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The culture of peace – a necessary utopia?

Summary

The notion and the vision of a culture of peace was developed by UNESCO, the UN Organization for Education, Culture and Science, in cooperation with a huge number of individuals, organisations and institutions over the ten years leading up to the year 2000, the International Year for a Culture of Peace. Some 75 million people signed the UNESCO Manifesto on a Culture of Peace, thereby showing both their desire for a world without war and accepting to contribute to fostering a culture of peace, on different levels and at different scales. Many, even most people, have this wish to contribute to finding non-violent solutions to conflicts without using force, unfair methods and violence, be it on a family level, a local level or on national or international levels.

This hope for a better and more peaceful world has through the centuries been considered more or less realistic. Some consider human beings greedy and evil by nature, only capable of catering to their own desires. Whilst others see human beings as in need of both social interaction and to feel useful in a social context, as well as being incapable of profound happiness as long as injustice and misery exist. Major religions all have their Paradise or Shangri La and major political movements such as communism or socialism have had/have their guiding vision of an ideal society. A number of philosophers, including Plato and Rousseau, have concretized how this can be done in practical terms. People have migrated and continue to do so in the search of *a new land* and a better life.

Utopia

It was Thomas More who first used the notion “Utopia”, in 1516. He underlined that an ideal society, a Utopia, could be built by people here and now, not in a next life. In many ways, such a humanistic forward-looking way of thinking is at the basis of most major human developments. Envisioning, describing and defining strategies towards a preferred future are done in futurology or future studies in a systematic manner. Sometimes it can be a fruitful exercise to imagine the Utopia at a given time in the future and then reflect on what brought us from where we are today to this desired situation. See e.g. Ravi Morey: *Looking Backward: 2050-2013*.

In modern times, at least in the Western part of the world, it is probably the Hippie movement of the 1960ies that had the strongest faith in a utopian society. The movement shared a strong belief in the creativity and solidarity of people, in freedom and justice for all, besides protesting against rigid power structures, war economies and traditional hierarchical thinking. The search for new ways of interacting and loving inspired new energy into both the women’s movement and the peace movement, and partly also into the labour movement.

Some of these ideas have in recent time led to a new movement or movements such as *the Occupy-movement*, *the Arab Spring* and *Les Indignés*. These developments towards participatory democracy and a new type of humanism and away from wild capitalism mobilize mainly through social media. Their slogan: “We are the 99% – they are the 1%” has found echo all over the world.

Now, in a world in unrest with a growing and rather generalized acceptance of militarization and use of force in international relations, it seems yet again of utmost importance to promote the vision and program of a culture of peace as a necessary utopia - to be reached in our time.

The culture of peace

The concept and vision of a culture of peace was developed by UNESCO as of the 1980ies with involvement from many professional groups: women, youth, artists, scientists, journalists, educators, peace activists, politicians, NGOs and others. UNESCO wanted to renew interest in the normative instruments, institutions and programs of the UN and create enthusiasm and commitment to the goal of “no more war”. UNESCO set out to strengthen the vision for a desired future in accordance with the UN Charter “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”.

At the initiative of UNESCO, the UN made the year 2000 the International Year for the Culture of Peace as a very symbolic start of the new Millennium. The International Year was followed by a Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010). This major movement of hope and inspiration was, however, undermined by the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York 11. September 2001. These events turned the world’s attention towards the fight against terrorism. The need for long-term peace building was put outside mainstream thinking. Fear and the fight against terror has since then dominated both the international discourse and the use of resources. The agreed UN Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace became mainly words on paper or underutilized guidelines, except in the quarters of the strong, convinced and courageous peace promoters and pacifists.

The Manifesto 2000 on a culture of peace, which was developed by UNESCO in cooperation with Nobel Peace laureates, was signed by more than 75 million people committing themselves to: “respect all life, reject violence, share with others, listen to understand, preserve the planet and rediscover solidarity”: www.unesco.org/manifesto2000. This gives evidence to people’s longing for peace, and also show the sometimes huge discrepancy between people and their governments, even in democracies.

The culture of peace vision emphasizes peace not only as the absence of armed conflict or war, however important that is, but focuses on the content and the conditions of peace. It also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation. The challenge is how to help develop a mindset that would enhance the transition from force to reason and from conflict and violence to dialogue and peace. How best to support the development of a stable and prosperous world, a world at peace with itself, saving resources by making war and armed conflicts obsolete?

The culture of peace program analyzed and confronted commonly held beliefs or myths, such as (i) if you want peace, prepare for war, (ii) nothing can change because violence is inevitable and intrinsic to human nature, and (iii) violence is an efficient method for solving problems and disputes.

In the context of the culture of peace program it was stated loud and clear that if we want peace, we must prepare for peace. We should not only have ministries of defence or security, but ministries of peace or a culture of peace; not only prestigious military academies, but obligatory peace education at all levels of the school system; not only peace research that is preoccupied by following the developments of new weapons, armed conflicts and national security issues, but peace research that truly helps us to understand and to solve conflicts creatively and in non-violent ways.

The scientists who developed the UNESCO Seville Statement on Violence (1989) underlined that: “ It is scientifically incorrect to say that war or any other violent behaviour is genetically programmed into our human nature”.

The culture of peace concept has strong connotations to agriculture. To build or to cultivate peace takes time and knowledge in the same way as it takes time and care, knowledge and concern to make a seed grow. Cutting down a tree takes little time, and, only small minds are needed for destruction.

The word *culture* is used as part of the culture of peace concept mostly in the wider sense of culture as ways of living. Culture of peace does, however, also link to art and creativity. Time, know-how, a constructive mind-set, patience and commitment are needed in artistic work, as in agriculture. Culture *for* peace is different from the concept of a culture *of* peace as it has as its base the fine arts. Dance, music, visual art, theatre, film and literature are used in order to build and inspire peace. Culture *for* peace is clearly an important part of the culture *of* peace.

Women and a culture of peace

Individual women, women’s networks and women’s organizations have from the very beginning taken a special interest in the culture of peace. The relationship with UNESCO was felt as very rewarding from both sides, not least because the very charismatic Director General of UNESCO at the time, Federico Mayor, strongly encouraged and highly valued women’s contributions.

The UNESCO Women and a Culture of Peace Programme, which I was fortunate to head, was established after the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995, with the primary objective to mainstream a gender perspective on the major UNESCO trans-disciplinary project: Towards a Culture of Peace. Serious work had started already prior to the Beijing Conference, which inter alia resulted in the concept of a culture of peace being used in the Beijing Platform for Action as the first official use of the term in the UN system outside UNESCO. The Statement on Women’s contribution to a Culture of Peace, 1995, was signed by most of the few women heads of states and governments at the time – and a lot of other prominent and engaged personalities.

The priorities of the Women and a Culture of Peace Program were:

- To support women’s initiatives for peace,

- To empower women for democratic participation in political processes and to increase women's capacity and impact in economic and security issues
- To contribute to gender sensitive socialization and training for non-violence and egalitarian partnerships with a special focus on young men and boys.

The program attracted attention worldwide. Because of the many conflicts in Africa at the time, it had a special focus on that continent. It was most rewarding to be in a position to assist the many strong and courageous women to meet, to network, to strategize, to learn from each other, to develop policies and didactic materiel that at least sometimes would help them in acute difficult situations or to tackle or transform deeply rooted conflicts.

Most studies on women and war/peace focus on women in conflict or post-conflict situations. A gender perspective on the culture of peace seeks more to inspire the strengthening of policies of prevention, of nonviolent conflict transformation, peacemaking and peace building.

Masculinities

UNESCO organized as part of the Women and a Culture of Peace project one of the first international conferences on male roles, masculinities and violence in 1997, in Oslo. Connections between certain types of masculinity and violence were discussed, as well as how masculinities can change in ways favourable to peace, notably the social, cultural and economic conditions producing violence. The challenge was to develop political and practical strategies for reducing men's violence and to seek ways to raise boys that would emphasize qualities such as emotional response, caring and communication skills, which are vital to a culture of peace.

Statistics gathered by the researchers, however insufficient, show that men, mostly young men, are responsible for almost 90% of all physical violence. Participants emphasized, however, that most men are not violent, nor have natural violent inclinations. It was argued that men, in general, through their upbringing, feel entitled to dominant positions in the family, in work and political life, and react negatively when this entitlement is not fulfilled. Young men may feel marginalized and disempowered when they, e.g. due to the globalization process, do not, in the same way as before, inherit work from their fathers and dominant positions in the family and in society. These reactions might lead to domestic violence, violence in schools or in the street, adherence to extremist gangs and sects, or wanting to join institutions which may use force, such as the police and the military. Some groups of men were seen as becoming risk factors, not only to them, but also to society at large.

The hegemonic masculinity was considered a straight jacket for many men with its insistence on stereotyped expectations to men to be the breadwinner, the "over-decisive", forceful, non-emotional, aggressive and fearless (even of war and weapons of mass destruction). In addition, men showing *traditional female attitudes* tend to be negatively perceived since "the female" has a lower status in society.

Given the existing gender imbalance in political and economic life, it is very important that men, who are the current power brokers, participate actively in the discussion on developing egalitarian partnerships and reducing violence and force.

The journalist and author Jonathan Power, *Transcend*, has raised the question as to whether a surplus of men will give a deficit of peace. Worldwide, according to him, there are some 104 women to 100 men. A few countries have an inverse gender ratio primarily due to son preference. He estimated that there are some 62-68 million “missing women” in Asia, a situation which risks to gradually undermine everyday life equilibrium. Other research findings reinforce this view by indicating that women have a stabilizing factor on men. There is e.g. less criminality among married men and mixed workplaces are healthier than single sex workplaces.

An initiative for a Men’s Day, which originated in the Caribbean, has since several years been celebrated in a growing number of countries, putting emphasis on the new challenges for men and boys in a globalized world, as fathers, as egalitarian partners and as non-violent actors.

Gender differences

The great majority of the poor, the illiterate and the discriminated against continue to be women and the great majority of the world’s economic and political leaders are men. 70% of the approximately 1.2 billion poor are women. There is no real democracy as long as women do not have a proper say. In numbers women are in majority, but in power relations they are in minority.

The world is actually full of alarmingly *unfinished democracies* with only some 17% women in governments and some 21 % women in parliaments on a global average according to the statistics of the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU 2013). The trend is, however, positive, even though far too slow.

A few international studies indicate that societies with a high level of gender equality have a low level of violence. A few other studies confirm a general popular opinion that women in general have more of a “dovish” or “soft-power” approach to issues related to war and peace than the generally more “hawkish” and “hard-power” attitude of men, notably men in decision-making positions. A key question is therefore whether the world would be different – more just and peaceful - with better gender balance in governance at different levels.

Much more research is needed within and across different disciplines in order to try to answer such a question and to deepen our understanding. These typically under-researched security issues are complicated, complex and intertwined, affected by a lack of transparency and perhaps even with some taboos.

Foreign affairs and defence issues remain usually remote from democratic decision-making and popular involvement; an issue that is frequently raised by feminist peace researchers. Gendering and democratizing the security discourse, the most opaque and patriarchal part of the political system, would probably contribute to an alternative reading of history, a different analysis of the present and in policy formulations more in line both with the human security and the culture of peace concept.

Women’s attentiveness to life may well give women an asset as to the “supreme human right”, the right to life; and it may well be at the core of a humanistic approach to conflict resolution, peace building and development. The demands related traditionally to women’s “mothering and caring functions” provide valuable training in

empathy, patience, dialogue and cooperation – important factors for conflict transformation and peace building.

Security Council Resolution 1325

The Security Council, strongly encouraged by women's organizations, feminist researchers and women peace activists and with the attentive Bangladeshi ambassador, Anwarul Chowdhury in the Security Council, passed an unprecedented and historical resolution on Women, Peace and Security, 31 October 2000 (SC 1325). This resolution is particularly important because it is passed by an organ with high status among Member States of the UN, it is a binding document and it is potentially also an important step towards a gender perspective on security issues - which again may lead in the future to a stronger emphasis on human security (as opposed to, or complementary, to national security). The resolution, however, gives more attention to women in conflict and post-conflict situations, and is weaker when it comes to practical and political measures for the strengthening and use of women's potential for peace building, negotiation and prevention.

Women have traditionally been the strongest opponents of militarism. It is therefore a sad contradiction that Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, that women's organizations wanted as a tool to empower women in important male dominated areas, in many countries now is used to get more women into the military. Thereby sneakily militarizing also women's minds with the military systems traditional focus on enemy images and competition instead of cooperation. As an example from my own country, the Norwegian Plan of Action on SC Resolution 1325, which was one of the first to be developed and which has been used as a model in many countries, had in its first version only one quantified goal: a desired percentage of women in the military.

The right to peace

The right to peace was originally a UNESCO idea from the 1990ies, developed in the context of the culture of peace program. The idea was, however, turned down primarily by Western countries. It was argued that there is no need for such a new human right, because if all existing human rights were implemented, the sum total would be peace.

Civil society organizations, notably the Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law, have, however, continued to work for the right to peace both in order to keep a visionary process going and with the hope that it eventually would become a legal right. There are some recent interesting developments: The Human Rights Council adopted resolution 20/15 on the right to peace July 2012, and an Open-Ended Working Group on the Right to Peace was established. <http://www.aedidh.org/?q=node/2143>. The first session of the OEWG took place in February 2013 in Geneva with the mandate of progressively negotiating a draft United Nations declaration on the right to peace.

Disarmament for Development

A seemingly growing use and acceptance of violence worldwide, coupled with an impotence of “the international community” both to meet the needs and interest of the majority of the world's people and to tackle problems and conflicts in a non-violent manner, is alarming. The old Roman devise “if you want peace, prepare for war”, seems

to continue to be, also unconsciously, echoed in international relations. The gap between the global military and social expenditure continues to widen. Despite a certain flattening out of the military costs in 2012 due to the economic crisis in the West, military budgets are well beyond 1.7 trillion dollars (SIPRI yearbook 2013), thereby exceeding even the peak Cold-War military budgets. Of these 1.7 trillion US dollars a year, some 100 billion dollars a year are devoured by the nuclear weapons industry for weapons whose production and use should be ruled out on military, political, legal, ecological and moral grounds.

Only some 10 % of the annual military costs would be enough to meet the Millennium Development Goals, the MDGs, agreed to by all world leaders in the UN in 2000. Despite progress to halve the world's poverty, hunger, illiteracy, AIDS and child mortality by 2015 and provide better basic health care, improve maternal health and bridge the gender gap in opportunities, there is a constant lack of resources to meet people's basic needs. Imagine that one year military spending equals more than 600 years of the regular budget of the UN. If we want the UN to be able to tackle its core responsibilities, we will have to move the money to where the real needs are.

Substantial reductions of the world military expenditures could eliminate the poverty whereby nearly one third of humanity lives in insufferable conditions. This structural violence is unacceptable - and unnecessary. Excessive military expenditure not only represents a theft from those who are hungry, but is also a totally ineffective means of obtaining security.

At the Rio+20 conference in 2012 it was decided to develop a new UN agenda for sustainable development. The UN has established a working group to prepare the Post 2015 Development Agenda. Even though many organizations and institutions are aware that it was a mistake not to have *peace* as a defined goal in the Millennium Development Goals, and despite the fact that many acknowledge the obvious relation and interdependence between peace and development, it is still uncertain whether member states would want peace as a stand alone goal in the new Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs.

In order to obtain a holistic approach to development that includes *peace*, civil society will have to mobilize broadly and link up with the peace-oriented members of academia, government officials and UN staff members. The positive outcomes of the four UN world conferences on women can largely be attributed to such a broad cooperation. The themes of these four conferences can also serve as a model in its insistence on a holistic interrelation and interdependence between *equality, development and peace*. One element could not be achieved without the other.

The International Peace Bureau is one of the international organizations working for *peace* as a stand-alone goal. IPB also campaigns for a world wide 10% yearly reduction in military spending to finance the new sustainable development goals. The International Peace Bureau insists on the need to prioritize welfare over warfare. www.ipb.org. Such an internationally controlled phasing down of the abnormal military costs is absolutely feasible. It takes, however, political will and courage to get out of the present grips of the military industry. This reduction in military's costs would be beneficial to all, except the military industry where conversion to civil production would be required.

With the financial crisis in the West and the very unequal distribution of wealth in

many countries in the south, it is obvious that we cannot continue to misuse the world's resources for military purposes. Peace and disarmament is becoming a question of survival for people and for the planet.

Educating for global citizenship

The preamble of UNESCO's Constitution states: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that defences for peace must be constructed"(1945). This quote conveys a belief in the importance of education and socialization in changing mind-sets and attitudes. A relevant question in gender context is: Are women more than men inclined to culture of peace principles or feel more affinity with the culture of peace? If so, are we socializing girls for a culture of peace and boys for a culture of war and violence? If this is proven to be correct, how do we socialize both girls and boys and women and men for peaceful conflict transformation, dialogue and a culture of peace, as well as for responsible and global citizenship?

The UN project *Education First* gives new energy and attention to education for global citizenship. If implemented broadly, education for global citizenship may lead to a new feeling of solidarity, as well as to a responsibility to protect and care for both humanity and the planet.

Short term humanitarian and long term humanistic approaches

Too often we see mechanical, preconceived, uncreative, culturally and linguistically insensitive, gender-blind, uninformed, a-historical and undigested "real-political" approaches to conflicts. It seems that we are more into competition for resources and power than seeking co-operation and overcoming differences. Are we too fragmented and not sufficiently comprehensive in our approach to really make a sustainable difference to the lives of people in zones of conflict and war? Are we not involving properly the locals and local competence and culture in our attempts to help? And if we involve the locals, are they representative, and are women and women's insight, experience, talents, needs and interests taken into consideration?

The peace-building arena seems to be dominated by some kind of emergency thinking of short-term relief, stabilization and efficiency. The long term and preventive aspects are less in the forefront. In addition, and increasingly, both the immediate emergency and the middle-term humanitarian work is dangerously getting mixed up with military actions and operations. The lines between military and emergency operations are getting blurred – with all the potentially negative implications.

Perhaps there is a need to reinforce both a humanistic approach and attitude to conflict resolution, peace building and development. And perhaps it is high time to revalue the human sciences? The human sciences are primarily geared towards understanding individuals or groups of people, their interaction and products in a given context. This would normally entail openness to new situations, to languages, to cultural expressions and to looking at a given situation in an historic and comprehensive manner. Perhaps the human sciences are particularly apt to raise questions that do not necessarily find answers easily? Perhaps the humanistic inclined scientists understand the complexities of the human mind and of society and its structures and do not easily fall into the trap of (over)-simplifications?

The vast amounts of resources used for military purposes, peacekeeping and in conflict and post-conflict humanitarian assistance depict our failure to meet basic human needs and concerns in an adequate and timely manner. Instead of trying to tackle problems and conflicts at the roots, we mainly deal with symptoms and undertake “stop-gap” measures in times of crisis. Acting in a timely manner with long-term preventive measures to radically address the root-causes of violence: poverty, exclusion, ignorance, inequality and injustice, would be more humane and less costly. Prevention is better than cure also in this context. Hence the importance of re-instituting the humanistic long-term values, lest we all have to become part of an unsatisfactory and mostly unsuccessful humanitarian fire brigade, always coming late, after the suffering and the destruction.

Militarization of the mind

To build peace, we need to unlearn the codes of a culture of war and violence. Instead, there is an ongoing, growing and sometimes aggressive militarization of the mind, in schools, in universities and through mass media. As universities are lacking in official funding, the military industry is buying its way into academia. The trend is strong in the USA and coming also to other continents. Some even speak about a colonization of the universities by military industry/defence interest and the broad and growing security sector. It is difficult, however, to have a full overview because some research is direct military research and some is dual military-civilian research. More public knowledge is required.

Besides the question of brain drain from more productive sectors, this militarization of the mind enhances the need for a code of conduct for scientists like the medical doctors have their Hippocratic oath. “*Do no harm*” is most relevant also in science. Attempting to make a universal code of conduct for scientists, UNESCO researched more than 115 existing ethical guidelines/principles/norms (some 40 international and some 80 national) and in addition looked at the guidelines of some universities and workplaces.

Particular inspiration can be found in the Russell – Einstein Manifesto and in Nobel Peace Prize laureate Joseph Rotblat’s oath: “*I will not knowingly carry out research which is to the detriment of humanity*”. Student Pugwash (conferences on science and world affairs) groups echo this: “*I will not use my education for any purpose intended to harm human beings or the environment*”.

UNESCO’s humanistic mandate is important in order to help confront the present materialistic trend with its focus on material wealth, economic growth and insane and unsustainable production and consumption patterns. UNESCO was established as the intellectual and ethical body of the UN – to be, as it was said by the British Minister of Education, Ellen Wilkinson, in 1945: *A world wide brain workers parliament*.

Working on an ethical code of conduct for scientists is part of UNESCO’s overall efforts to try to connect the basic values of science with the ideals of social responsibility and accountability. ICSU, the International Council of Scientists, established by UNESCO, have developed Standards for Ethics in Science. And in 1997 the Commission on Ethics of Science and Technology, COMEST, was established to guide and inspire the work of the Organization in this field. However, so far no agreement has been made by member states on a new code of conduct for scientists. Do we have to draw the conclusion that there is so much money in production of and trade

in lethal weapons, as well as continued misguided pride, that countries are not willing to sign such a code of conduct for scientists, at least not for now?

Language of peace, language of war

Military decisions are to a large extent kept outside democratic processes. Descriptions given of “reality” are presented as neutral, “scientific”, undisputable, in the interest of the state and our security. A few insiders own the language of “reality”, primarily people (mostly men) who earn their living from the military industry, the world of strategic analysis and wars in one way or the other. Unfortunately, the media far too often repeats this type of language uncritically. In addition, the use of technical words and abbreviations unfamiliar to most people hampers people’s involvement. The language of peace is often seen as naïve, unprofessional and emotional.

If we look at who is participating in the public debate on security issues, we find a very small minority of women. This is under-utilizing the competence and experience of half of humanity. Women can, and do, play a very important role in conflict transformation and peace building. Their participation in defining the strategies of security may even be vital for the survival of the planet. They enact often an alternative type of rationality – the rationality of care. Most women are strong in their protection of children and the weak. They want children to be born into this world without the threat of war and nuclear annihilation.

In times of tension it becomes difficult to get to the truth, by many considered to be the first victim of war and armed conflict. Parties in conflict are fighting for the hearts and minds of people. The thinking of the “belligerent” class is impenetrable – the language often false, turned upside down or inside out – using words that people link to honourable causes to conceal war mongering. The machinery of propaganda is a vast business.

Even frequently used terminology such as “the international community”, “the people,” “the nation” and “we” lacks in clarity. This terminology seems to express a consensus, but may not be covering both women and men, but instead mostly relate only to “the powerful”, where women’s concerns and viewpoints are not necessarily taken into consideration – nor those of the vast majority of men.

Having a high level of knowledge has always been the hallmark of the peace movement. However, being too eager to learn to use the language of the “war industry insiders” may influence our own thinking and hamper the struggle for peace, real democracy and justice. This is described e.g. in Carol Cohn: *A feminist spy in the house of death: Unravelling the language of strategic analysis* (in *Women and the Military System*, by Eva Isaksson). When Cohn was admitted as an intern in a nuclear weapons factory in the US, she did not feel that she was being heard in her discussions with the insiders and thought it would be useful to learn to master their language. But in doing so she noticed she was alienating herself from her own thinking.

Recently the book *Dictionary for the Underclass, (Ordbok for underklassen)* by Klyve/Sæverud created debate in Norway. The authors argue that the ruling class uses a language, words and concepts made to conceal the truth, distract, confuse, des-inform and fool us. The New Public Management, inspired by big international corporations,

has invaded public discourse with a pronounced view to make public sector more efficient. In reality, according to the authors, this non-progressive management concept alienates people and undermines democracy since the political discourse thereby becomes difficult to grasp and understand. The goal is to make decision-makers look better and more efficient than they are, and hamper people's questioning. The authors refer e.g. to the then Norwegian minister of defence who said to the pilots that they had "delivered world class achievements" when Norway, as a part of NATO, bombed 588 times in Libya (in the no-fly zone). This way of speaking about war is unheard of previously in Norway. It is cynical and grotesque to use the word "deliver" when you speak about bombing in a war as if it was a sports achievement.

When people in Norway have not protested more loudly to Norwegian participation in the NATO "interventions" in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Libya it may be that people in general have not been able to look behind the words used for these wars, such as "humanitarian interventions" or "humanitarian operations". Establishing a "no-fly-zone" in Libya looked perhaps innocent at the outset. Mainstream media, in Norway as elsewhere, echoed to a large extent deliberate des-information by warmongers and their short-term interventionist thinking. There are too many who earn their living from producing, selling and authorizing the use of lethal weapons or who, like vultures wait for the destruction and thrive on misery and the need for reconstruction. For instance in relation to Syria, the media keeps saying that some countries are blocking a solution to the Syrian civil war, meaning that they are blocking a military "solution", as if that is the only solution. Those working for non-violent solutions are hardly worthy of any media coverage nor adequate funding for their activities.

To use Norway yet again as an example, there are presently strong, well-funded and glossy advocacy campaigns in favour of the military, geared towards the general public, the schools and young people. Campaigning for the military in schools is most unusual in Norway, so why now? Is it for fear that people will start questioning the strongly growing Norwegian military industry and the NATO membership? Are people starting to see that NATO no longer acts as a defence organisation, but more and more do aggressive "operations" so called "out of area"? NATO's use of sophisticated and extremely lethal weapons also inspires others to do the same in an endless spiral of weapon production, trade and use. The buying of the attack-bombers, the Joint Strike fighters, F-35, to a colossal expense, might turn out to be more unpopular than first envisaged, and the same may happen with the decision to have as of 2015 so called *gender neutral* military service, as obligatory for girls as for boys. Since the number of recruits is less than one third of the cohort, it is stated that nobody will have to enter military service who do not want to. However, civil service does not exist any more in Norway, and it remains to be seen what will happen in practical terms.

The goal of the feminist movement was not for women to become like men, but to provide equal opportunities for girls and boys, women and men. Instead of getting more young men into civil service, we get more women into military service. Culture of peace – indeed a necessary vision that needs our concerted efforts!

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