

Book Reviews

Review by Elise Boulding

Peace Studies from a Global Perspective: Human Needs in a Cooperative World.
Edited by Ursula Oswald Spring. Delhi: Maadhyam Book Services (2000).

Peace Studies From a Global Perspective is an important book for the international peace studies community. Edited by Mexico-based environmentalist and former International Peace Research Association (IPRA) president Ursula Oswald Spring and assembled from papers presented at the 17th General Conference of the IPRA held in Durban, South Africa in June 1998, this book vividly presents world developments from the perspective of the marginalized in the process. Globalization from above is seen as destructive of the capacities of the planet and people. However, the alternative globalization from below is also presented, a globalization rooted in the local knowledge and creative life ways, reaching out to networks across the planet. The authors come from 20 countries in Africa, the Asia Pacific region, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. Half of the authors are women, highlighting the often-overlooked but significant work being carried out by women peace researchers around the world.

Part I gives a valuable overview of contemporary peace studies. Howard Richards of Earlham College (of the U.S.) has written a profoundly thoughtful piece on the development of the concept of peacemaking in philosophy and the social sciences as well as in different traditions and cultures, with emphasis on peace as a process. This chapter is followed by a discussion of the European-Chinese perspective by Regina Watkin Kolb and Quing Chao. This chapter gives an invaluable overview of Eastern traditions of thought in contrast to Western traditions. The reader is invited to think seriously about what has been lost in contemporary peace studies by overlooking Eastern traditions. Li Shaojun further explores the Chinese concept of globalization as captured in the phrase “under heaven”. The non-exclusionary nature of that phrase, which has no equivalent in Western one-world concepts, is emphasized.

Mary Soledad Perpnan, of the Philippines, has long been one of IPRA’s most articulate scholar-activists in calling attention to globalization’s crushing effect in two-thirds of the world. Perpnan describes the impact of industrialization on women and children,

particularly as rights to land are lost which ultimately leads to marginalization and wage slavery. Ursula Spring closes this section with a challenge to peace researchers to counter the destructive effects of globalization through further exploration of the ecologically based concept of sustainable development. She recommends an historical comparative analysis and utilization of alternative technologies and processes of social production in rural and urban settings. This leads to visualizing a utopian future comprising a worldwide consciousness of co-responsibility for the state of the earth and its people.

Part II, "Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution," opens with an overview of forms of third-party intervention by Marta Martinelli (of Italy), co-convener of IPRA's Commission on Internal Conflicts. Acknowledging that this is already a well-studied field, Martinelli makes a special plea for a more in-depth study of intractable conflicts – a phenomenon that is stalling many conflict resolution efforts at present. Luc Reyckler (Director of the Field Diplomacy Initiative in Belgium), who has provided leadership for IPRA's Commission on Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building, gives a cogent exposition of a valuable new tool for scholars, practitioners, and diplomats in his piece on Conflict Impact Assessment (CIAS). The CIAS method offers a wider approach to the complex interactions between conflict transformation and development and between sustainable development and peace.

The inclusion of two articles from South Africa on the contributions of the Bahais to peacemaking through their proposal for a National World Peace Council (T. Nomveta, a co-convener of IPRA's Religious and Peace Commission) and through the Bahai's distinctive approach to spiritual education for peace (Sepideh Rouhani) is a useful reminder that faith traditions have an important role to play in peace processes. A more general overview of that special role of faith traditions is lacking, and this is to be regretted.

Ivan Ivekovic, a Russian scholar now at the American University in Cairo and convener of IPRA's Commission on Internal Conflicts, contributes a rich comparative study of contemporary ethnic conflict in the context of long-term historical processes of changing models of production and models of appropriation. In the process, he references a galaxy of outstanding thinkers in this tradition. Ivekovic concludes that contemporary authoritarian cultures and nationalistic states are, in fact, a product of modernity, namely, massive displacement from agrarian communities into anonymous urban industrial society, which generates efforts to recreate the lost rural experience of community. Moving to a specific conflict zone, Ada Aharoni (of Israel), co-convener of IPRA's Culture and Communications Commission, offers an approach to the Arab-Palestinian Israeli conflict through a mutual learning about each other's cultures and self-images with the goal of replacing the older enemy images with new understandings. Peace films, poetry and theater from each community must be made more visible to the other, both through school curricula and in the public media. This requires Israeli-Palestinian cultural collaboration; in fact, this can be thought of as a research partnership to develop a culture of peace. Nduba Echezona (of Nigeria) gives an all-too-brief glimpse of African efforts to establish a regional conflict mechanism and a regional African force. What is needed is an update on the follow-up to the OAU Cairo statement, which was in itself an important step in this direction.

Jannie Malan of South Africa's ACCORD writes a thought-provoking piece on guarding against inertia, pointing out the dangers of inducing dependence on outside peacemakers. Malan also points out the need for developing "attitudinal energy" for the work of conflict resolution, and awareness among locals of the competence and skills they do have. Matt Moge kwu (of Swaziland), co-convener of IPRA's Culture and Communications Commission, offers a serious discussion of media and regional peace in Africa. He focuses on the problem of media censorship and the importance of generating more public discourse on this issue in Africa itself, in order to generate a public demand by Africans for better media. Moving from Africa to India, Rohan Guneratna, now at the University of St. Andrew (Scotland), furnishes an analysis of the role of the state and non-state actors in South Asia in the illicit transfer of conventional weapons. Guneratana builds a compelling case for strong regional and international control on weapons flows across national borders.

The last article in this thought-provoking series on regional conflicts is by Maria Villareal, co-convener of IPRA's International Human Rights Commission and an activist with the Defense for Children in Guatemala. She presents the sad story of non-compliance with the UN-brokered Peace Agreement in Guatemala, based on the work of the Commission for Historical Clarification. Her account underlines the importance of continuing public pressure for follow-up on the post-conflict agreements, so that policies of national reconciliation move beyond words only.

Part III, "Peace Education and Global Citizenship," provides an upbeat ending for this book, since peace education has been one of the strengths of the peace research community from its early days. Frank Hutchinson, a leading Australian futurist who has done outstanding work on peace curriculum development for children, reminds us that the point of such programs is to prepare children to become futures creators. He points to the general tendency to ignore children's views and the reality of youth pessimism, with the U.S. and Australia leading the world in youth suicides. Offering a social context for valuing what children think and the importance of preparing them for futures-creation, Hutchinson calls for far more creativity in planning the educational experience of children. Ian Harris, convener of IPRA's oldest commission, the Peace Education Commission, is concerned with preparing teachers so that peace education is incorporated in their teaching practices. Overburdened and under-supported, teachers struggle with what to include in their classroom work with children. Concepts of peacemaking and conflict resolution may be squeezed out unless there is administrative and community support for their inclusions, even though teachers may have had training in this type of work with students. Harris gives us an important and highly realistic presentation of an idealistic program that needs practical support to work. Irma Ghosen (of Lebanon), focusing on the seeds of peace in children's literature, provides a glimpse into the challenges for teachers in war-torn countries, by introducing peace-building skills in the classroom. There are overlooked potentials in the existing children's literature to the extent that it encourages imagination and thus creativity in children. The themes of moral dilemmas and overcoming obstacles and the experience of empathizing with characters in stories (including "cultural others") open the possibilities of

identifying with change agents and developing new understanding of change itself. Quality children's literature stands in sharp contrast to commercial children's books and comics that are often replete with violence.

In the "Epilogue", the editor reminds us of the challenges we face in the peace research community. This includes fully understanding the destructive aspects of many socio-economic, political, and environmental practices as well as the importance of developing a model for world development that involves more attention to the conditions and practices of peace building. Fuller involvement of women and children in creating a sustainable earth and people-nurturing modes of production in a future world that thrives on diversity and awareness of the interdependence of all life is also urged. This book needs to be widely read and reflected upon, as the international peace research community prepares for its own work of helping to create cultures of peace for the twenty-first century. (Note: The reader will need to make allowances for occasional poor or incomplete translations due to the magnitude of the translation task with so many languages to work from. The results are worth the effort!)

Review by Klaus Töpfer

Global Environmental Policies: Institutions and Procedures

Edited by Ho-Won Jeong. Houndmills: Palgrave (2001).

In the last few decades, sustainable development and environmental protection have become one of the most important domains of international politics and public policy. This trend is paralleled by the growing importance of the issue of environmental governance. Clearly, the rapid pace of global change has put pressure on the environmental policy capacity of governments. Policy issues that governments face include the increasingly transboundary nature of environmental problems, interlinkages between various environmental problems, implementation of the increasing number of multilateral environmental agreements, growing urbanization, the increasing role of the civil society in influencing public policies and the transition towards a knowledge based information society. Understandably, governments worldwide find that they do not have adequate knowledge to respond to the environmental challenges posed by rapid technological advances and the forces of globalization.

One aspect of effective environmental governance needs to be made clear. The regulation of global economic activities is strongly shifting towards being organized at the global level. International governance is being increasingly dedicated to income growth through free movement of goods and services, capital and labour. It is therefore important

that effective environmental governance is construed as sharing authority between environmental and economic institutions at all levels.

Good environmental governance demands public participation to ensure that environmental, political, social and economic priorities are based on a broad societal consensus, and that the poorest and most vulnerable populations can influence political decision-making, particularly with respect to the allocation of natural resources.

The role of the private sector in sustainable development cannot be ignored since it is the primary source of opportunities for productivity, employment, income-generation, public investment, enterprise development, and economic growth. Sustainable development is also impossible without the participation of the civil society. Civil society organizations facilitate public participation through social mobilization. The capacity of governments to engage civil society is critical to a nation's capability to sustain political and economic opportunities and social cohesion.

It is important to recognize that although it is the scientific and technical challenges of sustainable development and environmental conservation that will occupy the attention of most people, it is the institutional and behavioural challenges that will prove to be more formidable over time. Facing the environmental challenges of the 21st century will, ultimately, be a matter of good policies, effective leadership, creative and adaptable agencies, concerned and involved citizens, good information and rational decision making.

Ho-Won Jeong's book is a valuable addition to the growing discipline of international environmental policymaking. The contributions to this volume show that we cannot pretend that any one perspective can solve environmental problems, but that a range of complementary perspectives can help policymakers and advisors in their continuing efforts to understand environmental problems and to address them more effectively. The contributions to this book show that to improve the performance of environmental policies the backward look must be complemented by an ability to look forward at the long-term consequences of present actors.