

REPORTS FROM THE ACADEMY

The Seville Declaration: Anthropology's Auto-da-Fé

Robin Fox

In 1986, during the business meeting of the American Anthropological Association's annual conference, a proposal was made that the "Seville Declaration on Violence" be adopted as the Association's "official policy." It was evidently adopted *nem. con.* At various times in the past the agents of righteousness had passed other "resolutions" of a roughly similar type, including condemnations of various heresies and heretics. Thus Derek Freeman and his publisher (the Harvard University Press, of all people) had gotten the treatment for daring to criticize Margaret Mead and the official party line of cultural determinism, and "sociobiology" had been given an attempted going over. I, and many other members of the association, in disgust at these exercises, or out of indifference, had stopped going to the "business meetings." As is the Association's rule, however, the matter was eventually put to a mail ballot for confirmation.

Before this happened, news not only of the declaration itself, but of the "Seville Declaration Network" began to percolate. *Vogue* ran a column on the network, explaining that it was run by one David Adams of Wesleyan University, and was "promoting the adoption" of the declaration. If adopted by enough concerned bodies, *Vogue* concluded, the declaration would not necessarily stop wars, but would "give us one less excuse for having them." The offending "excuse," it seemed, was that we were innately aggressive and that this innate aggression made war inevitable.

In a further development, no doubt prompted by the network, the *Human Ethology Newsletter* (Vol. 5:2, June 1987) contained a copy of the text. It also carried a critical commentary by Joseph Manson and Richard Wrangham (University of Michigan) and a reply by Robert Hinde (University of Cambridge), one of the signatories—of which more later.

To be fully fair here, let us print the document in question exactly as given in the newsletter. It evidently derived from a meeting of luminaries in Seville (Spain) on May 16, 1986 which was "supported by Spanish UNESCO" and is designed to appear in the volume of papers from the conference (which I have

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not seen): *Essays on Violence*, Ramirez, Hinde and Groebel (eds.). The "Seville Declaration Network" is a group of activists whose goal is to get publicity for the declaration, but especially to engineer its "adoption" as the "official policy" by learned and scientific societies. The document is evidently "proposed for adoption by UNESCO," and indeed this may well have happened by now.

Here it is:

Statement on Violence

Believing that it is our responsibility to address from particular disciplines the most dangerous and destructive activities of our species, violence and war; recognizing that science is a human cultural product which cannot be definitive or all-encompassing; and gratefully acknowledging the support of the authorities of Seville and representatives of the Spanish UNESCO; we, the undersigned scholars from around the world and from relevant sciences, have met and arrived at the following Statement on Violence. In it, we challenge a number of alleged biological findings that have been used even by some in our disciplines, to justify violence and war. Because the alleged findings have contributed to an atmosphere of pessimism in our time, we submit that the open, considered rejection of these mis-statements can contribute significantly to the International Year of Peace.

Misuse of scientific theories and data to justify violence and war is not new but has been made since the advent of modern science. For example, the theory of evolution has been used not only to justify war, but also genocide, colonialism, and suppression of the weak.

We state our position in the form of five propositions. We are aware that there are many other issues about violence and war that could be fruitfully addressed from the standpoint of our disciplines, but we restrict ourselves here to what we consider a most important step.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that we have inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors. Although fighting occurs widely throughout animal species, only a few cases of destructive intraspecies fighting between organized groups have ever been reported among naturally living species, and none of these involve the use tools designed to be weapons. Normal predatory feeding upon other species cannot be equated with intra-species violence. Warfare is a peculiarly human phenomenon and does not occur in other animals.

The fact that warfare has changed so radically over time indicates that it is a product of culture. Its biological connection is primarily through language which makes possible the coordination of groups, the transmission of technology, and the use of tools. War is biologically possible, but it is not inevitable, as evidenced by its variation in occurrence and nature over time and space. There are cultures which have not engaged in war for centuries, and there are cultures which have engaged in war frequently at some times and not at others.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say the war or any other violent behavior is genetically programmed into our human nature. While genes are involved at all levels of nervous system function, they provide a developmental potential that can be actualized only in conjunction with the ecological and social environment. While individuals vary in their predispositions to be affected by their experience, it is the interaction between their genetic endowment and conditions of nurturance that determines their personalities. Except for rare pathologies the genes do not produce individuals necessarily predisposed to violence. Neither do they determine the opposite. While genes are co-involved in establishing our behavioral capacities, they do not by themselves specify the outcome.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behavior more than for other kinds of behavior. In all well-studied species, status within the group is achieved by the ability to cooperate and to fulfill social functions relevant to the structure of that group. "Dominance" involves social bondings and affiliations; it is not simply a matter of the possession and use of

superior physical power, although it does involve aggressive behaviors. Where genetic selection for aggressive behavior has been artificially instituted in animals, it has rapidly succeeded in producing hyperaggressive individuals; this indicates that aggression was not maximally selected under natural conditions. When such experimentally-created hyperaggressive animals are present in a social group, they either disrupt its social structure or are driven out. Violence is neither in our evolutionary legacy nor in our genes.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that humans have a "violent brain." While we do have the neural apparatus to act violently, it is not automatically activated by internal or external stimuli. Like higher primates and unlike other animals, our higher neural processes filter such stimuli before they can be acted upon. How we act is shaped by how we have been conditioned and socialized. There is nothing in our neurophysiology that compels us to react violently.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that war is caused by "instinct" or any other single motivation. The emergence of modern warfare has been a journey from the primacy of emotional and motivational factors, sometimes called "instincts," to the primacy of cognitive factors. Modern war involves institutional use of personal characteristics such as obedience, suggestibility, and idealism, social skills such as language, and rational considerations such as cost-calculation, planning and information processing. The technology of modern war has exaggerated traits associated with violence both in the training of actual combatants and in the preparation of support for war in the general population. As a result of this exaggeration, such traits are often mistaken to be the causes rather than the consequences of the products.

We conclude that biology does not condemn humanity to war, and that humanity can be freed from the bondage of biological pessimism and empowered with confidence to undertake the transformative tasks needed in this International Year of Peace and in the years to come. Although these tasks are mainly institutional and collective, they also rest upon the consciousness of individual participants for whom pessimism and optimism are crucial factors. Just as "wars begin in the minds of men," peace also begins in our minds. The same species who invented war is capable of inventing peace. The responsibility lies with each of us.

Seville, Spain, May 16, 1986

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The document was signed by some Western savants whose scientific eminence is not in question. It was also signed by people from behind the Iron Curtain. One knows that it is usually hard to get such ideological agreement, so this was a curiosity at least. It also seemed that many who would have had something to contribute—for example myself and many who think like me and work in similar areas related to the study of violence—were never invited in the first place. It began to look awfully like a stacked deck—and the equal unease felt by leading researchers such as Wrangham and Manson showed that there were others who had a strange feeling of being railroaded.

However, the “network” was squirreling away, and by now the American Anthropological Association was putting the issue to a mail ballot. The only “text” sent out with the ballot was the five “It is scientifically incorrect . . .” pronouncements. Approximately 8,500 ballots were sent; only about 2,200 were returned. Predictably, 1,699 voted in favor, 230 against; the rest must have been abstentions. Before the results came out, I decided to make some protest. I felt that the *nem. con.* vote at the business meeting should not go unchallenged lest people out there in the world should think that it represented the views of all anthropologists. So I wrote the following letter to *Anthropology Newsletter* (Vol. 28, No. 8, 1987) the monthly house organ of the association. They added the title:

Murmur of Dissent

It disturbs me that the “Seville Declaration on Violence” might become official AAA policy without anyone offering a murmur of dissent. It is not that *one cannot readily agree* with the rather obvious propositions. Indeed, it is a little like being asked to vote in favor of mom and apple pie. But this exercise in self-righteous piety, while leaving its sponsors with a warm glow of moral superiority, does nothing to advance our understanding of the dilemma of human violence. What is more, it raises false hope in suggesting that a condemnation of such simplistic notions as “innate aggression causes war” will remove “pessimism” and therefore lead to peace on earth. It isn’t pessimism that threatens peace but fanaticism—even the sober considered kind exemplified by this document. To me, at least, the prospect of being at the mercy of human intelligence and culture, given its record, is far more frightening than being at the mercy of “aggressive instincts,” which I think I understand and can handle.

I certainly do not believe that such instincts “cause” war. (See “The Violent Imagination,” in P. Marsh and A. Campbell, eds., *Aggression and Violence*, Basil Blackwell, 1982.) But I believe they exist, and that complementary to them are the equally powerful instincts to ritualize aggression. I also believe that in the “normal circumstances” of our species—that proverbial 99% of our existence in the palaeolithic—these would be in some kind of healthy balance, as they were and are for other aggressive animals. But I also know that this is no longer the case and that what we now have to fear is something far more terrible than simple aggression.

Except for a few pathological cases, aggression is not a basic motive for action; it is a tool of other more frightening motives. What the supporters of this resolutions do not seem to understand is that their own action in drawing up a list of heresies and pushing for their general condemnation tells us more about our dismal prospects for survival than anything they can say about human aggression. Our worst enemy is *fanaticism* (xenophobic or ideological or both) and our capacity for an intelligent *routinization of fanaticism*. Aggres-

sion is merely a handmaiden that can be called into play once the heretics are identified and condemned, ostracized and silenced and eventually tortured and burned. It is ironically appropriate that this document should have originated in that sordid center of the Inquisition, Seville. No, I'm afraid that the absolute "scientific" proof that innate aggression is not the cause of our troubles does nothing to alleviate my pessimism, and this declaration and the thoughtless acceptance of it do a lot to deepen my gloom over the prospects for human survival. The nuclear war they anticipate will certainly not be "caused" by innate aggression, but by mechanisms closer to those that produced this pointless document. It is that that the students of human survival should be considering, not shopworn denunciations of ideas that no one ever really held in the first place. [Reprinted with the permission of the *Anthropology Newsletter*.]

The response was quite remarkable. Clearly a large number of those who did not vote or speak up at the business meeting were nevertheless as disturbed as I was, but—and now we come to the sinister aspect of this whole affair—*they confessed that they were afraid to voice objections*. In fact, an entire distinguished department voted in support of my letter and condemned the declaration, but this was never made public. The reason for this is, as my reply indicates, that it is hard to disagree with the propositions baldly stated, however much one may dislike bald assertion or the antiscientific manner of it. But most of the fear expressed was of offending their "morally committed colleagues" (an actual statement from a letter). No one wished to appear "antipeace" or "pro-sociobiology" or "antirelativist" or whatever. The "good people" had claimed the moral high-ground here, and managed to make any opposition look like advocacy of nuclear war.¹

But a surprising number of people (certainly more than the 230 who voted) were obviously disturbed by the dogmatic, assertive tone of the declaration, and its sinister claim to know who the heretics were without naming them (shades of McCarthy). They were especially unsettled by its arrogant insistence that scientific disputes could be determined by majority votes of institutional memberships, or even in the columns of *Vogue*. In a subsequent issue of the *Anthropology Newsletter* (February 1988), Walter P. Zenner of S.U.N.Y./Albany wrote (again their title):

Making Scholarly Decisions

I am sure that the over 80% of AAA members who voted to endorse the Seville Statement on Violence did so out of a sincere belief that they were taking a step toward the elimination of war and other forms of aggressive behavior and toward disabusing the public of erroneous and unscientific explanations of such phenomena. Unfortunately, this accusation was taken without a thorough public debate, and thus it constitutes a ritual of good intentions.

What offended me in the Seville statement was its dogmatic tone and its assumption that we have sufficient knowledge to state a correct scientific position. It also distresses me that 80% of my colleagues act as if scholarly decisions can be made by legislation and resolutions rather than through research, open debate, and a free, not majoritarian, consensus.

We also are biased in favor of environmentalist positions and tend to reject any hint that human beings may have tendencies toward risk taking, aggression, violence or

sadomasochism, despite that fact that we are, as Doris Lessing suggested, "children of violence." We must explain these phenomena, not shove plausible explanations, however unpalatable to our utopian tastes, under the rug. While we clearly remember the evils of racism, whether Nazi, North American or South African, we forget the atrocities committed under the banner of radical environmentalism by Stalin, Lysenko and others. We must remember that in this century, the road to hell has literally been paved with good intentions. [Reprinted with the permission of the *Anthropology Newsletter*.]

The motive for all this declamation and heresy hunting did not become clear until the *Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation Newsletter* asked to reprint my letter and solicit a reply from the network's spokesman, David Adams. (For twelve years I was a director of research for the foundation, which is devoted to the study of violence and aggression, so it seemed appropriate.) They printed my letter,² but Adams grandly refused to reply, referring them instead to his original paper at the Seville conference. They printed a précis of it as follows:

126 college students answered questions (and 114 completed follow-up questionnaires a month later) regarding the attitudes to peace activity, beliefs concerning human nature and war, feelings of anger about the arms race, and normative attitudes about peace activity of family, friends, and school. 40% of the students answered "very much" or "somewhat" to the question "Do you believe that war is intrinsic to human nature?" 40% agreed that "there is a war instinct" and 33% that "wars are inevitable because human beings are naturally aggressive." The researchers then examined the history of "peace activity" by students holding these views.

As predicted, beliefs about human nature and war proved to be significant correlates of peace activity . . .

These results support the need for a worldwide educational campaign to dispel the myth that war is instinctive, intrinsic to human nature, or unavoidable because of an alleged biological bias. As shown by the result obtained here, such a myth is widespread and constitutes an important obstacle that interferes with the development of activity for peace

The data obtained in this study are consistent with similar results obtained in Finland and in a pilot study . . . in the U.S. In all three studies it was found that a student is more likely to believe that he or she can do something about nuclear war if he or she believes that war is not intrinsic to human nature.

Since this was evidently the inspiration for the declaration, let us start with it and return to the declaration later. The problem with this survey of the "attitudes" of 126 students is the problem with all such studies: garbage in, garbage out. Just a look at the nature of the questions shows how loaded a deck was being dealt. Adams probably got the answers he did because he asked his questions in the context of a barrage of inquiries about "peace activities." What's more, we really have no idea why students answered "yes" to these questions. It could have been, for example, on the basis of their deeply held religious beliefs about original sin and the fall of man. In contrast, it is rather doubtful that their replies were the result of reading abstruse papers on the nature of aggression by neuroscientists. Indeed, Adams fails to make any connection between aggression research that claims to show we have an innate

aggressive instinct (and that aggression is therefore inevitable) and the beliefs of these 126 students. Even if the declaration succeeds in its inquisitorial aim of silencing such research (however much people like Hinde may deny this is the aim) this does not mean that the “myth” will be silenced or that the majority of people will then take up “peace activities” on a large scale. Millions of people have, after all, held such beliefs for thousands of years in the absence of any research on aggression. If, as I believe, it is far more likely that religious conservatism has prompted these answers, a more plausible explanation is readily at hand. Religious conservatives are, after all, not noted for their fondness for “peace activities” if this means participating in left-liberal, or even worse, radical marches, protests, and demonstrations.

And what would Adams do if these people told him that they prayed daily for peace, because only God’s intervention can save us from the consequences of our innate depravity? One can perhaps be forgiven for assuming that he wouldn’t count this as a “peace activity.” If he *had* made the religion-pessimism connection, would he then have called for a declaration denouncing religion? Again, we can be forgiven for supposing he wouldn’t have done so, and, if he had, that UNESCO wouldn’t have sponsored it.

Again, what if Adams had gone to countries with Marxist-Leninist educational systems (as opposed to Christian-derived ones), and asked, in the context of questions about the causes of war and peace, “Is war between the imperialist monopoly capitalist countries and the revolutionary proletarian countries inevitable?” He would certainly have got “yes” answers to that impeccable environmentalist-historical position, but precious few of his respondents would have been engaged in “peace activities”—at least as he defines them. What would he then have concluded? That we should have a declaration denouncing the myth of environmentalist causes of war, so that there would be an upsurge in “peace activities” by all the Marxist-Leninist pessimists? Again, one may be excused for entertaining some doubts. If anything like it had occurred, those signatories from behind the Iron Curtain would never have been in Seville to start with. Fortunately, Adams found just the thing to bring them all together under the banner of UNESCO: a heresy hunt in which environmental determinists on both sides of the Curtain could agree. Let’s not, at all costs, look for the real causes of war; let’s condemn instead a few writers and scientists who are easy targets. But let us condemn these writers without naming them, for if we did their small numbers and pitiful influence would belie the need for our elaborate condemnation.

If the foregoing implies a certain cynicism about the role of UNESCO itself, this is not accidental. It has become an article of faith among “peace activists” to believe in UNESCO right or wrong. Those who find in UNESCO a spent idea which because of its internal contradictions cannot do what it overtly claims to be doing, are automatically condemned as reactionaries or whatever the current term of disapprobation happens to be. But anyone who has read, for

example, Peter Lengyel's excellent, honest, and disturbing account³ will be left in no doubt that by its very nature the institution cannot fulfill its functions.

The original UNESCO ideal of a secular humanitarianism, still embodied in its charter, is described by Lengyel as "the last great manifesto of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, a utopian document reflecting fervid belief in the bases of the liberal democracies that had just triumphed over fascism and pinning hopes on reform through education, science and reason" (p. 5). It was in trouble from the start since the Catholic countries opposed it and Julian Huxley, first director general, was forced out. Once the Marxist, Eastern, and Third World countries became active members (if not always steady contributors), the ideological quagmire deepened and the "search for a universalist ideology" was doomed. Hence there was a tendency to find a way of "agreeing on denominators which offended nobody and generalizations so broad that everybody can subscribe to them" (pp. 100-101). This beautifully describes the declaration, and that it should be achieved by scapegoating a few unnamed offenders is well in line with UNESCO tradition, despite what the optimists would like to think.

But back to the declaration itself. While I said in my protest that the issue was not really any disagreement with the propositions to which "everybody can subscribe," it would be well to look at them a little more closely. The first two propositions are more or less the same: we have not inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors; and violence and war are not programmed into human nature. In the first proposition this is "proved" by stating the obvious truth: "that [since] warfare has changed so radically over time . . . it is a product of culture." Thus war is possible, but it is not inevitable, "as evidenced by its variation in occurrence and nature over time and space." Now, though one can subscribe in a general way to the propositions as stated, there is a problem with spelling them out in this way. And this is the issue all along: one can more or less subscribe to the bald statements, but not necessarily to the implications read into them. Thus, for example, the fact that warfare is not a *constant* among all societies at all times does not *prove* that it is "culturally rather than biologically" caused. It merely shows that it varies in its incidence, which is as true for biological as for cultural phenomena. Even if war is indeed culturally rather than biologically "caused," variation in incidence does not prove this. And insisting that it does only deters us from looking at the biological components of war and warlike behavior. "Warfare" among those species that exhibit it (as Manson and Wrangham point out)—species which certainly lack language and culture in the human sense—is not constant either. Part of what those of us interested in aggression study is why, for example, chimpanzees under some conditions live peacefully and at other times practice murderous genocidal and cannibalistic "warfare." We can't attribute this to "culture." These wars do not begin, as the preamble to the UNESCO charter would have it, "in the minds of men." But neither are they the direct expres-

sion of any genetic tendency as far as we can see. Chimpanzees do engage in predation of other species, and it therefore becomes an open question how far this kind of “violence” is related to their intraspecific violence; particularly since chimpanzees often eat the other chimps they kill. At the moment we simply do not understand the exact interplay of innate violent predispositions, ecology, resource competition, mate competition, predation, and territoriality. But the issue can only be decided by careful investigation, not by majority vote.⁴

I have myself put forward a quite elaborate theory of the variation in the incidence of warfare in human history,⁵ so I am quite able to subscribe to the view that it varies over time. One cannot object to this way of putting it. But to conclude that this “proves” it is a “product of culture” with the implication that there are no biological components is unwarranted. The statement itself says that its “biological connection is primarily through language”—which at least admits a biological connection. But why stop there? The complex relationship between selection for successful speaking, successful mating, and successful aggression has to be explored. It was to this that Manson and Wrangham addressed themselves, and Hinde’s reply that no one wanted to stop such research was nothing if not naive in view of the route the Declaration Network has taken.⁶ While we are on this item let us note another grand tautology built into the argument: if warfare is declared in advance to be “uniquely human,” then, since culture is the species-specific behavior of *Homo sapiens*, war is “culturally caused” by definition. But the species-specific behavior of any species is part of its “evolutionary heritage,” again by definition. So the fact that war is culturally caused does not cut us off from an evolutionary (i.e., biological) understanding of it. It is all part of the understanding of the biological basis of culture (i.e., specifically human behavior).

The third of the “scientifically incorrect” heresies is that there has been selection for aggressive behavior *more than* for other kinds of behavior. Well of course. What could “more than” mean here? Has there, for example, been a greater selection for the human “power grip” than for the human “striding walk”? I don’t know what “greater” or “more than” could mean in these contexts. In a certain sense the statement is tautological (and therefore impossible to disagree with). All human attributes have evolved to the same stage—how can some have evolved “more than” others? The rather incoherent justification for this statement, however, is probably no more than a simple recognition that hyperaggressive animals are not likely to succeed well in social groups. I know no one who would deny this. But a careful mix of aggression with the other factors mentioned—status, dominance, social bonding, affiliation, cooperation, and physical power—is certainly, for example, a central part of success in competitive mating situations. It may well be the essential part, in the sense that without it all the other items don’t ensure reproductive success. On the other hand, hyperaggressivity without the leavening of the rest of the

repertoire will rarely, except in some species, have happy results. But to conclude that "Violence is neither in our evolutionary legacy nor in our genes" is to oversimplify violently the very complex interaction of aggression with other factors, that is, after all, implicit in what they are themselves saying.

In some very real sense it *is* in our genetic/evolutionary legacy. If it isn't, how on earth do we and other species come to manifest it so regularly? The complex outcomes of the interactions of our genetic predispositions and our socioecological-cultural environments are not "in our genes," and it is this problem of the expression of genetic material and its incidence that is our prime one, as the authors of the statement seem half to recognize. But they then back off from it with dogmatic and meaningless absolutist statements about what is and is not the case.

The fifth proposition about the "violent brain" is again so banal it is not worth comment. But again, while being nothing but the truth, it is not the whole truth, and hides the fact that a number of individuals in any population have severe impairment of their capacity to "filter" stimuli, and their neurophysiology *does* "compel them to act violently." It only takes a few of these to wreak havoc way out of proportion to their numbers.⁷

As for the final statement that war is not caused by instinct or any single motivation, again one asks, who ever said it was? Where people genuinely disagree is on the balance of forces involved. Some, certainly, would put more stress on the innate components than others. But these are hypotheses open to testing and refutation. And that brings me to my main point.

The point is not whether one or the other of the positions here supposed to exist is *true* or not; the point is that "*it is scientifically incorrect*" to say that position X or Y is true or false—especially on the grounds offered in the declaration. Either position should be stated in a way that leaves it capable of refutation: then it is "scientific" and open to argument. Thus I have quarreled here with the arguments of the declaration, not to prove an alternative view "true" (even if I believe it is) but simply to show that there are valid objections and alternatives that the document arrogantly dismisses as "impossible." This is profoundly antiscientific. The ideal scientific situation—which Karl Popper called the "demarcation criterion"—would be one in which all could agree on a crucial test that would conclusively refute a hypothesis. If, for example, we could agree that chimpanzees do not have a "culture" but do have "war," then we could agree that war does not "begin in the minds of men" and is not "culturally rather than biologically caused." Perhaps one can be forgiven, again, for doubting that we can get such agreement. The declaration, while reluctantly admitting that a few examples of "destructive intraspecies fighting between organized groups" are found in nature (omitting to say that one of these instances involves our closest genetic relatives) throws in the caveat that none of these "involves the use of weapons." If the defining characteristic of "war" then becomes "the use of weapons," that lets the chimps out nicely—with sighs of relief all around.

But the basic objection to the arrogance of the declaration is the same: no positions can be declared “correct” or “incorrect” by fiat. The best we can say is that the preponderance of tested hypotheses so far renders it more or less likely that such a position is correct. But we cannot predict future findings. One dreads to think what would have happened to the sciences if a list of “incorrect” positions had been drawn up in, say, 1910, and subsequent research guided by that list. In fact, many of the worst episodes in the history of science have resulted from just such domination of ideology over research. It is ironic given the dogmatic cultural determinism of the declaration that the best example of this should come not from the “theory of evolution” which they single out (significantly) in their preamble, but, as Zenner pointed out in his letter, from the lunatic environmentalism of Lysenko and its implementation by Stalin.⁸ Do we need to spell that example out? Or the programs of “reform” on the environmentalist model which resulted in the genocide of millions of Kulaks and Ukrainians, and the death, imprisonment, and ruination of many honest scientists?

Let us remember a few names that were sent into oblivion because they were “scientifically incorrect.” Let us remember Vavilov, Levit, Ivanov, Karpchenko, Muller, Dobzhansky, Ephrussi, Sakharov, Zhebrak, Sergeer, Gause and Stern—the list, while finite, is very long. And let us hope that they will never be forgotten, and that their names will haunt the purveyors of absolute scientific “truth” forever. Perhaps if Adams had given his questionnaires to those few opponents of Lysenko’s who survived, he would have received some sobering answers. But he surely would not have gotten UNESCO sponsorship and those brave signatures from behind the Iron Curtain appended to tautological declarations that “everyone can subscribe to.”

In the end this is the nastiest and most sinister aspect of the whole tawdry affair. The declaration’s signatories challenge “a number of alleged biological findings that have been used, even by some in our disciplines, to justify violence and war.” It is against that evil influence of these unnamed disciplines and the unnamed colleagues in them that they boldly take their stand. I know of no one in any discipline who has ever used biological findings to *justify* violence and war. This is an outrageous libel. I know many who have tried to understand the terrible persistence of wars and violence with the help of biological insights. But I know of none who would not willingly put these insights to the service of peace, and who are not convinced that the greater the real insight—as opposed to pie in the sky—the greater the chance of controlling whatever biological factors are involved. I know of many, like myself, who think that simply to deny there are any such factors is a potentially dangerous route to take, and is in effect nothing more than a defense of an untenable environmentalist ideology.

But the declaration actually goes on to accuse us of encouraging war by spreading “pessimism” about the possibility of stopping international conflict. That this is ludicrous is obvious on two scores: first, scientific findings on the

innate components of aggression are very recent, but wars have existed throughout human history; and second, there is no evidence that current “pessimism” about the inevitability of war stems from the biological studies in question. Some of us are certainly pessimistic, but our pessimism stems from the inevitability of human actions like the Seville Declaration on Violence, not from any theories about innate aggression. If wars are indeed “culturally and biologically caused,” given the record of culture, we are in deep trouble.

My message to the signatories remains the same as in my original letter: If you truly wish to prevent World War III, then the way to do it is not to indulge in the activities which, by your own admission, cause wars, to say nothing of the cruelest and most characteristically human forms of lesser violence. If one starts a punch-up in a bar, one does not risk starting a war. Aggression as such has little to do with the starting of wars—a point on which all can agree. But, if one tries to organize the world intellectual community to declare, by the vote of an intimidated majority, that certain testable scientific hypotheses are “incorrect” and what is more, evil and dangerous, then one is well on the way to harnessing aggressive instincts in the service of the inquisition, the pogrom, the witch hunt, the book burning, the stamping out of heresy, and finally, the jihad, the crusade, and the “war to end all wars.”

Wars, as you remind us, begin in the minds of men. And today at least they begin like this: with a commitment to the true faith and a campaign against unbelievers. It was once the hope, yea even of UNESCO, that the values of science would help transcend this very human and very violent tendency. You seem to have forgotten this. UNESCO seems to have forgotten this. The professional organizations that pass these resolutions with such fervor (to which we can now add the American Psychological Association) seem to have forgotten this. Perhaps there *is* an innate tendency in “the minds of men,” a tendency more terrible than aggression, a tendency we are doomed to express and live by and that explains all this passion to lay blame and punish. My letter was impudent enough to suggest that “fanaticism” is such a tendency, and that aggression is merely one of its handmaidens. But one had better not suggest it too loudly without risking the righteous wrath of those who know with absolute certainty what is or is not “scientifically correct”; who, unlike the rest of us struggling with the hard business of finding things out, have a corner on God’s truth. From those who know all the answers, good Lord deliver us.

Notes

1. Two people wrote to the *Newsletter* protesting about my denigration of a “city and a nation” in my reference to Seville. This is puzzling. Do they mean there was no Inquisition; that Seville was not its center; that it was not sordid? No disrespect was meant to Spain or to Seville. But the Spanish Inquisition was a fact, and Seville was its sordid center.
2. *Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation Newsletter*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Fall 1987. *The Human*

Ecology Newsletter, to its credit, printed the whole exchange in Vol. 5, No. 5, p. 4, 1988. While this article was in press, *Psychology Today* (Vol. 22, No. 6, pp. 35-8, 1988) printed an article entitled "Make Love, Not War" by Alfie Kohn, devoted to promoting the views of the declaration by quotes from obvious supporters of the positions and a printing of excerpts from the statement. No contrary views were entertained, and there was no attempt at a critical assessment.

3. Peter Lengyel, *International Social Science: The Unesco Experience* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1986).
4. This is what Hinde fails to grasp in his reply to Manson and Wrangham. The very reasoned and argued nature of his reply in effect belies the nature of the declaration. If the arguments of the declaration are to be countered or supported, then this must follow his model of countering the Manson-Wrangham argument (i.e., through reason and counter evidence, and not by majoritarian "resolutions" passed by bodies the majority of whose members have never engaged in relevant research and do not know the basic published materials, but are following an ideological line.)
5. Robin Fox, "Aggression: Then and Now," in Michael Robinson and Lionel Tiger (eds.) *Man and Beast Revisited* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1989).
6. Hinde does not seem to see that what Wrangham and Manson fear is precisely what he naively denies: that the declaration will have a damaging effect on aggression research if this research does not, in advance, fall into line with the declaration's environmentalist ideology. It could not, for example, hope for much support from UNESCO or the professional bodies which have adopted the resolution.
7. See: Kent G. Bailey, *Human Paleopsychology: Applications to Aggression and Pathological Processes* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1987); V.H. Mark and F.R. Ervin, *Violence and the Brain* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).
8. Julian Huxley, *Soviet Genetics and World Science* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1949); David Joravsky, *The Lysenko Affair* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970); Z.A. Medved, *The Rise and Fall of T. D. Lysenko* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).