

REMARKS ON RECEIVING THE JOHN AND CHARA HAAS PEACE AWARD ON BEHALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LAWYERS AGAINST NUCLEAR ARMS

Peter Weiss, November 8, 2010, Philadelphia

I am greatly honored to receive this award on behalf of IALANA, the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms. I should begin by saying that I like its title, "The Project for Nuclear Awareness".

Sometimes satire brings us closer to the truth than bare facts. The year 1964 witnessed the launch of a film which few who have seen it will ever forget. It was called "Dr. Strangelove – How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb" and dealt with a fictional nuclear war between the Soviet Union and the United States. Forty six years later, opinion in the nuclear weapons countries is still divided between those who believe that "the bomb" has kept the peace between old and new enemies and those who fear that the longer nuclear weapons remain in the world's arsenals the greater is the possibility, if not of a full fledged nuclear war, at least of a nuclear explosion with dreadful consequences. But the horror is gone and with it, the awareness is gone. What was once called omnicide or nuclear winter has become another equation to be solved in the complex math of world governance. This contrasts sharply with the words which Bernard Baruch, President Truman's representative to the recently established United Nations Commission on Atomic Energy, used in offering his plan for a nuclear weapons free world to the Commission on June 16, 1946. "We are here to make a choice between the quick and the dead.....Let us not deceive ourselves: We must elect World Peace or World Destruction."

Those were the days of nuclear awareness!

Founded in 1988 in Stockholm, IALANA is an international association of lawyers and lawyers' organisations working for the elimination of nuclear arms, the strengthening of international law and the development of effective mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. It currently operates, somewhat inefficiently, out of four offices: Berlin, Germany, the country where one of its most active affiliates is located (the most active, in terms of membership, being the one in Japan); Wellington, New Zealand, the occasional abode of the peripatetic and many-hatted Alyn Ware; Colombo, Sri Lanka, the home of Christopher Weeramantry, one of the great legal scholars of my generation, former Vice President of the International Court of Justice and current President of IALANA; and New York, where the indefatigable John Burroughs serves in the double capacity of IALANA's representative and Executive Director of its US affiliate, the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy (LCNP).

In the 22 years of its existence, IALANA has produced a stream of resolutions, declarations, analyses, books and pamphlets and has generally been the go-to place for nuclear activists seeking to base their advocacy on the law. It has also contributed significantly to the evolution of the international law of nuclear weapons. The 1996 landmark opinion of the International Court of Justice in the nuclear weapons case was instrumental in

reinvigorating a flagging worldwide anti-nuclear weapons movement and in furnishing the basis for a yearly General Assembly resolution urging the nuclear weapons powers to proceed with the ICJ's unanimous mandate for total nuclear disarmament. The Model Nuclear Weapons Convention, an official UN document endorsed by the Secretary General, was elaborated by IALANA and LCNP in cooperation with our medical colleagues in IPPNW and our scientific colleagues in INESAP.

The principles guiding IALANA's work may be summarized as follows:

- 1) The threat and use of nuclear weapons has long been illegal under the norms of international humanitarian law.
- 2) This illegality has been confirmed and emphasized by the ICJ Opinion.
- 3) A nuclear weapons convention is the best – some would say the only – way to bring about a world free of nuclear weapons.
- 4) There is no time to lose in embarking on this path.

This award, which will be communicated to the IALANA community in all six continents, will encourage IALANA to increase its efforts to implement the vision to which we all aspire. I receive it with gratitude and with commitment to nuclear awareness, the essential condition for a nuclear weapons free world.