



## Call for Contributions

We joyfully announce the upcoming first issue of *The Irenaut*, a magazine devoted to exploring the concept of peace as an irenic force and how it may most effectively be deployed, to be published and distributed by **Cairn.info**. We see peace not as a goal, nor as a state defined in contradistinction to war, but as a continual effort of human agency inherent in work and other human activities. The irenic force renews by a continual effort of creative jeopardy the connection between the arche of our work and its inherent goal of human amelioration.

The focus of our first issue is violence. An odd choice? Well, violence—not war, which is merely its most grotesque embodiment—is the antithesis of peace and hence attracts our interest. But I'm not proposing we replace war with violence as the key to thinking about peace. Violence is of interest because the way we represent it has evolved.

The fact that the term 'violence' has outgrown its association with physical aggression to embrace hostile words, lack of inclusivity, relative deprivation, asymmetrical power relations, and countless more phenomena, seems to confirm the long tradition that finds an ineradicable destructive urge in human nature. We have come to see the possibility of violence everywhere in our relations with others. And it goes beyond us, spilling over into the increasingly precarious niche that we inhabit: in the way we treat the air, the seas, the earth, the space around our planet. Violence seems to permeate everything we do and touch!

But in this expansive redefinition there is cause for hope. As long as violence was understood as an eruption, an outburst, a convulsion, it sat alongside tsunamis, earthquakes, floods—natural disasters we often just have to put up with. When we identify its mycelial growth within institutions and our own behaviour, then we can examine its structure and aetiology, and bring the irenic force to bear upon it through a more thoughtful performance of our work: through teaching, law-making, building, town planning, the allocation of resources, and so on.

Work in all its forms—the budding tips of human phylogenesis—has an irenic force that runs at least as deep in us as violence does, an equipollent energy that gives the lie to the notion of civilisation as a mere veneer. For our ancestors and present-day hunter gatherers could never have survived without a common organised goal of human amelioration and the acknowledgement at some level of the truth expressed in the Shona language as *ndiri nekuti tiri* (I am because we are).

From a bar terrace opposite a hectic intersection on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital in Paris, I recently watched cars, cyclists, pedestrians, electric scooters, (and unicycles!) interweave in cross currents frequently pierced by convoys of emergency vehicles, and occasionally navigated by disoriented or drunken citizens. It suddenly became clear to me that if everyone fulfilled their duties strictly according to the laws of right of way and traffic lights, the result would be instant carnage. Only a kind of benevolent—albeit sometimes impatient—crafty skill could govern these mingling destinies, averting bloodshed. And in this co-operative metis I rejoiced to see the irenic force at work.

We invite you, essayists, scholars, journalists—writers of every kind—and visual artists, to explore the tenebrous paths of violence with a torch of peace. —And not only fellow 'irenauts': a well-argued case for looking otherwise at the issues will also be considered. While violence is the main focus of this first issue, other topics relating to peace and conflict will also be included. Join us at the start of this journey into a peaceful world. Unleash your piece!

Written contributions should be no longer than 8,000 (there is no lower limit) and may be submitted in English, French or Spanish. Please send a preliminary summary of your piece (no longer than 300 words) to [mark-alec@unleashyourpeace.org](mailto:mark-alec@unleashyourpeace.org).

The closing date for submitting a summary is 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 and the full contribution should reach us by 31<sup>st</sup> August.

Please address any queries to [mark-alec@unleashyourpeace.org](mailto:mark-alec@unleashyourpeace.org)

For a fuller account of our guiding concepts, you can read the essay 'In search of an irenic force' on our website: [www.unleashyourpeace.org](http://www.unleashyourpeace.org).