

THE NECESSITY OF A NEW MULTICULTURAL PEACE CULTURE

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The major idea exposed in this essay is that Multiculturalism in our kinetic and mobile modern times, is a key factor in promoting genuine peace. If a new multicultural peace system instills openness, understanding and recognition of the "other", respect for his identity and culture, as well as commitment to solving conflicts and differences by peaceful means, using the instrumental knowledge and valuables acquired by Multiculturalism, then the chances for regional and global peace can be greatly enhanced. By contrast, if the cultural and educational system instill nationalistic self-centeredness, rejection and hatred of the "other", of his identity and culture, and calls for and justifies the resort to violence to solve conflicts - then peace will be endangered.

A reformed multicultural regional and global peace culture, communications and educational system, can make it possible for the creative voices of the many lands around the globe yearning for peace, to be heard and to be listened to. The writers, film makers, dramatists and poets, encouraged by multiculturalism and an ensuing culture of peace, would give voice to the craving of the preponderant majority of the global community to build a world beyond war, terror, and violence. There is a crucial need of reform at an international scale, concerning culture, literature and the arts, which can replace the culture of violence and crime, which is often a major mode nowadays, and multiculturalism and respect of each other's culture can be the answer

THE MEANING OF THE TERM CULTURE

According to the Webster Dictionary "culture" is defined as: "The development, improvement and refinement of the mind, emotions, interests, manners, tastes, as well as the arts, ideas, customs and skills of a given people in a given period." The Oxford English Dictionary adds to this definition, that culture is: "The intellectual side of civilization." Culture can therefore be perceived as the essence of individual and national identity. The definition of "culture" used in this essay is based on all the above.

WHAT DOES A MULTICULTURAL SYSTEM CONSIST OF?

The process of initiating and building an innovative multicultural peace system can be related to ongoing initiatives of educational institutions affiliated to the United Nations and other establishments. The proposed "Multicultural peace system" should have intra-state as well as inter-regional dimensions, and it should be established on the basis of solid and thorough research at various levels. To counteract fanatical and violent hatred, the new multicultural system should aim at the utmost level of openness, tolerance and it should be established with a high level of professionalism and expertise.

After the horrendous terrorist attack on the Trade Center in New York (September 11, 2001), it has become obvious that the new era has ushered a war of cultures, it is urgent therefore to build a powerful and effective multicultural peace culture system, at governmental and global levels. Hence, the following measures are recommended:

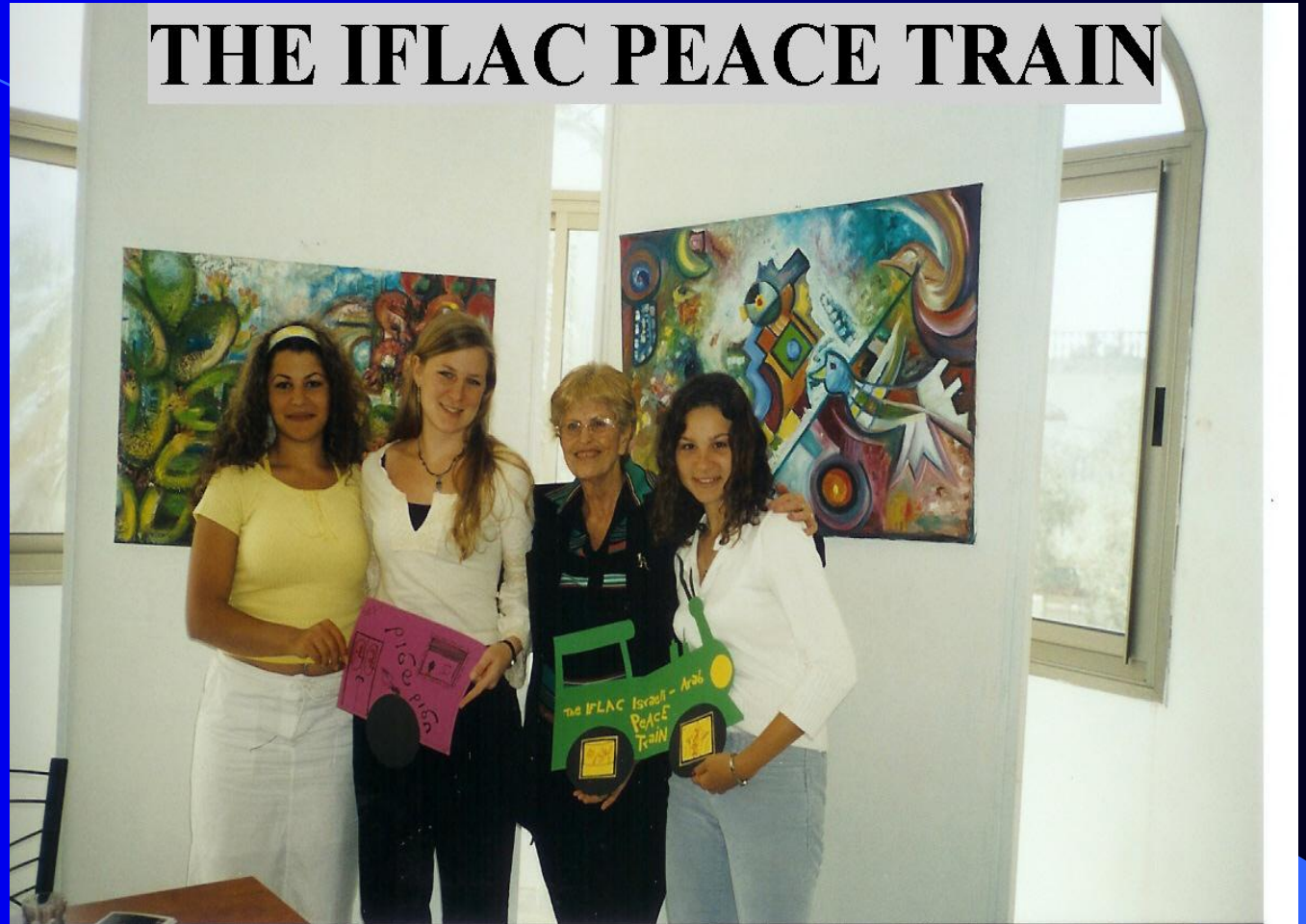
- 1. Governments should consider establishing ministries of "Multicultural Peace Culture," with appropriate budgets that can accomplish the huge task of changing the global and national culture of violence and terror to one of harmony and peace.**
- 2. A multi--layered structure and framework for building and propagating the innovative system will need to be minutely planned and designed.**

1. 3. Literature and arts in the pursuit of peace collected from the various civilizations and cultures, should be researched, translated, and widely used, and multicultural peace education and peace studies at all levels should be initiated and established.

2. 4. Non governmental peace organizations in the various countries, should be involved in the creation of the new multicultural peace culture system, and they should be largely sponsored to be able to operate effectively and in an interconnected fashion.

NGO's could help in the collection of the various pluralistic cultural contributions of peace literature, poetry and the arts, from the best that is available in various civilizations, thus reflecting the many "Voices of the Earth" yearning for a peaceful world without violence or terror.

POETRY AND ART IN THE TENT OF PEACE





Richard Gere came to Israel for 4 days, for a Peace Poetry Conference he was invited by IFLAC and the international movement of "The Spirit of Peace," to give support to peacemaking in the region. He participated in an Israeli and Arab Women Meeting for Peace, in Furadis (July 3, 2003), and he talked to Jewish, Arab and Druze women, in the Youth Center of the village. He said: "Such wonderful peace meetings by women should be covered by CNN and the BBC, and not only when men kill each other!" <http://www.iflac.com>

THE ROLE OF PEACE LITERATURE

"I am the enemy you killed my friend!" Strange Meeting,
Wilfred Owen

Culture, literature, and the arts, are an important part of our lives, and they also constitute the building blocks of the required culture of peace system - however, we do not give their contents and impact enough attention. The major components of literature: novels, fiction, poetry and drama, are often made into films and television scripts, and as various studies have shown, fiction can often influence more than facts. The online IFLAC Magazine Horizon spreads this new needed literature, and you are warmly invited to visit: www.iflac.com/horizon and www.iflac.com/ada