EDUCATION AND PEACE CULTURE THROUGH TELEVISION

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The International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace

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Summary

The major aim of education today should be the creation and establishment of an encompassing and effective "Peace Education and Culture System" (PECS), which should be channeled throughout all levels of education. Schools, colleges and universities, are suitable forums where personal and national identities, values, ideals, and ideologies are formed. Curricula and agendas should reflect the central events and conflicts that mark our era, and address them from the point of view of conflict resolution. The Foundation of a Powerful SALAAM – SHALOM Television by Satellite in English, Arabic and Hebrew and various other languages, can spread a crucially needed peace culture all over the Middle East and the whole world. The growing boom and expanding dimensions of telecommunications offer various new opportunities and directions for the promotion of peace education and a humanistic peace culture. These new possibilities have not as yet been fully explored or used enough. Television, Press, Radio and Internet, play a vital role in forming our views, values and relations. Actions and behavior begin in the mind, and the stories we show, write and tell, should be peaceful and constructive and not violent and destructive as we unfortunatelyoften see on television today.

1. Introduction: The Need of a New "Peace Education and Culture System" (PECS)

We are nowadays in the greatest global cultural crisis in human history, and it is therefore imperative to mobilize education in all its forms to alleviate and help solve this dangerous crisis. Education can provide an important context and channel for peace

culture and the respect and love of humankind and of life. In the light of the recent increase of cultural conflict that we are witnessing in the Middle East and various parts of the world, the promotion of the "unconditional" love of peace, life and of humanity, through education, is of central importance.

The dilemmas that face the education system are a microcosm of the contradictions and struggles of the whole of society, and the attitude towards education has an important effect on society as a whole. In trying to establish the dynamics that mark the interplay between education and society, we have to take into consideration the fact that for this symbiotic interplay to take place fruitfully, a transformation of some of the priorities in aims and methods of traditional education is needed.

The major aim of education today should be the creation and establishment of an encompassing and effective "Peace Education and Culture System" (PECS), which should be channeled throughout all levels of education. Schools, colleges and universities, are suitable forums where personal and national identities, values, ideals, and ideologies are formed. Curricula should reflect the central events and conflicts that mark our era, and address them from the point of view of conflict resolution.

Various researchers, educators and NGO's (Non Governmental Organizations), have created programs, networks and websites to promote various aspects of non-violence. However, the results of these efforts have unfortunately remained small pockets of oases in a global desert of a mostly violent culture, in our region in particular, and in the world in general. What is needed today is a colossal project to spread the "Peace Education and Culture System" (PECS), not only through educational institutions but also to the large public, as widely as possible.

2. Foundation of a Powerful SALAAM – SHALOM Television by Satellite

The growing boom and expanding dimensions of telecommunications offer various new opportunities and directions for the promotion of peace education and a humanistic peace culture. These new possibilities have not as yet been fully explored or used enough. Television, Press, Radio and Internet, play a vital role in forming our views, values and relations. Actions and behavior begin in the mind, and the stories we show, write and tell, should be peaceful and constructive and not violent and destructive. The Nobel Peace Laureate, Elie Wiesel, rightly said in his Nobel Prize speech: *"We are the stories we hear and tell."*

IFLAC: The International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace, in addition to its daily online IFLAC PEACE DIGEST for the spreading of the Culture of Peace, has planned a gigantic project for the year 2007 (See www.iflac.com and www.iflac.com/ada). The basis of IFLAC's colossal plan is the foundation of a powerful SALAAM – SHALOM Television by Satellite (SST), and an accompanying Radio by Satellite (SSR), for the propagation of the PECS - the new revolutionary Peace Education and Culture System. It would include, in addition to formal peace research and intensive peace education and peace studies programs, an exciting and attractive agenda not only for children and youth, but also for teachers, parents and the wide public. As it is the teachers and parents who are in charge of teaching the children, if

they themselves are not peace – culture oriented, the children cannot benefit from a significant and substantial peace education. It is planned that the SST will function in three languages: English, Hebrew and Arabic, covering not only Israel and the Palestinian Authority, but also the whole Middle East, and it would be made available to the whole world.

In the past wars and conflicts in the Middle East, the various sides tended to forget their common humanity and they energetically joined in efforts to kill their "opponents". However, killing will not stop killing, and it may unfortunately lead to a world nuclear war that would destroy the whole of humankind and bring a total nuclear winter to our whole planet. To preempt and prevent this horrific tragedy, all sides must join in an all-out effort to eliminate the deep causes of war, conflicts and terror.

3. Funding and Support of the SST

The UN, UNESCO, the European Community, the World Bank and all Governments, as well as Peace NGO's and major Peace Institutions - should all join hands to fund and to quickly create the crucial "Salaam - Shalom Television by Satellite for Peace Education and Peace Culture." The SST will function as "Preventive Medicine," before further wars, destruction and terror bring havoc and tragic calamities again to our much-ravaged region. Human greed, injustice and folly have already ruined many parts of our region and planet and have endangered its future. The most powerful institutions - global corporations, mass media and rich governments - put financial profit first, and not the good of the people. They do not focus on preventing wars and terror and on what will do the most good for the people, but on what will make the most money. The resulting violence, terror, and environmental carnage have been disastrous. All this could be changed conceptually and ideologically through the peace education and peace culture programs of the SST, and SSR, and it could significantly promote the great needed changes on the ground, toward a Middle East and a World beyond war.

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Biographical Sketch

Ada Aharoni is a professor and peace culture researcher, writer, poet and lecturer. She writes in English, Hebrew and French, and has published twenty-five books to date that have been translated into several languages. She believes that culture and literature can help in healing the urgent ailments of our global village, such as war, conflict, and famine, and the themes of peace and conflict resolution are major ones throughout her works. She studied at London University(M.Phil in English Literature, and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem-B.A in Sociology and Literature, and Ph..D, on Nobel recipient Saul Bellow. She lectured at Haifa University, and at the Israel Institute of Technology (Technion in Haifa), as well as at the University of Pennsylvania, where she received her Professorship. She is the Founder – President of IFLAC: The International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace. She has been awarded several International Prizes, and was elected one of the "100 Global Heroines" in Rochester, New York (1998).