepest in human life<sup>15</sup>. Thus, in the end, non-violence is a belief on much more a common rationality, rather on a common nature of human beings and, according to believers, on a common brotherhood founded by God (Drago 2010b; 2016); indeed, non-violence is incomprehensible to people whose minds are closed inside classical logic, that leads to reasoning by formal deductions only, that is, in a mechanistic way.

In conclusion, writing “non-violence” with a hyphen emphasizes both its non-Western origin and its introduction into the intuitionist way of thinking that is not mechanistic, but is supported by subjective faith in a general brotherhood.

The result of this non-violent method of conflict resolution transcends the initial situation; therefore, Galtung was right to call his method of non-violent conflict resolution “Transcendence,” a world that underlies the higher level achieved (by an act of faith, even in the future) than the initial level of each actor. This good insight of Galtung gives reason for many intelligent suggestions he was able to offer on non-violent conflict resolution. First of all, he discovered that a conflict is not represented by two ideas (as within a conflict is conceived by each opponent) that consequently lead to reasoning in classical logic, where each proposition is subject to the dichotomous law: either true or false); rather, it is represented by three independent dimensions that cannot be dealt with by classical logic, but only by non-classical logic. In fact, in classical logic, if A is not B and B is not C, C by the law of transitivity must be equal to not-not-A = A; however, this equality reduces the triad to a duality and thus to the dichotomous opposition A vs. B. Only if C (equal to not-not-A) is not-A, that is, the previous “not-not” is not equal to “the same,” i.e., the law of double negation is broken, do we have that the conflict is represented by a triad of independent dimensions.

But he saw the nature of the process of resolution from the outside. He did not trace the word “transcend” back to an intuitionist-type logical process. Therefore, Galtung multiplied his A-B-C scheme into a variety of its versions in order to represent a variety of aspects of

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<sup>15</sup> Capitini defined this change as due to a “free addition” given by a non-violent person to the conflict situation.

a given conflict. In this way he remained limited to simply describing the infinite number of aspects of a conflict; he did not achieve an interpretation of the dynamics of conflict.

In conclusion, Galtung's theoretical potential to achieve a coherent system that includes all aspects of non-violence was reduced by him to merely improving his own starting theory of conflict resolution, hoping to unite Eastern and Western traditions of thought on peace and non-violence by reaching a comprehensive theory of this topic (through an arguing in classical logic).

## **10. The legacy of Galtung's theorization: a prophecy for the present time**

In retrospect we see that over the course of forty years non-violent politics has received a theorization ranging from the personal level to the structural level. Although incomplete, his non-violent structural thinking allowed Galtung to extend historical consciousness from his own time to later times. Indeed, the initiation of structural thinking was sufficient to enable some masters of non-violence to have such an awareness of the historical course that they were able to predict the political future. All of them enjoyed this ability because, as non-violent thinkers, they did not ascribe to the outcomes of wars the significance of God's judgments, but only random outcomes (today this point is also proved by mathematical techniques).

First, in 1956, Aldo Capitini predicted the fall of socialism (actually: of communist societies).

## **11. The crisis of socialism**

The deep reason for the crisis of socialism is, as I said, its institutional closure [within formal institutions]. It is a matter of: a) finding [from below] new structures that will prevent the slide of institutionalized socialism toward a bureaucratic collectivism and [based on] officials without freedom, without exchange between the top and the base, without autonomy; b) [being able to put] socialism in relation to an ethical-religious life, to an

interiority, to feelings, ideas, practices that invest the entire liberation of humanity, of society, of reality (Capitini 1956; my translation).

Furthermore, Capitini predicted, based on historical analogies of the present times with the last period of the “Pompeian-American civilization” (i.e., the period of great expansion of the Roman Empire), that our historical civilization would soon come to an end (Capitini 1956).

LdV foresaw the failure of Western civilization through an accurate metaphor of the fall of the “Western Hero.” In 1959 he emphasized that this Hero, full of his power acquired through science and technology, cannot be defeated from the outside. Instead, realizing his own magnificent designs, he recklessly sets out for his own destruction, just like Oedipus who materializes his fate, although it was announced to him in advance:

Yet his hour is coming; it cannot take long, the fatal hour of the Hero. And if he doesn't find anyone to hit him, he'll tear himself away eyes and will lacerate himself like so many heroes in whom judicial fury exceeds the love of life; and hence he will execute, in its crimes as in his punishment, his condemnation signed since the beginnings (LdV 1959, 284)<sup>16</sup>.

In 1980 Galtung drew a parallel between the decadent regime of the USSR and the Roman Empire. In a book published in Norwegian (Galtung, Poleszynski & Rudens 1980, 85), Galtung predicted, based on four macro-social parameters, that within 10 years the USSR would collapse. Then, exactly at the deadline, the end of the year 1989, the USSR lost its satellite states and finally in 1991 it fell.

In 2002, Galtung wrote an article, which later became a book (Galtung 2009), to announce the “Fall of the U.S. Empire” on the basis of fifteen socio-economic parameters representing the economic (3), military (4), political (2), cultural (3) and social (3) contradictions of the contemporary U.S. system (however, he wrote, “The cause of the decline and fall of imperialism is imperialism itself”). He concluded that the U.S. is on a trajectory similar to empires of the past, such as the Roman Empire. The projected deadline was 2025. However, the outcome will be different from similar outcomes of past empires; the result of the fall of the United States will be the beginning of a period of

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<sup>16</sup> This LdV prophecy along with four others is illustrated by (Drago 2015b).

flourishing and prosperity that will be of great benefit to most of the United States and to the peoples of the world.

In 2002 I listed these predictions and added the following words: “Our first problem is to figure out how long it will take for this hero to reach the end of his trajectory, through the tremendous convulsions that his tragedy entails on other peoples and on nature itself” (Drago 2002, 28).

However, at last a non-violent people, “they will try to live in the countryside and wait for the day when living as brothers, cultivating their own garden and eating the fruit of their own hands' labor will cease to be a dream and a legend” (LdV 1978, 101).

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