

## Richard Gush Memorial Lecture

## IS PEACE POSSIBLE?

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## 1. Introduction

The title for this lecture comes from a book written in 1957 by Kathleen Lonsdale, a prominent Quaker scientist and writer on peace. The book is a mix of essays on what seem now to be somewhat old-fashioned scientific debates and an uncompromising and thoughtful pacifism, built around the belief that 'wars would cease if men refused to fight'. It begins by quoting the Quaker Declaration to Charles II in 1661, which provides a fitting introduction to this lecture.

*We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, for any end, or under any pretence whatever; this is our testimony to the whole world. The Spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil, and again to move unto it; and we certainly know, and testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ which leads us into all truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ, nor for the Kingdoms of this world.*

Two questions are raised by this declaration. The first concerns the possibility of peace if large num-

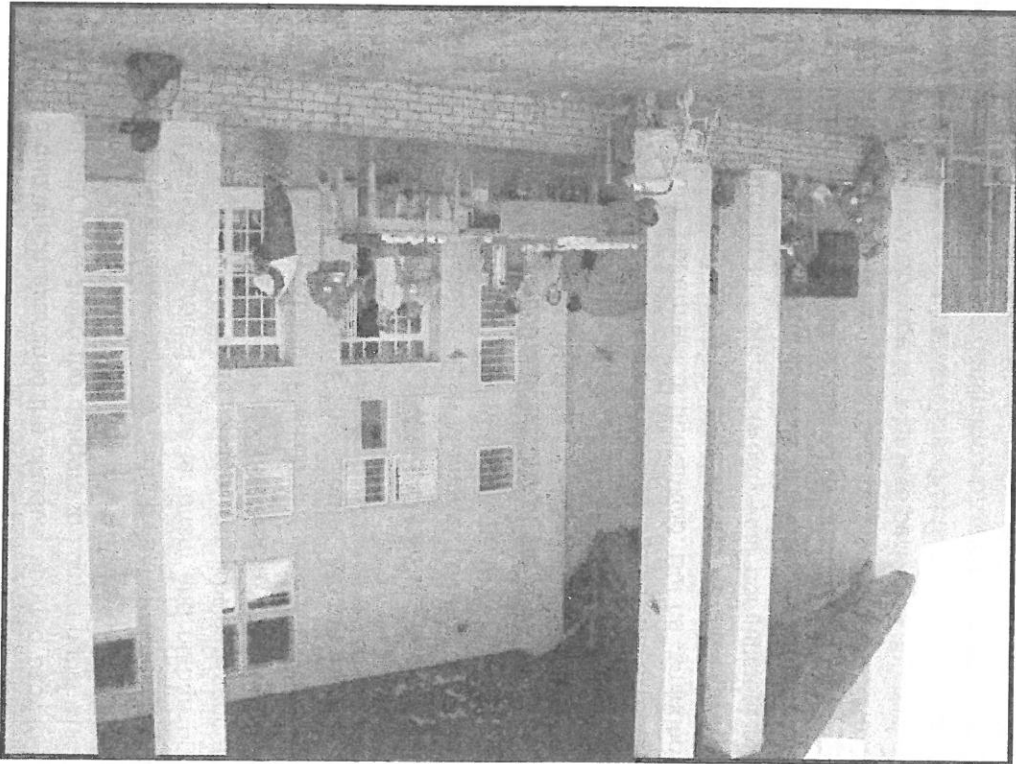
bers of people were to abide by the spirit of this declaration and refused to engage in or support war. A related question is whether the other side of the coin—non-violent action—has a reasonable chance of success. These questions will be specifically dealt with in sections 4 and 5 respectively. There is first a need for some preliminaries.

## 2. The meanings of conflict, violence and peace

Like any discipline, peace studies uses words in particular ways. In this section, I will briefly and non-technically review the most important of these in order to make sense of later parts of the paper. A *conflict* refers to an incompatibility between the interests or needs of two parties, be they individuals, groups or nations. Conflicts are common and inevitable.

*Direct violence* refers to physical or verbal abuse, or threat of abuse, by one party to another. Domestic violence and war are obvious examples. The ending or prevention of such violence is known as *negative peace*.

*Structural violence* was a term coined by Johan Galtung, one of the founders of the discipline of Peace Studies, as a result of field-work in Rhodesia under colonial



rule. Galtung became increasingly aware of the limitations of defining peace as the absence of violence. He noted that while there was little direct violence by the colonial authorities against the native population, there were structures in society, which had significant negative effects on them:

*In a certain sense, there was harmony, cooperation, and integration. But was this peace? With the blatant exploitation, with blacks being denied most opportunities for development given to whites, with flagrant inequality whereby whites were making about twenty times as much for exactly the same job as blacks? Not to mention the basic fact that this was still a white colony.* (Galtung, 1985: 145)

*These structures, procedures and policies, it should be noted, were not intended to cause harm but none the less did so. To Galtung, they represented a 'quiet process, working slowly in the way misery in general, and hunger in particular, erode and finally kill human beings'. (ibid: 145)*

Structural violence, then, describes the structures, which maintain the dominance of one group at the centre of power over another group at the periphery. At a practical level for those at the periphery, it can mean low wages, landlessness, illiteracy, poor health, limited or non-existent political representation or legal rights and, in gen-

eral, limited control over much of their lives. If those who suffer structural violence resist or try to change it, they may be met with direct violence.

The exploitation, neglect and exclusion, which are features of structural violence, kill slowly by comparison with direct violence but kill vastly more people. Subtracting the world average life expectancy from the highest national life expectancy, year by year, and dividing by the highest life expectancy to provide a rough indicator of preventable, premature deaths can estimate deaths due to structural violence. For the period 1945 to 1990, William Eckhardt (1992) estimated this to be 28 per cent, noting that the proportion fell from 43 per cent in 1945 to 20 per cent in 1990. This translates into 17 million people per annum, mostly children under five years in developing countries, who died from hunger or preventable disease. Eckhardt sums up these 'surplus deaths' as a result of government action or inaction between 1945 and 1990 as follows:

- Civilian deaths in war 14 million
  - Military deaths in war 8 million
  - Civilians killed by their own government 48 million
  - Civilian deaths due to structural violence 795 million
- Structural violence, then, killed 36 times more people than does war.

*Positive peace* is the alternative to structural violence. It involves the building of structures and proc-

esses, which emphasise economic, social and political justice for all. The process of establishing positive peace is termed peace-building.

The term *cultural violence* is used to describe the explanations or structural violence. That is, one group may believe that it is appropriate to treat other groups in certain ways because of characteristics such as ethnicity, language, religion or gender, or because the first group believes that they have some sort of divine right to do so.

### 3. The nature and extent of violence

We do not need to be reminded that violence is widespread in South Africa. Opening any newspaper will provide numerous examples of interpersonal and community violence. In South Africa, levels of interpersonal violence are huge compared with those of its neighbours, much of it a legacy of the violence employed and encouraged by the apartheid regime. I will focus here, however, on armed conflict in the broader African context.

We first need to be aware that the nature of armed conflict and the meaning of security have changed dramatically in the last two decades. First, almost all armed conflicts now occur *within* countries rather than between them, typically between government forces and groups wishing secure control over government or territory. For the period 1990-2000, the Stockholm In-

ternational Peace Research Institute (Seybolt, 2001) reported 56 'major armed conflicts' in 44 locations. Only three of these were interstate conflicts – Iraq and Kuwait, India and Pakistan and Ethiopia and Eritrea.

In 2000, there were 25 major armed conflicts, of which nine were in Africa (Algeria, Angola, Burundi, DRC, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan). Some of these seem to have since concluded (Angola, Ethiopia/Eritrea), peace agreements have been signed for others (DRC) and others have commenced (Cote d'Ivoire). None of these, it might be noted, are in countries, which have borders with South Africa. As to casualties, the battle-related deaths of both military and civilians in 2000 probably numbered less than 20,000 and another 80,000 civilians may have died due to disruption of food supplies and medical facilities as a result of war (derived from Seybolt, 2001: 57-59). In aggregate, well over five million people are estimated to have died in these wars, some of which have been running for many years. To provide some perspective on these figures, it may be noted that 250,000 people currently die of AIDS-related illness in South Africa and a further 60,000 from road accidents and interpersonal violence.

I want to add two words of caution as we think about the extent of violence. First, there is a human tendency to exaggerate times of

violence because they are compelling and exciting, and to downplay times of peace. The periods without war are often seen as 'interwar periods', an exception and background to the real events of history. In reality, as Matthew Melko (1993) has convincingly demonstrated, peace is far more prevalent than war: it is 'ubiquitous, incessant, normal'. Second, recall that despite our perception that war is everywhere, it is a different type of violence—structural violence—which is responsible for the overwhelming proportion of deaths and misery.

Related to the changed nature of wars, the traditional definition of security has come, over the past 20 years, to have limited relevance to developing countries. The traditional definition focused on territorial security—on external military threats to nation states—and military power to deter or resist such attacks was seen as the prerequisite of national security. One redefinition focuses on the threats posed to developed countries by corruption, organized crime and terrorism.

Of far greater relevance to southern Africa is the range of insecurities first proposed by the United Nations Development Programme (1994, ch. 2) under the heading of human security viz. economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security. The level of acceptance of such thinking, at least at the level of policy statements,

may be judged by the following extract from the SANDF website:

*The greatest threats to the people of SA at present are socio-economic problems such as poverty, unemployment, lack of education, lack of housing, the high crime rate and violence. One of the policy priorities of the Government, therefore, is socio-economic development and upliftment (quoted in Harris, 2002a: 77).*

Unfortunately, despite this recognition, the 1999 arms deal has continued the orientation of the SANDF very largely towards conflicts which are extremely unlikely to occur, and helps maintain the total fiction that South Africa faces an external threat to its security.

#### **4. Is a national policy of non-violence possible?**

There are three common ways of trying to deal with a dispute. The use of power—physical, military, economic—usually results in victory for the most powerful. The use of rights, in a legal sense, also most often results in victory for the most economically powerful who can afford the best legal resources. Attempting to reconcile the interests of the parties is based on the hope that, by uncovering their underlying needs and interests, parties to a conflict can achieve a mutually satisfying outcome.

The problem with the first two is that they result in a winner and normally leave the underlying causes of the conflict unchanged.

They may appear to be quicker than the third option but they are costly, they leave the relationship between the party in disarray and sow the seeds for the subsequent re-emergence of conflict (see, for example, Ury *et al.*, 1988: 3-19).

It is obvious that individuals can commit themselves to the non-violent resolution of conflict and insist on reconciling the interests of the parties to a dispute. Experience suggests, however, that even where their numbers exceed a small minority (as with the Peace Pledge Union in the UK during the 1930s), their commitment often fades away in response to the drums of war. My emphasis here is on whether a nation can be pacifist.

Let me first say that neutrality is not the same as pacifism. Switzerland spent 38 per cent more on its military than South Africa in 2000, and Sweden spent 2.5 times as much (SIPRI, 2001, Table 4A.3). Pacifism is based on a decision not to use power to deal with conflicts, reinforced by a constitutional decision to do away with military forces.

There are a number of countries without military forces, mostly small island countries, but stronger evidence comes from Central America, where three countries have demilitarised. Costa Rica, which has a current population of 4.0 million, abolished its army in 1948, following a brief civil war. Haiti (8.1 million) disbanded its 7,600 strong military after the military government was replaced by a civilian administration in 1994.

Panama (2.9 million) disbanded its military in 1990, following its heavy defeat during a US invasion. Each country has made alternative arrangements for its security. Costa Rica has paramilitary forces of around 8,400, comprising a Civil Guard (equivalent to a national police force) of 4,400, Border Security Police numbering 2,000, and a Rural Guard of 2,000 (International Institute for Security Studies 2000). Its Border Security Police operate an air surveillance unit (which has no combat aircraft) and coastal patrol vessels. Haiti has a national police force of 5,300. It has a coastguard of 30 persons and, since 1995, no air force. Its military equipment was destroyed after 1994. Panama replaced its military with a National Guard comprising 11,000 national police and maritime and air services with 800 personnel.

Inspection of the social and economic indicators for the six Central American countries (Harris 1996) shows that Costa Rica ranks first for almost every indicator and achieving first world levels despite a modest GDP per capita. Such a performance in areas such as health and education does not come overnight. It depends upon policy decisions, in this case of public sector expenditure decisions made in the past, and the effectiveness with which these decisions were implemented. The demilitarisations in Haiti and Panama are too recent for clear social and economic consequences to

have emerged. Costa Rica, on the other hand, has had over 50 years for such effects to become apparent and we now consider whether its impressive social and economic indicators can be reasonably attributed to its decision to demilitarise.

Before examining the possible links between Costa Rica's demilitarisation and its socio-economic performance, we will consider some basic issues of causality. There are, for our purposes, four possible causal linkages:

- Low military expenditure causes high socio-economic performance.
- High socio-economic performance causes low military expenditure.
- A variable (or group of variables) causes both low military expenditure and high socio-economic performance, or vice versa.
- Low military expenditure and high socio-economic performance are not linked, that is, separate variables cause low military expenditure and high socio-economic performance.

The first possible explanation is that low military expenditure in Costa Rica allowed relatively high public expenditure allocations to education, health and other social activities. Costa Rica's first national health plan, which commenced in 1971, had a twofold strategy. The primary health care component extended the coverage of preventive health services, improved water and sanitation serv-

ices and had an extensive immunization program. Second, medical services were improved and broadened so as to reduce the number of hospitals but to double the number of centres offering outpatient services and the number of physician-hours provided. The results were impressive e.g. the under five mortality rate fell from 76 per 1000 live births in 1970 to 31 in 1980. The UNDP (1994, pp. 41,51) concludes that this experience shows how well structured government expenditures can result in dramatic social improvements over a short period, even with only moderate growth and a poor distribution of income.

This first explanation is certainly the one which Costa Rican leaders accept. Oscar Arias Sanchez, President of Costa Rica between 1986 and 1990 and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, asserts that the country's social performance is directly attributable to its low military expenditure:

*International development agencies recognize that Costa Rica today has a standard of living comparable to that of the industrialized countries. It is universally accepted that the extraordinary advances of my country in the fields of education, health, housing and social welfare are basically due to the fact that we do not dedicate our resources to the purchase of arms. The absence of an army has strengthened the Costa Rican democratic system,*

*making it one of the most consolidated democracies of Latin America. To us, these are the dividends of peace. These are the dividends that would be within the grasp of all third World countries if they did not dedicate a very important part of their resources to the purchase of arms.* (SIPRI 1991, quoted in Harris, 1986: 96-97)

It may be that Costa Rica is a 'special case' and that it is not possible to build any theory of disarmament on its experience. My assessment is that the only special aspect of Costa Rica is that despite its location in a region of violence, it has consistently dealt with internal conflicts and potential external conflicts in broadly democratic and non-violent ways.

What, then, is needed for a country to successfully demilitarise? The basic requirement is that the decision is acceptable to the vast majority of society. In Costa Rica's case, this acceptance was built upon a popular commitment to, and confidence in, civil means of handling the conflicts inherent in achieving societal objectives. Two supporting factors may also be mentioned. The first is that the resources saved by minimal spending on the military are reallocated to other socially desired objectives. The Costa Rican experience is that great improvements in social indicators can occur, given well-planned government programs, over quite short periods of time. The rewards to society of low mili-

tary expenditure, as well as the success of civil means of achieving national objectives, seem to be mutually reinforcing. On the other hand, demilitarisation simply as a means of saving government expenditure will probably not be long lasting.

The second is that the new governments of Costa Rica, Haiti and Panama were faced with a particular opportunity—when the military was weak and low in status—to implement demilitarisation, and this opportunity was grasped.

The potential outcomes of demilitarisation, then, are positive and such a policy makes sense for the small countries of southern Africa. These are, in any case, generally incapable of defending themselves militarily from a determined invader.

### 5. Does non-violence work?

In the previous section, we saw that the best example of sustained demilitarisation appears to have reaped major social and economic benefits as a result. In that respect its commitment to non-violent means of conflict resolution has worked. This section examines a related question: if a government persists in engaging in some undesired practice, can non-violent action by its citizens cause it to change?

There seems to be a general belief that power, in particular the military, is effective, and that non-violent efforts are not. As to the effectiveness of the military, consider a number of recent wars. The

Falklands War of 1980 resulted in a military victory but the unresolved issues require a permanent British military garrison. The Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988 cost half a million lives but no change in the boundaries over which the war was fought. The Gulf War of 1990 resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands Iraqis but the underlying issues were not dealt with. This has resulted in the subsequent deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians as a result of sanctions since 1990, and the US/UK invasion of 2003. Inter-ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia was largely ended by heavy NATO bombing of Serbia but 60,000 NATO troops remain in Bosnia and Kosovo. More importantly, wars shatter societies, and it may take decades for them to recover. The effectiveness of the military, other than in achieving negative peace, is certainly open to question.

We do not know, of course, whether non-violent alternatives would have worked in these contexts. Typically, non-violent and less violent interventions were tried for a time and then the military option was used. But what if the military option was simply not on the list of alternatives? Is confidence in non-violent methods based on evidence of success, or is it a triumph of hope over experience?

A number of researchers have evaluated the effectiveness of non-violence (e.g. Galtung, 1996; Zunes *et al.*, 1999; Ackerman and Duvall, 2000). Galtung (1996: 117-

119) lists ten 'amazing successes' of non-violence in the twentieth century; and these are considered in detail in the bracketed references.

The campaign for Indian independence led by Gandhi, 1920-1947 (Ackerman and Duvall. ch.2)

The protest in Berlin by the Aryan wives of Jewish men arrested by the Nazis, February, 1943 (Ackerman and Duvall .ch. 5)

The campaign for civil rights for blacks in the United States, led by Martin Luther King (Ackerman and Duvall, ch. 8; Zunes *et al.* ch. 14)

The anti-Vietnam war movement in the US and elsewhere (Zunes *et al.*, ch. 14)

The campaign by Argentinean mothers in the Plaza de Mayo, Buenos Aires (Ackerman and Duvall ch. 7)

The 'people power' campaign against the Marcos government in the Philippines, 1986 (Ackerman and Duvall, ch. 10; Zunes *et al.*, ch. 7)

The non-violent campaign of many facets which resulted in the ending of apartheid (Ackerman and Duvall ch. 9; Zunes *et al.*, ch. 11)

The non-violent campaign in occupied Palestine for justice from Israel (Ackerman and Duvall ch. 11; Zunes *et al.*, chs. 3,4)

The Beijing campaign for greater democracy, Spring 1989

The Solidarity/DDDR movement which resulted in the collapse of communism in eastern Europe and

the end of the Cold War (Ackerman and Duvall, ch. 3; Zunes *et al.* ch. 5)

The list above is by no means exhaustive. Gene Sharp (1971a) lists 84 cases, not all of which were successful, and the end of slavery in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the non-violent Czech resistance to Soviet forces in 1968, the campaign which led to the ban on the manufacture and use of landmines in the 1990s and the Treatment Action Campaign's current efforts in South Africa spring to mind. Galtung (1996: 117) comments that to assert that 'non-violence does not work' is 'uninformed'. He notes that:

*Of course, no case is ever totally clear and pure. But in these cases major direct violence was averted, and major structural violence was averted or reduced. Other factors were also at work; but if instead of using non-violence, the threatened, exploited and/or repressed had engaged in major violence, not only would that have invited major counter-violence, but the oppressive conditions would probably have remained unchanged. This we cannot know, since we cannot run history over again. But it certainly seems highly plausible.* (Galtung, 1996: 118)

Two questions arise. First, non-violence worked against the British in India, but can it work against a 'ruthless aggressor', as in countries occupied by Nazi Germany? Second, if it so often works, why is

it not used more extensively? Why is it, in the words of Theodore Roszak, that we 'try non-violence for a week and then when it doesn't work' ... go back to violence, which hasn't worked for centuries (quoted by Nagler, 1999: 239).

The first of these I will deal with briefly as it has been specifically examined by Ralph Summy (1994). In short, the evidence is that extensive and successful non-violent resistance against ruthless aggressors has indeed occurred, for example, in the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway under Nazi occupation.

The second question may be more difficult to answer and I will suggest two possible answers, apart from the misconception that military solutions are more effective than non-violent approaches. First, there is a widespread belief that violence is natural and is inherent in human (especially male) nature. This belief has been challenged by the Seville Statement on Violence of 1986 (appended) which makes it clear that we are not genetically programmed to be violent. Violence and wars are human constructs and we have the capacity to choose to engage in them or to choose non-violence. To quote the well-known UNESCO statement 'Since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'. The discipline of peace studies, which began about 1960, is based on the belief that

violence is a learned behaviour and that it can be unlearned.

Second, violence and war fit in with the desire for quick, decisive action which has a clear end-date. We are often impatient. We want something to be completed, dealt with so that we can move on. The military provides us with an instrument to do this when we become impatient with slower moving alternatives. An alternative to invading Iraq could have been for the UN to have set up an Office of Iraqi Affairs whose task it was to try, by a range of non-violent means, to achieve the desired changes within Iraq. A twenty-year commitment might easily have been necessary but we would not have a society shattered by draconian sanctions and an invasion from which it will take decades to recover.

#### 6. What are we to do?

I want first to make a comment about strategy. It is usually easier to build something positive than to try to break down something negative, although at times the latter is essential. The military is big, well resourced and well entrenched and it is unlikely we would win by the use of any sort of direct frontal attack. In any case, winning is perhaps not what we are about. Rather what we want is to help people think differently about issues of conflict and violence. Then, hopefully, out of date ways of behaviour will begin to change.

Margaret Thatcher is credited with the phrase 'there is no alternative' which has since become

known by its acronym TINA. There is another acronym which I commend to you—TAAA — 'there are always alternatives'. Violent solutions to issues based on TINA are often a lazy and impatient way out. That is, rather than think through an issue, listen to what God and the universe are saying, put forward non-violent alternatives and implement them, we choose a quicker, easier but ultimately ineffective route. Fundamentally, we need to move ourselves and others from TINA to TAAA. I now suggest four ways of doing this and when I use the word 'we' I am referring to faith communities in particular.

We need to spread the news that non-violence works. In order to do this, we need to acquaint ourselves with the stories of successful non-violent campaigns and the techniques of non-violence. Gene Sharp's classic 198 methods (Sharp, 1971b) are surely in need of updating. We need to be able to offer alternatives to the invasion of Iraq which had reasonable chances of success in terms of positive and sustainable peace.

There is a strong case for teaching the motivation for and practice of non-violence at different levels of education. Lonsdale refers to the ease with which children can be taught values, morals and standards. 'They are willing to learn, and the ways of peace and cooperation fit in more naturally with the behaviour we expect of them as individuals than the ways

of war and of national selfishness' (1957: 113).

We need to spread the news that the military has reached its use-by date. This follows from a belief that God never uses war to accomplish his/her purposes; from the fact that non-violent methods are less costly, more effective and able to be learned; from the fact that invasions have become rare and that countries' security needs embrace far more than simply territorial security; and from the recognition that there are alternative ways of achieving security (Harris 2002b) and cost effective non-military alternatives for the non-core functions which the military currently performs. Should faith communities stop supporting their countries' military forces, for example by the withdrawal of chaplaincy services?

We need to persist in our efforts of peace building i.e. in working towards positive peace. This is long-term work and is the foundation on which a peaceful society must be founded. A useful definition of peace, incidentally, is 'a way of life committed to the non-violent resolution of conflict and to personal and social justice'. How would it have been if, in the words of economist Jeffrey Sachs (2002), the US had offered weapons of mass salvation—in the form of generous aid—to Iraq rather than focusing on alleged weapons of mass destruction?

We could press for the establishment of national Ministries of

Peacebuilding, as suggested by Suter (2003). There is currently no ministry with prime responsibility for peace and non-violence so it is not surprising that so little progress has occurred at government level. We could envisage a senior ministry, which controls and coordinates efforts at building a non-violent society. Its responsibilities would include the oversight of

- Education in non-violent ways of dealing with conflict
- Building good relationships with neighbouring countries at all levels of society by all manner of means
- Demilitarising, including the reallocation of non-core functions currently undertaken by the military e.g. coastal patrol, rescue work and disaster relief to other government departments or civilian bodies
- Efforts to confront cultural violence in all its forms

What would it need to establish a Ministry of Peacebuilding in a southern African country? Could faith communities set up national Centres for Peacebuilding to begin some of these tasks and encourage governments in this direction?

These suggestions seem big and open-ended but recall the success stories of non-violence. We will face opposition from individuals, groups and governments who differ from us in their diagnosis of conflicts and in their assessment of military versus non-violent solutions. Has it not always been so for Quakers?

We have an additional challenge, which does not face some 'secular' peacemakers and peace-builders. Our motive in practicing non-violence is not only because it is effective. It allows us, in a way which violence cannot, to treat our opponents with love. 'You have heard it said', taught Jesus, 'Love your friends and hate your enemies'. But I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you'. To Jesus' words, we can add Gandhi's question: 'What kind of a victory is it when someone is left defeated?' In promoting non-violence, we are not simply pragmatists; we are being true to the Love that is the foundation of non-violence. In more complex but still helpful language, Galtung comments:

*In non-violence there is the assumption that what enhances me will also enhance you. Non-violence is a source of soft power, and a form of communication, with a sender and a receiver... The communication is predicated on the assumption of a deep communality among human beings; that Other is touched by the suffering of Self and wants to remove himself as a cause of that suffering ... Non-violence seen only as a bag of tricks, doing little more than making life unpleasant for the oppressors, is a very shallow form of non-violence indeed (1996, p. 122).*

Finally, for those who think the task is impossible, here is an ex-

tract from a children's story by Norman Jester, titled *The Phantom Tollbooth*. The young Milo is sent by King Azaz and the Mathemagician to rescue the princesses Rhyme and Reason. After many adventures, he succeeds and returns to a hero's welcome:

*As the cheering continued, Rhyme leaned forward and touched Milo on the arm. 'They're shouting for you,' she said with a smile. 'But I could never have done it', he objected, 'without everyone else's help'.*

*'That may be true' said Reason gravely, 'but you had the courage to try; and what you can do is often simply a matter of what you will do.'*

*'That's why', said Azaz, 'there was one very important thing about your quest that we couldn't discuss until you returned.'*

*'I remember', said Milo eagerly. 'Tell me now'.*

*'It was impossible', said the king, looking at the Mathemagician.*

*'Completely impossible', said the Mathemagician, looking at the king. 'Do you mean ...' stammered Milo, who suddenly felt a bit faint.*

*'Yes, indeed', they repeated together; 'but if we'd told you then, you might not have gone - and, as you've discovered, so many things are possible just so long as you don't know they're impossible'.*

*And for the remainder of the ride, Milo didn't utter a sound ...*



*Co-operation is better than conflict.*

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### THE SEVILLE STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE

Believing that it is our responsibility to address to our particular disciplines, the most dangerous and destructive activities of our species, violence and war; recognizing that science is a human cultural product which cannot be definitive or all-encompassing; and gratefully acknowledging the support of the authorities of Seville and representatives of the Spanish arm of UNESCO; we, the undersigned scholars from around the world and from relevant sciences, have met and arrived at the following Statement on Violence. In it, we challenge a number of alleged biological findings that have been used, even by some in our disciplines, to justify violence and war. Since the alleged findings have contributed to an atmosphere of pessimism in our time, we submit that the open, considered rejection of these mis-statements can contribute significantly to efforts at making peace a possibility in the minds of our educators at all levels and in those who will be the beneficiaries of that education.

Misuse of scientific theories and data to justify violence and war is not new, but has been a fact since the advent of modern science. For

example, the theory of evolution has been used to justify not only war, but also genocide, colonialism, and suppression of the weak. We state our position in the form of five propositions. We are aware that there are many other issues about violence and war that could be fruitfully addressed from the standpoint of our disciplines, but we restrict ourselves here to what we consider a most important first step.

### IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY

**INCORRECT** to say that we have inherited from our animal ancestors a tendency to make war. Although fighting occurs across the gamut of animal species, only a few cases of destructive intraspecies fighting between organized groups have ever been reported among naturally living species, and none of these involve the use of tools designed to be weapons. Normal predatory feeding upon other species cannot be equated with intra-species violence. Warfare it must be declared unambiguously is a peculiarly human phenomenon and does not occur in other animals. The fact that warfare has changed so radically over time indicates that it is a product of culture. Its biological connection is primarily through language, which makes possible the coordination of groups, the transmission of technology, and the use of tools. War is biologically possible, but it is not inevitable, as evidenced by its variation in occurrence and nature over time and space. There are cultures which have not engaged in war for centu-

ries, and there are cultures which have engaged in war frequently at some times and not at others.

### IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY

**INCORRECT** to say that war or any violent behaviour is genetically programmed into human nature. While genes are involved at all levels of nervous system function, they provide a developmental potential that can be actualized only in conjunction with the ecological and social environment; and while individuals vary in their predispositions to be affected by their experience, it is the interaction between their genetic endowment and conditions of nurturance that determines their personalities. Except for rare pathologies, the genes do not produce individuals necessarily predisposed to violence. Neither do they determine the opposite. While genes are co-involved in establishing our behavioural capacities, they do not by themselves specify the outcome.

### IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY

**INCORRECT** to say that in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behaviour more than for other kinds of behaviour. In all well-studied species, status within the group is achieved by the ability to cooperate and to fulfil social functions relevant to the structure of that group. 'Dominance' involves social bondings and affiliations; it is not simply a matter of the possession and use of superior physical power, although it does involve aggressive behaviour. Where genetic selection for aggressive be-

haviour has been artificially instituted in animals, it has rapidly succeeded in producing hyper-aggressive individuals; this indicates that aggression was not maximally selected under natural conditions. When such experimentally created hyper-aggressive animals are present in a social group, they either disrupt its social structure or are driven out. Violence is neither in our evolutionary legacy nor in our genes.

### IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY

**INCORRECT** to say that humans have a 'violent brain.' While we do have the neural apparatus to act violently, it is not automatically activated by internal or external stimuli. Like higher primates and unlike other animals, our higher neural processes filter such stimuli before they can be acted upon. How we act is shaped by how we have been conditioned and socialized. There is nothing in our neurophysiology that compels us to react violently.

### IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY

**INCORRECT** to say that war is caused by 'instinct' or any single motivation. The emergence of modern warfare has been a journey from the primacy of emotional and motivational factors – sometimes called 'instincts' – to the primacy of cognitive factors. Modern warfare involves institutional use of personal characteristics such as obedience, suggestibility, and idealism; social skills such as language; and rational considerations such as cost-calculation, planning, and information processing. The technology of modern war has ex-

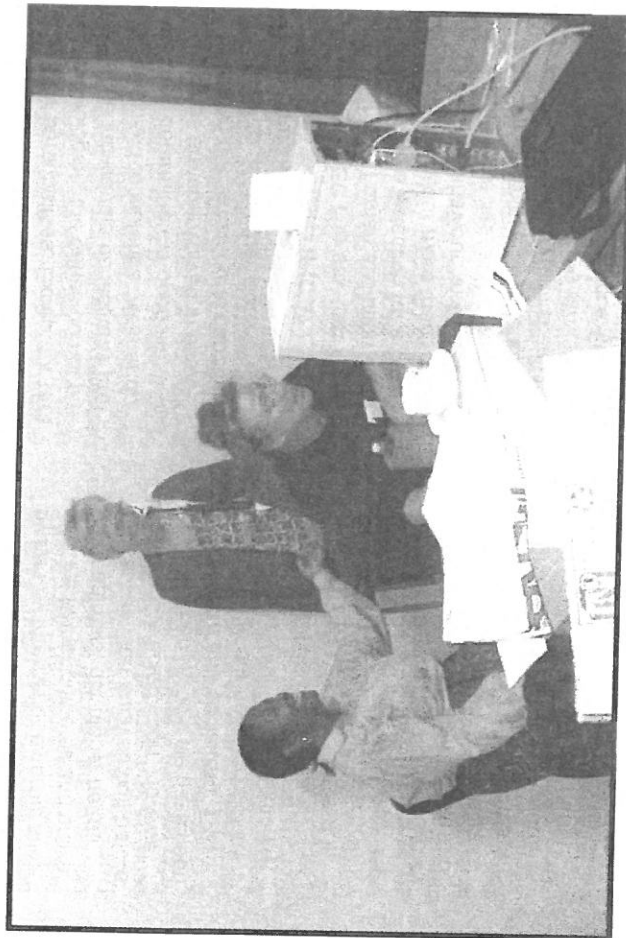


aggregated traits associated with violence both in the training of actual combatants and in the preparation of support for war in the general populations. As a result of this exaggeration, such traits are often mistaken to be the causes rather than the consequences of the process.

We conclude that biology does not condemn humanity to war, and that humanity can be freed from the bondage of biological pessimism and empowered with confidence to undertake the transformative tasks

needed now and always. Although these tasks are mainly institutional and collective, they also rest upon the consciousness of individual participants for whom pessimism and optimism are crucial factors. Just as 'wars begin in the minds of men,' so does peace settle there. The same species that invented war is capable of inventing peace. The responsibility lies with each of us.

Seville, May 16, 1986.



## QUAKER PEACE CENTRE, Cape Town Chairperson's Report 2003

Minute 2003.9.13

*It has been a privilege to take over the Chair of the Quaker Peace Centre in 2002, working closely with our Director Jeremy Routledge and Operations Director Anthea Nefdt; as well as with a talented and diverse Board with experience in various faiths, community sectors, career experiences and perspectives on the country and continent in which we live. The support and input of the Cape Western Monthly Meeting has continued to be valuable and motivational to us, as we strive to apply the core values of worldwide Quakerism to the realities and needs of people in South Africa and Africa today.*

### ● South Africa—challenges and opportunities

During 2002, Quaker Peace member staff and Board members shared in a comprehensive strategic planning debate on the changing priorities in South African society, as our young democracy begins to take shape. Emerging from the opinions and insights shared during this process, we have developed a shared view of the main trends and issues, which will probably underpin community solidarity, social justice and human security in our part of the world. Linking these South African trends with international experiences, the QPC Board has adopted a refocused framework of strategic priorities (in consultation with Centre management and staff) for the period 2004 to 2006. In South Africa's complex society, with our highs and lows of economic development, access to justice and of cultural diversity, we are now moving into a period of consolidation of our proven programmes for peace building and several innovations to meet new challenges for empowering and equipping community organizations and government agencies with new skills to build sustainable development, through peace and democracy.

### ● Partnerships for peace and progress in Africa

Our Director has initiated and nurtured partnerships with like-minded people and organizations in South Africa, and with international Quaker and Friends Church contacts internationally, which have led to exciting opportunities, through the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), amongst others. Given the fact that some 40% of Quaker members and attenders live in Africa, we feel confident that these partnerships can and will play a significant peace building role for the people of our continent, and there-