



Can peace be created positively?

An old and primitive method to create peace has been: kill the enemy.

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Now that the global village is becoming smaller and smaller due to modern means of transportation and communication, the question has become more urgent than ever: How to establish peace positively and enable widespread sustainable progress on this planet? Each change of power in one of the nuclear weapon states in the world is like a russian roulette for planet earth. What if the next leader turns out to be mentally unstable or vulnerable to the “Jan van Speijk” syndrome? The search for positive ways to create peace has hence become a necessity. Many traditions and initiatives are already there that can contribute to positive peace creation, including ... the humanities, linguistics and social sciences, which need to be positively introduced to primary and secondary education. We propose here to develop a method of peace creation through textual-conceptual memes (in the classical sense of the term) and through non-violent, transformative action.

As we are currently witnessing profound, rapid and unprecedented societal transformations, we see that they are sometimes accompanied by violence, sometimes without violence, recently also again in Europe and a wide area around the Mediterranean. Apparently, the success of a transformation of contemporary societies is not determined by violence in itself, but rather by factors such as the size and intensity of the participation of the community concerned. It has recently been found (study by V. Dudouet and H. Clark, 2009) that, rather than armed strategies, it is nonviolent resistance and activism which require the active participation of the largest part of a society ...

See further a recently published article in French (“Des conflits armés ...”, Houben 2016).

This “peace creation project” can be downloaded here:

[peace-creation-project-english](#)

The “peace creation project” in English (*with a few updates 2024*) can be read without downloading [here](#).

Deze bijdrage aan de veiligheidsdiscussie is nu ook in het Nederlands beschikbaar:

[project-vrede-creëren-nl](#)

Summaries in various languages of this “peace creation project” can be downloaded here:

[From armed conflicts to ... SUMMARY RESUME RESUMEN](#)

[From armed conflicts to ... SUMMARY Arabic](#)

[From armed conflicts to ... SUMMARY Chinese](#)

[From armed conflicts to ... SUMMARY German](#)

[From armed conflicts to ... SUMMARY Greek](#)

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[From armed conflicts to ... SUMMARY Hindi](#)
[From armed conflicts to ... SUMMARY Russian](#)
[From armed conflicts to ... SANGRAHA Sanskrit](#)
[From armed conflicts to ... SUMMARY Swahili](#)
[From armed conflicts to ... SUMMARY Wolof](#)

(Un grand merci à tous ceux qui nous ont aidé pour les traductions et les ajustements des traductions; corrections, suggestions for improvement and additional translations are most welcome.)

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an earlier version appeared in

After Paris - 13.11.15 : conflits, exodes, attentats. Notes et analyses de chercheurs du monde entier,

par Collectif sous la direction de Pierre Musso. Paris : Editions Manucius, 2016. pp. 110-113 under the title

DES CONFLITS ARMÉS À LA COMPÉTITION DANS LA CRÉATION DE PAIX ET DE PROGRÈS :

UN PROJET DE GESTION MÉMÉTIQUE

From armed conflicts to competition in creating peace and progress : a memetic management project

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AT PRESENT we are witnessing profound, rapid and unprecedented societal transformations, sometimes with violence, sometimes without violence, also recently in Europe and in the wide periphery of the Mediterranean. It turns out that a successful transformation of contemporary societies that have already lost much of the rigidity they still had fifty years or a century ago, is not determined by violence in itself, but rather by factors such as the size and intensity of the participation of the community involved. Rather than armed strategies, it is nonviolent resistance *and nonviolent activism* which require the active participation of the widest section of society.¹ The belief that a state or a revolutionary group can establish a better society with violence and brute force, still defended in the nineteenth and early twentieth century,² has proved to be hardly less unforgivably naïve than hitting with a hammer on a pile of planks in the hope that a chair will emerge.

In order to prevent a too violent societal transformation which risks destroying in the process the very people for whom the transformation is sought, we need, as in chemistry and biochemistry, catalysts which facilitate the transformation and guarantee a broad participation of the units concerned – catalysts such as large well-organized festivals,³

ceremonies and state rituals, beautiful concerts, and projects such as the doubly memetic project proposed here.

ACCORDING TO SEVERAL religious traditions, a community can avoid and escape calamities and disasters if a limited number of people in it live a righteous and / or spiritual life. According to the monks of a monastery in the Netherlands where I was visitor for a few days in the 1980s, their prayers and religious life contributed to the prosperity and progress of the region and the country. According to the Book of Genesis 18, God wanted to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of the great “clamor” and severe “error” of their inhabitants. At the request of Abraham, God is nevertheless ready to spare the two cities, in order not to kill the “righteous” people together with the “guilty” ones, if he can find fifty “righteous” people, even if he can find only ten of them.

A canonical text of Buddhism, the Mahāparinibbānasutta, says that Ajātasattu, king of the powerful kingdom of Magadha, had sent his minister to consult the Buddha on the chances of success of an attack on the Confederation of the Vajji – a neighbouring country having an administrative organization resembling that of a republic. The Buddha explained that the Vajji will progress as long as they fulfill certain conditions: they regularly assemble and disperse in peace to settle their affairs; they show respect for their elders and think it worthwhile to listen to them; they refrain from abducting women and girls; they protect the monks.

An ancient text of one of the classical Indian systems of thought, the Yogasūtra, predicts a tangible effect if a practitioner of Yoga is deeply nonviolent in his mind, in his words and in his actions: enmity decreases in his environment. The Indian epics and classical literary works describe hermitages of great sages where even the enmity between wild beasts has disappeared (Houben 1999: 141).

THESE TRADITIONS of creating peace (1) deserve to be studied historically from an evolutionary, memetic perspective; (2) their practice, if anywhere alive, should be facilitated and encouraged through bonuses and national and international prizes ; (3) the practices must be studied from the point of

view of psychological and sociological principles that may be underlying them ; (4) a plan for memetic management (Whitty 2005) of the usable memetic elements *and textual-conceptual memes* can next be formulated, (5) in order to generate a competitive momentum that contributes to the peace and the progress of all concerned countries.

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1. Dudouet & Clark 2009, p. 9 : “nonviolent resistance could be said to demand greater activity from a wider section of the population than would armed strategies.” [↵](#)
2. For instance, Georges Sorel quoted in Houben & v. Kooij 1999: 2. [↵](#)
3. Bennet et al. 2014. [↵](#)
1. ^[1]From the time that nuclear weapons have become available first to one country, next to several and now to many countries with quite diverging ideologies, policies, state-forms etc., the usual primitive method of peace creation – kill the enemy, through conventional weapons, and, if deemed necessary, through nuclear weapons – is bound to be, or to become, sooner or later, self-defeating. Non-violent methods have been proposed and developed and experimented with, in the past, with various degrees of success. They were not more than well-intended alternatives for the old method. At present, to develop non-violent methods to create peace for sustainable progress is no longer an “alternative” but a necessity. [↵](#)