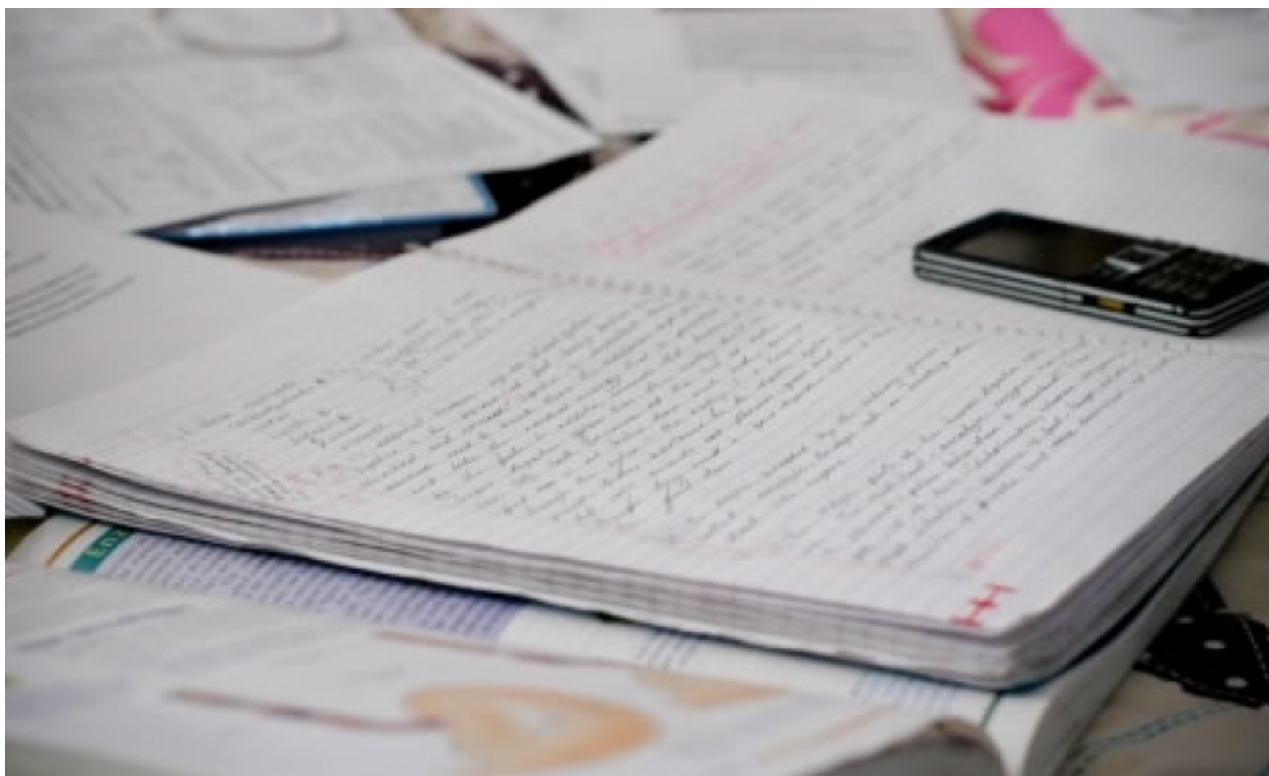


There can only be peace when there is justice



09/20/2016 - 11:46



Recently was the 80th anniversary of the coup that marked the beginning of a terrible civil war in Spain and then a dictatorship that lasted 36 years.

Xavier Masllorens

Submitted by F Pere Tarrés on Tue, 09/20/2016 - 11:32

Description:

President of the [International Catalan Institute for Peace](#) (Institut Català Internacional per la Pau). He has been in the board of directors of several NGOs working on human rights, peace and international cooperation.

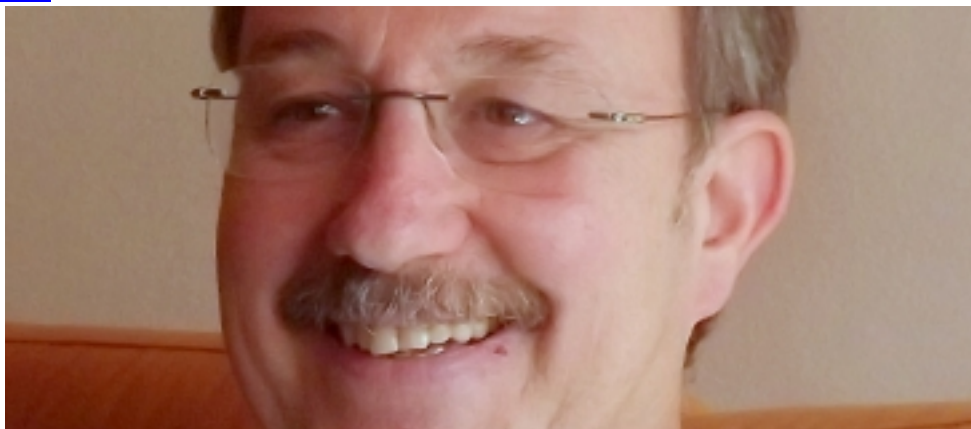
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The barbarity of those events has been explained in many books, articles and films, but three generations later we still haven't left this chapter aside and **there has been no true reconciliation** because, in order for this to happen, both sides of the story must be confronted with bravery, to deliver justice to both sides and without being afraid of repairing the damage done by everyone. Yet instead of this, what we see is a collective oblivion that reminds us of a child covering his eyes and saying "I'm not here" instead of a mature society that is able to look into and analyse its faults and virtues.

However, just some weeks ago, there was constant mention of a different coup, the one in Turkey, and the repression that came after, which could well do away completely with the Ottoman democracy. And a few days before, it was the Nice attack, in France, or the killing of some police officers in Orlando, in the USA or... to a lesser extent... the terrible bloodshed further South, or in the Middle East or Africa.

At such turbulent times like today, when immediate violence –that of terrorism one day, drug trafficking the next, and almost always human rights violations– gives cover, more and more, to the issue of **structural violence caused by injustice**, it is good to ask oneself some questions that can help talking about peace more from the heart and the mind than viscerally.

Firstly, that positive peace is more than the absence of an explicit conflict. We will never tire of repeating that peace is not a desire, but a construction that requires a continuous effort from everyone; it is not only a goal, but the way of reaching this goal so that peace can grow and stand firmly. **Peace is the path to reach a more just and humane society.**

A second reflexion has to do with the immediacy of our judgements: everyone can suddenly give their opinion of what has just happened, but the structural issues that are the root causes of violent conflicts are very rarely denounced or studied within opinion centres, political groups, business lobbies or media outlets. And when political powers seek to reassure their citizens, they do so **by adding fuel to the fire of the conflict** (threats, more bombs, blockades...), **never tackling any of the causes** of the harm, suffering and barbarity. This reassurance that is offered is like a caricature, because we from the pacifist world will never tire of repeating that the quest for maximum security only generates more insecurity. If you don't believe me, just take a look at the atomic arsenal: it gives no reassurance to anybody nowadays.

There is yet a third issue: **violence is learnt, and it is learnt socially from a very young age**. A society that does not fully live by social cohesion, that allows a growing economic and social inequality, fewer equal opportunities and more people being marginalised, is a violent society that enhances injustice that causes and fuels violence, in an endless spiral. A society that is based on strict competition, and never on collaboration; a society that feeds its children violence night and day, cannot hope for living in fraternity and peacefully.

It will therefore become necessary to work in pro of justice from where each of us stand and taking our responsibilities onboard so that peace can lie within everyone's hearts and minds. Otherwise we'll just be daydreamers.

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