

Einstein and Freud's 'Why War?' Revisited: Why Anti-War Efforts Go Nowhere

By [Robert J. Burrowes](#)

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Theme: [History](#)

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*In 1932, **Sigmund Freud** and **Albert Einstein** exchanged letters, later published under the title 'Why War?' See ['Why War? An exchange of letters between Freud and Einstein'](#).*

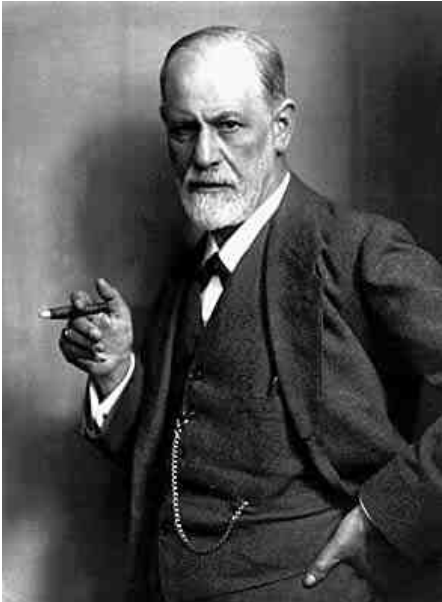
WHY WAR?

AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN
FREUD AND EINSTEIN



However, whatever insight these two giants of an earlier era brought to our understanding of war, the reality is that a great deal has been learned since they corresponded.

Sigmund Freud. Image Right



Nevertheless, since the emergence of an identifiable, organized anti-war movement during World War I which has grown to include a diverse range of activists and organizations from across the political spectrum, as well as peace and conflict resolution scholars from various disciplines, there is little evidence that this movement, or any of the many organizations within it, has been learning from its failures by systematically undertaking or commissioning further research to understand the phenomenon of war more completely and then devising a strategy to end it based on that learning.

Hence, during its existence for more than 100 years, the organized anti-war movement – and the subsequently developed peace movement with its broader agenda – has had minimal impact in preventing or halting particular military conflicts, including wars, and zero impact in ending war generally, as the record testifies.

And so, even today, war continues in several countries in West Asia (the Middle East), Africa, elsewhere and, more recently, in Ukraine with the antiwar movement again demonstrating its ineffectiveness and, in the case of Ukraine, failing to comprehend the deeper agenda behind what is taking place in that country.

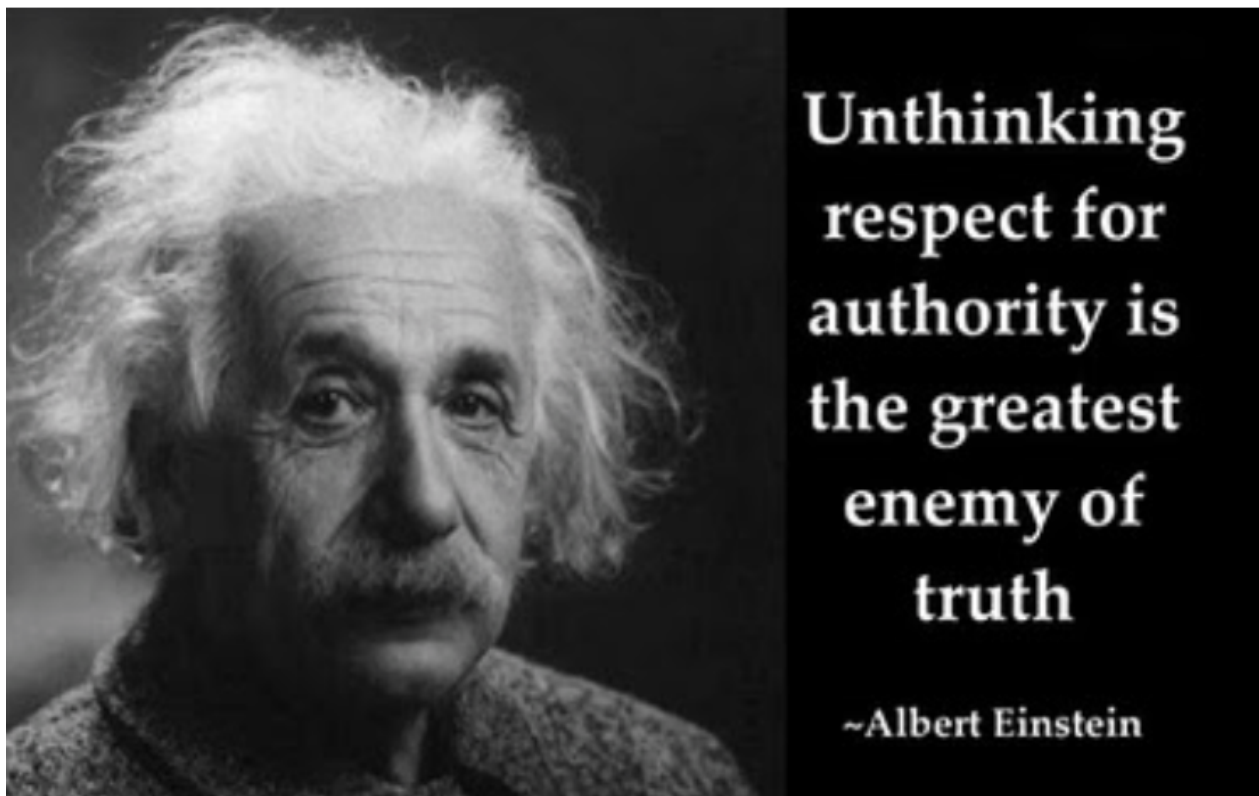
See [‘The War in Ukraine: Understanding and Resisting the Global Elite’s Deeper Agenda’](#).

Of course, while an utterly inadequate analysis of what, fundamentally, is driving war is the critical foundation of the anti-war movement’s problems, it is still just one of the substantial range of problems it faces, some of which derive from this flawed analysis but others which a better analysis would expose. These include, for example, an understanding of why the fear of most of those within the anti-war movement is preventing the movement from mustering the commitment and courage that will be necessary if we are to undertake the many actions necessary to end war. In essence, fear makes most participants in the movement happy to complain about war but not take action themselves (or take action that has zero or minimal impact).

As Daniel Berrigan noted in his 1969 book [No Bars to Manhood](#): ‘the waging of war, by its nature, is total – but the waging of peace, by our own cowardice, is partial.’

This cowardice means that **a large proportion of the anti-war movement contents itself with a range of powerless measures** – usually extending no further than signing petitions, issuing lameduck ideologically-oriented statements, writing articles, organizing

conferences, issuing calls for negotiations or appeals to politicians – all invariably devoid of emotional and geopolitical reality as well as realistic measures to avert/halt the latest war.



This might include advocacy of measures, such as those developed under the guise of international humanitarian law, in relation to ‘outlawing war’ or outlawing particular weapons systems, despite the obvious observation that these legal constraints are routinely violated with impunity by any military power, starting with the United States, or non-state actor that is unconstrained by questions of legality.

Beyond this, ‘action’, when it is taken, is usually confined to conducting (notoriously ineffective) street protests or employing other tactics devoid of strategic impact in the context (of ending war). As former US Secretary of State Alexander Haig once noted about a massive anti-war demonstration: ‘Let them march all they want, as long as they continue to pay their taxes.’ See [Alexander Haig](#). As a four-star general, Haig, not regarded as the most intelligent Secretary of State in US history, certainly understood that tactical choice is a question of strategy. Most activists have no idea.

So if we are to end war as a phenomenon in human affairs, or even meaningfully attempt to prevent or end a particular war, we need to do a number of things. Most fundamentally, we must start with a sound understanding of what causes violence to begin with because war does not emerge from a vacuum. War, when all is considered, is just another manifestation of violence, like everything from violence against women to economic exploitation to environmental destruction.

And if we are not able or willing to investigate and understand what is causing violence, and address this fundamental cause as part of our strategy, then our other efforts to end the manifestations of violence, including war, must all be in vain. Again, as the record readily testifies.

What Causes Violence?

So what is the cause of violence? Here is what 41 years (1966-2007) of concerted effort taught me.

Perpetrators of violence learn their craft in childhood. If you inflict violence on a child, they learn to inflict violence on others. The political leaders who decide to wage war, the military leaders who plan and conduct it, as well as the soldiers, sailors and aircraft personnel who fight war each suffered violence as a child. The terrorist suffered violence as a child. The neo-Nazi suffered violence as a child. The individual who inflicts violence on his (or her) partner suffered violence as a child. The corporate executive who exploits working class people and/or those who live in Africa, Asia or Central/South America suffered violence as a child. The racist or religious bigot suffered violence as a child. The individual who perpetrates violence in the home, in the schoolyard or on the street suffered violence as a child. The individual who overconsumes, or even consumes certain products and/or otherwise destroys the biosphere, suffered violence as a child.

So let me illustrate this point, in a very simplified way, by briefly explaining the parenting experience of a neo-Nazi. This individual has been terrorized by their parents and/or other significant adults in their life into projecting their fear onto particular groups of human beings and into believing that violence is a morally correct and superior way of dealing with these 'different' people. But for a much fuller and more nuanced explanation of this point, see the sections headed 'The Emotional Profile of Archetype Perpetrators of Violence' and 'The Spectrum of the Violent Personality' in ['Why Violence?'](#)

If we want to end violence in all of its manifestations, structural and otherwise, locally and globally, then we must finally end our longest and greatest war: the adult war on children. And here is an additional incentive: if we do not tackle the fundamental cause of violence, then our combined and unrelenting efforts to tackle all of its other symptoms must ultimately fail. And extinction at our own hand - by nuclear war or other means - is inevitable.

How can I claim that violence against children is the fundamental cause of all other violence? Consider this. There is universal acceptance that behaviour is shaped by childhood experience. If it was not, we would not put such effort into education and other efforts to 'socialize' children to 'fit into' their society. And this is why many psychologists have argued that exposure to war toys and violent video games shapes attitudes and behaviours in relation to violence.

But it is far more complex than this and, strange though it may seem, it is not just the 'visible' violence (such as hitting, screaming at and sexually abusing) that we normally label 'violence' that causes the main damage, although this is extremely damaging. The largest component of damage arises from the 'invisible' and 'utterly invisible' violence that we adults unconsciously inflict on children during the ordinary course of the day. Tragically, the bulk of this violence occurs in the family home and at school.

See ['Why Violence?'](#) and

['Fearless Psychology and Fearful Psychology: Principles and Practice'](#).

So what is 'invisible' violence? It is the 'little things' we do every day, partly because we are

just 'too busy'. For example, when we do not allow time to listen to, and value, a child's thoughts and feelings, the child learns to not listen to themSelf thus destroying their internal communication system. When we do not let a child say what they want (or ignore them when they do), the child develops communication and behavioral dysfunctions as they keep trying to meet their own needs (which, as a basic survival strategy, they are genetically programmed to do).

When we blame, condemn, insult, mock, embarrass, shame, humiliate, taunt, goad, guilt-trip, deceive, lie to, bribe, blackmail, moralize with and/or judge a child, we both undermine their sense of Self-worth and teach them to blame, condemn, insult, mock, embarrass, shame, humiliate, taunt, goad, guilt-trip, deceive, lie, bribe, blackmail, moralize and/or judge.

The fundamental outcome of being bombarded throughout their childhood by this 'invisible' violence is that the child is utterly overwhelmed by feelings of fear, pain, anger and sadness (among many others). However, mothers, fathers, teachers, religious figures and other adults also actively interfere with the expression of these feelings and the behavioral responses that are naturally generated by them and it is this 'utterly invisible' violence that explains why the dysfunctional behavioral outcomes actually occur.

For example, by ignoring a child when they express their feelings, by comforting, reassuring or distracting a child when they express their feelings, by laughing at or ridiculing their feelings, by terrorizing a child into not expressing their feelings (for example, by screaming at them when they cry or get angry), and/or by violently controlling a behavior that is generated by their feelings (for example, by hitting them, restraining them or locking them into a room), the child has no choice but to unconsciously suppress their awareness of these feelings.

However, once a child has been terrorized into suppressing their awareness of their feelings (rather than being allowed to have their feelings and to act on them) the child has also unconsciously suppressed their awareness of the reality that caused these feelings. This has many outcomes that are disastrous for the individual, for society and for nature because the individual will now easily suppress their awareness of the feelings that would tell them how to act most functionally in any given circumstance and they will progressively acquire a phenomenal variety of dysfunctional behaviors, including some that are violent towards themselves, others and/or the Earth.

From the above, it should also now be apparent that punishment should never be used. 'Punishment', of course, is simply one of the words we use to obscure our awareness of the fact that we are using violence. Violence, even when we label it 'punishment', scares children and adults alike and cannot elicit a functional behavioural response.

See ['Punishment is Violent and Counterproductive'](#) and

['The Rule of Law: Unjust and Violent'](#).

If someone behaves dysfunctionally, they need to be listened to, deeply, so that they can start to become consciously aware of the feelings (which will always include fear and, often, terror) that drove the dysfunctional behaviour in the first place. They then need to feel and express these feelings (including any anger) in a safe way. Only then will behavioural change in the direction of functionality be possible.

See [‘Nisteling: The Art of Deep Listening’](#).

‘But these adult behaviors you have described don’t seem that bad. Can the outcome be as disastrous as you claim?’ you might ask. The problem is that there are hundreds of these ‘ordinary’, everyday behaviors that destroy the Selfhood of the child. It is ‘death by a thousand cuts’ and most children simply do not survive as Self-aware individuals. And why do we do this? As mentioned above, we do it so that each child will fit into our model of ‘the perfect citizen’: that is, obedient and hardworking student, reliable and pliant employee/soldier, and submissive law-abiding citizen (that is, one who pays their taxes, including those for war, and votes and/or lobbies politicians rather than acting powerfully themSelf).

The bottom line is simple: As parents, teachers, religious figures and adults generally, we want the child to be obedient to our commands, and not powerfully able to act in accord with their own Self-will. And we achieve this outcome by terrorizing the child into doing what we want rather than nurturing the child’s innate capacity to listen, deeply, to themSelf in order to follow their own will.

Moreover, once we destroy the Selfhood of a child, it has many flow-on effects. For example, once you terrorize a child into accepting certain information about themSelf, other people and the state of the world – with the bulk of this information mediated by elite agents including education systems, the entertainment industry and the corporate media – the child becomes unconsciously fearful of dealing with new information, especially if this information is contradictory to what they have been terrorized into believing. As a result, the child will unconsciously dismiss new information, no matter how truthful, out of hand.

In short, the child has been terrorized in such a way that they are no longer capable of learning (or their learning capacity is seriously diminished by excluding any information that is not a simple extension of what they already ‘know’). If you imagine any of the bigots you know, you are imagining someone who is utterly terrified. But it’s not just the bigots; virtually all people are affected in this manner making them incapable of responding adequately to new (or even important) information. This is one explanation why some people are ‘climate deniers’, most people do nothing in response to the climate catastrophe and even those people who do take action usually do so ineffectively.

See [‘The Global Climate Movement is Failing: Why?’](#)

But the same can be said for those working to end war – see [‘The War to End War 100 Years On: An Evaluation and Reorientation of our Resistance to War’](#) – end the nuclear weapons race or engage in other struggles, including liberation struggles, that are vital parts of the global struggle to create a more peaceful, just and sustainable human culture.

See [‘Why Activists Fail’](#).

And to briefly put this issue in the current global context, the vast bulk of the human population, including most of those individuals whom society would regard as ‘highly intelligent’, has been readily terrorized into believing that they are threatened by a pathogenic virus (labeled ‘SARS-CoV-2’) when there is no documented, scientific proof that such an entity as a pathogenic virus even exists – see [‘Dismantling the Virus Theory – The “measles virus” as an example’](#) and [What Really Makes You Ill? Why everything you thought you knew about disease is wrong](#) – and certainly no documented scientific proof that a virus

labeled SARS-CoV-2 exists.

See [‘COVID-19: The virus does not exist – it is confirmed!’](#)

and [‘Statement On Virus Isolation \(SOVI\)’](#).

And for an account of researcher Christine Massey’s fruitless search over the course of more than a year to find evidence of an isolated virus, via Freedom of Information requests to health/science institutions all over the world, see

[‘177 health/science institutions globally all failed to cite even 1 record of “SARS-COV-2” purification, by anyone, anywhere, ever’](#).

Despite this, the vast bulk of the human population has been terrorized into accepting a series of medical intrusions (including lockdowns, PCR tests, mask-wearing and gene-altering injectables) when, in fact, there is no documented, scientific proof that (assuming there was a ‘pathogenic virus’) lockdowns, PCR tests, mask-wearing or ‘vaccines’ even ‘work’ and/or extensive documentation of their harm. See, for example,

[‘And How Are the Children? Lockdowns, Massive Fear, Deaths from Suicides and Drug Abuse’](#),

[‘The WHO Confirms that the Covid-19 PCR Test is Flawed: Estimates of “Positive Cases” are Meaningless.](#)

[The Lockdown Has No Scientific Basis’](#), [‘Conclusion Regarding Masks: They Do Not Work’](#),

[‘Masks “don’t work,” are damaging health and are being used to control population: Doctors panel’](#),

[‘The Truth about the Covid-19 Vaccine’](#),

[‘A Final Warning to Humanity’](#), [‘COVID Shots to “Decimate World Population,” Warns Dr. Bhakdi’](#) and

[‘20 Facts about Vaccination Your Doctor Forgot To Tell You’](#).

And because the fear generated by the elite-driven ‘virus’/injectable narrative has been so debilitating and thus engendered a high level of obedience by the population at large, it is a rare individual who has investigated both the shortcomings in this narrative and the horrific agenda that this narrative is concealing, let alone identified a powerful strategy to resist it. See [‘We Are Human, We Are Free’](#).

So, to return to the focus of this article, let me briefly reiterate this vital point: ***The essence of what human beings call ‘socialization’ is the process by which each child is terrorized in such a way that they are no longer capable of learning or their learning capacity is seriously diminished.***

The multifaceted violence inflicted throughout childhood and adolescence ensures that the adult who emerges is suppressing awareness of an enormous amount of fear, pain, sadness and anger (among many other feelings) and must live in delusion to remain unaware of these suppressed feelings. This ensures that, as part of their delusion, the individual

develops a strong sense that what they are doing already is functional and working (no matter how dysfunctional and ineffective it may actually be) while not investigating the existence of evidence that might contradict their delusion and/or unconsciously suppressing awareness of any evidence they come across that does contradict it. **They do this because, unconsciously, people learn to identify obedience with ‘functional and working’ (because they do not get punished for being obedient).** See

[‘Why Violence?’](#),

[‘Fearless Psychology and Fearful Psychology: Principles and Practice’](#),

[‘Do We Want School or Education?’](#),

[‘Love Denied: The Psychology of Materialism, Violence and War’](#) and

[‘Human Intelligence or Human Awareness?’](#)

Just one critically important outcome of this terrorization process is that a significant proportion of the human population is effectively insane, and this certainly includes the Global Elite and those primary elite agents on which it relies to generate and maintain wars. See [‘The Global Elite is Insane Revisited’](#).

Another critically important outcome of this terrorization process is that the international conflict resolution architecture – which is essentially a legal framework – does not take emotional factors into account. Hence it is not capable of resolving conflicts in any meaningful way. This is why negotiations often go nowhere, particularly in a timeframe that would avert adverse outcomes. And why ‘agreements’ that are reached are utterly superficial. The fundamental drivers of the conflict – invariably including suppressed terror, self-hatred and anger which are often unconsciously projected at the other party – are never addressed and will continue to manifest as violence in various forms, even if military violence is ended in a particular context. See [‘Challenges for Resolving Complex Conflicts’](#).

So if we want a powerfully effective anti-war movement (or peace movement, environmental movement, social justice movement....) then we need Self-aware individuals who can think, plan and act powerfully as part of strategically-oriented organizations to achieve ambitious longer-term goals. Such as ending the institution of war.

Anything less will fail. Again, as the record demonstrates.

So what can we do?

Ending war is possible. But it will take a courageous, sophisticated, strategic effort, given how deeply violence is embedded into the human ‘socialization’ process which makes war just one of the many approved violent behaviours in which adults are expected and encouraged to participate, beginning with paying taxes to finance it.

So while it is possible to end war, this won’t be happening any time soon.

And it can’t happen until we commit ourselves to eliminating violence against children so that human society creates adults who are psychologically whole and powerfully able to participate in conflict without resorting to violence to ‘resolve’ it.

Nevertheless, in parallel with efforts to eliminate violence against children, those powerful enough can also participate in a comprehensive strategy to end war as explained on the 'Nonviolent Strategy' website, starting with this list of ['Strategic Goals to End War'](#). This is extrapolated from a book which explained why a strategy of nonviolent defense, understood and implemented by sufficient committed and organized individuals, is strategically superior to any military strategy.

See [The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach](#).

Or, if you want to participate in a strategy to end a particular war, such as that in Ukraine, particularly given the possibility of it morphing into a longer term insurgency - see ['Ukraine And The New Al Qaeda'](#) - you can read how to do so here: [Nonviolent Defense/Liberation Strategy](#).

But, as explained above, precisely because of their socialization experience during childhood, most of those who would identify as 'anti-war' are simply too frightened to act powerfully in resisting it. Hence, war will continue until we address its root cause: violence against children.

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Robert J. Burrowes has a lifetime commitment to understanding and ending human violence. He has done extensive research since 1966 in an effort to understand why human beings are violent and has been a nonviolent activist since 1981. He is the author of ['Why Violence?'](#) His email address is flametree@riseup.net and his website is [here](#).

He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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