

UPF Celebrates the Beginning of Argentina's Tercentennial - interfaith event

Miguel Werner
July 12, 2016



Buenos Aires, Argentina -- "Solidarity and Peace Commitment" was the theme of an intercultural and interfaith event UPF-Argentina and Red Cooperar, a civil society network, co-organized to celebrate the beginning of Argentina's tercentennial. The event took place on July 12, 2016 at the Sala de Representantes (House of Representatives) room in the [Manzana de las Luces](#) (Illuminated Block), a historical building in Buenos Aires city.

The program included the presentation of three peace flags; interfaith prayers, followed by the watering of an olive tree; an overview of Red Cooperar's health campaign; the distribution of a questionnaire, the answers from which a "Solidarity and Peace Commitment" statement will be written; as well as music and dance. An interesting part of the event was the impersonation of historical figures, as a way to honor them.



Peace Flags

One of the first speakers was Mr. Christian Oreb, the general coordinator of Red Cooperar. He said, “At the 200th [anniversary of Argentina’s independence], [there have been] issues in the past and [there are] issues today that challenge us as a republic. We need to reencounter ourselves and acknowledge the richness of cultural and religious diversity [so that we may] face these new challenges with civic maturity, solidarity and a commitment to peace. We should be the protagonists of history so as to open a tercentenary of hope.”

Then, everyone sang Argentina’s national anthem. Afterwards, the sponsors of the event were recognized [\(1\)](#) and the messages UPF’s Ambassadors for Peace wrote to be shared on this occasion, were read. Among those who wrote a message was Prof. Dr. Ernesto Kahan, an Argentinian doctor who lives in Israel. Dr. Kahan, who is also a well-known writer, was a member of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) delegation that received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985 [\(2\)](#).

Mr. Miguel Ángel Brignani, coordinator of the Manzana de las Luces, spoke about the history of the venue. The Provincial Legislature, which was used as the Argentine National Congress in the early and mid-1800s, was established at the site. The site was also the meeting place for the Buenos Aires City Legislature from the late 1800s to the early 1930s.

Three peace flags were then presented and subsequently hoisted onto the same flagpole to signify unity and diversity for peaceful coexistence. The meaning and history of each flag was explained: the International Peace Flag, by Mrs. María Irene Giurlani, a member of the Poets Circle of Boulogne Sur Mer; the Wiphala Flag, by Mrs. Rosalía Gutiérrez, president of the Students Community of the First American Nations (CEPNA); and the Universal Peace Flag, by Mr. Eduardo Borri and Mrs. Jackeline Giusti, coordinators of the Pacis Nuntii Movement [\(3\)](#).

Donations

Peace will remain an ideal unless we are in solidarity with those who suffer. A brief [video about a health campaign](#) Red Cooperar runs that works towards achieving this was shown. The video, which was recorded in April 2016, features the people of Yerúa Port in Entre Ríos province, as well as residents of an evacuation center in Concordia city, also located in the same province. In December 2015, the city experienced flooding and thousands of families were evacuated. Executives of Red Cooperar donated an oximeter and a cardiac stethoscope to Mr. Fabián Cevey, mayor of Concordia, which are both now used by the city’s health center. Mr. Cevey shared some words and said he was touched and thankful for the organization’s work and the donation they made, and noted that the city was also in need of a defibrillator, an audiometer and an electrocardiogram. At that moment, Mr. Franco Scoccimarro, an elder of the Mormon Church and president of the Almas Doradas Foundation, publicly committed to donate one of these pieces of medical equipment.

Poet Donato Perrone, representing UPF-Argentina’s Peace Council, also committed to making a [donation*](#).

Watering an Olive Tree for Peace and Solidarity

Then, representatives from the government and civil society watered an olive tree to symbolize a shared commitment to life care, solidarity and peace. Among those who participated in this ceremony were Mrs. Silvia Carranza, president of CILSA; Mr. Héctor Pibernus, a member of the Coordinating Team of Argentina’s Peace Council; Mrs. Patricia Pitaluga, president of Acercando Naciones; Dr. Sofia Pallitto, manager of the Liaison Unit of the Security and Crime Prevention Council of the Ministry of Justice and Security of Buenos Aires city; and journalist Mr. Osvaldo García Napo, director and CEO of “El Ascensor” Radio, where he promotes culture and ecology.

The olive tree will be planted in Puerto Yerúa in Entre Ríos province by the end of the year.

After the ceremony, interfaith prayers were offered by representatives of various faiths. Representing the Hindu faith was Ms. Norma Terzo from the Ramakrishna Spiritual Home of the Ramakrishna Order in Argentina, who offered the first prayer. She was followed by the Venerable Senpo Oshiro, a monk who directs the Soto Zen Buddhist Association in Argentina, representing the Buddhist faith; Ms. Graciela Grynberg, rabbi of the Bet Israel community, representing the Jewish faith; and Ms. Faiza Yahia, representing the Muslim faith. This part of the program concluded with prayers by Pastor David Calvo from the United Evangelical Lutheran Church, representing evangelical Christianity, and Friar Jorge Bender, guardian of the Saint Francis of Assisi Church, who gave the Prayer of Saint Assisi, “Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace.”



History, Arts and “Peace World”

The last part of the program featured a tribute to key figures in Argentina’s history with people dressed as them. Those represented were José de San Martín (1778-1850); Manuel Belgrano (1770-1820); Martín Miguel de Güemes (1785-1821) and Juan Bautista Túpac Amaru (1747-1827), who Belgrano recommended at Tucumán’s Congress to lead the United Provinces of South America. Other figures were Juana Azurduy (1780-1862) and María Antonia de Paz, also known as Mama Antula (1730-1799), who is considered by some as the “spiritual mother of Argentina.” She continued the Jesuit legacy after her expulsion in 1767, and she will be beatified by Pope Francis in August 2016, in a ceremony that will be held in Santiago del Estero in northern Argentina. Also, people from other countries appeared in their country’s traditional attire, including four Japanese girls who wore a kimono.

The closing part also included dances, as another way of expressing the importance of groups to work together to build peace. The “uno,” a tango, was performed by Ms. Carolina Signorelli and Mr. Marcos Carabajal, directors of Amalgama Tango. The pericón, a folk dance whose roots come from different South American countries, was performed by 10 couples from the traditional dance school “El Triunfo” of Ezeiza (in Buenos Aires province). The dance was directed by Ms. Silvia Olgún, who was helped by the dancer José Robles. At the end, Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP)-Argentina’s chorus sang the song, “Mundo de Paz” (Peace World).

The organizers thanked everyone who supported and helped organize the event. Also, Mr. Miguel Werner, UPF-Argentina’s secretary general, shared an excerpt from a speech by UPF Founder, Rev. Sun Myung Moon: “This means we need a movement to realize a society of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universally shared values. We need to make humanity one great family, by breaking down the walls in our hearts and eliminating even the boundaries between nations. This movement begins from each family.” (Peace Message, February 23, 2007)

Statement after the Beginning of Argentina’s Tercentennial

Also, the following questionnaire was distributed to the participants, the responses from which the “Solidarity and Peace Commitment” statement will be written:

Are we free today? From what or whom should we free ourselves today? How can we have more freedom? What do we mean by cooperation and complementarity?

What is our identity as individuals and as a nation? When we face difficult situations, where does our dignity come from? Does it come from laws and consensus?

How can we heal the wounds of the past? How can we recognize ourselves as part of a people whose luck is inexorably interwoven with each other? How can we build present and future together?

Independence or interdependence? How can we achieve development and shared progress? How can we have better relationships in this globalized world?

Am I critical as a citizen? What is my commitment to overcome challenges, build the common good, and promote friendship among all people and advance peace in our world?

Please send your responses to these questions to:

argentina@upf.org, redcooperar@gmail.com

(*) Other members of Red Cooperar who contributed a donation were Dr. Valentín Thompson, president and founder of Ágora Americana, a civic space; Mrs. Alejandra Durán, president and founder of the nonprofit, Psyche Terapias Integradoras; Mr. Pablo Olivera Da Silva, president and founder of the nonprofit, Construyendo Ciudadanía and coordinator of Red Cooperar; Mr. Enrique Michelli, president and founder of the nonprofit, Sin Diferencias; Mr. Martín Oliva, manager of the Murga de Flores Association; Ms. Daiana Wade, director of the Revivir Adictos a la Vida Foundation; Mr. Carlos A. Rosenffel, representative of the Argentinian Association of Adapted Tennis (AATA); and Mr. Christian Hernán Oreb, general coordinator of Red Cooperar.

Several of Red Cooperar's members could not attend the event including Club de Leones de Buenos Aires; Centro Cultural Antonio Devoto; Asociación Civil Manzi; Asociación de Cooperadores Escolares Adeccop 17°; Asociación Argentina de Fútbol de Mesa; Cruzada Jujeña de Solidaridad; and Centro Cultural Murga Los Amos de Devoto.



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(2) Congratulatory Messages

Dear friends:

On the occasion of the cultural, interfaith and artistic event that will be held on July 12, under the theme, “Solidarity and Peace Commitment,” I want to greet you and wish you the best.

I would have loved to have been there to embrace all of you and to participate in this important gathering.

The world and our Latin American countries are undergoing a great economic and social crisis that is causing frustration, violence and pessimism. In moments like this, the intellect of people should take action in order to light the flame that can illuminate the path towards health progress, freedom and justice.

I am a passionate worker of peace and universal tolerance. This is a long road that can only be built with fruitful work and sociopolitical alliances!

I am sure that our shared commitment to work with science and our shared desire for a more humane and fair, healthier and less violent world will guide you during the development of the event.

You, fruits of the American seed sowed by liberators and intellectuals, are the reserve. The world trusts all of you.

Prof. Dr. Ernesto Kahan
Vice President of the World Academy of Arts and Culture

Former president of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) and president of the IPPNW-Israel; member of the delegation that received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985

Winner of the 1991 Schweitzer Peace Prize “for his courageous work for peace in the Middle East”

WHAT I LOOK FOR AND CANNOT FIND...

WHAT I FIND AND THEN FORGET...

If we meditate and spend “A MOMENT WITH GOD,” we can surely find a path of commitment to solidarity that takes us to a “REAL AND EVERLASTING PEACE...”

The harder the path, the more GOD will multiply our strength. We have been created for LOVE, and this love must be upheld.

Today, [many] brothers say that “apostasy has replaced the rights and duties in “LIFE, [and as understood from] THE HOLY BOOKS...” All these books may have differences, but their real axis is “THE COMMON GOOD,” which prophets have carried out in the name of “the LORD...”

Brothers, look at each other and you will find what you are looking for; embrace each other in the name of the Father, since “HE IS WAITING FOR YOU...”

Many political and religious leaders, with a weak faith, have fallen into the prevarication of proposing laws that benefit them... You, as the current prophets, “should recover the faith that restores our soul and changes war, for the “FRATERNITY OF THE SPIRIT, THE REASON OF LOVE...”

I greet you in the name of the GOD MOST HIGH.

Writer Hugo López Pénelas
Ambassador for Peace of UPF-Argentina
July 9, 2016

(3) Peace Flags

International Peace Flag

The International Peace Flag is a universal symbol. It represents unity in diversity, towards a better world, and the respect of all beliefs.

Archeologist Nicholas Konstantinovich Roerich, who was a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, created the flag in 1920. It shows three magenta spheres surrounded by a circle in the same color on a white background. The logo has ancient origins; its earliest known example appears on Stone Age amulets. Roerich described the circle as representing art, science and spirituality as aspects of culture, with the white background representing truth.

The three spheres can also represent other things, such as: past, present and future, within the circle of the eternity of time, and body, mind and spirit, within the circle of our humanity.

This flag was formally adopted by the Roerich Pact, which was signed by 21 North and South American countries, among them, the United States; Argentina; and Mexico, on April 15, 1935 in Washington, D.C. The Pact, also known as the Treaty on the Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic Monuments, was designed to protect cultural property during times of both war and peace. In 1937, it was approved by all the countries that belonged to the League of Nations, predecessor of the United Nations, and in 1957, it was approved by 77 countries.

Today, when humanity and our planet face difficult times, the Roerich Pact reaches our conscience and helps us live valuing the richness of unity in diversity and work in harmony towards achieving lasting peace in our world.

This Flag does not take a side; it serves the creative spirit, in order to achieve unity and universal peace.

It is important to clarify that this International Peace Flag does not represent any ideology, party, belief or religion. It only represents human integrity, as well as the integration of cultural expressions.

What is culture? Culture is what we cultivate together. A better world is possible, and it is in our hands.

Let us move forward with hope and fly together in freedom!

María Irene Giurlani
Poets Circle of Boulogne-sur-Mer



Wiphala Flag

The word Wiphala comes from the word wiphay, which means “triumph voice,” and laphaqi, which means “the flow of a flexible object in the wind” in Aymara, a language spoken by the Aymara people of the Andes. It is believed the language was created more than 1,000 years ago, although some sources indicate it may have been created more than 2,000 years ago.

The Wiphala flag has four sides and is made up of seven colors distributed across 49 squares of the same size, arranged diagonally. The same size of the square symbolizes equality in people’s diversity. The seven colors of the rainbow are the cosmic reflection that represents the unity and equality of a community’s organization and harmony.

Since its beginning, this flag was an emblem of the Aymara-Qhishwa people. Today, many other native peoples have considered it a symbol of peace and understanding among cultures.

The Wiphala flag represents the dreams of our ancestors, the voice of Mother Earth. It encourages us to work together for peace and the environment.

Rosalía Gutiérrez

President of the Students Community of the First American Nations (CEPNA)



Universal Peace Flag

The Universal Peace Flag was created by a group of young people who had traveled together on a canoe expedition, “Pacis Nuntii,” from Brasilia, Brazil to Buenos Aires to celebrate the first International Year of Youth in 1985. Since then, the flag has traveled to the farthest corners of the planet, from the Marambio Base in Antarctica, the peace-white continent, to summits of Aconcagua, the highest mountain outside of Asia, and Mt. Everest. The flag has also been given to different organizations and international figures, including Pope John Paul II, on Palm Sunday, April 12, 1987.

The Universal Peace Flag evokes and appeals to peace. Its message and calling are a symbol of direct interpretation; it does not need an explanation, since the viewer identifies it as a flag that expresses the universality of peace.

The central image of the Universal Peace Flag is the white dove, an international peace symbol. The dove embraces planet earth, which has no borders between countries or continents. Within the earth, a human family is represented in gold under a light with the same color. This image signifies overcoming nationalities, religions and ethnicities; it also represents the divine presence in the universe that inspires devotion and peace. The olive branch in the dove’s beak is recognized by many spiritual traditions as a symbol of life and hope...

The inspiration for the Universal Peace Flag came during dusk on September 8, 1984. While crossing the Alvear de Paraná Park in Paraná, the group of young people who had been on the Pacis Nuntii expedition, looked at the sky and saw two clouds, white and bright, with the shape of wings, pushed by the south breeze, joining together and embracing the full moon for a couple of seconds. Two planets and the Milky Way appeared. They saw the flag reflected in the sky and decided to create a design based on what they had seen. This is how the Universal Peace Flag was born. This flag is the symbol of a new era, and is promoted by the Pacis Nuntii Movement, which was created in 1986 by Eduardo Alberto Borri, who led the expedition. The Pacis Nuntii Movement (“pacis nuntii” means “peace messengers” in Latin) seeks to convey “peace, love and confraternity.”

Eduardo Borri / Jackeline Giusti

Coordinators of the Pacis Nuntii Movement