

Moving from a Culture of War to a Culture of Peace  
for Fellowship Magazine by David Adams

"The transformation of society from a culture of war to a culture of peace is perhaps more radical and far-reaching than any previous change in human history. Every aspect of social relations, having been shaped for millennia by the dominant culture of war, is open to change - from the relations among nations to those between women and men. Everyone, from the centers of power to the most remote villages, may be engaged and transformed in the process." This vision, written in 1995 for a book on the UNESCO culture of peace program, seems more needed with each passing day.

With hindsight, September 11, 2001 may be seen as one of the landmarks along the way. On that dark day, the violence of the culture of war in the hands of men trained by the CIA in the far reaches of Central Asia converged on New York City, home of Wall Street, and Washington, home of the Pentagon. "Blowback" they called it. Not that such violence is new in the world, but this time it struck at the center of the empire, with main line television on hand to broadcast.

And since September 11, the forces of the culture of war, on all sides, calling for vengeance, have moved towards a reign of terror and repression throughout the world. As Martin Luther King described in *Strength to Love*: "Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction.... The chain reaction of evil --hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars--must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation."

Does this mean that there is no way out? Does it mean that our species is inherently, genetically violent? That war is in our human nature?

No. The same species that invented war is capable of inventing peace. This is the conclusion of the Seville Statement on Violence drafted by leading scientists from around the world during the UN International Year for Peace in 1986. After examining the scientific arguments based on evolution, genetics, animal behavior, brain research and social psychology, the conclusion is drawn that biology does not predestine us to war and violence.

In fact, our biological legacy of aggression is the basis of our capacity for righteous indignation against injustice which is much more essential for peace activism and peace education than it is for modern warfare. This is one of the conclusions of my books on The Aggression Systems and Psychology for Peace Activists.

If war is not in our genes, where does it come from and why has been so persistent throughout history? The answer is in our culture. Over the course of history, humans have developed a culture that permits and encourages war and violence: a culture of war.

#### THE CULTURE OF WAR

We need to understand clearly the culture of war - what is necessary for it and what is closely linked. First, those aspects that are necessary:

- an enemy
- armaments and soldiers
- a society in which people follow orders
- a belief that power can be maintained through violence
- control of information (secrecy, propaganda)

In fact, if any one of these is missing, there can be no war. No enemy - no war. No army and armaments - no war. No control of information - no war. And if people don't follow orders and if they don't believe that power can be maintained through violence - no war.

Add to these three other important aspects of the culture of war as it has developed throughout human history:

- profitability - whether for plunder, colonies, economic domination or the profits of the military-industrial complex.
- male domination
- education for war

The profitability of war has ensured that there have always been powerful interests to maintain, and, if necessary, re-establish the culture of war. Male domination, to be discussed further below, has been associated with the culture of war since its inception. And education, from its origins in the initiation rituals of prehistory to the history books of today, has been heavily influenced by the culture of war.

### THE CULTURE OF PEACE

I was provided with the privilege and challenge of developing an alternative to the culture of war after proposing and being hired on to develop a culture of peace program at UNESCO in 1992-1993. Not by chance that it was UNESCO that took up the challenge, as it was founded in 1946 to build peace in the minds of men. Its Constitution states that "a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and ... peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind."

By 1999, UNESCO had proposed and the United Nations General Assembly had adopted a Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace with eight programmatic areas:

instead of enemy images	understanding, tolerance and solidarity
instead of armaments and armies	disarmament, general and complete
instead of authoritarian governance	democratic participation
instead of secrecy and propaganda	free flow of information and knowledge
instead of violence (structural and physical)	respect for all human rights
instead of male domination	equality between women and men
instead of education for war	education for a culture of peace
instead of exploitation of the weak and of the environment	sustainable economic and social development

In the course of developing the International Year for the Culture of Peace, for which I was the Director in collaboration with Enzo Fazzino, I worked with groups throughout the world to analyze the culture of war and to propose culture of peace alternatives. The responses have been remarkably universal, although the wording may change from one audience to another. Most recently at the June 2002 FOR/IFOR conference, it looked like the following:

instead of enemies and dehumanization,	solidarity and cooperation
instead of weapons and soldiers	disarmament
instead of hierarchical authority	democratic participation
instead of fear and violence	human security
instead of greed	sharing
instead of unforgiveness	forgiveness

Since we only had a few minutes for the discussion, we did not get to male domination, secrecy and propaganda and education for peace (although I recall hearing "peace education" being stated from the

audience as we finished), but I am sure it was only a matter of time. Coming from individuals, some of the points are stated differently than by diplomats. Hence, "greed" stands for "exploitation of the weak and of the environment"; "fear" is added to "violence"; "sharing" stands for "sustainable economic and social development." The question of unforgiveness and forgiveness deserves more consideration than I can give in this short article.

In addition, we need to go beyond the UN definition and program and consider a question that is too hot for diplomats to handle: is the function of war and the culture of war primarily for external defense or for the maintaining of internal power? I submit that this question is far from resolved and needs to be debated.

From the historical beginnings of the state 5,000 years ago, war had two faces: one turned outward for defense and conquest; the other turned inward to prevent revolt against the authority of the state. Thus, the early city-states of Mesopotamia were engaged in military conquest abroad and maintenance of a hierarchical social structure at home that included semi-free laborers, slaves and prisoners of war. Greece and Rome were built on slavery, the slaves captured by war and kept in check by internal military force. The crusades abroad of the Middle Ages were accompanied by the inquisition at home.

Although not often discussed, today's "democratic states" have not escaped from this dynamic. My 1995 article in the Journal of Peace Research, Internal Military Intervention in the United States shows this as a continuing theme in American history. During the period of slavery, while we do not have records, we know there was a great deal of military activity, often local, against slave rebellions and escapes and against Native Americans. More recently, for the past 120 years there are more complete records indicating approximately 18 interventions and the involvement of about 12,000 troops per year against organized labor, urban rebellions, etc. During periods of external war, the internal wars are usually intensified and accompanied by large scale spying, deportations and witch hunts. It would appear that we have once again entered such a period.

The modern democratic state is embarrassed to admit to making war on its own citizens, and so it tends to carry it out in secrecy. A note in the International Herald Tribune of May 14, 1997, reported that the cost of classification of secrets by the US government was over \$5 billion dollars a year and that does not include the CIA secrets because that cost is secret. Although precise data are not available, the US government seems to be increasing secrecy in the name of its "War on Terrorism". How much is being used for an internal culture of war?

The continuing internal culture of war by the nation-state further underlines the importance of working for a culture of peace, and especially for its key aspects of democracy and the free flow of information, without which democracy cannot properly function. It underlines also a danger for religion: when it is linked to the state it cannot escape being implicated in the state's culture of war.

#### GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

A global movement for a culture of peace was called for by the UN General Assembly as part of its 1999 Declaration and Programme of Action. This was launched with the International Year for a Culture of Peace in 2000, followed by the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World from 2001-2010. During the United International Year for a Culture of Peace, more than 1% of the population of the world (over 75 million people) signed the Manifesto 2000, pledging to practice a culture of peace in their family, school and community (See the UNESCO Decade Website for details). **Fellowship** readers know of the Decade through the regular column. See also a partial list of conferences attached.

The global movement brings together activists who would not have seemed to be allied in the past. Those who promote one area of a culture of peace are coming to appreciate the complementary action by others in the other seven areas of a culture of peace.

**Non-Violence.** Because of the nature of a culture of peace, non-violence must be basic to the tactics and strategy of the global movement. Increasingly, the importance of non-violence as it has been developed by Gandhi and King and their disciples is recognized by social activists around the world, including a new-found appreciation of non-violence by those who consider themselves revolutionaries. While working for the UN in Africa and Latin America I got to know revolutionaries who have come to question the traditional model of armed revolution (for example that followed by Kabila in the Congo) because it requires secrecy and hierarchical structures which are antithetical to the kind of society that they seek to build. Democracy and transparency, while impossible for an armed struggle, are essential to the process of building movements of non-violent resistance. Communist Parties are going through a similar soul-searching, considering seriously a non-violent strategy with democracy and transparency as a way towards socialism. This may accelerate if the internal culture of war is unmasked with its usual linkage to the repression of trade unions and labor movements.

**Sustainable economic and social development.** Throughout the world, many people engaged in development are finding that they need to abandon the old models based on exploitation and capitalist globalization and seek new models that are not so destructive. Together with the millions of people who are taking action to protect the environment, they are important allies in the global movement for a culture of peace.

**Democratic participation.** There is a crisis in traditional models of democracy: voter abstention increases with each national election in the North; while national election models are viewed with increasing skepticism in the South. With hindsight one could have foreseen this with the increasing secrecy of the nation state, which masks incompetence and corruption, as well as the internal culture of war. At the same time, however, other models of democracy are emerging. For example, with the continuing urbanization of the world's population, municipal governance becomes increasingly important and the cities become a testing ground where the culture of peace can take root.

**Equality of women.** Just as war is not in our genes, neither is male domination. For this, the reader is referred to my scientific articles on [Why There Are So Few Women Warriors](#) and [Biology Does Not Make Men More Aggressive than Women](#), which show that women were systematically excluded from war in prehistory.

Because male domination has been causally linked to the culture of war since its inception in prehistoric times, there is a special two-way relationship between the global movement for a culture of peace and movements for women's equality. Women will not attain equality until the culture of war is transformed into a culture of peace. And we will not achieve a culture of peace without the power and effectiveness of mobilized women throughout the world. In this regard, I was especially pleased to have been sponsored at the FOR/IFOR Conference by the Women Peacemakers Program and to have had a chance to hear firsthand of their important work.

**Free flow of information and knowledge.** The advent of the information age bodes well for the success of the global movement for a culture of peace. While the culture of war hides behind secrecy and control of information, the global movement for a culture of peace thrives on the sharing of information and networking. Secrecy may prove to be the Achilles heel of the culture of war. As secrecy continues to be increased, I foresee dozens, then hundreds of Daniel Ellsbergs who abandon the culture of war and expose its secrets (incompetence, corruption and internal war) on the Internet to the point that the people will no longer tolerate it.

On the positive side, the Internet can be a powerful tool for the networking of the global movement. Readers are especially invited to take part in one such experiment, the [Culture of Peace News Network](#), a participative system designed to provide for the culture of peace what CNN provides for the culture of war.

**In conclusion,** we are in a very special moment. We have the privilege to participate in the most radical and far-reaching change in human history - the transformation from a culture of war to a culture of peace.

## REFERENCES ON THE INTERNET

Seville Statement on Violence: [http://www.unesco.org/human\\_rights/hrfv.htm](http://www.unesco.org/human_rights/hrfv.htm) and <http://www.culture-of-peace.info/ssov/title-page.html>

The Aggression Systems: <http://www.culture-of-peace.info/aggression/title-page.html>

Psychology for Peace Activists: <http://www.culture-of-peace.info/ppa/title-page.html>

Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace:  
<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/53/a53r243.pdf>

Internal Military Intervention in the United States:  
<http://www.culture-of-peace.info/intervention/title-page.html>

International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World from 2001-2010: <http://www.unesco.org/cp> (This site includes many important links, including the various UN resolutions and full data on Manifesto 2000 signatures)

Manifesto 2000: <http://www.unesco.org/manifesto2000>

Why There Are So Few Women Warriors:  
<http://www.culture-of-peace.info/women/title-page.html>

Biology Does Not Make Men More Aggressive than Women:  
<http://www.culture-of-peace.info/biology/title-page.html>

Culture of Peace News Network: <http://cpnn-new-england.org>

## SOME CULTURE OF PEACE CONFERENCES

Conference: African Youth for a Culture of Peace  
June 30-July 7, 2001, Capetown, South Africa

Conference on Assessing Cultures of Peace, September 28-30, Clark University, USA

International Conference of NGOs, Paris, France, 12-15 December 2001 - adopted a resolution making a priority of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010)

European Youth Festival for a Culture of Peace, April 21, 2002, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Il Simposio Latino-Americano pelos direitos humanos e a cultura da paz, 8-9 agosto, 2002, Florianópolis, Brasil

Conference - Weaving Solidarity Toward a Culture of Peace  
August 20 - 26, 2002, Miriam College, Quezon City, Philippines

Congreso Iberoamericano de Cultura de Paz  
September 13-15, 2002, Granada, Spain

Building Human Security through Education: Celebrating the International Decade for a Culture of Peace,  
November 1-4, 2002, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Global Education Conference on Culture of Peace and Non-Violence  
December 19 - 21, 2002, Jalandhar, Punjab, India