

THE QUEST FOR AN ENDURING SOCIAL PEACE: THE NIGERIAN SITUATION

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Abstract

How can an enduring peace be assured a society? We subscribe to the thesis that to achieve social peace, it is imperative that the culture of violence and war prevalent in virtually all societies is replaced with a culture of non-violence and peace. This requires embarking upon a process of peace education as a means of imparting and imbibing new sets of values that are essential for constructing the right attitudes as well as social institutions and structures that are congenial to non-violent resolution of conflicts and promotion of enduring social peace. The paper discusses some of the characteristic features of the culture of violence, which are values, beliefs, social institutions and social structures that encourage the use of violence before outlining the content of the peace education required to undermine the culture of violence and promote the culture of peace and non-violence. These include teaching the values of social peace, social justice and respect for the dignity inherent in humanity. We argue the cultivation of a culture of peace that provides the framework within which practical skills of conflict transformation and conflict resolution can be put to a productive use.

Key words: Culture, Violence, Peace, Education, Society
Since the end of World War II, men have been fighting continuously without a day's respite, somewhere in the world

- from the remotest jungles of Black Africa to the streets of Belfast and Detroit - there have been race riots, campus riots, civil disturbances, kidnappings and hijackings; and so much terrorism that violence has lost all its power to shock...Real human blood flows now on television news bulletins as fake blood in the "entertainment" sector.¹

A constant feature of the Nigerian society is violence in its various manifestations. People appear to be too quick in resorting to violence as a means of achieving desired ends without exhausting all non-violent alternatives. The phenomenon of violence has a paradoxical character in that while many people see it as undesirable in itself; they believe that it is desirable as a means of achieving social ends. Some even uphold that social progress cannot be recorded without violence.² Hence, violence is conceived as both inevitable and necessary in society. However, this opinion appears to be a consequence of the confusion of two distinct concepts: *conflict* and *violence*. The notion of conflict connotes struggle, difference and disagreement while "violence" stands for brutality, aggression, cruelty and fighting. Although, it is impossible for people to interact in society without the incidence of conflict, it is possible to handle conflict constructively such that it does not degenerate into violent confrontation. Conflict, in itself, may be good as it often provides occasions to bring about positive change in society. For instance,

Conflicts cause the other party to clearly express or articulate his interests in a pluralist socio-political system and force people to develop the habit of tolerating the nuances of other people and in the process facilitate a democratic environment³ Regrettably, many cases of conflicts that end up in violence because they are not handled constructively. A primary reason why people are not able to prevent conflict from degenerating into violence is the prevalent belief that violence is not just an acceptable means of achieving social ends, but also, it is

very effective and readily available.⁴ This belief is one of the features or manifestation of the culture of violence that should be jettisoned if we are to enjoy an enduring peace and record sustainable development in the so-called developing societies of Africa.

The Culture of Violence

The term, “culture”, has a number of definitions, but broadly speaking, it refers to a complex of the “attitudes”, “values” and “beliefs”⁵, as well as the traditional institutions of a people. Alternatively, it may be described as the totality of the way of life of a people, which includes their thought system, language, value system, traditional practices and institutions. In Anthropology and Intercultural Communication fields, culture is taken to include all our socially learned behaviour. Quite often, the culture of a people is manifest not only in their art, music and dance, but also in their dispositions, daily activities, social organizations and technology.⁶ Besides, there is usually an intricate relationship between the culture, religion and the moral system of a people such that the religious and moral systems of a people may be correctly described as elements of culture.

“Violence” may be described as ‘the wilful application of force in such a way that it is intentionally injurious to the person or group against whom it is applied’.⁷ Violence aims to prevent the actualization of an end, which the victim of violence desires to achieve. It is present in any situation in which people are either incapacitated somatically or deprived of their physical or psychological health. In the opinion of Johan Galtung, violence is present when there is a difference between “the potential” and “the actual”, between “what could have been” and “what is”⁸. Violence is anything that prevents or inhibits the actualization of a potential or goal, especially those that are socially approved or beneficial.

Given the above understanding of “culture” and “violence”, the expression “culture of violence”, may be interpreted as a way of

life that engenders or encourages the intentional use of force to injure or harm the person against whom it is applied, either physically or psychologically, or one that impairs the actualization of socially beneficial potentials or objectives. A culture of violence would consist in and also be made manifest in different attitudes, values, beliefs, social institutions and social structures that encourage the use of force to injure persons and also inhibit the realization of their socially beneficial potentials and objectives. These values, institutions and structures abound in different forms and degrees in virtually all societies. A United Nations document identifies eight factors as features of the culture of violence.⁹ These are belief that violence works, enemy images, authoritarian government, propaganda and secrecy, armaments, human rights violation and human exploitation, exploitation of nature and patriarchy. An analysis of these suggests, however, that they are factors that underlie the use of violence or predispose people to employ violence in social relations. Let us attempt to explain each of these in turn.

Features of the Culture of Violence

Belief that violence works: A fundamental characteristic of the culture of violence, understood as a set of beliefs, values, institutions and structures that promote the use of violence, is the belief that violence is both acceptable and effective to achieve desired social ends. It holds that significant social developments are only possible with the use violence. It also maintains that power and influence is best achieved and maintained through direct force or at the least through threatening its use. The conviction that the use of violence is effective and acceptable encourages people to adopt various forms of violent means in the pursuit of their desired ends. Indeed, it underlies every use of violence between individuals, groups or nations. Moreover, to justify the use of violence, advocates often stress that violence is not just a constant feature in the historical evolution of humankind, but also requisite for positive social changes. These include gaining national independence and access

to vital resources. They frequently cite illustrations from the history of the United States, which include the extended wars between the European settlers, the revolutionary war over the question of independence and the civil war over the questions of sovereignty and slavery.

Enemy images: Society is made up of people that may be classified into different groups based on ethnicity, social status, religion, age, profession or gender. Where such categorization exists, it is normal for individuals belonging to specific groups to define themselves by distinguishing themselves from individuals belonging to other groups. In conditions of scarcity, people who are conscious of their group differences tend to regard people of other groups as essentially different from them and slightly less than human.¹⁰ Consequently, they perceive them to be opponents against whom they must contest in a struggle for the scarce resources, rather as equal stakeholders with whom they should cooperate to efficiently manage the scarce resources and see how the supply of such resources can be enhanced.

Actually, it is very unlikely that there would be a resort to the use of violence against an individual or a group without a prior conception of the other party as an opponent against whom one must necessarily strive in order to achieve desired social ends. This conception normally produces intolerance, suspicion, fear, prejudice, anger and other negative attitudes that predispose people to violence. Martin L. King corroborates this view by contending that there cannot be a resort to violence without these negative attitudes, and their absence makes it easier for people to coexist peacefully in society. Besides, experience shows that these negative attitudes very often degenerate into violent confrontations when allowed to persist.

Authoritarian government: The culture of violence is also evident in authoritarian governments, that is, governments that are dictatorial and rely on sanctions to coerce obedience from citizens. Such governments are characterized by a concentration of power in an individual who is not constitutionally responsible to the people,

non-participation of people in the process of making and executing laws, promulgation of unfair laws and public policies, and a consequent prevailing sense of despair and powerlessness in people. Such regimes constitute a good example of social structures and institutions that promote the use of violence. This is so because authoritarian governments normally exercise political power and compel citizens to obedience by the use of violence or at least its threat. People in turn resort to the use of violence to assert their rights and demand for just social arrangements. This takes various forms, ranging from demonstrations and riots to civil wars.

Apart from direct and physical violence, authoritarian governments often breed structural violence, understood to exist when the basic structures in a society are ordered in such a way that avoidable deaths occur.¹¹ For instance, if people starve to death when there is food to feed them, then structural violence exists, for alternative social arrangements could prevent such deaths. Other characteristics of an authoritarian government include denial and violation of basic human rights, a lack of legal protection of the individual under the law and insufficient provision of social amenities like good health care delivery system and good education.

Propaganda and secrecy: Propaganda includes misinforming or outright lying in order to deceive, intimidate or get people to do things they would otherwise not do. Secrecy, in the political arena, means deliberately withholding information about the activities of government or the true condition of society. Two of the most prominent tools for propaganda and secrecy are censorship and governmental control of the media. Any society in which government employs propaganda and secrecy to prevent people from getting correct information may be rightly described as psychologically violent¹²: they are employed to deceive, intimidate, scare or compel people to behave in certain ways or carry out certain actions, which are usually not in their interests. They are also employed to conceal the misdeeds of government and elites. Authoritarian governments employ propaganda and secrecy as tools

to subjugate citizens and compel them to conform to certain ideals. They are also prominently employed in situations of conflicts and wars to incite people to violence, gain support for specific objectives and justify the prosecution of wars.¹³

Armaments: The term, 'armaments', in the context we are interested in, does not just refer to the weapons of warfare, but includes all the activities embarked upon in preparation for war: compilation of sophisticated weapons of warfare as well as recruitment and training of military personnel. In our world today, even when there are no threats of war every country prepare for war as a matter of routine. We have all grown up to accept that war is something inevitable and that must be prepared for at all times. Even the might of nations and the amount of influence they can exert in the international sphere are measured in terms of their military abilities. Besides, the quest to accumulate sophisticated weapons of warfare is further encouraged by the manufacturers of arms in their drive for profit maximizing. They are also found to instigate conflicts in order to boost the sales of their wares of destruction. Consequently, we witness the rat race by countries to develop more sophisticated and devastating weapons of warfare, culminating in the stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction that are capable of destroying the world and all that exist in it several times over. This has placed humanity under a perpetual danger of complete annihilation.

It is however encouraging to observe that the world is gradually coming to the reality of the counter-productivity of war. We are gradually realizing the truth in the claim made by Leo Tolstoy that all the centuries of efforts to make life more secure through the pagan organization of violence has brought only fresh dangers into our personal and social lives.¹⁴ Hence, in recent times, there has been a shift in the paradigm for measuring national strength from military to economic considerations. In addition, we are beginning to witness some serious efforts to reduce the amount of resources that are invested in the war industry and the number of weapons of mass

destruction in existence.

Human rights violation/human exploitation: People by virtue of their humanity are endowed with some fundamental rights that cannot be justifiably violated or withdrawn from them. The respect for and promotion of these rights facilitate peaceful co-existence among people as well as provide the conditions requisite for the promotion of the general well being of people in society. Conversely, the denial and violation of these rights tend to generate and exacerbate conflict and encourage people to resort to violence in an attempt to protect their basic rights. When people's rights are denied or violated, they tend to develop such negative feelings as anger, resentment, hatred, distrust, and fear. These mental states reduce the ability of people to relate freely and harmoniously with one another and frequently propel people to violence in a bid to protect or promote their rights.

Aase Lionaes, chairman of the 1968 Nobel Committee for Peace award, realized the centrality of respect for human rights for peaceful co-existence and the important connection between violation of rights and violent confrontations some 37 years ago when he declared:

Lasting peace had to be built upon respect for the rights and worth of the individual human being. There cannot be peace in a country wherein people are not free, where they cannot express their thoughts or print their words, where they are not equal before the law, where they are subject to torture and degrading treatment.¹⁵

Intricately connected with violation of basic human rights is human exploitation of different forms and degrees. In fact, violation of rights usually manifest in exploitative acts, policies or structures. Exploitation consists in different forms of discrimination and misuse of people, ranging from child and women trafficking to unjustifiable social, economic and political discrimination and exploitation of

people based on gender, ethnicity or religion. Examples of economic exploitation that does not seem to be given adequate attention in many developing countries like Nigeria include irregular payment of wages, especially in the public sector, underpayment of workers and the dearth of a conducive work environment and terms of service.

Exploitation of nature: Until very recently, people in virtually all societies construe of the natural environment and all that constitute it as essentially separate from humanity and a resource to be exploited without any consideration of the effects of our activities on it. This attitude underlies the indiscriminate exploitation of the environment, which accounts for much of the environmental problems experienced today: global warming, green house effect, ozone depletion, acid rain, water and air pollution, oil spillage, resource depletion, deforestation, specie loss and the diverse environmental hazards brought about by wars.

Incidentally, the perception of nature as a resource to be exploited to attain our objectives underlies many of the wars that have been prosecuted in the history of human society. This is evident in the fact that war is traditionally regarded as one of the major means of gaining access to needed natural resources.¹⁶ Perhaps, the world would have witnessed fewer wars - and the evils associated with them - if humanity had earlier evolved a conception of the environment as an integral part or at least an extension of ourselves and not as something external to be appropriated and exploited for ends that often turn out to be selfish and counter-productive.

Nevertheless, it is fast becoming obvious that the indiscriminate exploitation of the environment has grave consequences on the well-being and continued existence of human beings and all species with which it shares the world, rendering both the world and life more precarious. Many diseases -some cancerous growth and respiratory disorders- have been traced to environmental hazards that are consequences of the past indiscriminate exploitation of the environment. Hence, it has become

imperative that we adopt and pursue new ideals about nature and our relationship with it for us to enhance the chances of the continued existence of humanity in a flourishing condition.

Patriarchy: The idea of patriarchy relates to all social organizations that act against females based on a presupposed supremacy or dominance of the male and the essential dependency of the female on the male. Within such organizations, females have very little or practically no rights and are in general ‘subject to the whims of fathers, brothers, husbands and pimps’.¹⁷ In some societies, women are viewed as little better than disposable properties to be used and dumped at will without any sense of responsibility towards them. This attitude engenders many of the cases of domestic violence or micro-level unorganized violence we are familiar with today. We have, for examples, rape and wife beating. It also produces various forms of discriminations and structural violence against females across all social levels and structures: in marriage, religious institutions, business institutions, access to education and other community organizations and benefits.

Prevalence of a Culture of Violence in the Nigerian Society

One does not need to search for too long before realizing that the culture of violence abounds in contemporary African societies. We can easily identify beliefs, values, attitudes, institutions and structures that promote the use of violence. For instance, there is the general opinion in Nigeria that positive change is impossible without the use of violence and force, or at least the threat of its use. In fact, citizens can hardly get their legitimate rights satisfied except they go on strike or, to use an expression that is becoming quite popular in the country, threaten to ‘make the country ungovernable’. For example, a newspaper in Nigeria reported that the federal government has repeatedly shunned all non-violent efforts made by regional associations like the “Ijaw Republican Assembly”

and 'Ijaw National Congress' to get government to address the environmental and economic problems confronting the Niger-Delta region. However, government was very quick to respond to the threat of violence made by the "Niger-Delta People's Volunteer Force" (NDPVF) under the leadership of Dokubo Asari. The group threatened to blow up oil pipelines and cause untold conflagration in the country. According to the newspaper report,

It is now being whispered here that violence may be the only language that the Federal Government understands. The other non-violent bodies now look at members of NDPVF as commanding superior attention.¹⁸

The construction of enemy images is also very prominent in many African societies. It is normal for people to consider members of other ethnic or religious groups different from the ones they belong to as enemies they must contend with and do to undermine. This situation dates back to the colonial era when elites taught their supporters to hate "outsiders". In the case of Nigeria, northern Nigerian political elites 'in the late 1960's had to teach their people to hate the Southerners: to look at them as people depriving them of their rights in order to win them over'.¹⁹ To be sure, southern leaders equally told their followers lies about the northerners in order to get the former to hate the latter and see them as enemies they must constantly strive to undermine.²⁰ Unfortunately, more than forty years later, the situation has not improved. Rather than forge a sense of national identity, the relationship between the different ethnic entities constituting Nigeria continues to be characterized by a hardly concealed mutual hatred and suspicion as each group tries to get as much as it can for itself at the expense of the others. This attitude underlies, for example, the demand from several sections of Nigeria that key political positions in the country should be zoned based on ethnicity. It also explains why the spates of ethnic and religious

violence, at very slight provocation, are rampant in Nigeria.

Authoritarian system of governance also predominate the political history of Nigeria. Of her 45 years of post-independence existence, the country has experienced 30 years of authoritarian military rule, essentially characterized by the setting aside of the constitution, rule by coercion and decrees, and gross violation of basic human rights. The situation has not been much different under our 15 years of civilian rule. For instance, politicians as a matter of routine ignore or disrespect the constitution and the laws of the country. They are usually more interested in using the machinery and the powers of the State to pursue their private interests than to pursue policies that are in the national interest. Like their military counterparts, they violate the basic rights of citizens with impunity and have very little or no interest in enhancing the well-being of their people.²¹

Given the gross neglect of the well-being of citizens and the widespread violation of human rights under the four attempts at democratic rule in Nigeria, people have realized that a civilian government is not necessarily a democratic rule. It is not the case that all non-military, elected and supposedly, democratic governments are truly democratic. The experience of Nigeria has proven that such governments can turn out to be as authoritarian as any military regime. For instance, the current 'democratically elected' President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, has increasingly demonstrated authoritarian tendencies. A daily newspaper reported that even members of his political party are becoming exasperated with what they described as 'the emerging full blown dictatorship of President Obasanjo'.²² Another report described his economic policies to 'have left many Nigerians stranded, worsening their standard of living' and "unfortunately, presidential responses to public outcry against policy failures have been insensitive and painfully arrogant".²³ A sad consequence of this is that 'political bickering, violent politicking and dictatorial outbursts' essentially characterize the socio-political landscape in the country.²⁴

Although we can easily cite instances of the manifestation of the other features of the culture of violence in Nigeria, we shall mention only one more. This is patriarchy. Traditionally, virtually all the ethnic groups constituting the country are patriarchal in nature, and modernization has only brought about marginal positive changes in this regard. Apart from a few exceptions, women are still largely regarded as chattels, to be seen, used and discarded without much consideration for their well-being, needs, desires or rights.

Among some Nigerian tribes, like the Igbo, women are not given any property rights: they cannot inherit part of the properties of their fathers neither can they own any property upon the demise of their husbands. In some areas, a widow is made to shave off her hair, spend days without bathing and, worse of all, made to drink of the water used to bathe the corpse of her dead husband. Alternatively, she may be made to spend a number of days sleeping beside the corpse of her dead husband. Young girls are discriminated against with respect to access to education, with many parents preferring to train only the male children. The assumption underlying this practice is that girls would eventually end up in their husband's houses where all their responsibilities would revolve around cooking, raising children and carrying out general domestic chores, for which no formal education is required. It is also not uncommon for women to be prevented from taking bail for people in police custody, even though there is no constitutional provision to this effect. Another manifestation of discrimination against women is seen in the relationship between a husband and his wife. The woman is often seen as the inferior partner in the relationship that can be beaten severely whenever she is believed to have erred. Normally, cases of wife beating in the country are considered as domestic or family affairs, which the legal system should not interfere with. By the Nigerian legal system, a wife cannot even accuse her husband of rape.

The Imperative of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence

Thus far, we have identified some of the features of the culture of violence, understood as a complex of those values, beliefs, attitudes and institutions that encourage the use of violence in society. We have also discussed some of the manifestations of these features in Nigeria. A question that we need to dispose of before we endeavour to discuss how we can effectively develop a culture of peace and non-violence in place of the existing culture of war and violence is “why do we need to jettison the prevalent culture of war and violence?”

We find an answer to the above question in the increasing incidence and devastation of violence in society, coupled with its risk of completely annihilating the entire human race. These have made it imperative for all humans, as beings endowed with reason and driven by an ultimate desire for self-preservation and self-fulfilment to come to a clear-sighted understanding that no genuine human end can be effectively pursued in the absence of peace. Peace is a prerequisite for social development. Peace is a prerequisite for the continued existence of humanity in a tolerable and meaningful condition. Without peace in society, human life would be precarious, and according to Thomas Hobbes, nasty, brutish and short.²⁵

If you have never been privileged to witness a theatre of war or live in a society rent by ethnic and religious violence, I invite you to imagine what a condition of war would be like. To be sure, you would not be able to carry out your normal daily activities, as the atmosphere would be charged with the fear of being caught in the crossfire. As you hear of the many that have been killed or maimed, your heart would be filled with a great sense of trepidation. Multitudes would flee from their homes for the fear of death. Hostility and distrust would be the guiding principles, as it would be dangerous to trust even those that used to be your friendly next-door neighbours. You stand the risk of losing all you have worked for all your life before your eyes because a good number of physical

structures would definitely be destroyed. Indeed, many people have stood helpless and terrified as they watched their loved ones gruesomely murdered or led away as captives, never to be seen again. Many have to live for the rest of their lives with the trauma of their experiences of war, having become physically deformed or mentally deranged.

A clear understanding of the evils inherent in and consequent of all forms of violence and especially its most extreme form, war, would impress on us the value and desirability of peace as well as the pressing need to undermine the attitudes, beliefs and institutions that engender violence. We would come to appreciate the fact that no end, however important it might seem, can justify the resort to violence. This would become more evident if we consider the fact that after the display of violence, which frequently fails to achieve the ends for which it was embarked upon, conflicting parties finally resolve their difference on the negotiating table.

Peace Education and the Development of the Culture of Non-Violence

The above reality has prompted scholars and professionals in the area of “Peace and Conflict Resolution” to come up with theories, principles and practical techniques of peace making, peace building, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and conflict transformation.²⁶ In Africa, the application of these theories, principles and techniques have achieved only a marginal success as records in the conflict ridden and war torn regions show that contending parties frequently frustrate well-meaning efforts to resolve conflicts and end violent confrontations. Consequently, there are many African countries are trapped in a vicious circle of violence: Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan are good examples. Even those that appear to be enjoying some relative peace show signs of tension between the diverse entities constituting them. If effective measures were not urgently taken, the violent confrontations going on in some of the African

countries would remain intractable even as fresh ones erupt.

While we agree that, in practical terms, the various techniques of peacekeeping, peace building and peace making, as well as the diverse skills of conflict resolution and transformation can help to resolve conflicts and promote social peace, they would be most productive only when complemented by a direct effort to develop a culture of peace and non-violence. It is only within a culture of peace and non-violence, understood as a framework of values, attitudes, social institutions and social structures that promote and predispose people to peaceful co-existence and non-violent resolution of conflicts, that the practical skills of conflict resolution and transformation can be productively employed.

Now, “how do we facilitate the requisite change that would enhance the abolition of the culture of violence and the evolution of the culture of peace and non-violence”? How can we systematically undermine those values, beliefs and attitudes that encourage or engender violence and replace them with those that enhance peaceful co-existence and a commitment to the use of non-violent methods in society?

We must understand that culture is not a spontaneous phenomenon. Culture is something that gradually evolves and usually, unnoticed over a period of time. It is also not static, but dynamic, constantly undergoing a natural process of change that is normally unnoticeable until change has reached an advanced stage. However, in some situations, cultural change is facilitated through the deliberate effort of stakeholders. This happens when it is realized that a culture or some aspects of it has become anachronistic or antithetical to desired social development. This is the case with the culture of violence and war.

Historically, the most common means of getting people to conform to social ideals is to employ social sanctions and the force of the law.²⁷ This approach has been successful, to some extent, in compelling people to conform to social standards. However, it has not been successful in producing the desired change in their mentality

and value system. That is, while it has had some measure of success in holding in check people's outward behaviour, it has not been effective in changing people's consciousness. Laws and the sanctions associated with certain actions may discourage people from carrying them out. However, they often do not create a consciousness of such actions as immoral. For instance, an individual may avoid committing murder or armed robbery due to the death penalty attached to the crime. He or she may not have the conviction that murder or armed robbery is a despicable and immoral crime that should be avoided irrespective of whatever sanctions.

What we require is not just a way to compel people to avoid the use of violence in any of its dimensions but a means of developing in people, a character trait and disposition that rejects violence as morally unacceptable and counter-productive. A good way to do this is to embark upon a process of peace education designed to transform people's consciousness such that there is a widespread recognition of violence as morally unacceptable, a general rejection of its use in human affairs and a pervasive acceptance and practice of the principles of non-violence. Such dispositions, to borrow the words of Frankena, "are not wholly innate; they must all be acquired, at least in part, by teaching and practice".²⁸ Indeed, education is a process of acculturation through which knowledge, skills, beliefs and values are transmitted.²⁹ As such, the medium of education is a very potent tool for any social transformation that must begin with a change in human values, beliefs and attitudes.

The proposed peace education should seek to identify, elucidate and propagate basic principles and values that people must understand, internalize and put to practice if society is to enjoy any meaningful peace. It must also make explicit exactly how these concepts, principles and values are productive of social peace. Some of these are social justice, human rights and good governance. In addition, the proposed education must seek to convince people about the evils of violence, its illusory foundation, and the values of peace

as well as inculcate in them those values, like social justice and respect for human rights that are productive of peace in society. Let us briefly outline some aspects of peace education and point out how they can enhance a culture of non-violence.

A good starting point for the process of peace education would be an analysis and clarification of some of the key concepts and principles like “peace”, “violence”, “justice” and “non-violence”. The analysis of these concepts should be carried out with a view to clarifying their meanings and implications and enhance their adequate understanding and appreciation, which in turn are vital for an effective pursuit of the social conditions depicted by the concepts.

We may use the concept of peace to illustrate the point we are trying to make. Its analysis suggests that peace, at the social level, involves the physical security of members of society, relative absence of violence and the will to employ violence to achieve social objectives as well as the emotional well-being of members of society. It also includes a harmonious relationship between members of society, a prevailing sense of contentment and an efficient system of governance.³⁰ A clear understanding of these factors is important to determine when a society is actually at peace and what to do in order to establish a peaceful social order. It would also help to avoid those activities that might propel society towards violence.

As concepts and principles relevant to social peace are analyzed, consistent efforts must be made to propagate what they stand for across the different levels of society with a view to getting people to accept them and desire to work towards the attainment of appropriate social institutions and social conditions. In a similar manner, the proposed peace education should focus on educating people about the nature and undesirable consequences of violence and war. In this regard, it would be helpful to teach people about the illusory foundations of violence and the evils, both inherent and consequent, of it. For instance, people should be educated on the illusory nature of the dichotomy usually drawn between parties in

conflict, often epitomized as the 'them' and 'us' dichotomy.³¹ Sincere efforts must be made to undermine the belief that individuals and groups are distinct and separate from one another in such a way that it is possible for an individual or group to look after its own interest to the total exclusion of others or even at the expense of others.³² This belief generates and sustains hostilities.

To replace this belief, we need to enlighten people that we are more interconnected and interdependent than we have hitherto assumed.³³ People must be brought to the realization that the differences between us are never absolute, but always relative and in degrees: people who distinguish themselves based on ethnicity, for example, may be united based on religion. Hence, while the Yoruba and Hausa peoples of Nigeria distinguish themselves using tribal considerations, many of them are united in a fundamental sense, based on a common religion. A good number of the members of both tribal groups are Muslims.

To achieve the desired goal of propagating the culture of non-violence, it is imperative for the proposed peace education to include instructions on the type of social institutions and structures that would enhance peaceful co-existence and encourage them to work for their establishment in society. For example, people must be taught to appreciate the value of justice, its essential character as far as the pursuit of social peace is concerned and how the value can be realized in practical terms.

In effect, it is only after people are sufficiently persuaded about the need to jettison the culture of violence and develop instead, values, institutions and structures that are amenable to peace that the various practical skills of conflict resolution and transformation would be productive of social peace in the conflict ridden and violence torn societies in Africa.

Conclusion

To check the increasing trend of social violence and establish society on the path of peace, the paper argued that there is the need to embark upon a process of peace education. It should be designed in such a way that people's mentality is transformed from one that consists in a set of beliefs, values and attitudes that sees violence as acceptable and desirable to one that rejects the use of violence and places a very high premium on peace and all that can enhance its establishment in society. This provides a framework that is conducive for the effective application of the skills of conflict transformation, resolution and prevention.

An attempt was also made to give an outline of the content of the proposed peace education. It should include the clarification of the meanings and implications of the concepts relevant to the establishment of the social condition we are seeking for: For example, the concepts of peace, violence, justice and human rights. The aims of the proposed education should be to enlighten and convince people that violence and war are evil and counter-productive, help to identify the social conditions that predispose people to violence and those that facilitate peaceful co-existence. In addition, it offers suggestions on how to avoid the former and cultivate the latter in society. The paper did not attempt to answer the question, who or what agencies should spearhead the proposed peace education?

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⁷ Joan Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 9.

⁸ Johan Galtung, "Violence and Peace" in Paul Smoker, et al, *A Reader in Peace Studies*, Oxford, Pergamon Press.1990, pp. 9-14

⁹ Visit <http://cpnn-usa.org/learn/values.html> & www.culture-of-peace.info/history

¹⁰ See Groff and Smoker, *op.cit*, p.15 for an account of Gandhi's opinion on violence and non-violence

¹¹ Johan Galtung, "Violence and Peace" in Paul Smoker, et al, *A Reader in Peace Studies*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1990, pp. 9-14

¹² *Ibid*, pp. 10-13

¹³ See David Turton, (ed.), *War and Ethnicity in Global Connections and Local Violence*, SanMarina: University of Rochester Press, 1997, p. 4

¹⁴ Leo Tolstoy, "The Kingdom of God is Within You", in Howard P. Kainz (ed.) *Philosophical Perspectives on Peace*, Ohio: University Press, 1987, p. 189.

¹⁵ Aase Lionaes, "Presentation" in Frederick Haberman (ed.) *Nobel Lectures: Peace*, Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Co., 1972, p. 388.

¹⁶ Peter A. Corning,, "Human Violence: Some Causes and Implications" in Charles R. Beitz and Theodore Herman (eds.), *Peace and War*, San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1973, p. 127.

¹⁷ Groff and Smoker, *op. cit*, p.10.

¹⁸ *Weekend Vanguard*, Nov. 20, 2004, p.7

¹⁹ P.J Dent, "Tarka and the Tiv: A Perspective on Nigerian Federation" in R. Melson and H. Wolpe (eds.), *Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communalism*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1971, p. 452

²⁰ Isaac I. Albert, *op.cit*, p.74

²¹ *Ibid*, pp. 70, 76

²² *Daily Sun*, Vol.2, No.372, Jan.17, 2005, p.4

²³ *The Punch*, Vol.17, No. 19,263, Jan.20, 2005, p. 15

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 39

²⁵ See M.M. Goldsmith, "Thomas Hobbes: Ancient and Modern" in Tom Sorell (ed.), *The Rise of Modern Philosophy, The Tension Between the New and Traditional Philosophers from Machiavelli to Leibniz*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.321

²⁶ For more information on these techniques see Raimo Vayrynen (ed.), *New Directions in Conflict Theory: Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation*, London: Sage Publications, 1991, Barbara J. Hill, "An Analysis of Conflict Resolution Techniques: From Problem-Solving Workshops to Theory", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.26, No. 1, March, 1982, pp.109-138 and Stephen

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²⁷ John H. Farrah and Anthony M. Dugdale, *Introduction to Legal Methods*, London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1990, pp. 5-7

²⁸ William K. Frankena, *Ethics*, New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India Ltd., 1995, p. 63

²⁹ Chukwudum B. Okolo, *Philosophy of Education and Education of Philosophy*, Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd, 1989, pp. 14-15

³⁰ Adebola B. Ekanola, "Realizing the Value of Peace: An Antidote for the Prevalence of War in Africa", an Unpublished Paper Presented at a Conference at the Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan, September 15-18, 2004, pp. 4-5

³¹ Adebola B. Ekanola, "Peace in Contemporary Society: Transcending the Bonds of Group Affiliations", *Journal of Conflict Management and Development*, Vol.1, 2003, p. 2

³² See Rex Ambler, "Gandhian Peacemaking" in Paul Smoker, et al. (eds.), *A Reader in Peace Studies*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1990) p. 200

³³ Ekanola, 2003, p.3