



# The Bulletin

of the Australian World Citizens Association

<http://www.worldcitizens.org.au>

Volume 7, Issue 2 – Summer 2010-11

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## President's Column

Inch by Inch

*On the international scene, the most interesting news has been the popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world. It seems that authors like Samuel Huntingdon, who argue that democracy is a Western concept, and alien to other cultures such as the Chinese or the Islamic world, were wrong. Muslims are interested in democracy after all. Of course, the examples of Turkey and Indonesia should have convinced us of that anyway.*

*The other hopeful news is that the newSTART Treaty between the US and Russia, which limits ICBM warheads to 1550 on each side, is now being ratified. Inch by inch the nuclear threat is being wound back, although there is still no sign that any of the nuclear powers will give up their nuclear deterrent entirely. My belief is that they will only give up their weapons entirely when it is safe to do so, that is, when our system of international law and governance is strong enough to guarantee the security of everyone in common.*

*Meanwhile, we continue to plod along on the home front. The exciting news is that a small sub-committee of our members has volunteered to push forward the campaign for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA). This is the best organized and most advanced of all the initiatives pushing for democratic global governance, and we must do our best to push it along in our region. Michael Cornish and Kizzy Gandy are both doing postgraduate degrees in international relations, one at the University of South Australia and the other at ANU, and Michael has previously worked closely with Gareth Evans. Crawford Yorke ▶*

## Tribute to Stella Cornelius (1919 - 2010)

AO, OBE, Hon DLitt (Macq.), FAIM

A founding member of the World Citizens Association, Stella Cornelius died on 20 December 2010 at the age of 91. A prominent Australian peace activist, member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and pioneer in conflict resolution, WCA was just one of the many organisations Stella Cornelius was involved with. Such organisations included the Conflict Resolution Network, which she co-founded with her daughter Helena in 1986.

Her contributions to peace and human rights were recognised with an Order of Australia, an honorary doctorate at Macquarie University and acknowledgement as a "peace messenger" by the United Nations. In the year 2000 Stella Cornelius, together with the indigenous rights activist Faith Bandler, was honoured by Nelson Mandela for their contributions to conflict resolution. In 2005, she was nominated among 1000 "peace women" for the Nobel Prize.

In 2010, when she was awarded the UN Australia Peace Award, she was arguing that should go beyond remembering war and could be a reminder of our desire for peace".



In 2010, when she was awarded the UN Association of Australia Peace Award, she was arguing that should go beyond remembering war and could be a reminder of our desire for peace".

I was privileged to attend the memorial service held for Stella Cornelius on 20 January 2011 at the Northside Conference Centre, Crows Nest along with about 400 others, all of whom had been touched in some way by Stella. The service was beautifully conducted by the celebrant Annie Lewis-Bramall, prior to which we enjoyed watching a series of photos taken at different times in Stella's life. Seven speakers spoke in celebration of the many qualities which made Stella Cornelius the wonderful caring person she was. These included Professors Kevin Clements and Stuart Rees, both well known in the area of peace-building and conflict prevention; Jane Sloane, Executive Director, International Women's Development Agency; Rabbi Zalman Kastel, founder of Together for Humanity which encourages mutual respect and cooperation to replace prejudice; Donna Jacobs Sife, social activist specialising in performances emphasising non-violence and conflict resolution; Dr Keith Suter, media personality in the areas of social policy and foreign affairs who spoke of his 38 years working with Stella.

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*in WA has also volunteered to assist them. Michael will report on the present state of play soon.*

*Our application for DGR status (tax deductibility) has finally gone in to DFAT, and a result can be expected any week now. If we succeed in getting tax deductibility, we can begin a much more serious effort to raise funds, both for our overseas aid project and for the association itself.*

*In another development, a first meeting has been held to discuss a proposal for a Centre for Peace, International Law and Global Governance at the University of New South Wales. A tentative promise of seed funding has come from an international Buddhist organization. We must hope that this idea bears fruit in the next year or two.*

*Finally, I would like to renew my thanks to all of you who are contributing funds or working hard to further the aims of our association. Wali Islam has been working tirelessly on the aid project, and Michael de Mol is reporting elsewhere on a solar cooker project he is organizing for Bangladesh. Brett lends a professional touch to the Bulletin, Alan Ryan maintains the website up to the minute, Daryl keeps a watch on the school curriculum, and Michelle Cavanagh provides the backbone of the organization at the helm of the Treasury.*

*To all of you my heartfelt thanks.*

*All the best, from*

*Chris Hamer.*

Jenny Dixon-Elliott sang Song of Joy with everyone joining in the last chorus. Helena Cornelius told the audience her mother was a constant task master for peace whose favourite saying was to “create centres of loving kindness wherever you go”. Stella Cornelius certainly did that. I'm proud to have known her – thank you Stella for your friendship, wisdom, passion and persistence for peace.

■ Michelle Cavanagh

Our 'patroness' Liliane Metz-Krencker is in Sydney, and we are organizing the usual lunch with her on the northern beaches. The tentative date is Thursday 24th February. Can I ask any Sydneysiders who would like to come along to let Chris know fairly promptly, so we can make a booking?

## Treasurers Report

### As at 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011

To date we have \$1505.79 in our working account with no outstanding bills due. Since the last report in May 2010 we have made payments as follows:

- \$22.50 Webcity Australia Pty Ltd
- \$77.00 Dept of Fair Trading
- \$84.00 Printing expenses
- \$12.90 Envelopes
- \$36.00 Stamps

To date we have \$704.06 in the Aid Project account. Since the last report we have made payments as follows:

- \$700.00 Bangladesh Project for 3 months + function
- \$500.00 Oxfam Australia for Pakistan Floods
- \$500.00 Medecins Sans Frontieres for Pakistan Floods
- \$1220.00 Bangladesh Project again
- \$100.00 Expenses for Annual Function
- \$316.30 Expenses related to our WCA Aid Project Fund (Postage \$52.30, Printing \$251.10 & Envelopes \$12.90)

Subscriptions valid to 30/06/2011 paid by the following:

Michael de Mol	Alan Ryan	John Withanage
Michael Cornish	Glenda Sladen	Kizzy Gandy
Crawford Yorke	Weini Samuel	Doug Everingham
Chris Hamer	Daryl Le Cornu	Keith Suter
Michelle Cavanagh	Alistair Hamer	Sarh Brenen
April Hamer	John Smith	Stephen Preimeier
Joe Wolfe		

## Meeting Reports

### Zagora: Peoples Congress Meeting

I have just returned from a meeting of the Peoples Congress in the town of Zagora, on the edge of the desert in Southern Morocco. We had some useful meetings, as well as some fascinating glimpses of life in Morocco.

The Peoples Congress is a model world parliament, with delegates elected by members of the World Citizens Registry, based in Paris. The Registry issues “passports” to its members as world citizens, which of course are not recognized by nation states, but serve as a symbolic gesture of faith in democratic global governance. Our friend and advisory board member Liliane Metz-Krencker was President of the Congress before Zagora.

In Zagora new elections for the executive were held, where the masterly political strategy of Liliane won the day. The new President is Rob Wheeler from the US, and the Vice-President is Francisco Plancarte from Mexico, while Liliane is now Secretary and yours truly is also on the Executive. This is quite a coup. Rob Wheeler and Francisco Plancarte are two of the most prominent leaders of the worldwide movement for a global parliament. Rob is President of WATUN, the World Alliance to Transform the UN, and Francisco founded the association ‘Planetafilia’ (Love the World) and PARLMUN, another model world parliament, in Mexico.

Several Commissions or working groups were set up. One was to link and co-ordinate between various model world parliaments, including the Congress itself, the World Parliament Experiment of Rasmus Tenbergen in Germany, Francisco’s PARLMUN, and the Model World Parliament of WATUN. Another Commission is to establish links with the World Federalist Movement (WFM), and the United European Federalists (UEF). Others were set up to study particular questions such as the clauses in national constitutions which provisionally allow for the ceding of some

degree of sovereignty to supranational institutions, and yet another group will work on supporting the campaign for a UNPA.

All in all, it was a useful and productive meeting, although a problem is infighting within the Congress and its supporting organizations.



### Wellington: Oceania UNPA meeting

On 14th October, I flew over to Wellington in New Zealand to attend a meeting on the UNPA chaired by Gordon Glass of Vision 2020, UK, a member of the Steering Committee of CEUNPA (Campaign for the Establishment of a UN Parliamentary Assembly). The meeting was hosted by Sue Kedgley, a New Zealand Greens MP, and attended by seven other New Zealand MPs from all parties. Unfortunately no Australian MPs were able to be present, although Bob Brown has moved a motion in favour of a UNPA in the Australian Senate (defeated 37 votes to 5?). Among those present were Keith Locke (briefly), NZ Greens MP, spokesman for Foreign Affairs, and Kennedy Graham, NZ Greens MP, ex-Secretary-General, Parliamentarians for Global Action, who is very interested in these issues.

The meeting was round table and informal; some MPs were only able to be present briefly. Gordon Glass opened proceedings by outlining the aims of CEUNPA, and the progress made so far. The campaign was launched in Geneva in 2007, and has so far gathered signatures from over 800 sitting MPs from around the world and 200 former MPs, and endorsements from



- Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former Secretary-General of the UN
- The European Parliament;
- The Pan-African Parliament
- The Latin-American Parliament
- The Parliament of Argentina
- Some 260 NGOs etc

Aim: to address the “democratic deficit” at the UN by establishing a Parliamentary Assembly, made up initially of delegate MPs from the member states, to advise the General Assembly on matters of global policy, and give “We, the people” a voice at the UN. In time, it would hopefully gather authority, influence and power to become the ‘people’s chamber’ at the UN, with directly elected representatives, following the path of the European Parliament. This would give politicians a voice at the UN, to enliven the stultifying drone of bureaucrats and diplomats.

**Possible Methods**

1. Employ Article 22 of the UN Charter, by which the General Assembly could create a UNPA as a subsidiary body, without need of any amendment to the Charter;
2. By means of a treaty between interested member states (a path advocated by Andrew Strauss)
3. Through a committed group of parliamentarians themselves, c.f. the Inter-Parliamentary Union

International parliamentary institutions are increasingly equipped with competences and functions that “help them to fulfill genuine parliamentary oversight functions.”

whether a UNPA is the right way to go about fixing these problems of global governance. Philip Twyford was doubtful; the National MPs said they were ‘interested’ in these ideas but gave no pledge of support. Only the Greens were wholly in favour. (Interpolation: I’ve expressed my doubts about this approach previously. But at least it’s one possible way to democratic global governance, so let’s give it a go!)

**Continues Page 6 ▶**

**International Parliamentary Institutions**

**International Parliamentary Institutions “help to overcome democracy deficits”**

A new study published by the Committee for a Democratic U.N. (KDUN), a think tank based in Berlin, concludes that international

parliamentary institutions such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe or the Pan-African Parliament “all introduce a democratic element into regional and global governance.” The study analyses and classifies more than 100 international parliamentary institutions.

Around 70 of them were established within the last 10 years. “There is a clear trend towards stronger interaction of parliamentarians across national borders and towards the creation of formal mechanisms for their inclusion into international organizations. The institutions might not be in the public spotlight. Nevertheless, they do play an increasingly important role,” said Claudia Kissling, author of the study and Vice-Chair of the Committee.

According to the study, international parliamentary institutions are increasingly equipped with competences and functions that “help them to fulfill genuine parliamentary

**Reactions**

There was a general agreement that we need better management of global issues such as nuclear weapons, climate change, global poverty and the Millennium Development Goals, etc. There was general agreement that the present UN system is stifling and inadequate. (Philip Twyford: “The UN is stuffed”). There were some doubts, however,



oversight functions.” In this way, it is argued, they can contribute to overcoming existing democracy deficits. However, it is pointed out that the trend so far has not reached major international intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, or the World Trade Organization. “So far, none of them does possess a formal parliamentary body. This seriously weakens their legitimacy. We are convinced that the creation of a global parliamentary assembly will come onto the agenda sooner or later. The trend towards more parliamentary involvement will not be limited to regional organizations,” Ms. Kissling noted.

The head of the Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training at the National Assembly of Kenya and former Clerk of the Pan-African Parliament, Murumba Werunga, notes in the preface of the new publication that international parliamentary institutions “have so far proved to be the best placed fora to bridge the gap between the governed and international governance. One therefore sees in the international parliamentary institutions a compelling rationale for the creation of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly.”

Professor Lucio Levi, head of the research program “International Democracy Watch” at the Centre for Studies on Federalism in Italy, said that the study “is a very important contribution to the advancement of our knowledge of international democratic bodies. It fills a huge vacuum that was present in this field of research.”

Download the study from KDUN's website: [www.kdun.org/1290/the-legal-and-political-status-of-international-parliamentary-institutions/](http://www.kdun.org/1290/the-legal-and-political-status-of-international-parliamentary-institutions/)

■ Andreas Bummel in Berlin, courtesy of Democratic World Federalists

## Meeting Reports Continued

It was proposed that a cross-party grouping of NZ MPs should be set up to study and (hopefully) support the proposal. Keith Lock's assistant Claire volunteered to act as coordinator/secretary on this. Again, no absolute pledges were made by Labour or National MPs to take part, but hopefully this will come to fruition. It would be a most useful outcome of the meeting.

Gordon and Ann Glass were going to make a tour of the Pacific islands afterwards. It was recommended that they explore the possibility of getting declarations of support from The Pacific Islands Forum, or The Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, and/or UNAA, UNANZ

## Problems

Doubts over the UNPA included:

1. “It would only add one more layer of bureaucracy to the UN”. It would initially have no power and no responsibility, and would be just another “talk shop”. Why would anybody listen? On the other hand, as practicing politicians, the Assembly should command respect as an independent voice of the people, and could over time gather weight and power, as has the European Parliament.
2. It could collide with, or usurp the role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, an international group of MPs from many countries which already exists (and was founded in the 19th century). This appears to be a big stumbling block, e.g. both major parties in Australia apparently oppose the UNPA concept. On the other hand, why shouldn't the IPU become the UNPA? Apparently a struggle is going on within the IPU on this issue, and about 50% of members are in favour of this outcome.

## Conclusions

I enjoyed the meeting: it was invigorating to meet with such a group, who agreed on the need for better and more democratic global governance. The CEUNPA have undertaken a



courageous venture, which seems to be getting considerable traction, and we should certainly support it wholeheartedly.

### **Actions**

- Try to recruit interested MPs, including Mike Moore, Bob Brown, Sarah Hansen-Young, and the Foreign Affairs spokesmen for both major parties in Australia;
- Add contacts: Gordon Glass, Claire, NZ Greens
- Distribute Buenos Aires Declaration

■ Chris Hamer

## **Conditions of an Unforced Consensus on Human Rights**

*This essay is continued from the last bulletin.*

Taylor (in Bauer and Bell, *East Asian Challenge for Human Rights*, pp. 124-44) argues that for unforced consensus to exist human rights must be separated from their philosophical background. Taylor argues the progress of human rights to date has been unnecessarily grounded on a philosophy of humanistic entitlement. Tracing the development of human rights back to their origin in Ancient Rome as *ius* it is clear rights have always been linked to human agency. Taylor attempts to give an example of how rights could be undergo philosophical divorce in Thailand by replacing human agency with two ideas from the core of Protestant Buddhism. First, Protestant Buddhism recasts traditional teaching about individual responsibility for attaining Enlightenment, to general concepts individual responsibility. Second, Protestant Buddhism gives a novel implementation of Ahimsa (the Buddhist doctrine of nonviolence) to require recognising personal autonomy.

Taylor's example is soft for two main reasons. First, Taylor is making use of a dilute version of Buddhism that is not adopted by all Thai people. To be adopted in Thailand, some kind of Imperialist effort would be needed. This is

exactly the kind of forced consensus Taylor is trying to avoid. Second, Protestant's has considerable overlap with liberalism. The underlying criticism is that the Thai example is not strong enough to prove Taylor's point. To overcome this softness a less complementary example such as Lee Kwan Yew's representation of Singapore is necessary. While it is clear Taylor's example is not strong enough to prove he is right, his examples do not disprove his account. To determine Taylor's his account is coherent a charitable position is taken though it is doubted his argument could withstand examples with greater discord – on the grounds of logic.

Taylor's Protestant Buddhism example shows that human rights can be divorced from their Judaeo-Christian origin; the problem is what do human rights become? Because a Protestant Buddhist perspective is now being adopted the question according to Taylor becomes what are the consequences of interrupting an individual's pursuit of Enlightenment? A comprehensive search of western databases did not yield a single answer to the question of what is the Protestant Buddhist opinion on the consequences of interfering with a person's path to Enlightenment. Silent on the topic, it is reasonable to assume Protestant Buddhism relies on the answers of more traditional schools of Buddhism (such as Theravada and Mahayana). The traditional Buddhist schools consider the quest for Enlightenment to be a journey that spans many lifetimes. The traditional schools agree with Taylor that the path to Enlightenment is a personal journey. Thus interference on the path to Enlightenment is the responsibility of the seeking not the person creating interference.

It appears Taylor assumed that by showing Buddhists can adopting the value of individual autonomy he could adopt all the Western conventions and ideas surrounding individual autonomy. The problem is this contradicts commonsense and Taylor's own argument that



consensus cannot involve the disregarding of other cultures. In effect Taylor has denounced reliance on western philosophy and thus dropped a single bag but continues to carry the rest of his Western baggage. In most Western philosophy, interfering with personal autonomy is considered a serious moral wrong. However, using Buddhist teachings as a core interference with autonomy (or the path to enlightenment) is a part of everyday life. In Taylor's own words "they [Westerners such as himself] tend to anachronistically to think that people must have always felt this way".

*This essay will be continued in the next bulletin.*

To get a full copy of this paper please email the editor at: [Brett.Samuel@gmail.com](mailto:Brett.Samuel@gmail.com).

■ Brett Samuel

## Solar Cooker Project

Solar cookers can reduce the amount of firewood needed for cooking; and save the forests. The area of our sponsored school in Bangladesh, for instance, is frequently subjected to severe erosion. With solar power (different to solar cookers) school children have a better opportunity to do homework and study if they have an electric light, and hence better opportunity for a successful education. Schools can give a vastly better quality of education with the use of computers and maybe a small satellite dish for internet access. In Australia if your work office had no electricity for a day your work would grind to a halt. So too, in developing countries, having electricity can contribute significantly to a person's ability to generate income.

Respect International, is an NGO based in Canada, developing Solar Cookers for West Africa. The solar cooker is a small oven concentrating solar energy using reflectors for cooking food. A representative from Respect International is helping WCAA to develop a solar cooker for Bangladesh conditions.

WCAA is also looking at the possibility of introducing solar and maybe wind technology to the School that WCAA sponsors in Bangladesh. Wali Islam is currently in Bangladesh doing some initial investigations that are crucial to the success of both of these projects.

There is another NGO called The Solar Electric Light Fund. (SELF). This organisation puts together solar packages for about \$400 for individuals living in developing countries; which it sells to an individual, and then uses that same \$400 to provide micro credit for other locals in the same village also wanting solar power. They also teach a local how to install and maintain the equipment, providing them with a cottage industry for their area. As yet they have not done any projects in Bangladesh. If Bangladesh is not in their area of proposed projects, then as Wali frequently visits Bangladesh I am hoping to convince him to learn from SELF how to install and maintain the equipment, and how the micro credit works, so that he can initiate the project on his next visit.

These are some very good reasons us world citizens to support our fellow brothers and sisters who are doing it tough. If you feel you are able to support these projects in some way (either financially, fundraising in your local area or with technical expertise) then don't be shy in offering your valued assistance. Please contact Michael de Mol at [m.demol@unsw.edu.au](mailto:m.demol@unsw.edu.au) for expressions of interest. Please put "Solar Project" as email subject to minimise spam deletion.

■ Michael de Mol

## Safety Thirst Award

Congratulations to WCA member Brett Samuel who together with his [Newton's Nerds](#) business partner Peter Evans led a team that recently won the Sydney Genesis Business Plan Prize for Best Social or Not-for-profit Entrepreneurship Award. The other business team members are: Valentine Cupac, Dr Niko Tiliopoulos, Wei Ni



Ma (also a WCA member) and Errol Samuel. The team's plan is titled "[Safety Thirst](#)".

Executive Summary: Safety Thirst has a simple vision, safe drinking water for every person in the world. Easy to say, but it sounds impossible, right? Our solution is to focus on water analysis in developing countries. This problem might sound like a small issue compared with problems like war, or famine, but in fact water borne disease is the largest cause of death in developing countries. Unfortunately, as with so many other problems this world faces, the media is not interested. It simply is not exciting enough!

We are going to change that. By providing proper water testing, we are empowering communities to take control of their water supplies and better understand the causes of water borne disease. We are not going to do this with a radical new technology that is unproven. We are going to use a proven technique George Whiteside developed for urine and blood testing called zero-cost systems.

The idea of zero-cost systems is almost self-explanatory; reduce the cost of a system to as close to nothing as possible. This may sound inconceivable but zero-cost testing for blood and urine samples is already changing the way medical practitioners in developing countries work. Leveraging camera phone technology, tests that require expert analysis can now be done in real time. In the case of water this makes testing more affordable and more practical.

Although stage one trials are planned to take place in Bali, it is hoped stage two trials may be able to take place in Bangladesh.

The [Sydney Genesis Business Plan Competition](#) is an annual competition aiming to encourage a culture of innovation amongst students at the University of Sydney.

■ Brett Samuel



## Literary Corner

Here is a curious item that came to our attention from the Democratic World Federalists.



I, David Spielberg, recently published a novel, *On Deception Watch: A World Federation*

Novel that presents a plausible route to a world government of sorts. The story takes place about 25 years in the future and ends with a new paradigm for the legitimacy of a government.

The book follows the deadly consequences of successful, controlled laser fusion. Unanticipated by anyone, a visionary physicist/entrepreneur, Arthur Cranshaw is able to achieve the technological breakthrough of the century. But he still needs a key piece for his system to go commercial that only US military technology can supply. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Morgan Slaider, recognizes a surprising opportunity and the conspiracy begins. Along the way, you will witness assassination ("virtual" and real), Army and Air Force generals at war with each other, collapse of civil government, and a united community of nations reinvented along with the concept of legitimate governance.

The book seeks to answer the question of how the worldwide addiction to fossil fuels will finally be broken—and at what cost. With twists and turns, from fraud to revelation, the new order of the not-so-distant future finally takes you out of this world for the last component completing the march to virtually unlimited energy.

■ David Spielberg

Does anyone want to check out this book (or another) and write a brief review? If we have a good response the 'Literary Corner' can become a regular section in our Bulletin.

## Join the World Citizens of Australia



*World Citizens Association*

(Australia)

Incorporation No. INC9882127

<http://www.worldcitizens.org.au>

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Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Subscription Rates: Full	\$30
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Please complete this form and send together with your cheque made out to 'World Citizens Association (Australia)' to:

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Treasurer, World Citizens Association (Australia),  
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