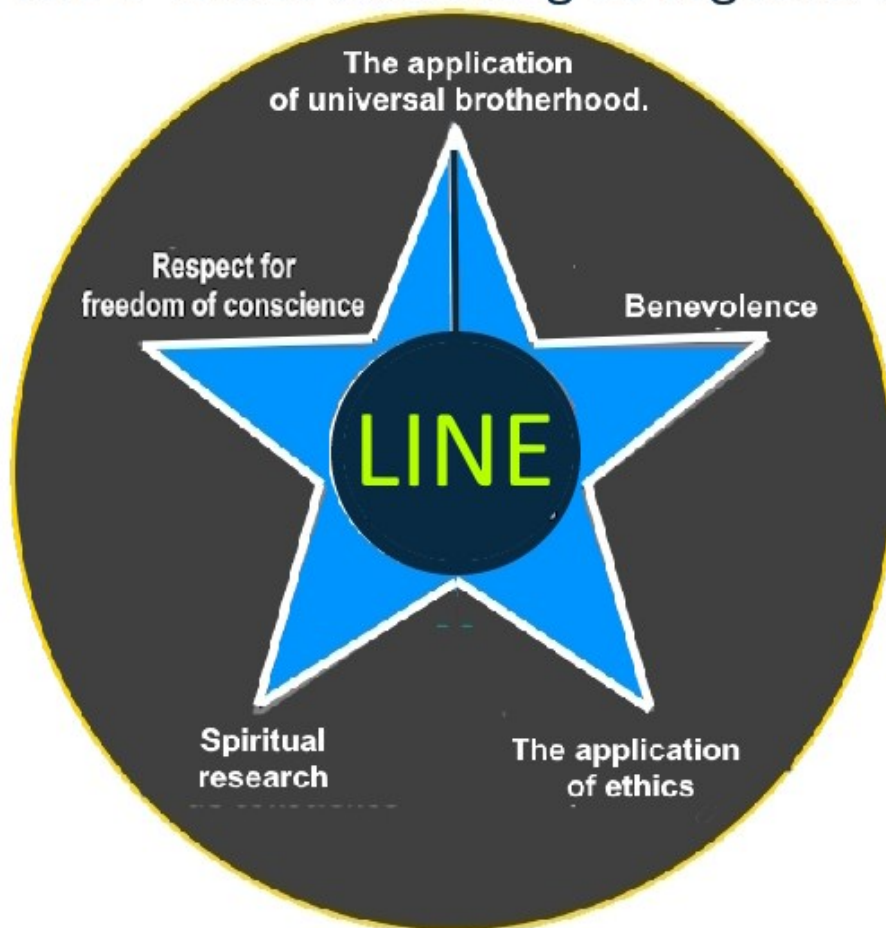


# LINE

International Secular Brotherhood  
N°15 - February 2025

Violence? Understanding it better  
**to better control it!**

## The 5 values that bring us together!



**Editor's note: LINE INFOS is the English edition of our numeric magazine. If you would like to see the Spanish and French editions, simply log on to [www.webfil.info](http://www.webfil.info) where you can download them free of charge. Line infos is a publication of the Fil-Infos-Loges association.**

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**Publishing director : Alain BREANT**

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Parce que le fil à plomb symbolise la rigueur, l'élévation et le désintéressement !  
**Porque la plomada simboliza el rigor, la elevación y la abnegación.**  
Because the plumb line symbolises rigour, elevation and selflessness!

## EDITORIAL

# Understanding violence for better control!

by Frederic Ecoutin

**Violence is the use of physical force or power (see, for example, Weber and the different types of legitimate domination, which can lead to abuse of authority, and hence violence).**

Violence is therefore a physical OR psychic constraint imposed on another person, individual or group, by legitimate or "illegitimate" (unwanted) domination and whose result for the dominated person(s) is to be subjected to the will of the other.

Violence uses physical threats (verbalized or in attitude, behavior), blows, or psychological attitudes and words (criticism, devaluation, humiliation...) which are all psychological "blows"...

Threats and injustices can be separated into those with consequences that concern ME (e.g., a traffic jam prevents me from keeping my appointment and may cause me to miss an important contract) and those that don't ("I've got plenty of time" and the threat disappears).

This brings us back to the notion of CHALLENGE, as we know it in stress management: the higher the stakes, the greater the fear, then the anger, then the violence.

The norms and rules necessary for group living limit degrees of freedom, and urban concentrations are clearly conducive to the development of violence. A very interesting case reported in *Courrier International* in 1999 presents the Achuar of Conambo (Ecuador), "a people with the sad privilege of having had, in previous generations, one of the highest homicide rates on the globe".

Anthropologist John Patton pointed out that this matriarchal society had no hunger problems (a frequent reason for war), but that warriors fought and killed each other to advance their status: "The better you fight, the higher you climb the social ladder".



Thus, for Patton, "Studying the impact of war value on social success (...) is the first step towards understanding the persistence of war in human societies".

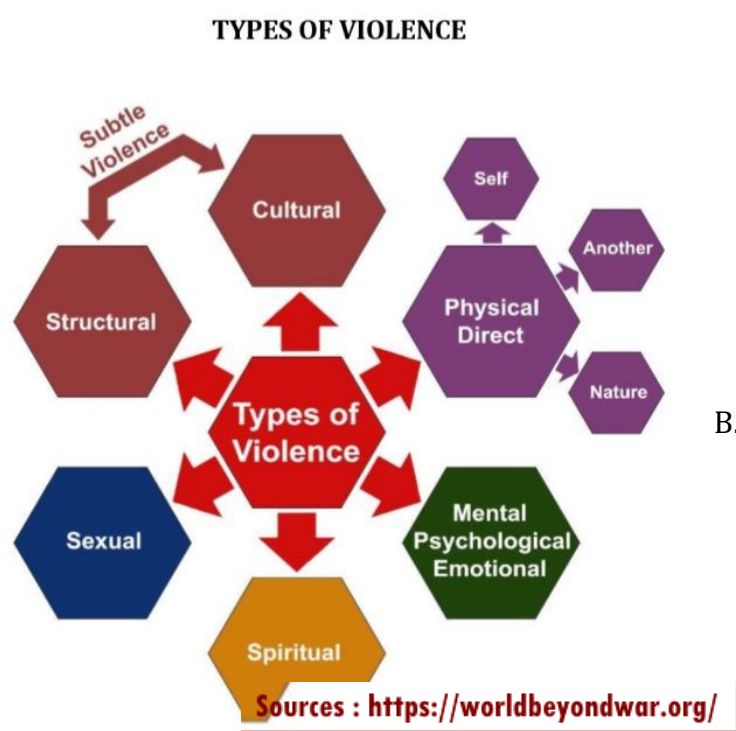
"In his *Logique de la philosophie*, Eric Weil argues that the origin of philosophy stems from a choice: that of reason in the face of violence".

Let's also remember that violence is the consequence of threats or injustice, but also of pleasure in the suffering of others (perversity), which makes a different response possible, to avoid violence and put an end to suffering.

Frédéric Ecoutin



# The physiological basis of violence production in humans



Plays a key role in regulating emotions, notably fear and aggression.

Hyperactivity of the amygdala is often observed in violent individuals.

Animal and human experiments: lesions of the amygdala reduce aggressiveness, while hyperstimulation increases it.

## B. The prefrontal cortex - Regulating behavior

Responsible for impulse control, decision-making and morality.

A decrease in prefrontal cortex activity is observed in violent and psychopathic criminals.

It inhibits aggressive responses generated by the amygdala.

## C. The hypothalamus - Center of primary aggression

Controls instinctive reactions, including defensive and predatory aggression.

Linked to the amygdala and brain stem, it modulates the response to threatening stimuli.

## D. The striatum and the reward system

Violence can be reinforced by the release of dopamine in the reward system.

- Some people take pleasure in violence (e.g. sadism, social domination).

## II. Neurotransmitters involved in violence

### A. Serotonin - a natural inhibitor of aggression

Even if the current state of knowledge doesn't allow us to understand everything, scientific research has enabled us to understand the structures involved in the production of violence in human beings.

## I-Brain structures :

It is widely accepted that the production of violence is linked to the brain structures responsible for emotional intelligence.

These are essentially :

The hypothalamus,

The septum,

The amygdala,

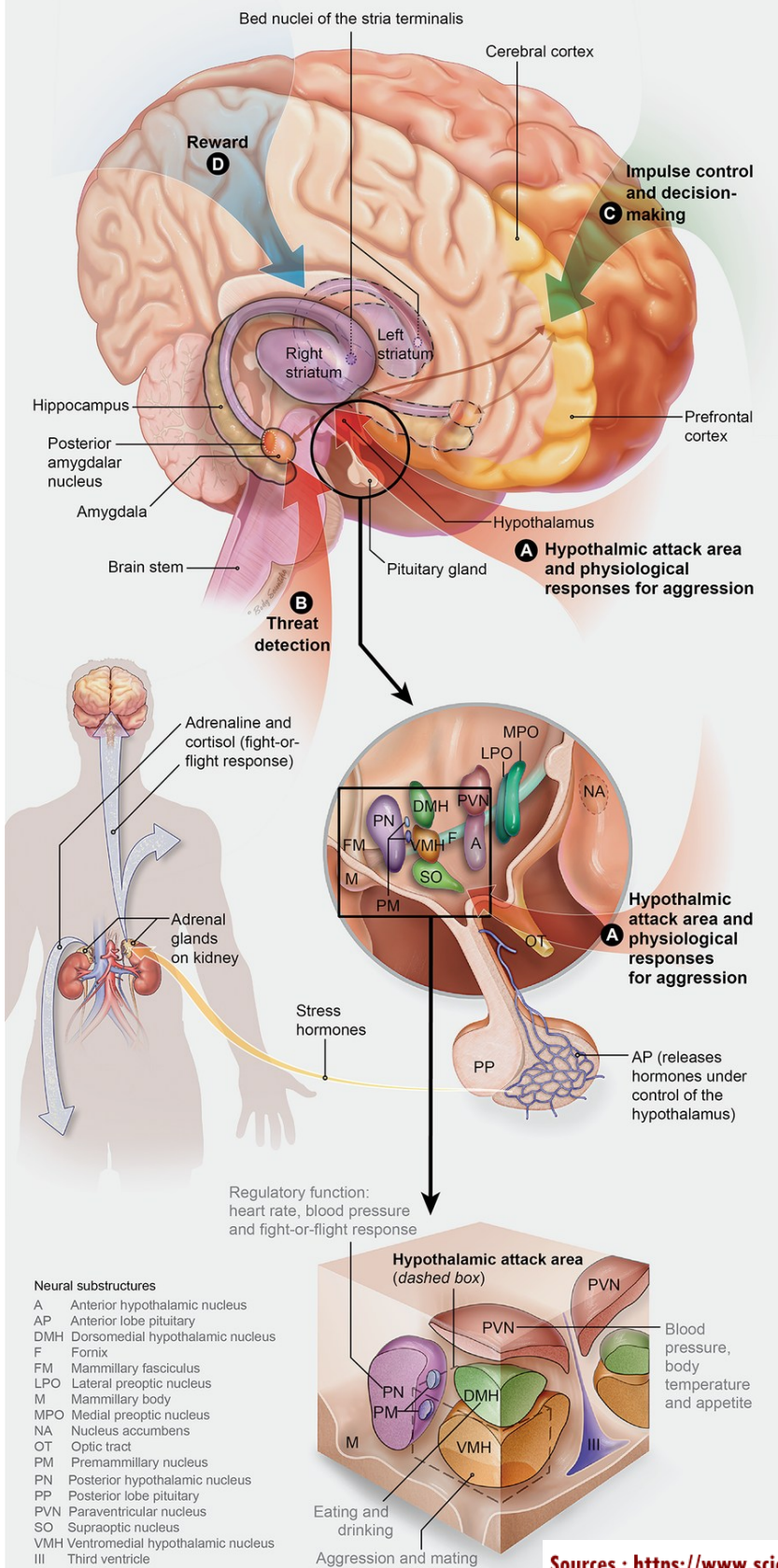
The core of the terminal streak

Anterior cingulate and orbitofrontal cortex.

### A. The amygdala - Center of fear and aggression

## Pathways of Rage

Conduits within the human brain transmit signals that fan aggressive behavior—or tamp it down. A key hub is the “hypothalamic attack area,” minute clusters of neurons where the brain receives inputs that regulate the racing heart and other physiological responses that precede a violent incident **A**. Elsewhere the amygdala receives inputs from the senses and the decision-making area on the brain’s surface that signal the presence of a threat **B**. The cortex keeps a check on wayward impulses **C**. Rage and reward circuits interconnect **D**.



Low serotonin levels are correlated with increased impulsive aggression.

Serotonin deficiency is often detected in violent criminals.

**B. Dopamine** - Linked to motivation and instrumental aggression

In excess, it can reinforce aggressive behavior.

It is involved in the rewards associated with violence (e.g. pleasure in dominating others).

**C. Glutamate and GABA** - Excitation vs. inhibition

Glutamate: excitatory neurotransmitter promoting aggression.

GABA: inhibitory neurotransmitter, reduces impulsivity and aggression.

An imbalance between these two neurotransmitters can lead to aggressive hyperreactivity.

## III. Hormones and their role in violence

**A. Testosterone** - the hormone of aggression and dominance

High testosterone levels are often associated with increased aggression, particularly in competitive and dominant behaviors.

**B. Cortisol** - Stress and fear regulator

Low cortisol levels are correlated with low fear of consequences, favoring increased aggression. Conversely, too much stress (too much cortisol) can also provoke violent reactions.

Sources : <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-roots-of-human-aggression/>

C. **Oxytocin** - Hormone of social bonding (and group violence)

It increases intra-group cooperation, but can reinforce aggressiveness towards outsiders.

It partly explains identity-based violence (xenophobia, ethnic wars).

#### **IV. The role of the autonomic nervous system**

**Sympathetic system:** Activates the fight-or-flight response. Over-activation can trigger excessive violence.

**Parasympathetic system:** acts as a brake, reducing physiological excitation.

Individuals with low parasympathetic tone find it harder to inhibit their violent reactions.

#### **V. Environmental factors influencing the biology of violence**

**Early trauma:** Childhood abuse and violence have a lasting impact on the brain (hypersensitivity to threat, reduced pre-frontal control).

**Substance use:** Alcohol, drugs (cocaine, methamphetamine) increase impulsivity and aggression.

**Nutritional deficiencies:** lack of omega-3s, vitamins and minerals affects emotional regulation and impulse control.



**Brotherhood should promote world peace!**

**And yet, today, we are obliged to note that this is not the case!**

**If this is not the case, it's because those who recognize themselves in brotherhood are divided into a multitude of groupings!**

**It's time to come together!**

**That's what Fraternité Internationale Laïque is all about!**

**Isolated, we can do nothing!  
Together, everything is possible!**

**Thank you in advance!**

**Fraternally**

**Alain Bréant  
President of Fraternité Internationale Laïque  
fil.infosloge@gmail.com**



# Psychology and violence

Sources : <https://psychology.org.au/publications/inpsych/2011/feb/weiss>

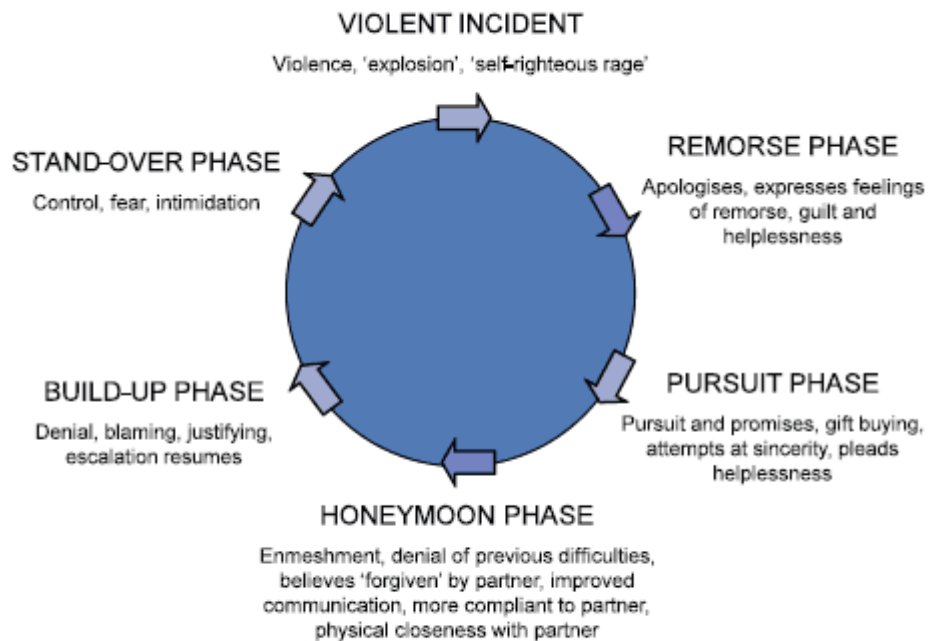


Figure 1. The cycle of violence – commonly used to explain the perpetuation of IPV (adapted from Walker, 1979)

If we accept that psychology is concerned with the study of human behavior and the search for its causes, it's only natural that various hypotheses have been developed to understand what is generally referred to as "acting out". Whether it concerns individual or institutional violence, whether apparently justified or instrumentalized to gain power, recourse to violence is always the consequence of a complex process that deserves to be analyzed.

## A. The death drive

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the famous inventor of psychoanalysis, is considered to have invented the concept of drives, which are capable of influencing human behavior. One of these drives seems particularly concerned by violent behavior: the death drive. Sigmund Freud unveiled it in 1920, in his book "Beyond the Pleasure

Principle", to designate the unconscious force that pushes the individual towards either destruction or self-questioning. He gave it the name Thanatos. Today, this explanation seems contested. Other psychoanalysts retain it, but give it other meanings.

## B. Frustration-aggression theory

The term was coined in 1939 by John Dollard and Neal Miller, two psychologists from the behaviorist school. Violence is said to be the consequence of frustration to which a person is subjected. Frustration with affection, in most cases.

## C. Social learning theory

The social learning theory of Canadian psychologist Albert Bandura (1925-2021) states that

individuals learn by observing and imitating the behavior of others, especially adults, through modeling and reinforcement processes.

Violence is learned through observation and imitation:

- Family environment
- Media (video games, films, social networks)
- Personal experience (reinforcement of violent behavior)

## D . Operant conditioning

The American psychologist Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1904-1990) developed an explanation of child behavior known as "operant conditioning". This law also applies to violence: violence is a behavior that is reinforced when an advantage is gained. For example: a child who gets what he wants after a tantrum learns to use aggression. This also applies to adults, particularly in hostage situations.



## E. Social dominance theory

This theory, elaborated by two American sociologists, James H. Sidanius (1945-2021) and Félicia Pratto (b. 1961)(Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), develops the idea of the influence of dominant social groups. Certain groups and individuals use violence to maintain or acquire power. For example: gangs use violence to control territory and reinforce their status.

## F. The theory of anomie (Émile Durkheim, 1897)

When social rules are weak or absent, individuals are more likely to adopt deviant behaviors, including violence.

## G. Deindividuation theory (Philip Zimbardo, 1971)

In certain contexts (crowds, social networks, violent groups), anonymity reduces inhibition and encourages violence.

Key experiment: Stanford prison experiment, where students playing guards showed extremely violent behavior under the effect of the role and anonymity.

## H. Relative deprivation theory (Ted Gurr, 1970)

Violence arises when an individual or group feels at a disadvantage compared to others.

Example: Social revolts in response to economic injustice.

## I. The theory of natural selection (Charles Darwin, 1859)

Violence may have been an evolutionary mechanism for survival and domination.

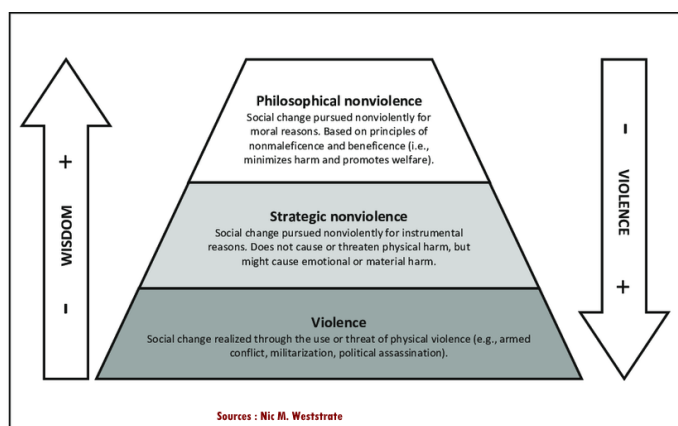
## J. Adaptive aggression theory (David Buss, 2005)

Violence can be a strategic behavior in certain situations (sexual competition, rivalry, revenge).

**Fraternity can prevent violence!**



# A philosophical approach to violence



## Ontological approach: violence as an inherent human trait

**Heraclitus** (6th century BC): "Conflict is the father of all things".

He believes that conflict (polemos) is a fundamental principle of the world and that it enables evolution.

**Thomas Hobbes** (1588-1679): Violence as a state of nature

In *Leviathan*, he describes the state of nature in which humans live in permanent war ("man is a wolf to man"). Violence is therefore natural, but the state must regulate it to ensure peace.

**Sigmund Freud** (1856-1939): The death drive  
In *Malaise in Civilization*, Freud distinguishes two fundamental drives: Eros and Thanatos. Violence is thus an innate expression of human nature, difficult to eradicate completely.

## Ethical and moral approach: is violence legitimate?

**Aristotle** (384-322 BC): Violence as an unnatural act

He distinguishes legitimate force (exercised by the state) from brute violence, which he considers an excessive and degrading act.

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau** (1712-1778): Violence as a product of society

In « *Le Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* », he asserts that man is good by nature, but that it is society that has corrupted him and driven him to violence.

**Hannah Arendt** (1906-1975): Violence vs. Power

In *De la violence*, she distinguishes between violence and power:

Power rests on the legitimacy and consent of citizens.

Violence arises when power fails.

She criticizes the use of violence, which she sees as counter-productive to building a sustainable society.

## A dialectical and revolutionary approach: violence as the engine of change

**Hegel** (1770-1831): The master-slave dialectic  
Violence and its role in shaping social relations.

**Karl Marx** (1818-1883): Class struggle  
In *Le Manifeste du Parti Communiste*, he asserts that history is a series of struggles between dominant and dominated classes.

He saw violent revolution as a necessary means of abolishing injustice and establishing an egalitarian society.

**Frantz Fanon** (1925-1961): Violence as a tool of liberation

In *Les Damnés de la Terre*, colonial violence can only be overthrown by revolutionary violence.  
Political and strategic approach: legitimate and illegitimate violence

**Max Weber** (1864-1920): Monopoly of legitimate violence

In *Le Savant et le Politique*, he explains that the state has a monopoly on legitimate violence (police, army).

He differentiates between legal violence (army, justice) and anarchic violence (terrorism, insurrections).

**Michel Foucault** (1926-1984): The violence of power hidden in institutions

For him, violence is not limited to physical conflict, but lurks in systems of domination and control (prisons, schools, hospitals).

He speaks of "symbolic violence", which imposes a norm and crushes individuals without the direct use of force.

**René Girard** (1923-2015): Mimetic violence

He explains that violence is born of mimetic desire (imitating others).

To prevent violence from escalating, societies create scapegoats, sacrificial victims who restore social order.

**Pacifist approach: violence is a failure**

**Gandhi** (1869-1948): Active non-violence

He advocates peaceful resistance (Satyagraha) as a more effective means of achieving political change than violence.

**Tolstoy** (1828-1910): Rejection of all violence

In *Le Royaume de Dieu est en vous*, he advocates absolute non-resistance, opposing all forms of coercion.

**Martin Luther King** (1929-1968): Civil disobedience

Inspired by Gandhi, he defended the non-violent struggle against racial segregation in the United States.

**Henri Laborit** (2014-1995) in "*La Colombe assassinée*" and "*L'éloge de la fuite*".

Professor Laborit provides an insight based on neurobiological knowledge.



## The originality of the Masonic method

- To accept the diversity of opinions
- To privilege the natural empathy between humans
- To put forward the necessary ethics which must guide our actions
- To think in the dimension of the Universal
- Always live in humility.



# Violence in the mythologies used in Freemasonry



**In Freemasonry, several mythologies and symbolic traditions are used in the various rituals. Some of them involve the use of violence.**

**Egyptian mythology:** the myth of Osiris: his murder by Set and resurrection by Isis symbolize death and initiatory rebirth.

**Related to Greco-Roman mythology: Dionysus and the Eleusis Mysteries**

Norse and Celtic mythology: Odin and Yggdrasil: Odin, god of knowledge, who sacrifices himself to acquire knowledge, is sometimes compared to Hiram Abiff.

**Related to biblical mythology**

**Hiram Abiff:** This legendary figure, architect of Solomon's Temple, is a key element of the Masonic rite. His murder and symbolic resurrection represent the transmission of secrets and spiritual rebirth.

**The Crusades and the chivalric myth:** the glorification of violence and vengeance can be found in Christian Masonic rites.

**Related to alchemical and Hermetic mythology**

**The transformation of lead into gold** is a metaphor for spiritual perfection.

**The myth of initiation,** which appeared long before the Judeo-Christian period, uses violence as a condition of access to initiation.

**Freemasonry speaks of the symbolic death of the profane.**

The Hiram myth is simply a reformulation of this use of violence.

A symbolic content that can be problematic: the valorization of the Crusades and the strength of the knights!

In the content of certain Masonic rituals (in particular the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite), the emphasis on the Templar myth seems anachronistic, to say the least, if we refer to the history of the Crusades!



# Preventing destructive violence! What to do?

By Mateo Simoita

Of all forms of violence, destructive violence is the most dangerous, whether on an individual or collective level.

For example, on an individual level, this could mean being put under influence (pedophilia, sexual violence, submission, etc.), and on a collective level, fascist dictatorships, mafia violence or civil wars.

Preventing destructive violence naturally requires a comprehensive, multifactorial approach, taking into account individual, family, community and societal aspects.

The aim of this article is to reiterate a certain logic.

## **The role of education is of course fundamental in avoiding exposure to destructive violence wherever possible.**

- Ensuring a caring, violence-free family environment
- If parental violence exists or threatens to deve-

lop, safeguard the children by separating the parental couple,

- If possible, offer children the support of caring grandparents.
- Report any domestic violence to social and administrative structures.
- Teach children the rules of interpersonal relationships and their limits (cf. transactional analysis).
- Encourage the existence of an adult resource (aunt or uncle culture).
- Identify risk-taking temperaments and use specialized support to create an opportunity for reassurance.

## **In interpersonal situations**

- Introduce a "Zero Violence" contract; if this contract is not respected, separation must be immediate!
- Avoid putting yourself in situations of economic or emotional dependence.

## Effective Strategies to Prevent Workplace Violence

- Establish a Comprehensive Policy
- Provide Education on Recognizing Signs
- Utilize Surveillance Systems
- Encourage Reporting of Concerns
- Foster Open Communication Channels
- Implement Conflict Resolution Mechanisms
- Establish Partnerships with Local LEA
- Seek Employee Feedback



Sources :  
<https://www.canadasafetytraining.com/>

- In the event of economic or emotional dependence, do everything possible to regain autonomy.
- Refuse emotional blackmail!
- Build and nurture a friendly, supportive network.
- Identify risk situations and anticipate precautionary measures.

### **For collective situations**

- Analyze the structure of the group to which you belong and look for collective goodwill,
- If a dominant-leader cult emerges, leave the group if possible or distance yourself from it,
- Prefer dialogue to sectarian dynamics.
- If you belong to the dominant sub-group, cultivate non-clan relationships.
- Identify high-risk situations (social injustice, discrimination, etc.)
- In the event of an emerging conflict, opt for a compromise that respects both parties.

### **In the event of unjustified institutional violence**

- Favoring subliminal collective awareness
- Refuses to use violence,
- If possible, use legal recourse.

### **Other measures to prevent destructive urban violence**

Improving socio-economic conditions

Fighting poverty, unemployment and inequality, which are major factors in violence.

Invest in safe urban planning (lighting, well-maintained public spaces, ghetto reduction) to reduce urban crime.



Provide psychological support for at-risk children (aggressive, hyperactive, isolated).

Reforming the prison system - a school for crime

Providing caring support for young people in difficulty

Encourage non-competitive sports, artistic activities and mentoring programs.

Reduce the influence of gangs by offering positive alternatives to young people in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Rehabilitating perpetrators of violence

Work on the psychological resilience of violent people to break the cycle of aggression.

Set up victim support centers, including psychological and legal support.

Strengthen the fight against domestic violence by improving care for vulnerable people.

Raise awareness of the effects of violent media (video games, social networks, films) on aggressive behavior, and allow access restrictions.

Encourage educational content and campaigns against the trivialization of violence.

Strengthen legislation on carrying and access to weapons to limit serious violence.

Promote international initiatives to prevent armed conflict.

Promoting a culture of peace and training in fraternity.

Develop intercultural dialogue programs to avoid community tensions.

Discourage access to the black economy.

Matéo Simoita

# Ecology and Freemasonry in the modern world

by Giorgos Boussoutas Thanassoulas

*As Director of Publication, I am truly honored that the Brother Giorgos Boussoutas Thanassoulas has agreed to contribute to our Line Infos magazine.*

*Alain Breant*

There are many issues that concern modern society, especially that of Western countries. One of these, for me and for many others, the most important and the one that cannot be ignored for any reason, is that which concerns the Environment and the existence of the Human in it.

In the twentieth century, many human activities took place whose impact has a direct effect on the Environment. Nuclear tests on the Earth's surface, the development of industry and the increase in consumption, the decrease in free land and the increase in its use for the needs of the economy, and the application in agricultural production of methods and technologies that bypass the natural process, are some of the reasons that have contributed to the awareness of a problem, which is not new, which is directly related to the survival of the human species.

In recent years, modern human has begun to worry about the impacts of his activities on the Environment, and various movements and activist groups are making demands regarding its protection from human actions.

Civil society is gradually including in its interests the changes in the Environment and the effects of these changes on Humans.

Masonry is part of civil society and therefore must be interested in the place of Human in the new World that is being created and in the new



Sources : <https://www.thesquaremagazine.com/>

environmental conditions that arise.

In this article we will examine the way in which modern Freemasonry has included, or not, the environmental concerns in its Rituals and its interests.

**A first general question, therefore, is whether Freemasonry, as a system of ethics for Humans, has included the Environment and its problems in its interests by proposing some "rules" of behavior?**

It is true that I am a Freemason in a country located on the periphery of Europe and therefore I do not have full knowledge of what is happening in the Masonic systems throughout the World. The relevant information comes from personal

relationships that have developed during my personal Masonic journey and cannot be characterized as the most reliable.

From this information, however, I have formed the opinion that at the level of Grand Lodges, there is no one who has integrated the Environment and the problems it faces into its actions. They have not even informed their members about the impacts of human activities on the Environment. Today, at the beginning of the 21st century, charitable actions continue to be the main Masonic activity. However, I know that some individual masons and perhaps some lodges are concerned about the Environment and the Ecological problem, but they are isolated and uncoordinated in their initiatives.

**Another important point is that the ecological problem and the attitude of the Human-Mason towards it is not mentioned in the Rituals of the masonic degrees.**

We could justify its absence due to the fact that the Rituals were written, in most cases, before the middle of the previous century when the ecological problem was not so acute. However, the Rituals are changing and modernizing to meet current needs. Should the ecological problem and the attitude of the Human - Mason towards it be one of the elements of their modernization?

**Therefore, to the question of whether tectonics should begin to be interested in Ecology and human actions that have an impact on the Environment, the answer cannot be other than an affirmative one.**

The Ecological Problem tends to become number one in the issue of the survival of Humanity itself. Masons are part of it and therefore it is necessary for them to be involved in it. Freemasonry is a "system of Ethics", at least in the Emulation Rite which I serve. As a "system of Ethics", it proposes a way of life. This way of life, in order to be modern and attractive to the Human of the 21st century and the issues that concern

him, must necessarily include exhortations to protect and care for the Environment.

There are many ways that the interest and the initial concern can create proposals for a life in harmony with Nature that subsequently, will lead Masons to address the ecological issue.

**The organization of information and reflection events by masonic lodges with the participation of scientists, who may not be their members but who know the subject in depth, is a good start.**

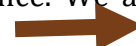
In Greece, for example, in the masonic lodges, after each meeting, a Dinner follows, in which all the Brothers participate and is a continuation of the masonic meeting. In this, after the meal, a chaired discussion takes place, where opinions and reflections are exchanged on the topic presented by a brother during the meeting. In such a meeting, the topic to be discussed may be the Environment and the impact of Human on it.

**The Environment and the problems of Human survival in it can be part of the social actions of the Grand Lodges.**

Supporting, financially and morally, groups and movements to address the Ecological Problem is a form of action. Another form is to encourage members of the Lodges to participate in environmental awareness and protection actions at a local or national level.

Regardless of any collective actions, I think what is important is the stance of each mason on this issue. Awareness of the problems caused by our daily actions on the Environment and finding ways to help protect it are necessary. If we think about it more carefully, we will identify many of our actions that negatively affect it.

We must all realize that the planet will exist without us, if the environment in which we will live is inhospitable to human existence. We as



humans have the problem of survival, not the planet.

**In conclusion, the ecological problem, in my opinion, requires a collective approach and its solution should not be assigned to a single person or group of people, no matter how knowledgeable they may be.**

The changes that need to be made in our behavior need to be very radical. This is even more true of Freemasonry and its exhortations. This, of course, presupposes a radical change in current masonic rituals and their modernization, without, of course, abandoning the main characteristics of the institution. I have referred to this issue in many of my articles and also in my book *Post-Masonry – Masonry in the 21st Century*, which was published in 2018, unfortunately only in Greek. However, you can download it for free from my website [www.boussoutas.gr](http://www.boussoutas.gr) and read it in your language with a translation tool.

As I mentioned before, the Masonic Ritual which I serve is that of Emulation Rite. In this, the ethics proposed are influenced by Protestantism and the development of Human through his labor and his economic and social evolution. Such an ethic that does not take into account the impact of the any development on the Environment cannot contribute to its protection. I'm not suggesting a very radical ecological models of de-development, which I could support, but I think placing its protection in individual and collective action is necessary.

Providing information and action on ecological issues, both at the local and national level, is another proposal. Information and awareness are important for any environmental action, especially today when two wars are being waged using weapons, which not only have impacts on the Environment, but these impacts are particularly devastating. Also, masons who may have duties in local, regional or national government

administrations should promote programs related to its protection.

However, as I have already mentioned, the effort to develop environmental action programs must be collective and coordinated in order to be effective. Actions for Ecology in general could be carried out with the participation of members from different tectonic Grand Lodges in the same country, overcoming "regularity" and "mutual recognition". Such initiatives will contribute to the creation of a true masonic fraternity that will include all masons, men and women, so that the vision of many members to see the masonic fraternity united and away from political masonic expediency that only concerns the leaders can be realized. The effort to protect Human from climatise change and the impacts of his activity on the Environment concerns every thinking person and much more so the mason, because he wants to believe that he is the model of Human who will build the Temple of Humanity. In order for the Temple to be built, planet Earth needs to be hospitable for the Human and his activities.

Giorgos Boussoutas Thanassoulas



Editor's note : George Boussoutas Thanasoulas holds a Master's Degree in Public History, and Modern Greek History.

He has written five books and four monographs. His texts have been included in collective volumes and articles published in various journals.

George is a Past W. Master of Attikos Astir Lodge Nr. 139 of the Grand Lodge of Greece, Past President of the Council of General Affairs of the National Grand Lodge of Greece and Past W. Master of the Research Lodge of Isis Nr. 9 of the National Grand Lodge of Greece.

(Sources : Square Magazine)



# The Rebellion of the Oligarchs

by Milton Arrieta-López

The French Revolution, that lightning bolt that tore through the darkness of absolutism, was more than just a bourgeois revolt—it was the eruption of the people against despotism. History has often tried to frame it as an insurrection of merchants and intellectuals against the feudal nobility, but its truth is far deeper, more volcanic. It was also the rage of the hungry, the worker, the peasant burdened by feudal taxes, the woman who watched her children die in misery while the monarchy squandered fortunes on palaces and banquets.

And in this whirlwind of change, Freemasonry played a key role as an intellectual vanguard. Lodges like Les Sciences, founded by Claude Adrien Helvétius, or Les Neuf Sœurs, founded by Joseph Jérôme Lefrançois de Lalande under the auspices of the Grand Orient de France, became beacons of Enlightenment ideas. In their meetings, Benjamin Franklin, Mirabeau, Desmoulins, and Voltaire sealed their alliance with the architects of a new era—the encyclopedia for the people, light for the people. Was it not fraternity that ignited the lights of the century? Liberty, equality, and fraternity were not abstractions—they were principles sealed with the blood of those who took the revolution to the streets, the squares, and the guillotine.

But time, in its irony, has reversed the roles. If in the 18th century the bourgeoisie fought against monarchical absolutism alongside the people, today, its deformed successor—the oligarchs—



have decided to rebel... against the people.

They do not wear tricorne hats or wield muskets, but their revolution is relentless. They no longer confront kings, for they have understood that true power is not the crown, but dominion over economies, institutions, and public opinion. They have no need for lodges—why would they? Why dream of enlightened republics? They now conspire openly in economic forums, corporate summits, and opaque multinational boardrooms.

The richest 1% of the planet controls nearly 46% of global wealth, according to Oxfam's 2023 report. Meanwhile, half of humanity survives on just 1.5% of global resources. This concentration of power is so extreme that, between 2020 and 2023, the wealthiest 1% absorbed 63% of all newly generated wealth. Billionaires have seen their fortunes multiply amid a global



crisis and during the pandemic. But they are not content with being obscenely rich. They want more. They want it all.

## Against the Fraternity of Peoples

The most alarming aspect of this new oligarchic insurrection is that its enemy is no longer a king, but the very fraternity between nations. The more fragmented societies become, the more defenseless citizens are against the advance of monopolies and multinational corporations.

Europe is the clearest example. The European Union, a project born from the ruins of two world wars, was conceived to guarantee peace through integration and cooperation. It is not an empire that imposes its rule by force—it is the materialization of a revolutionary idea: union as a guarantee of stability and prosperity. But today, it has been weakened from within and without. Exacerbated nationalism, hate speech amplified by algorithms, systematic attacks on democratic institutions—all seem to respond to a perverse strategy: divide the peoples to rule them more easily.

"Divide et impera" is a Latin phrase that means "divide and conquer." It refers to the ancient political and military strategy used to maintain control over a territory or group of people by fragmenting their forces, sowing internal discord, and preventing them from uniting against a common enemy.

Today's world bears an unsettling resemblance to the liquid modernity described by Zygmunt Bauman: everything dissolves, nothing is permanent, values and institutions melt like wax in the fire of media chaos. Constitutions, once the shields of civilization, are proving insufficient against the power of data, algorithms, and disinformation. Lies spread like truth, while truths fade into the digital fog of fake news.

What will happen to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen? What will become of the Universal Declaration of Human



Rights when states weaken to the point of becoming mere puppets of global capital? If rights only exist when there is a power capable of guaranteeing them, then what will remain when that power has been usurped by a handful of plutocrats wielding the banner of total capital?

For centuries, constitutions have been the pillars upon which modern democracies were built, establishing limits on power and guaranteeing fundamental rights. However, today, their ability to protect those rights has been eroded—not due to a lack of legitimacy, but because real power no longer resides in states. Instead, it lies in transnational private structures that operate beyond any constitutional framework.

## [Read more](#)

Milton Arrieta-López

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# A call for Peace

by David Henry

**Wars and armed conflicts have brought nothing but death, misfortune and misery; they are often born of little things and the lack of dialogue between Nations and Peoples.**

Territorial quarrels, in particular, have bloodied history.

Peace, on the other hand, is a situation of stability and harmony in relations between nations, based on five concepts:

- Benevolence ;
- Ongoing dialogue ;
- The search for negotiated solutions instead of armed violence;
- The search for external mediators to support a negotiated solution;
- Refusal to use armed violence to assert domination or territorial claims.

Peace has brought understanding between nations and peoples, stability and prosperity. It is one of mankind's most precious and fundamental assets, on a par with freedom.

At the present time, the world is in dire need of reconciliation.

Humanity, with Beethoven, Mozart, Shakespeare, Socrates, Leibniz, Gandhi, Einstein, Molière and Charlie Chaplin, to name but a few, deserves better than these incessant cycles of violence and hatred.

We are all interdependent and, more recently, interconnected. In the age of the Internet, Peoples and Nations can communicate directly, continuously and instantaneously, and take the time, through dialogue, to resolve their differences. They should even start sending each other flowers, and exchanging compliments on



the basis of their Virtues and Merits! But we're not there yet.

They should finally find their joy and sense of humor!

The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights is just 5 pages long. Wouldn't it be possible to design a similar document, this time detailing Guiding Principles for a Universal Declaration of Peace?

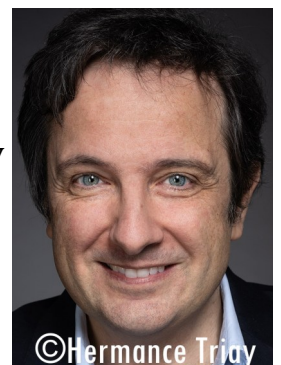
With the support of the FIL Association, a group of friends has drawn up a Charter entitled "Guiding Principles of a Universal Declaration of Peace".

for the moment, but the document, if we work on it, will remain one of our founding texts.

We call on all those of good will to come and contribute to this project, in order to free mankind once and for all from the scourges of war and hatred.

For the committee behind this appeal for peace

David Henry



# Ubuntu and the Search for Peace in a Masonic Key

by Margarita ROJAS BLANCO

The construction of a just and perfect peace is the result of collective efforts, involving the harmonious work of hundreds of thousands of people, each with their own filters through which they measure, evaluate, and judge the world around them. This is why it is such a complex task. In Freemasonry, we undertake this effort as a hive-like work, just and perfect, which closely resembles the global ethical rule known as Ubuntu.

The concept first emerged in South Africa, focusing on loyalty and human relationships. The word itself comes from the Zulu and Xhosa languages, where it refers to an attitude prevalent among the native peoples of the southernmost regions of Africa. It derives from the popular saying: "umuntu, ngumuntu, ngabantu", which means "a person is a person because of others."

Bringing this idea to our Order, it implies that Freemasons have both the duty and, above all, the right to use our tools—our square and compasses—to build a just and perfect peace, because any one Mason is all Masons. We are Masons because others recognize us as such.

It is common for us to use the expression "just and perfect" in our lodge work to indicate, for instance, that all required conditions were met during a ritual. If we analyze the phrase, we must begin by defining each word. "Just" refers to moral principles that seek to act with full respect for the truth, giving each their due. "Perfect" means something possesses all the necessary or desirable qualities, regardless of whether we speak of something morally good or bad.

We can thus say that something is just and perfect depending on how a group of people interprets these two words. And this is where the



truly interesting part begins: a group of people is all people. It includes those who compose it, those who surround them, those who have passed through their lives, those who have meant something to them, those they have loved and those they have hated, their moral, professional, and ethical role models, the historical figures they admire, and the examples they follow. This is why I am all.

In this sense, "just and perfect" can have very different meanings for two individuals.

When speaking of peace, most people generally agree on its meaning: we can correctly define it as the absence of war. There is little debate on this point, and irenologists can confirm it. The challenge arises when we discuss "peacebuilding," because pontificating speeches can be beautifully crafted with time and patience, but putting them into practice requires the work of the builder, the most difficult task of all.

Desmond Tutu said:

*"A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, supports others, and does not feel threatened when others are capable and excel at something, because they are secure in themselves. They know they belong to a greater whole and are diminished when others are humiliated or demeaned, when others are tortured or oppressed."*

A builder makes calculations in his mind, writes formulas on paper, lists the necessary materials,

and heads to the hardware store to purchase them. All builders have measuring tools—a measuring tape, a caliper, a level, a plumb bob, a spatula, and many more tools, including screwdrivers, wrenches, chisels, shovels, hammers, wheelbarrows...

Once he has gathered the tools and materials for the construction, he proceeds with the execution of the work, alongside a team composed of laborers, officers, and master builders who must agree on a shared plan to carry out a good construction. Master builders often warn that while erecting the structure may take a month, finishing the details can take almost twice as long. We thus see that for a work to be just and perfect, many factors must come into play.

The construction of peace follows a similar process. Studies on armed conflicts throughout history show that after a peace agreement is signed, a period of stabilization is necessary. This phase involves both physical reconstruction (infrastructure) and psychological reconstruction (social fabric) of the affected nation.

This means rebuilding cities, roads, hospitals, schools, parks, and providing psychological treatment for the conflict's victims and for society as a whole, since people must be taught how to live in peace—a remarkably complex endeavor. This process can take up to 30 years, depending on the country's economy and the political will of its leaders.

Once all these factors are in place, the consolidation phase of peace begins. In this stage, the community finds that its basic needs are met—health, food, education, housing, employment, and recreation, all available with fair access. It is then that peace has the right environment to take root. History tells us that achieving a just and perfect peace can take around 50 more years.

And here arises the central challenge: What is "just and perfect" for each person? We are talking about the basics. To cite just one example, Colombia has 9,625,203 registered victims in its



National Victims' Registry—a painful statistic that is lived with but rarely seen. At the same time, Colombia has built one of the most comprehensive peace agreements ever signed in the world.

## [Read more](#)

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