



“Whenever a nation or an international community is in the process of designing its future, it is important that the Fourth World take part in it. If it does not take part today, at the time of design, nor will it tomorrow, at the time of change.” Father Joseph Wresinski

“Ending extreme poverty, a road to peace” - just what does this mean?

As announced in the last newsletter, the International ATD Fourth World Movement has launched, with other human rights actors, a worldwide campaign entitled "Ending extreme poverty, a road to peace." This theme was chosen to express two particularly important truths :

- Those who are forced to live in extreme poverty cannot live in peace, because of the attempt to their dignity and social exclusion engendered by the injustices they endure.
- Society as a whole cannot be at peace, because of the tensions created by the inequalities, and the human rights abuses that they represent.

As a participant in a Fourth World People’s University¹ in Paris stated : « Where there is no justice, there can be no peace. » Likewise, through the work of the Peace and Reconciliation Commission in Peru, it has become clear that poverty and social exclusion are at the root of the violence that has torn that country apart for more than a decade. Peace is more than an absence of war – it is an environment in which all members of a society feel secure in the knowledge that they will be treated fairly and respectfully, and will have access to opportunities that will enable them and their families to lead healthy and productive lives.



Tapori Exhibition, United Nations, Geneva

The campaign is multi-pronged, in order to reach a wide range of audiences : over 1000 children have participated in the Tapori silhouette campaign (see photo), plans are progressing well for the youth caravans that will travel throughout Europe this summer, and academics and decision-makers are being invited to a symposium on Joseph Wresinski’s approach to poverty, knowledge, human rights, democracy and peace. **This symposium, entitled «Democracy : Facing the Test of Social Exclusion », will take place in December 2008 in Paris.**

The campaign will culminate on October 17, 2007, when the number of individuals and organizations that have signed the Call to Action “Ending extreme poverty, a road to peace” will be announced. The Call to Action has already been signed by a wide variety of people, from grass-roots human rights activists to well-known personalities such as **Josep Borrell Fontelles**, President of the European Parliament; **Silvio Campana Zegarra**, Representative of the Ombudsman’s Office in Cusco, Peru; **Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne**, film-makers, two-time winners of the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Festival; **Jacques Dermagne**, President of the French Economic and Social Council; **Daniel Genevois**, Amnesty International, France; **Bronislaw Geremek**, European Parliamentarian ; **Federico Mayor Zaragoza**, President of the Foundation for a Culture of Peace in Madrid and former Director-General of UNESCO; **Clotilde Nyssens**, Belgian Senator; **Titinga Frederic Pacéré**, lawyer for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; **Guy Ryder**, Secretary General of the International Trade Union Confederation; **Cassam Uteem**, former President of Mauritius; **Zinedine Zidane**, French football star.

You can sign the Call to Action at <http://www.oct17.org/site/Call-to-action.html>.

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¹ Fourth World People's University: Created in Europe in the 1970s, they are places for training and exchanges between very poor families and those who agree to recognize them as partners. Since 1975, they have been the starting point of the international Fourth World congresses, and it is from these universities that the delegations of representatives to meetings with national and international officials are chosen.

The new International Joseph Wresinski Centre is inaugurated

Ever since its creation, the International Movement has been carefully safeguarding the writings, photos, and other documents that have recorded the experiences of those involved in the struggle against extreme poverty. These include speeches, correspondence, essays, etc. by Father Joseph Wresinski himself, as well as contributions from families living in poverty, permanent volunteers, and allies. These have now been brought together in the new Joseph Wresinski Centre, in the aim of making them more easily available to members of the Movement, but also – while respecting the rules of confidentiality – to sociologists, historians, policy makers, etc., who are concerned about issues related to extreme poverty. The Centre, which is in Baillet-en-France, outside of Paris, was officially inaugurated on 10 February in the presence of local authorities, human rights activists, local residents, and families living in poverty – including some who had lived in the camp in Noisy-le-Grand where the Movement was born.

The Centre's objective is to "safeguard the memory of the injustices that were inflicted, the battles that were fought and the various ways in which people were involved," explained Jean Tonglet, the Centre's director.

In the days immediately following the inauguration, Pierre Sané, UNESCO's Under-Secretary-General, visited the Centre, in recognition that the records it contains form part of the world's heritage.

Appointments to visit the Centre's collection can be made by contacting www.joseph-wresinski.org

20 years since the Wresinski report: an international impact

In the 1980s, faced with an economic crisis that brought with it a sharp increase in the levels of poverty, France's Economic and Social Council, a consultative government body, asked Joseph Wresinski to serve as rapporteur for an assessment of the situation and of possible government responses. The result was a study adopted by the Council in 1987, entitled "*Chronic Poverty and Lack of Basic Security*." Based on the experiences of those living in poverty for decades and even for several generations, the study demonstrated the relationship between extreme poverty and multiple human rights violations.

The result was two lines of action: (1) the development of a comprehensive and coherent set of anti-poverty policies by the French government, and (2) the launching of efforts both in France and within the UN to establish that extreme poverty is a human rights violation.

Building on the positive French experience, Father Joseph Wresinski's approach successfully inspired the Council of Europe to adopt, in 1989, a project entitled "Human Dignity and Social Exclusion," which over the years brought to light the fact that extreme poverty continued to exist in all European countries, and led to the adoption of a report outlining for its member States a set of guidelines for the implementation of an inter-sectoral approach to social rights.

At the same time, Father Joseph Wresinski convinced the UN's Human Rights Commission to undertake a study to examine the question of extreme poverty and exclusion from society. This process has now led to the development of a draft set of guiding principles on the actions that governments should take to fight extreme poverty through a human rights based approach.

The Wresinski report thus continues to stimulate greater attention to the issues surrounding extreme poverty, and to inspire approaches based on access to all human rights.

Calendar

March 5, Paris, Adoption of legislation creating an enforceable right to housing: this constitutes a victory by a people's movement that brought together both homeless people and those that are well housed.

May, Montevideo, Global GCAP Constituency and National Coalitions' Meeting: the coalition, Global Call against Poverty, has decided that 17 October will be an international day of mobilization against poverty. ATD Fourth World has been invited to attend the Global GCAP meeting and will present Oct. 17's history and the campaign: "Ending Poverty, A Road to Peace".

June, Geneva, Parallel event during the Council of Human Rights: organized in link with the presentation by Special Rapporteur A. Sengupta of his report on extreme poverty.

June-July, Geneva: ATD Fourth World will participate in **the Civil Society Development Forum and the Annual Ministerial Review activities**, one of the new functions of the ECOSOC. The proposed theme for 2007 is "Strengthening efforts for the eradication of poverty and hunger, through global partnerships for development".

June, Cusco (Peru), and Dakar, Consultations on Guidelines against extreme poverty: the Human Rights Council has requested that consultations be carried out with NGOs through which people living in poverty express themselves. Dialogues with local people and human rights experts will be organized in Cusco and Dakar.