

# THE BIRTH OF USPID

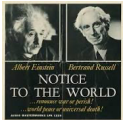
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- By Alessandro di Mariano di Vanni Filipepi

Since most of you were born after World War II, it may be helpful a nod to the environment in the early postwar years with respect to the atomic weapons issue, the environment from which USPID later came into being..

Following the end of the war and the first thermonuclear bomb tests, and especially after the Russell - Einstein Manifesto of 1955, many scientists in Western countries made public efforts to discuss the risks to humanity produced by the existence of nuclear weapons and to inform the public.



In Italy, these actions were taken also by left-wing physicists and their actions were qualified as excessively pro-Soviet.

I too, then in my early twenties, in the Partisans for Peace movement, collected signatures to join the Manifesto and later spoke in schools and public meetings and wrote articles mixing rigorous information and propaganda.

In public meetings I often had priests and friars beside me, such as Father Balducci, Don Franzoni, Monsignor Bello, Father Zanottelli, Father Melandri: figures with a high human profile.



I remember taking part in one of the first 'Peace Marches', leaving from Milan, in stages, for Perugia, with my daughter Elena; in the pouring rain, we covered the Parma-Reggio stage; in Sant'Ilario, the municipality offered the participants a sober meal, in an atmosphere of warm solidarity.



Meanwhile, abroad, particularly in the United States, groups of scientists were forming who were concerned about nuclear arms race. I recall those gathered around the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, which quickly became an authoritative source of information and analysis of military issues, and a point of reference for scholars interested in arms control and conflict resolution. Various groups merged into the Federation of American Scientists, which started operating in 1946.

In 1969, the Union of Concerned Scientists was founded. **2**

Even in Western Europe, similar groups gradually emerged. But not in Italy. In the summer of 1982 I received a phone call from a young physicist whom I did not know personally. It was Paolo. He proposed that an organisation be set up in Italy too.

I agreed to the proposal. We contacted Mimmo De Maria from Rome and decided to promote an organisation that would deal with nuclear weapons issues. Everyone worked hard to gather support for the proposal, moving towards colleagues or acquaintances, mostly in left-wing circles.

Understandably, since Paolo had been involved in Avanguardia operaia, I was in the Italian Communist Party, Mimmo also in Avanguardia operaia.

We collected many adhesions.

I consider Paolo's phone call as the "conception" of USPID.



The "birthing" would take place a few months later, although not 9 .

At the SIF Congress, in Perugia, October 1982, many of the physicists we contacted met. They discussed what should be the tasks of an association that would bring together scientists who considered their social responsibility to use their expertise to study the problems of disarmament and the arms race, even attempting to envisage solutions.

Thus USPID was born.

At the Perugia meeting, the text of the Charter was discussed and prepared. Among the objectives was a commitment to provide the public and the political class with a documented, non-partisan tool of information and analysis free from ideological or partisan bias. on such problems as: **3**

nuclear arms control and nuclear disarmament, nuclear proliferation, consequences of nuclear explosions, development of military technologies, conventional disarmament, chemical and biological disarmament, problems related to conflicts and their resolution.

The name USPID is an adaptation from the name of the American "Union of Concerned Scientists"; but, since in Italian "concerned" translates to "worried," we chose to put "for disarmament."

The symbol was created by a student, Paola Trapani.

USPID 's founding act is from 1983.

This activity for USPID to come to life encountered no problems. All of us were united by a common conviction.

But problems arose in the face of the need to obtain a broad membership, to achieve the coexistence of people with different political views, from the more radical and pacifist to the more moderate, Schematically, one could say: from the left-wing, sometimes pro-Soviet, to the more pro-American wing.

It is no mystery that in Italy, as in many Western countries, most physicists recognize themselves in the first category. And to this belonged almost all the promoters of USPID.

A joint effort made it possible to overcome this difficulty.

It would have been a disaster to leave without the convinced adhesion of the minority component, in particular of Edoardo Amaldi, the best known and most respected Italian physicist.



The realization of coexistence and effective collaboration between the two souls was also achieved thanks to the intelligence and personal prestige of Carlo Bernardini and to the patient mediation work and balanced sensitivity of Mimmo De Maria who was later the first secretary of USPID.

I learned with regret that he passed away recently.

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Mimmo De Maria

Carlo Bernardini

Francesco Lenci

Francesco Lenci became secretary in 1983, **after the Pugwash Conference in Venice**; Carlo Bernardini proposed him at a USPID meeting.

The agreement reached was soon put to the test.

At that time there was the alarming perception of the problem of the installation of the so-called "Euromissiles" (Pershing II and Cruise, both nuclear warhead carriers), in response to the Soviet Union's installation of SS-20 missiles aimed at Western Europe. The Cruise should be installed in Sicily, close to Comiso.



Cruise

SS-20

Lively movements arose in Italy and other countries in Europe that sought to oppose the installation of the Euromissiles. The USPID members had, on the issue, different views.



Then USPID commissioned a group of members, among whom I recall Francesco Calogero, Carlo Schaerf and Carlo Bernardini, to prepare a document analyzing the problem and presenting both arguments for and against the installation of Cruise in Sicily.

That document, which was later signed by a part of our scientific community, concluded with the hope that an international agreement would eliminate the need to proceed with the installation of Euromissiles in Europe. The document was then delivered by a delegation led by Edoardo Amaldi to the President of the Republic, Sandro Pertini.

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USPID also later produced -- and in some cases presented to parliamentary committees and to other institutions -- its papers analyzing and evaluating such sensitive issues as ballistic missile defense projects, horizontal nuclear proliferation, international scenarios after the U.S. attack on Iraq, and the war in Ukraine.

In the 1980s, the USPID Bulletin, a brilliant invention of then Secretary Francesco Lenzi, was published; this publication gathered, from domestic and foreign sources, to provide an overview of peace and disarmament issues; it was published monthly.

The Bulletin was possible thanks to Francesco Lenzi's and Giuliano Colombetti's efforts and also thanks to the conscientious objectors that the Ministry of Defense had assigned to us.



Giuliano Colombetti

It was a publication made with limited means, which soon became a point of reference for Italian pacifist movements and also for sectors of public opinion and politicians.

My collection of the Bulletin was later given to Mario Vadicchino for the Gramsci Institute of Turin.

In the spring of 1984, at a meeting of the Scientific Council, it was agreed that it would be important to organize an International Conference on the issues of disarmament and arms control, inviting authoritative experts.

I was told that myself, with the collaboration of Giuseppe Longo, had organized a first small conference in Bologna in 1983, but I don't remember it!

Then Bernardini suggested Castiglioncello. Carlo Bernardini, Francesco Lenci, Giuliano Colombetti, and Paola Venerosi approached the administrators of Rosignano Marittimo, to whom they illustrated the project of an international conference on "Nuclear Weapons and Europe". The City Council, thanks to the enlightened willingness of Mayor Giuseppe Danesin, approved, and a year later, in October 1985, the First International Conference was held.

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The Conferences were also attended by international political scholars and scientists such as Georgi Arbatov (then Director of the Institute for U.S.-Canada Studies in Moscow), Luigi Anderlini (then President of Disarmament Archive), Giorgio Napolitano (later President of the Republic), Joseph Rotblat (Founder of Pugwash, Nobel Peace Prize in 1995)).

To all this we must add the activity for the dissemination of the culture of peace and disarmament, an intense activity in several USPID Sections: assemblies in schools and Universities, cycles of seminars, public meetings, up to the "academic" recognition of the cultural value of "educational" activities in the field of Science for Peace.

This led also to the establishment of Courses in Peace Sciences, at Pisa and Bari, for example.

Among the members of USPID there are currently prominent personalities in the world of peace and disarmament. Suffice it to mention Francesco Calogero and Paolo Cotta Ramusino; the former was and the latter is currently Secretary of the Pugwash Movement, with which USPID has close contacts.

The Pugwash Conferences have obtained, together with Josef Rotblat, the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995. Receiving the award was Francesco Calogero, then secretary of the organization.



Finally, in close collaboration with USPID is the International School on Disarmament and Research on Conflicts (ISODARCO), founded in 1966 by Edoardo Amaldi and Carlo Schaerf, who is its Director.



Carlo Schaerf

ISODARCO shares many members with USPID, including Carlo Schaerf himself, Alessandro Pascolini, Francesco Calogero and Diego Latella.

As I was preparing these notes, images of the people who have left us, ran through my mind:

Paolo Farinella, Beppe Nardulli, Carlo Bernardini, Nicola Cufaro Petroni, Mimmo De Maria. To them I was bound by esteem and affection.

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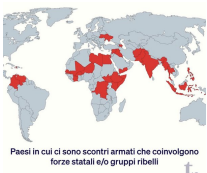
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Now that I have finished, let me say that I am oppressed by the squalor of the world scene; a few examples:

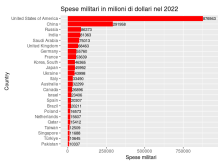
- In the first seven months of this year, nearly 2.000 people died or disappeared in the central Mediterranean Sea.



- In 2018, 26 individuals in the world owned the wealth of nearly 4 billion people, the poorest half of the world's population.



- In last year alone, at least 150,000 people died in ongoing armed conflicts in 56 countries.



- Last year world military spending hit an all-time high: \$2,240 billion

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Yet I tell myself that we cannot give-up and shut ourselves up in our shell of affluence in a relatively wealthy country.

Finally I like to add that, as a side-effect on me, I owe to USPID to have introduced me to people of great intelligence and moral stature, some of whom I have become friends with.

Roberto Fieschi