

Towards a Workable World

By: Aaron C. Albrecht



I grew up spending the early part of my life in Costa Rica with my extended family. My mother is from Costa Rica and my grandparents live in an adobe house in a small town called Escazu. As children, my brothers and I would chase my grandmother's chickens in her sunny, tropical garden while my grandfather would pick fruit from his trees. My grandparents' home was seemingly a paradise. However, once we left the tranquility of their gardens and went exploring in the streets, the paradise quickly transformed into a darker place. We were confronted with the harsh reality of the quality of life for the majority of people there. The streets were dirty and in bad condition. The houses were made of tin and had barbed wire covering the front gates. Often there were drunken people sleeping in the streets, while others were begging for coins. I loved the tropical sanctuary of my grandparents' home, but seeing the conditions that many others lived in hurt my heart.

During childhood, my mother, who is an idealistic and spiritual woman, inculcated in me a belief that God put me on the earth for a purpose. I believed her with my whole heart. However, during adolescence I began to scrutinize that belief because it seemed to me naive. I rejected the belief for a period of time during my pre-college years which caused me to become lost in the world. I began to falter and wander-about in the dark wood of uncertainty, fighting to

again find the path of meaning and purpose in life. Now at age twenty-two and flowering into manhood, I am firm in the meaning of my life and the importance of my calling.

The ethos of Esperanto is the cornerstone upon which my life is built. I began studying Esperanto when I was a young boy so that I could exchange notes with my classmates in a secret language. Despite my childish aim and even before I began studying Esperanto, the seed of thought of the *Interna Ideo* of Esperanto, or the belief in a common humanity that exists across cultural boundaries, had been sown in my conscience through the humanity of my mother and father. When I was sixteen I was granted a scholarship to attend an intensive Esperanto immersion course in San Diego, California called the *Nord-Ameriko Somera Kurso* (NASK). This experience changed my life forever. I met friends from all over the world at NASK, friends that I always remember for their deep humanity and because of the shared sense of kinship we felt despite our cultural differences. These bonds of brotherhood and these formative international experiences have shaped my sense of social justice and service, have driven me to develop my intellectual and academic talents, and have influenced my career goals to one day become an instrument of world peace.

I hope to follow in the footsteps of my grandfather, who worked as a diplomat for the food and agricultural organization of the United Nations. Through his work, my grandfather helped impoverished communities of farmers in Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Spain, Italy, and Kenya to grow crops higher in nutrients in order to improve their standard of living. He had, as I do, a critical mind and a strong desire to solve humanitarian problems. His influence has shaped my interests in inequality between peoples and nations, international conflict and security, and peace.

The influences of my grandfather and my international experiences led me to study

sociology at Truman State University, a Midwestern liberal arts institution. I chose to study sociology because as a discipline it grants the freedom to inquire critically into diverse aspects of society including politics, economics, history, and the human effect of these on individuals. I dove into the study of international and domestic social problems, the history of modern political and economic structures of inequality, and the study of social and political philosophy in order to understand both the material conditions of humankind and the philosophical justification driving the social change that I hope to dedicate my life to achieving.

The development of these interests was driven forward during my sophomore year when I participated in a series of courses taught by Dr. Muhammed Asadi. Dr. Asadi is from Pakistan, and he gave me the opportunity to ask questions about his area of the world. He and I had long conversations about issues relating to US foreign policy and the relationship between the United States and other nations and people. These were the conversations that influenced me to focus my undergraduate research on a critical study of the United States' use of armed drones to conduct targeted killings in the tribal areas of Pakistan.

In conjunction with studying the controversial aspects of drone warfare in the context of the global war on terrorism, I conducted research into the social-psychological processes of social influence and attitude change. During the spring of 2014, I organized a two day campus symposium on drone warfare which included a documentary film screening and a public lecture given by invited guest Professor and retired Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson of The College of William and Mary in Virginia. I conducted attitudinal surveys before and after the presentations and measured a change in students' attitudes toward the use of drones. The symposium inspired meaningful discussion between faculty, students, and Professor Wilkerson. Through my independent research I learned that a single individual can positively influence his/her

community. The sense of fulfillment and meaning I found through integrating the pursuit of knowledge with socio-political activism made me firm in my conviction to continue my education. I applied to The Thomas Jefferson Program of Public Policy at the College of William and Mary where I have begun a master's degree concentrating on Global Governance and Policy. I am eager to continue exploring questions of international development, US foreign policy, international conflict, social justice and peace, and through continued study I hope to explore solutions to international social problems so that I can act on these in a career in the international arena.

In my analysis the three greatest problems facing the human family today are inequality between nations, violent conflict between peoples, and the environmental crisis. Connections exist between the historical causes of these problems, and therefore the solution must be comprehensive and holistic.

Material desperation plagues too many of the world's people to be morally acceptable. Relatively few wealthy, developed nations exist compared to the vast majority of nations that are underdeveloped. The story of the development of the modern world system reveals the way in which these inequalities came about. Western imperialism and colonialism sowed the seeds of contemporary impoverishment and underdevelopment of much of the world. The allure of wealth, power, and status gave way to the colonization of the Americas, East Indies, and Africa. The colonizers plundered these "newly discovered" lands of their resources and created structures of colonial governance to facilitate the transfer of wealth. Even after achieving independence, the Darwinist structure of the world economy and the anarchical dis-organization of the interstate system saw to it that these new nations continued to be exploited.

Nations warred for geostrategic, political, and economic reasons. Misunderstanding, fear,

and hate were sown amongst the human family to divide the nations against one another, so that particular nations could enhance their positions of privilege and power. Governments transformed the world into a battlefield in the pursuit of wealth, power, and security while the cost to humankind's welfare was brushed aside, considered trivial, and ultimately ignored.

This insatiable thirst for wealth and power amongst nations has begotten some of the world's greatest advances in science and technology, but it has done so at the expense of the rape, plunder, and commodification of Mother Nature and all of her children and their labors. The contemporary values of wealth, power, and status are esteemed greater than sustainable living, humility, and kindness. Humankind can see environmental calamity rising with the sun on the horizon.

Now, more than ever before, humankind finds itself in a position to put aside the misunderstanding, fear, and hate that exists between nations in order to unite and work cooperatively. The very existence the human race depends on this generation's ability to do just that.

It is upon us to change the structure of the interstate system from being Darwinian and anarchical to being cooperative and ordered. Only through the creation of a world federation of nation states based on global democracy can such a goal be achieved. In this way democracy can be brought to the world economy, interstate conflicts can be adjudicated through tribunals of international law, and the environmental crisis can be mitigated and reversed through a concerted international effort. Only through global democratic governance can this generation achieve the aim once articulated by L.L. Zamenhoff, creator of Esperanto, when he wrote:

*“Malamikeco de la nacioj
Falu, falu, jam temp' estas!
La tuta homaro en familio*

Kununuigi sin devas."

(Hatred of the nations

Fall, fall, it is already time!

The whole of humanity in one family

Must unite themselves.)