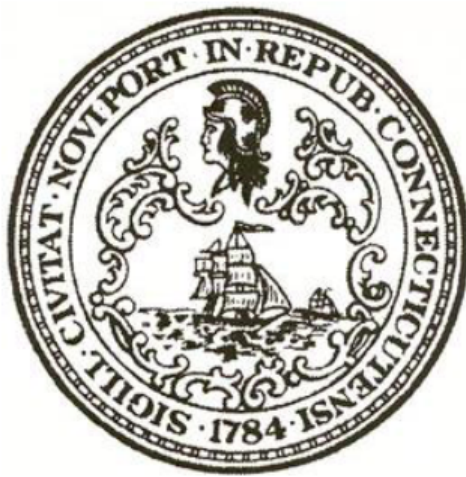


CITY OF NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

*A Peace Messenger City*

## **NEW HAVEN PEACE COMMISSION**



**THE STATE OF THE CULTURE OF PEACE  
IN NEW HAVEN 2015**



## THE STATE OF THE CULTURE OF PEACE IN NEW HAVEN 2015

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following analysis, revised each year, is based on interviews with local activists conducted by the New Haven Peace Commission. It is based on the concept of "culture of peace" as defined by the United Nations (see Appendix II) which consists of sustainable equitable development, democratic participation, equality of women, tolerance and solidarity, disarmament and security, education for peace, free flow of information and human rights, all of which are inter-related.

This year key word pronounced by all who were interviewed was "community" and we may judge all of the aspects of the culture of peace by how much they contributed or failed to contribute to the development of community spirit and resources. In this regard, there was good progress this year in tolerance and solidarity, while there were losses in development and human rights.

**Tolerance and solidarity**, and hence community spirit, were advanced by initiatives for restorative justice in the public schools, reception of refugees by the community and reinsertion of people returning from prison, all of which are supported by elected leaders, including Mayor Toni Harp and Governor Dannel Malloy.

**Human rights** for many New Haveners continued to suffer, especially with regard to the rights for employment and housing.

**Sustainable, equitable development** fell backwards this year. Hopes from previous years that New Haven Works would produce employment were largely unfulfilled. Development decisions continued to favor the construction of expensive housing, while affordable housing became more scarce than ever. And to make matters worse, the housing at Church Street South was condemned and hundreds of families were forced out.

More **democratic participation** is needed in development decisions. In other respects the Mayor and Board of Alders provide good representation. City elections were marked by lack of choice and lack of participation with the exception of the election of student representatives to the Board of Education which included good debate and contest.

Although **equality of women** remains to be achieved in many areas, Toni Harp's administration as mayor continues to advance women's equality as well as other aspects of the culture of peace. Attacks on Planned Parenthood were met by strong community support in New Haven.

As for **disarmament and security**, there continues to be a high level of violence in the city (exaggerated by media emphasis on violent news), which is related to unemployment, a failing education system, destruction of the family and family values and easy access to drugs and guns, among other causal factors. The emphasis on community policing is seen as taking a good direction, but it has just begun so it cannot yet be seen if it will produce good results.

The new initiatives in restorative justice promise to improve the atmosphere of schools and set a precedent for changing a broken criminal justice system, but **education** still needs to be strengthened at the neighborhood level. Unfortunately, the emphasis continues to be on magnet and charter schools to which children are bused out of their neighborhoods and which, in the long run, tends to increase rather than decrease the widening gulf between the rich and the poor.

With regard to the **free flow of information**, there are important new sources for community news in recent years, such as the New Haven Independent, La Voz and the new hispanic radio station WNHH.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1999 the United Nations adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace which defined the culture of peace as a goal much broader than the traditional idea of peace as the absence of war.

The culture of peace (CoP) includes all of the components necessary for a peace that is profound and lasting.

disarmament and security  
sustainable, equitable development  
education for peace  
democratic participation  
human rights  
equality of women  
tolerance and solidarity  
free flow of information

The rationale for this analysis by the United Nations is explained below in Appendix II. Although the resolution was conceived and adopted in terms of the Member States of the United Nations, it is equally applicable to cities.

With this in mind, on behalf of the New Haven City Peace Commission, 15 New Haven activists have been interviewed in all of the above areas and a summary of their considerations are presented here. Most of them have been interviewed in previous years as well. For more information about the methodology, see Appendix III at the end of this report.

### **INTER-RELATIONS AND PRIORITIES AMONG THE EIGHT COP COMPONENTS.**

As will be evident below, the eight components of culture of peace are all inter-related and dependent upon each other. Thus, it is not possible to say that one is more important than another. They are all important and linked together; to illustrate this, the linkages that appear in each section are indicated in boldface, as well as the theme for this year's report which is "**community.**"

## TOLERANCE AND SOLIDARITY

Almost everyone we interviewed repeated the same themes. On the one hand, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, and New Haven does not escape from this. The human rights of families and individuals suffer as more and more people are homeless and under- or unemployed. On the other hand, people are coming to realize, including at the level of leadership in the city and state, that we must build (cultivate?) **community** and no longer live in separate silos. As our interviewees emphasized: "We must all ensure that the poor do not get cut short."

Solidarity is not new to New Haven. Like many American cities, we have long received new generations of immigrants. In recent years, New Haven has taken national leadership by providing identification cards for undocumented immigrants, an initiative that has come to serve as a model for other cities across the country.

This year, our report features three important examples of solidarity programs.

The restorative justice program in New Haven's public schools, under a grant to the New Haven Teachers Union, is now in its second year. Its goal is to replace the expulsion of students with disciplinary problems by a process of restorative circles, in which the offending student listens to those he or she has harmed and comes to regret and make amends for the actions concerned. At least one teacher in every New Haven public school has now been trained in restorative practices, and the process of restorative circles is well underway. The initiative has strengthened **community** ties by involving many other institutions as well as the schools, including Youth Stat, United Way, Clifford Beers, ALIVE, New Haven Family Alliance and Pinnacle, not to mention a parents' group for restorative practice. Youth Stat is engaged in a complementary process to amend the rules on expulsion. Another related project is the Youth Court, in which young offenders are tried in a court made up of young volunteers. These initiatives, especially the restorative practices initiative, provide a precedent for new approaches to justice at many other levels in our city.

The welcoming of refugees, spearheaded by IRIS, Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, received headlines in November when New Haven received a family of refugees from Syria who had been refused entry to Indiana by the governor of that state. Connecticut governor Malloy came to New Haven to welcome the family and to tell them "not only was I welcoming them, but I was proud that they've come to the US and come to CT." IRIS has received over 240 refugees so far in 2015, and, despite the problems finding jobs and housing (to be discussed below), the community has welcomed them. According to director Chris George, our welcome is the most important thing. As he says, they have come here fleeing the violence in their homelands, seeking peace and security for their families.

The prison re-entry program, now located at the entrance of City Hall with the full support of the mayor, has linked up with hundreds of city organizations, including Project More, Easter Seals, the Community Action Agency, etc. to help serve the hundred or so ex-prisoners returning each month to New Haven. For example, they provide a city ID, bus passes, and clothing vouchers. Already a year before inmates leave prison they are helped to prepare a transition plan for housing, training and jobs. The key, says director Clifton Graves, is "**community**."

Many of those interviewed spoke against the terrible effects of the American penal system that has put millions of people in prison, especially African-Americans far more than any other country on earth, destroying families and communities in the process. They have been inspired by the recent book *The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, which concludes by quoting Martin Luther King that the time has come "for racial justice advocates to shift from a civil rights to a human rights paradigm."

In fact, none of the above positive initiatives of solidarity can succeed if our society cannot provide well-paying jobs and decent, affordable housing. As one interviewee insisted, "Peace is an economic issue."

## HUMAN RIGHTS

As mentioned above in the section on **solidarity**, the human rights of a large portion of our city continue to be violated, especially concerning the human rights to employment and housing. These rights should be guaranteed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but the United States remains one of the very few countries in the world that has refused to ratify the covenant (along with Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf nations, Cuba, Malaysia, Singapore and Myanmar). It's true that the Obama Administration has called for the elimination of homelessness, but development decisions in this regard are leading us in the opposite direction both nationally and locally.

Locally development decisions continue to favor expensive housing rather than affordable housing, at the same time as 278 low-income families are being forced out of the condemned Church Street South complex without enough alternative housing to go to.

As for employment, progress is slow. In April, at the annual State of the City address of the Black and Hispanic Caucus of the Board of Alders, it was said that "the city's staggering unemployment and underemployment rate is its most pressing problem." In December, New Haven Rising and Yale's unions, with which it is affiliated, negotiated a deal with Yale in which the university pledged to hire 1,000 people from lower-income New Haven neighborhoods over the next three years. While New Haven Works has found jobs for 500 people in 18 months, "it's a drop in the bucket when one considers the 500 'trained and qualified' people that the program would like to place, but hasn't been able to match to jobs in the city. It also doesn't put a dent in the thousands more who have been left behind but are still looking for work. A Department of Labor estimate puts the number of unemployed and underemployed New Haveners at around 20,000."

The one progress in recent years has been in health care. In Connecticut, the Federal Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare") obtained the largest enrollment percentages in the country. and brought affordable healthcare to thousands of people who were previously without access. It has greatly aided local healthcare providers who can now devote more of their resources to other needs rather than simply supplementing the healthcare of those who were previously ineligible for it. It also reduces the pressure on Emergency Room services which may be considered as the worst way to deal with healthcare. The bad news is that it is not a single-payer system but a complicated system pitched towards the profits of the various insurance companies which makes enrollment and understanding of entitlement very difficult for everyone.

Not all is progress in health care. Connecticut has the fourth highest healthcare costs in the US. The many mergers of hospitals that are taking place raises concern that their services may become even more expensive, less accessible and, in some cases, more limited in scope. Already, there is lack of rural health care in the state and lack of full reproductive health services in Catholic hospitals. Twenty years ago all Connecticut hospitals were locally governed, independent and not-for-profit, but if pending mergers are approved, 80% of inpatients will be cared for in large, multi-hospital systems. This will probably be accompanied by layoffs of healthcare workers, adding to the problem of unemployment.

The poor are getting poorer. A recent study by the Brookings Institution found that the poorest 20th percentile of family earners in New Haven saw their real wages plummet 31 percent (from 2007 to 2014 while the top 95 percentile in town (a much smaller group) saw wages rise 24 percent. That produced an overall 6.7 percent change in the equality gap, higher by far than in any other city in the United States. Last year we quoted an activist that "We have a new record of people using our food pantry, which means more poverty. The sheer numbers of the poor are increasing. The social safety net is frayed and tattered and more people are falling through it. We have established a country of winners and losers. The trickle-down approach does not work. What is needed is an approach that is bottom up, raising the level of the poorest and unskilled as the basis for full employment. A culture of peace must be for everyone, not just the privileged. We are in a moment of definition in the history of our country. What should be our priorities? Do we exist to make the rich richer and the poor poorer? There is a gigantic ideological struggle . . . We can no longer afford to put bandaids on the wounds of our culture, but we must address the underlying disease!" "Unfortunately," as another activist expressed, "when it comes to the federal government, it is confrontation not cooperation which is the value of the day." In the end, however, both of these activists came to the same conclusion: "What we need is hope and optimism to keep us working for a better world!" And, as it was put by a third person interviewed, "We have a lot of work to do!"

## SUSTAINABLE, EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

As mentioned above, the key issue of employment is not moving forward as we had hoped in the last few years. In this regard, as interviewees have stressed over the years, unemployment is endemic to the system not only in New Haven but throughout the country. It is hard to remember when the United States was a manufacturing country, and New Haven had many factory jobs. The flight of industry to low-wage, non-union countries calls into question the sustainability of the American economy. How long can we go on importing without exporting? As one of our interviewees puts it, "We have a country that can produce the best technology, best army, and is deeply involved in research to solve many problems. Why can't we solve the problem of unemployment? It's because our development depends on the capitalist system that doesn't want it to work. Full employment is not even on its agenda."

As for housing, there is plenty of development. Several thousand new apartments are being constructed. But is this development sustainable and equitable? It is certainly not equitable. Most of the construction is for luxury apartments, far beyond the reach of those who are being forced out of Church Street South, not to mention families and individuals already homeless or in over-crowded housing. Already in order to afford the Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment (\$1,123) without subsidy and spending no more than 30% of income on housing, it requires an hourly wage of \$23.53, i.e more than two people working at the State's minimum wage. And there is also the question as to whether the luxury housing boom will ultimately be sustainable. Will there be enough rich buyers if the economy plunges? Rising property prices have also taken a toll on small business across the city. As will be discussed further under **democratic participation**, these development decisions are made without effective citizen participation.

On the other hand, there is good news this year about development at the local **community** level, as exemplified by initiatives in the West River section of New Haven. The West River Watershed Coalition has gotten the five towns along the River to cooperate and clean it up: West Haven, New Haven, Woodbridge, Hamden and Bethany, as well as community organizations such as Common Ground School and Solar Youth. Soon there will be nature trails, good fishing, and more bird habitats, blueberries and raspberries along the River. The Friends of Edgewood Park have gotten together to clean up the park and hire a director to work with kids there during the summer. And the West River Neighborhood Services Corporation has seen citizens come out of their houses to transform their neighborhood by cleaning up the streets and creating drug-free zones. Each year they sponsor a very successful celebration of the International Day of Peace. All of these projects are marked by volunteer citizen participation, another example of the **solidarity** that is the high point of our report this year.

With regard to food and nutrition, the New Haven Food Policy Council, an official part of city government, continues to engage in food distribution which also addresses the basic **human rights** of New Haveners. Its working groups meet regularly for 1) cooking and food education, 2) food assistance; and 3) city farms and gardens. New Haven continues to have progressive programs, including five farmers' markets, a specialized high school (Common Ground High School, and a "mobile market" that distributes food around the city to senior centers, senior housing and low income neighborhoods. In addition there are numerous other local initiatives around food issues, including some 50 community gardens, school gardens, City Seed and the New Haven Bioregional Group.

Also on a positive note, this year the city's Environmental Advisory Board has been revamped to include more citizen participation. Six city residents will sit on the board, with three administrators holding non-voting positions. One or two alders will also sit on the council.

Many other aspects of sustainable development remain problematic.

It is not possible to separate development at the city level from the problem of taxation which has always been a problem throughout the country. Cities are caught in a double-bind situation as they are forced to pay for social services, especially **education**, from a base of property taxes that has continued to shrink for decades as manufacturing has left the city. New Haven is in a particularly difficult situation because its largest employers, Yale and the hospitals, are exempt from property taxes. Although the 2015 budget adopted by the State legislature of Connecticut contains many cuts that negatively affect social services, it did include a provision for PILOT, Payment in Lieu of Taxes, for some reimbursement to cities filled with tax exempt properties like colleges, universities, and hospitals: According to Senate President Martin Looney, who was responsible for the legislation, "For first time now we recognize that communities with more tax exempt property should have a greater degree of reimbursement under the PILOT formula than those who don't." Unfortunately, the state budget cuts also effect these payments, and, as one of our activists said, this still leaves a great difference between the tax bases of the cities and the suburbs whose citizens use the city's services: "What we need is regionalized taxes."



As indicated by one of the activists interviewed the culture of war is at the root of our development problems. "We have massive unemployment across the country which is the core problem, and it is due to the priority given to the military budget. Unlike what some people think, the military budget reduces employment rather than increasing it. We can see that with Pratt and Whitney which is now reduced from over 40,000 to under 1500 workers despite tripling of the military budget during that time. What we need is economic conversion from military to civilian production." The people of New Haven voted overwhelmingly in the 2012 ballot referendum to reduce federal military spending and increase spending for human needs, and a state-wide "Futures Commission" was established which could in theory address this problem, but so far it has not been able to make any progress.

The Greater New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority is supposed to reduce the problem of sewage in our rivers and streams, but it depends on a sewer separation project that is enormously costly and long-term. Meanwhile, shorter-term and less costly solutions such as increasing "green infrastructure" to absorb heavy rainwater, have not been effectively implemented. The Connecticut Fund for the Environment has had some success in the restoration of waterways. Meanwhile, in Connecticut as a whole, we have not begun to deal with how to get rid of nuclear waste.

Recycling has moved forward in recent years, but it is not consistent. In some neighborhoods there is over 50% recycling, but in others less than 15%. Compare San Francisco with 70%! And like San Francisco we should do composting with food waste.

As for urban planning and transportation, there is an increased interest in bicycles and alternatives to automobile transportation. According to the American Community Survey, New Haven's proportion of bicycle commuters (~5%) is one of the highest in the country. The city's Comprehensive Plan has good ideas for transit improvements, but they have not yet been realized. Unfortunately, New Haven's city planning decisions are still determined by the automobile, as could be seen last year in the Downtown Crossing Project. Bus transportation remains uncoordinated, and unavailable on many lines in the evening and there is still insufficient parking at the railroad station." While the Yale bus line provides an app so that their passengers can know the position of all the buses, the Connecticut Transit system that serves New Haven has no general information system.

Increasingly it is understood that we must develop alternative energy sources, both to reduce carbon emissions that contribute to global warming and to reduce dependence on the importation of oil. However, other than riding bicycles and eating locally-grown food, there is the feeling one cannot do much about this on the level of the city. On the national level, our Congressional representatives and national government do not even have a strategy to take action. The recent climate agreement in Paris was watered down to meet US Congressional opposition, and does nothing to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. Meanwhile, New Haven harbor remains a major center to receive imported oil on huge tanker ships, with periodic oil spills that are given little publicity. One good note was the agreement this year, under threat of legal action, that the polluted English Station power plant will be cleaned up as part of the terms allowing the merger of United Illuminating and the Spanish company Iberdrola.

People are increasingly convinced that the banking system is corrupt and unsustainable, but there seems to be little or no action in Washington to deal with this. There is a growing tendency to invest in local banks and credit agencies as an alternative, but it is still small in comparison. Unfortunately, in this regard, the local START bank decided to close its Fair Haven office this year.

## DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

There needs to be more participation in development decisions, especially those that determine whether housing is affordable. To some extent this takes place now in the community management teams that were introduced during the 1990's in conjunction with the move towards community policing. However, their power is quite limited; while their discussions may lead to a few more affordable housing units, their effect is small in comparison with the thousands of expensive units being planned or in construction. While the mayor and the Board of Alders have expressed concern about the increasing cost of housing, they seem powerless to stop it. Hopefully, we can find ways to get more public participation in these decisions in the coming years.

In other respects, the Board of Alders and the Mayor provide good support to democratic participation. Mayor Toni Harp often gets out into the **community**, attending neighborhood events and providing a role model for the spirit of **solidarity** that we see as so important this year. Her approach to **education** has been marked by a more personal concern with the lives of youth, rather than the bricks and mortar approach of previous administrations. The Board of Alders continues to be dedicated to employment and union rights. The Board is a good model for **women's equality** and **tolerance and solidarity**, as it now consists of two-thirds women, including some from Yale union locals 34 and 35, a racial membership that reflects the city's population, and now a Black woman President, Tyisha Walker.. New Haven is exceptional in this regard, since a recent survey of over 42,000 elected officials nationwide found that 90% are white, in a country that is 37% people of color, and 71% of elected officials are male, even though men comprise only 49% of the population. It was symbolic that the Board has changed its official name from the Board of Aldermen to the Board of Alders.

The city has re-established the annual Democracy School, where citizens can sign up for a 9-week course that enables them to meet department heads and public safety officials, look into the city's budget, tour the Emergency Operations Center, and network with other engaged residents from all over the city.

Fortunately, democratic participation includes far more than elections, because elections in New Haven are marked by lack of choice and lack of participation. This year there was no serious challenge to the mayor or to the newly established candidatures for Board of Education. Only a few of the Alders were seriously contested. Interestingly, the best debates and contest was among the high school candidates for the Board of Education.

The contested candidatures of student members for the Board of Education provides an important precedent for democratic participation in the schools, to be discussed later under **education**. Already, the student members have had an important effect, pushing the Mayor to visit Hillhouse High School and launch an investigation into its management problems.

Democratic participation includes, but must also go beyond the mobilizations and campaigns for elections. In this regard, we see more and more examples of local initiatives. A good example is the West River Watershed Coalition that we have mentioned under **sustainable development**. Another is the web-based organization SeeClickFix, which encourages citizens to report problems in their neighborhood, and mobilize people to take care of these problems if the city government does not respond. SeeClickFix started in New Haven and has now gone national and international in scope. As one activist said, "I see more people doing volunteer work and taking care of each other, which reflects an increase in the attitudes of **solidarity**."

## WOMEN'S EQUALITY

Once again this year, when asked about women's equality, people mentioned immediately Toni Harp and the importance of having the first woman mayor in New Haven history, as well her being only the second African-American in that position. She has appointed many women and people of color to key positions in her administration and she provides an excellent role model for the young women of New Haven.

Over the years we see more and more women in positions of authority. Yale, in general, is an influence for equality, especially since women were admitted almost a half century ago. The most active trade union, Local 34, is women-led, and has achieved major victories for women's wages, healthcare, pensions and housing mortgages. It is not accidental that a majority of the new alders they helped elect last year are women (see section on **democratic participation**). In addition, New Haven's congressional representatives (state and federal) include many very active and effective women, as well as men who are very supportive of women's rights. And especially important, the new community policing approach includes women managers in a third of the districts.

When the rights of women have come under attack, the people of New Haven respond with support. This happened in 2015 following the attacks on Planned Parenthood across the country. Hundreds of people, including the Mayor, came out to the New Haven Green to demonstrate their support, and local media gave the rally good coverage. The Connecticut delegation has also stood up against the attacks against Planned Parenthood in Congress.

On the other hand, many major problems remain unsolved. A large proportion of the poor in New Haven are women heads of households, some unmarried, some divorced or widowed, and too often with a husband in prison or unemployable because of a prison record. If they are married, their husbands are often victims of unemployment (see section on **development**). And if they are employed it is often part-time and for substandard wages without benefits. Women's non-union wages remain stuck at a level of 77% of the wages to men in equivalent jobs. Although it has yet to make a significant impact on this inequality, New Haven Works reports that half of the job placements they have made are for women, and that their wages are, if anything, higher than those of the men who have been placed.

Even if they make a good wage, women's income may be largely eaten up by expensive daycare. The program of Head Start which used to take their young children during the day has been cut in recent years. Women are especially inconvenienced by the requirement of the **educational system** that students must be bused to distant schools.

Not to mention other particular problems that are not often considered, such as, for example, the high cost of providing disposable diapers for babies. Even if there is a man in the household who contributes to the family income, there is too often a problem of domestic violence, as will be mentioned later in the earlier section on **security**.

In the past there were national organizations working explicitly for women's equality, such as the National Organization of Women, the National Women's Political Caucus and NARAL, but now they have reduced influence or have completely disappeared. On the other hand, several women's sororities (the "Deltas") remain strongly active for women in the Black community.

Both teenage pregnancy and abortion rates are down nationally. According to our interview with Planned Parenthood, this is probably not due to formal sex education programs, but rather to informal communication and awareness among the youth themselves and the use of long-acting contraception like IUDs which no longer have the medical problems that were associated with them previously. Although these IUDs are expensive, they are covered by the newly available medical insurance. The organization now talks of "reproductive justice" rather than a narrow focus on birth control. In fact, they are especially pleased by a privately funded daycare for teenage student mothers at a local high school: "Although some claim that this encourages teenage pregnancy, we don't think that this enters into the decision-making of teenage sex. What is important is that they should be able to continue their education."

## DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY

New Haven continues to suffer from a high rate of homicides among young men, mostly minorities, although the 13 homicides of 2015 are down compared to the 20 homicides in 2014 and the high of 34 homicides in 2011. The violence is linked to the lack of employment opportunities (**development**), failures of **education**, destruction of the family, the easy access to guns, the drug trade which promises quick money and power, and a "culture of violence" among many young people. As a member of the Peace Commission has expressed, "the fistfights of yesterday have turned into the gun battles of today."

The causes of violence go far beyond the scope of what can be done in New Haven. The national government provides an implicit model of violence when it goes to war or engages in assassination either directly or through its unmanned drones. The drug trade involves international channels of exchange of cocaine and heroin for guns that were established during the wars with Vietnam, Nicaragua and Afghanistan, among others.

Police killings around the country have exposed the ever-present potential for violence by the police. Last year, the Peace Commission organized a discussion with the two Alders who are developing the regulations for the Civilian Review Board that was included in the Charter revisions adopted by New Haven voters in 2013. Contributions to the discussion also came from a State Senator and State Representative. Unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to establish the Civilian Review Board with effective community participation and capacity for investigation and regulation.

The easy access to guns is also a national problem, largely due to the "gun lobby." An even greater number of minority youth are killed by each other than by the police. Like other states following the 2013 Newtown massacre, Connecticut passed a significant (though still insufficient) package of gun control reforms. But no matter how strict Connecticut's gun safety laws, you can always go and buy an assault rifle in some jurisdiction with less strict regulations. Unfortunately, a recent national survey found that support for gun ownership is now even higher among African-Americans than among others. Over the years, the Peace Commission has held several meetings on gun control, and some of those interviewed stated that the Commission should engage once again in this issue.

On the streets of New Haven you can see young people wearing buttons of those who have been killed in gun violence, some of them innocent bystanders, others presumably involved in the drug trade or other vendettas. On one hand, this is a traditional process of mourning and regret; on the other hand, it can serve to glorify the culture of violence as if one measures "how many people will come to my funeral." As one activist told us, "Many young men do not expect to live beyond 18 years of age in this culture."

Another casualty of the drug wars and gun violence is the high rate of imprisonment, especially among African-American men. As mentioned in the section on solidarity, this has been effectively analyzed and publicized in the book *The New Jim Crow*. Prisons have become a source of profit through slave labor, and the high rate of imprisonment contributes to the destruction of family structure. This is both cause and effect; as one activist remarked, "In the 1950's we had the values of 'good family training,' but this is no longer prevalent. Working with returnees from prison, I find that they have no values to go back to. Instead, they have brought back to our community a kind of ex-convict culture, ranging from violent rap music and ill-fitting clothes like those in prison to the belief that you must carry a gun to defend yourself. What is needed, and the new mayor and school superintendent should take the leadership in this, is a major campaign to 'shun the gun.' We must stop being enablers of the gun culture; we must stop treating the carrying of a gun as normal behavior." Hopefully, the newly expanded prison re-entry program, located in City Hall, will help to make the needed cultural change.

Although the drug wars, gun violence and crime involves a rather small percent of the population, often people who come from outside the city, it receives the headlines of newspapers and television which produces a climate of fear among the population in general. This will be dealt with later in terms of the **free flow of information**. Hence, in addition to a real problem of insecurity, there is an even larger problem in the perception of insecurity. People still say, "I'm afraid to go in the park."

The perception of insecurity is being addressed by the police chief's emphasis on **community** policing. Police are now based in 10 neighborhoods with the goal of being integrated into the neighborhood's activities. As the chief said in one remarkable interview, it is important that the **community** should not perceive the police as an "occupying army." This is a major change from the previous policy, and we have only begun to see officers on foot in New Haven's neighborhoods. To achieve this requires a larger police force, changing the methods of existing police officers and recruiting new police with a neighborhood approach. Door-to-door recruiting was initiated last year, and there are many new young officers. So far the results are promising, but it will take time for the police and the neighborhoods to adopt this new approach. For one thing, according to one of the activists interviewed, it will be necessary to change the nature of discipline in the police force by introducing some kind of mediation that involves the neighborhood as well as the police hierarchy, i.e. something similar to the restorative justice approach that has begun in the schools.

The YouthStat program modeled after the previous ComStat program of the police force involves regular meetings of the Board of Education and housing authority officials, police, city youth workers, state probation and social workers, firefighters, street outreach workers, and people from community agencies that work with kids in trouble. This was announced last year by Mayor Harp who said "We have to tear down the silos" that keep information within single agencies that deal with at-risk young people. I believe this information will save lives. I believe this information will give youngsters a second chance" at a better life.

In general, however, violence needs to be prevented upstream. Peace promotion is more effective than crime prevention. For example, we need more **community** centers such the planned re-opening of the Dixwell Q House which promises to provide young people with positive after-school and vacation programs. As will be elaborated in the **education** section, it would also be good to have more schools serving this function in the future.

In general, according to those interviewed, the criminal justice system is broken, and we need to develop a radically different system. In this regard, we can look towards a system of restorative justice, as described further in the section on **education**.

Sexual and domestic violence is another issue of great importance, linked in part to the destruction of family values, as mentioned above, but also reflecting long-standing values of male domination in the general population or "machismo" as it is called in the Latino community. Male domination has always been a fundamental component of the culture of war, just as **women's equality** is essential for a culture of peace. In New Haven, there are numerous programs addressing domestic violence, although one has the impression that sexual violence is on the increase. Or is this simply the result of a heightened awareness that it needs to be stopped? People were shocked by the high rate of sexual assault found in a recent survey of college campuses. Even if the figure of 16% at Yale may have been somewhat inflated by the survey methodology, there is no doubt that it is a real problem that needs to be addressed.

We need to recognize the use of sex in advertising and entertainment, including internet, as a destructive form of violence. One of those interviewed decried the fact that young people are now growing up in what he calls the "pornography generation." Recognition of the problem is the first step that we need to take towards finding solutions.

## EDUCATION FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

Everyone seems to agree in recent years that there is a crisis in education and that it is linked to the problem of unemployment. Here are comments from some of the activists interviewed:

- \* "We are completely and utterly failing the kids – in both education and jobs."
- \* "If education is to be successful, there must be a partnership between students, teachers and parents, but that is not working under the present system."
- \* "Education, to be successful, must be tied to employment. Students must have confidence that school work will lead to stable employment with a decent wage and benefits."

Some steps forward this past year include the election of some members of the School Board, including two student members, and the training of teachers for restorative justice in all of the city's public schools (see opening section on **solidarity**). Hopefully, the development of restorative justice can counteract the problem that schools have come to be seen more like prisons where discipline and obedience take precedence. Many youth end up dropping out of school, often after being suspended many times, sometimes simply for "insubordination." As one activist stated, "The present system simply pushes kids into the streets and the culture of violence." The suspension and dropout rate is especially high for minority youth, which puts a racist bias on the results of the educational system.

For those who manage to remain in school, there is the difficulty of getting an education that is sufficient to prepare them for good jobs or to go to college and university. According to some who were interviewed, most graduates of New Haven public schools are poorly prepared for higher education. There is a need for vocational programs and schools, but so far there is no concrete plan for them. And, of course, we are up against the general problem of the lack of available jobs, as we have discussed in the second on **development**.

There is growing movement of youth organizations outside of schools. The annual Youth Summit of New Haven brings together 50 youth organizations for strategy discussions. This year there were workshops entitled "Youth Haven: Perspectives on Violence in New Haven", "Healthy Relationships", and "Feminism";. The City-Wide Youth Coalition collaborates with many other groups and engages in development of advocacy, leadership and organizational strength for the new generation.

Although the new emphasis on neighborhood policing gives promise of renewing **community** solidarity and **security**, the push in recent years for the busing of children out of their neighborhoods is moving in the opposite direction. The worst are the new Charter Schools, since they suck resources out of the public school system and destroy teachers' unions as well as neighborhoods. As one person put it, the Charter Schools put profits before people.

Unlike Charter Schools, the Magnet Schools are at least part of the public school system, and are required to accept at least 65% of their students from New Haven, but rather than renewing **community**, they weaken it, since children no longer go to school with their neighbors, and parents have a harder time getting involved in their children's school. Gone are the days of Parent/Teacher Organizations. Gone are the days when your teachers knew your parents because they all grew up in the same neighborhood. When the school buses leave, the doors of most schools are locked and the teachers leave for their homes in other cities. The tilt toward Magnet Schools is sustained by the method of school finances; while the state provides education funds to supplement the local dependence on property taxes, the funds are greater for magnet schools than for neighborhood schools.

Magnet schools are better staffed and equipped than neighborhood schools and hence they are popular for the parents of children who do well in school, despite the fact that their children have to travel out of the neighborhood. In fact, magnet schools such as the Common Ground School, the Sound School, The Educational Center for the Arts, and the High School in the Community get high marks from most who are concerned. In the long run, however, the trend to magnet schools widens the gap between the rich and the poor. The education of children from poor neighborhoods who do well in a magnet school gives them the possibility to escape from their neighborhood, and this further increases the gap, as will be discussed further under **human rights**. Ironically, the magnet school approach came out of the Scheff vs O'Neill lawsuit in 1989 which aimed to rectify the problem of racial inequality for schooling. As one person put it, "At the time of Scheff vs O'Neill, somebody thought this approach would work. But as it stands today, it doesn't seem to work."

Can we return to neighborhood schools, either within or instead of the present system of magnet schools? This is an important question for the future of **community** in New Haven.

The fundamental nature of American education is criticized by those who were interviewed. The great emphasis on test scores narrows education and leaves out essential aspects. Critical thinking is not supported, nor are the cultural aspects of education that teach us to respect and live with each other which are values essential for people's **security**. Several people mentioned the importance of the new Montessori School in New Haven. Although it is another example of a charter school and is priced out of the range of ordinary working people, it provides a real alternative model of education. It allows students to develop at their own rhythm, unlike the public education model that puts the priority on testing to external standards, a process that often breaks down a student's confidence and desire to learn. As one activist emphasized, the testing system can be seen as a kind of psychological violence.

As mentioned earlier, the contested candidatures of student members for the Board of Education provides an important precedent for democratic participation in the schools. In general, the American educational system is not designed to prepare students for democratic participation. Instead, students are expected to simply follow instructions with little voice in how their education is structured and administered.

On the positive side, school administrators have cooperated with the New Haven City Peace Commission to involve the school system in the annual celebration of the International Day of Peace. Each year a different neighborhood is involved. This year it was held at the Conte School with planting of a tree, student music and release of peace doves.

There are many institutions of higher education in New Haven, but to what extent are they involved in the culture of peace of the community? In addition to Yale which attracts students and faculty from around the world, there are Southern Connecticut State University, University of New Haven in nearby West Haven, Quinnipiac in nearby Hamden, and now the new campus of Gateway Community College downtown. Gateway now has a 15 credit certificate for students to study peace, collaboration and conflict, which involves them in local activities that promote a culture of peace.

This year, along with many other universities around the country, Yale students raised the issues of racism and sexual violence on the campus, with a series of demands and a March of Solidarity. They have had a good effect on the Yale campus, and one hopes that the process will spread to other local universities and community organizations..

We may consider popular arts as part of education for peace, and in this regard there has been considerable progress in the last few years, including excellent coverage by local media (see next section on **free flow of information**). More and more we see high quality murals on our streets, in the best cases with **community** participation. There is also a new initiative for Cit"museums in the streets" to install information plaques that celebrate local ethnic history. Many local artists, playwrights, cinematographers, painters, poets, are young men and women of color, who contribute to overcoming our history of racism.

## FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION

As several activists emphasized, free and complete access to information is essential to **democracy**; only an informed public can know how to evaluate their elected officials. At the national level, secrecy is used to hid corruption and preparations for war, as has been exposed by whistle-blowers such as Julian Assange and Edward Snowden. At the local level, there is more transparency. For example, the LegiStar interface on the internet, provides an online search engine for information about legislation, Board of Alders agendas and calendars, etc. The incorporation of SeeClickFix (see section on Democratic Participation) into the City's work-flow is a significant step towards government accountability. It is said that the City needs to do more to adopt best practices of transparency, namely: open data portal, searchable database of campaign finance disclosure reports, etc.

In general, the situation for access to information is paradoxical. On the one hand, the national mass media is increasingly in the hands of very few, wealthy entrepreneurs, who use their control of the media to defend their economic and political interests. National political campaigns, based on the media, are outrageously expensive, and again, they serve the economic and political interests of the richest 1% of the population. Locally, there is decreased coverage of the news by the commercial media. The Advocate, which for many years was a good source of information, was disbanded completely two years ago. A generation ago there were six local radio newsrooms; now there are none. Local television is not much better. The New Haven Register has reduced to only a few local reporters.

At the same time, we are seeing the development of independent **community** media, print, radio and television, in both English and Spanish. New Haven now has its own local bilingual radio station, WNHH, launched in August by the English-language New Haven Independent and the Spanish-language newspaper, La Voz. It broadcasts round the clock with streaming online 24 hours a day. Programming includes local music and talk shows, both Hispanic and African-American, with newsmakers (including a weekly call-in show with Mayor Toni Harp). Each day's program is published on the website of the New Haven Independent.

One also finds good local programs on the public access channel of Citizens Television for New Haven, West Haven and Hamden.

The New Haven Independent (English on the Internet) and La Voz (Spanish print and internet) continue to provide good coverage of **community** news, including extensive coverage of the arts. The Independent has become the major source of information for many people. In fact, most of the activists interviewed cited at least one Independent article in describing the New Haven situation. A recent book, *The Wired City*, by Dan Kennedy tells the story of the New Haven Independent, and concludes that it "has created a promising model of how to provide members of the public with the information they need in a self-governing society." "Of course, we cannot please everybody," explained editor Paul Bass in our interview. "We give voice to all opinions, and needless to say, our readers will not agree with all of them."

The Internet has opened the door to enormous amounts of information. Along with informal networks of email, Facebook, Twitter, etc., they have broken the monopoly of the mass media. And now we are entering still a new phase of podcasts and dissemination of amateur videos. The biggest challenge is how to sift through the mountains of information available on the Internet to find and decide what is important. Are people more informed? It depends on how they use the new sources: for some they are valuable and useful, for others they simply add more "noise." As one activist said, "When I first ran for political office, I thought there was an information deficit, but now I think the information is there, but people don't look for it or read it."

The content of the mass media often supports the culture of war, putting its emphasis on violence and catastrophe. There are so many murders portrayed on television, in movies and on video games that violence has become banalized. Actors are shown murdered one day, and return the next. As mentioned earlier in the section on **security**, media violence increases the fears of the audience and results in more feelings of insecurity. Internet is not a simple solution to this because one can find sources on violence and catastrophe or culture of peace, depending on what the Internet user is searching for.

In general, the content of the mass media is aimed at the lowest common denominator. As one activist remarked, "one individual can poison the atmosphere on television and radio talk shows. This cannot be stopped by passing laws, but only through rebuilding **community** and renewing morality in public life."



A bright spot in New Haven is furnished by the branches of the New Haven Public Library which not only loan books and videos but also provide public lectures, films and displays on progressive themes relevant to the community. Not only do the libraries provide computer and Internet access, but they also train people how to use them, bridging the “digital divide.” When you enter a New Haven library, you find the computers all occupied. Libraries also help with job-hunting and writing of resumes, in coordination with community agencies. In the library, everyone is welcome and everyone is equal, whether you are rich or homeless. Thus, the libraries contribute not only to the free flow of information and **education for peace**, but also to **sustainable development** and **tolerance and solidarity**.

### **Where Are We?**

In general New Haven seems to be moving forward on a culture of peace, but slowly and unevenly.

In recent years, democratic participation, women's equality, tolerance/solidarity and the free flow of information have advanced in some aspects, while human rights, as in the rest of the country, have slid backwards. There is some good promise for advance in security if the community policing initiative develops as planned and if we can make progress in restorative justice. Serious problems remain to be addressed in education and sustainable, equitable development.

The New Haven Peace Commission will continue to help consolidate our progress and deal with our problems, in coordination with the city administration and the civil society. We are looking for more partners to work on these issues with us. Contact us in care of the Commission Chairman, Seth Godfrey at [sethgodfrey@yahoo.com](mailto:sethgodfrey@yahoo.com) or 203-946-7431.

**APPENDIX I  
THE NEW HAVEN PEACE COMMISSION**

The City of New Haven Peace Commission was established in 1988. The proposal grew from movements in the 1970's for a nuclear weapons freeze, against apartheid in South Africa. and people-to-people exchanges with the Soviet Union.

The Peace Commission helped formulate the International Association of Peace Messenger Cities designated by the General Assembly of the United Nations. New Haven was one of the first to be named a Peace Messenger City in 1985, and its chairman, until recently, was its International President.

One of the first major acts of the Peace Commission under its President Tom Holahan in 1989 was to put a referendum on the ballot in the November election to cut the military budget and direct the savings to the nation's cities. It received an 83% favorable vote! More recently in 2012, a similar vote was obtained on a similar referendum.

Over its 25 year history the Commission has engaged in many activities in addition to those mentioned above:

- \* Children's marches for peace on the New Haven Green (until 1992)
- \* Programs of live streaming on the Internet linking schools on the International Day of Peace, September 21 (since 2010)
- \* Peace parks in the West River neighborhood and at East Rock Park
- \* Annual public hearings on the negative impact of the military budget on the City of New Haven
- \* Annual commemorations of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 2009 this was marked by a video linkup from the Wilson Branch Library to the Hiroshima Peace Foundation and we spoke with Sada Kasaoka, who was as survivor of the bombing.
- \* Credit course for New Haven teachers on conflict resolution
- \* Work on legislation that promoted the Connecticut General Assembly to ban assault guns
- \* Initiation of the first public hearings on immigrant rights
- \* An initiating organization of the Coalition to End Child Poverty in Connecticut
- \* An initiator of the Connecticut Coalition on Human Rights
- \* Initiation of a Sister City relationship with Hue, Vietnam, the first in the US to partner with a Vietnamese city
- \* Hosting of an international exhibition of anti-war posters at Gateway College

In 2015, initiatives for live-streaming in schools on the International Day of Peace and hosting of an international exhibition of anti-war posters were continued. In addition, sessions of the Commission were devoted to the restorative justice initiative in New Haven schools.

## APPENDIX II HISTORY OF THE UN CULTURE OF PEACE INITIATIVE

The Culture of Peace initiative was launched in 1989 by UNESCO, based in Paris, at an international peace conference in Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire. The Member States of UNESCO then adopted in 1992 a Culture of Peace Programme to bring peace to states newly emerging from conflict. With the full support of the UNESCO Director-General, national programmes were then established, beginning with El Salvador and Mozambique, and over the next few years extended to a number of other countries. But the national culture of peace programmes did not receive the financing that had been expected from the UNESCO Member States, and by the end of the decade they had mostly disappeared.

Meanwhile, at the UN in New York, the Member States from the South began as early as 1995 to request a global culture of peace programme for the UN system. In 1998, the General Assembly proclaimed an International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) in its resolution A/53/25. At that time, they had already declared the Year 2000 as the International Year for a Culture of Peace, and they had received from UNESCO a draft document for a Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

The culture of peace concept, as presented in UNESCO's draft document A/53/370, was specifically presented as an alternative to the culture of war. For each of eight fundamental aspects of the culture of war, eight alternative programme areas were proposed for the culture of peace.

| CULTURE OF WAR                    | CULTURE OF PEACE                                      |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Development by exploitation       | Sustainable equitable development                     |
| Authoritarian governance          | Democratic participation                              |
| Male domination                   | Equality of women                                     |
| Having an enemy                   | Tolerance, solidarity and international understanding |
| Armament                          | Disarmament and security                              |
| Belief in power based on force    | Education for peace                                   |
| Secrecy and propaganda            | Free flow of information and knowledge                |
| Political and economic inequality | Human rights  |

In 1999 the UN General Assembly, after long deliberations, adopted a Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (Resolution A/53/243) which included the eight programme areas proposed by UNESCO and which called for a "global movement for a culture of peace" that would include initiatives of the civil society as well as governments and the UN, and that would be "promoted through sharing of information among actors on their initiatives in this regard".

For the International Year in 2000, UNESCO organized a campaign to involve the civil society and individuals around the world. Over 75 million people signed the Manifesto 2000, committing themselves to cultivate a culture of peace in daily life.

During the International Decade (2001-2010), the leadership was taken by over a thousand civil society organizations as described in World Civil Society Reports at the mid-point and end of the Decade, available at <http://decade-culture-of-peace.org>. Civil society reports are continually updated at <http://cpnn-world.org> as well as a blog based on this at <http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/blog> which makes the case that the culture of peace is advancing on a global level, even though it is not recognized by the media or academia.

More detailed information on the history of the culture of peace is available at <http://culture-of-peace.info/history/introduction.html>. A strategy for arriving at a culture of peace through city initiatives is elaborated in two books: *World Peace through the Town Hall* at <http://culture-of-peace.info/books/world-peace.html> and *I Have Seen the Promised Land (A Utopian Novella)* at <http://culture-of-peace.info/books/promisedland.html>

### APPENDIX III METHODOLOGY OF PRESENT ANALYSIS

In order to make the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace, we need to be able to measure our progress. In the present case, it is proposed to measure progress in a particular city. For reasons explained elsewhere, it is not very useful to measure progress towards a culture of peace at a national or international level.

The culture of peace is well defined by the UN Resolution A/53/243 of 1999 as being composed of 8 inter-related areas: sustainable equitable development, democratic participation, equality of women, tolerance and solidarity, disarmament and security, education for peace, free flow of information and human rights. All of these are relevant areas for a city.

There are no absolute, objective measures of these areas (only partial objective measures), but we can develop relative and subjective measures. This can be compared the situation of a typical stock market index which is based on a set of "representative" stock values. The absolute value at any given moment, i.e. the sum of the values of these stocks, is not especially interesting. What is important is whether the value is going up or down over time, and, if so, which sector of stocks is responsible for the change.

That leads to the next question: what is the equivalent of "representative stocks?" We propose that it consists of a set of individuals who have a good knowledge of the state of this particular area. In order to obtain a good overall view, it is important that interviews should be conducted with two or more individuals with intimate knowledge of each of the eight areas of a culture of peace. That requires about 15-20 interviews. Since the eight areas are very inter-related, those with extensive knowledge in any one area will necessarily have extensive knowledge in other related areas as well.

The most important measure is the trend over time, for example over succeeding years. For this, the survey needs to be repeated with the same people at more or less the same time every year.

Hence the methodology for this study:

- 1) Choose a basic set of people to be interviewed, based on their extensive practical knowledge of the eight areas of a culture of peace in the city. In other words they should be "activists" in this area. We start here with several present and former members of the New Haven City Peace Commission.
- 2) Enlarge the group of activists interviewed by asking each person interviewed to suggest others who can provide relevant information beyond what the interviewee can do. In this regard it is important to finally achieve a balance of men and women, activists from the Black, Hispanic and white communities, elected or government officials and civil society activists who can effectively criticize the city government.
- 3) Conduct face-to-face interviews of 1-2 hours with each activist, beginning with their area of expertise and asking for both the strengths and weaknesses of the city in this area, and how the strengths and weaknesses have developed over time.
- 4) After discussing the initial area, review with them the other 7 areas, and ask for suggestions of other people to be interviewed in all of the 8 areas.
- 5) Take detailed notes, because it is the specifics of their analysis that will be important for this annual report, and which need to be re-visited in the followup interviews in succeeding years. Obtain their agreement to use their ideas in the report and to interview them again one year later, as well as in succeeding years.
- 6) Write an extensive report including all of the information provided by the activists interviewed. It is not necessary to include the names of the activists interviewed. No one has demanded to be anonymous, but there is no special reason that the names need to be published.
- 7) Write a one-page executive summary of the full report.
- 8) Provide drafts of the full report and the executive summary to all of the activists interviewed to obtain their corrections and additions.

9) Publish both the executive summary, both on the Internet, and in local media that are read by people of the city.

10) Repeat the process annually, interviewing, if possible, the same people. Recall for them their previous remarks and the previous annual report, and ask them where there has been progress, lack of progress or retrogression. Again, draft, verify and correct and then publish the annual report.

11) Of course, the same people may not always be available. In that case, as is done with stock exchange indexes, it is necessary to substitute another person with similar practical knowledge of the subject. Be especially aware of potential gaps in the report, and fill in these gaps over time by enlarging the group of people interviewed.