

WAR / PEACE - CONSCIOUSNESS. War-consciousness - the view that wars sometimes are necessary, even useful - pervades our lives. We accept - or are oblivious to - that it is running our world. When we go to the movies, open the newspaper, turn on the tv or play a video game, what we are fed is often steeped in war-consciousness - with the result that many deem war inevitable, acceptable, fascinating, even alluring. In our archives war-consciousness manifests as technical manuals that dwell on engineering feats - or historic documents, in which famous battles are recounted, heroes celebrated and glorified. Countless movies tell the stories of our brave who are winning the fight to preserve our way of life. The message is that the 'just war' is worth the cost. **A**ustralia is said to have forged its sense of nationhood at Gallipoli, where young men proved their mettle. The battle was a massacre, but due to entrenched war-consciousness the tragedy has been elevated to a mythical status, with its annual celebration inducing war-imbued nationalism. The media offer documentaries - ostensibly to remember the fallen, but with the added incentive for patriotism and the war spirit being kept alive in the old and generated anew in the young. We are told not to forget. The dead? Well, surely. But why the militarism - the martial parades, the focus on battles? Will evoking past wars, glorifying won or lost fights and turning fallen soldiers into mythical heroes help prevent future wars? **H**istory and current events show that it will not. Thus war-consciousness overpowers peace-consciousness, the idea war is always wrong and must be avoided. However, this is what we must strive for; this is what our politics, entertainment and communications should be steeped in. We have to entrench in our minds the notion that our way of life must be preserved by peaceful means, not warfare. **T**he world wars of the twentieth century probably could have been avoided had peace-consciousness been developed during previous centuries; future generations will benefit from the peace-consciousness pacifists advocate this century.

*Peace is easily achieved.
First change the mind.
Then stop the shooting.*

*Once more,
one of my favourite quotes:
"I don't want to just end
the war, I want to end the
mindset that got us into
war in the first place."
Barak Obama*

Chris Hedges writes in his book WAR is a force that gives us meaning: "The myth of war is essential to justify the horrible sacrifices required in war, the destruction and the death of innocents. It can be formed only by denying the reality of war, by turning the lies, the manipulation, the inhumaneness of war into the heroic ideal."

"It is part of war's perversity that we lionize those great warriors and excuse their excesses in the name of selfdefense. We are humiliated in combat. The lofty words that inspire people to war - duty, honor, glory - swiftly become repugnant and hollow, replaced by the hard images of war. The rhetoric of patriotism is obliterated."