

SCIENCE, RELIGION AND WAR

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Preface

The first chapter of this book gives a very personal view of how science, religion and war are related to each other. It expresses beliefs which I myself think are true, but which I would not wish to force on anyone else.

The book consists partly of new material, and partly of material drawn from my previous writing, but arranged in a new way.

I very much hope that you will like at least a few parts of it, and that you will forgive me for those parts that you do not like.

This is an open access book. You may freely download it, publish it, or put it onto a website. The book was first published by the Danish Peace Academy, and updated versions of the book can be found on the following link: <http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/library/scirelbk.pdf>

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Chapter 1

What Is Science? What is Religion?

What is science?

In his autobiography, Charles Darwin says that “science consists in arranging facts in such a way that general conclusions may be drawn from them”. In other words, scientists try to find patterns in our observations of nature. These patterns stand temporarily as “laws of nature”, until exceptions are found. Very often it is possible to use such patterns or laws to make accurate predictions about the future, and when this is possible, it strengthens the credibility of the pattern that was used to make the predictions. Thus the test of a law of nature is its usefulness in making predictions about the future; and scientists find it hardly worthwhile to talk about assertions from which no predictions can be made.

When exceptions to natural laws are found, they are of extreme importance, and great efforts must be made to clarify the situation: If an exception to a natural law is found to be genuine, it means that the law must be modified, and this is the way scientific progress is made; hence the extreme importance of exceptions, and the massive attention which is given to them by scientists.

We seem to live in a universe in which the behavior of matter and energy is predictable. For example, if you put a coin into a box and shut the lid, you can say with some confidence, “The coin is inside the box”, even though you cannot see the coin. From this assertion, many predictions follow: You can predict that if you shake the box, the coin will rattle. The box will be slightly heavier than before because of the presence of the coin. An X-ray photograph would reveal the coin. If you open the box again, the coin will still be there, and so on. It would be hard to live in a world where this degree of predictability did not hold.

Besides predictability, the universe in which we live seems to have another remarkable characteristic: The most general and fundamental laws of nature that have been discovered have great simplicity and mathematical beauty. Pythagoras and his followers were the first to discover that “mathematics is the language of nature”.

Pythagoras, who lived from 582 B.C. to 497 B.C., is one of the most important and interesting figures in the history of European culture. It is hard to decide whether he was a religious leader or a scientist. He was a leader and reformer of the Orphic religion of ancient Greece, and he was the first to maintain that mathematics is the key to the understanding of nature. In the Pythagorean view of nature, mathematical harmony governs the fundamental laws of the universe. In the Pythagorean ethic, the highest vocation is that of the philosopher, and the aim of philosophy is to understand nature through the discovery of the mathematical relationships which govern the universe.

Today, much of what Pythagoras hoped to achieve in mathematics has been attained. For example, quantum theory has shown that the inner structure of an atom is governed by mathematical relationships closely analogous to those governing the harmonics of a lyre string. We have indeed found mathematical harmony in the fundamental laws of nature; but one can ask whether philosophy has brought harmony to human relations, as Pythagoras would have hoped!

As examples of the simplicity and beauty of the fundamental laws of nature, we can think of Maxwell’s equations for electromagnetic fields, or Schrödinger’s non-relativistic wave equation for electrons, or Dirac’s relativistic wave equation. All of them require mathematical language to be properly expressed, and all have great mathematical beauty. In fact, P.A.M Dirac, whose relativistic wave equation was just mentioned, wrote a famous paper in the *Canadian Journal of Physics*, where he maintained that the beauty of fundamental physical laws can be taken as a fact of nature, and therefore we can find new laws by following our sense of mathematical beauty. Apparently this method of research worked for him!

Furthermore, all of the fundamental laws of nature that have until now been discovered, fit together in a self-consistent way. Therefore, when something new is discovered, the first reaction of the scientific community is to see how the new discovery is related to the entire existing body of knowledge. If no relationship can be found, then either the new discovery is suspect or else it is of enormous importance. In any case, no one rests until the situation is clarified.

Modern astronomy has shown the Universe to be almost unimaginably large. Wikipedia states that: “The size of the Universe is unknown; it may be infinite. The region visible from Earth (the observable universe) is a sphere

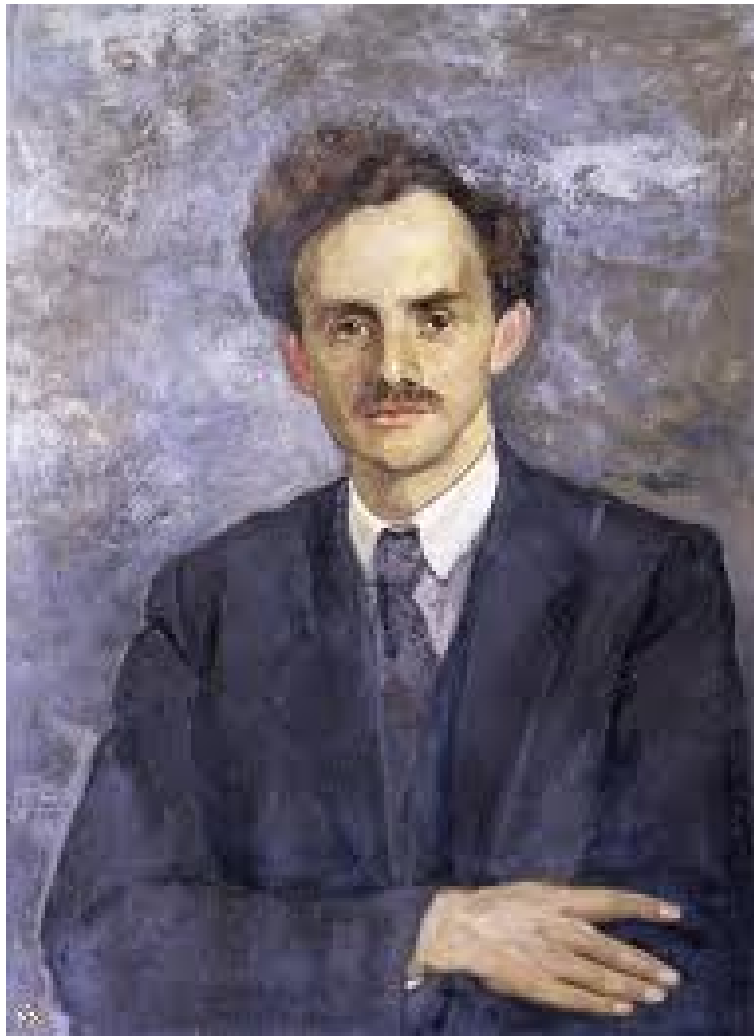


Figure 1.1: *Paul Adrian Maurice Dirac (1902-1984), discoverer of the relativistic wave equation that holds for electrons and other spin- $\frac{1}{2}$ particles. He maintained that since mathematical beauty is a characteristic of the most fundamental physical laws, we can find new ones by following our sense of mathematical beauty.*

with a radius of about 46 billion light years, based on where the expansion of space has taken the most distant objects observed. For comparison, the diameter of a typical galaxy is 30,000 light-years, and the typical distance between two neighboring galaxies is 3 million light-years. As an example, the Milky Way Galaxy is roughly 100,000 light years in diameter, and the nearest sister galaxy to the Milky Way, the Andromeda Galaxy, is located roughly 2.5 million light years away. There are probably more than 100 billion (10^{11}) galaxies in the observable Universe. Typical galaxies range from dwarfs with as few as ten million (10^7) stars up to giants with one trillion (10^{12}) stars, all orbiting the galaxy's center of mass. A 2010 study by astronomers estimated that the observable Universe contains 300 sextillion (3×10^{23}) stars."

Among this incredibly vast number of stars it is believed that there are innumerable stars that have planets similar to the Earth and hence able to support life. We also now know that given conditions that are favorable to life, it will almost certainly develop and evolve. The Earth seems to be only of extremely minor importance on the scale of the Universe. Given these facts, and given that the fundamental laws of nature are mathematical, I find it difficult to believe that the entire Universe and the laws that govern it were arranged for the benefit of humans, especially since humans have only existed for a brief instant on the time-scale of the Universe. If asked where the Universe came from and why, the scientist must answer with honesty, "I don't know".

The blindness of science

Ethical considerations have traditionally been excluded from scientific discussions. This tradition perhaps has its roots in the desire of the scientific community to avoid the bitter religious controversies which divided Europe following the Reformation. Whatever the historical reason may be, it has certainly become customary to speak of scientific problems in a dehumanized language, as though science had nothing to do with ethics or politics.

The great power of science is derived from an enormous concentration of attention and resources on the understanding of a tiny fragment of nature; but this concentration is at the same time a distortion of values. To be effective, a scientist must believe, at least temporarily, that the problem on which he or she is working is more important than anything else in the world, which is of course untrue. Thus a scientist, while seeing a fragment of reality better than anyone else, becomes blind to the larger whole. For example, when one looks into a microscope, one sees the tiny scene on the slide in tremendous detail, but that is all one sees. The remainder of the universe is blotted out by this concentration of attention.

The system of rewards and punishments in the training of scientists pro-



Figure 1.2: The blindness of science: Enormous concentration of attention on a small fragment of reality blinds the researcher to the larger whole.

duces researchers who are highly competent when it comes to finding solutions to technical problems, but whose training has by no means encouraged them to think about the ethical or political consequences of their work.

Scientists may, in fact, be tempted to escape from the intractable moral and political difficulties of the world by immersing themselves in their work. Enrico Fermi, (whose research as much as that of any other person made nuclear weapons possible), spoke of science as “soma” - the escapist drug of Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*. Fermi perhaps used his scientific preoccupations as an escape from the worrying political problems of the ’30’s and ’40’s.

The education of a scientist often produces a person with a strong feeling of loyalty to a particular research discipline, but perhaps without sufficient concern for the way in which progress in that discipline is related to the general welfare of humankind. To remedy this lack, it would be very desirable if the education of scientists could include some discussion of ethics, as well as a review of the history of modern science and its impact on society.

The explosive growth of science-driven technology during the last two centuries has changed the world completely; and our social and political institutions have adjusted much too slowly to the change. The great problem of our times is to keep society from being shaken to pieces by the headlong progress of science, the problem of harmonizing our social and political institutions with technological change. Because of the great importance of this problem, it is perhaps legitimate to ask whether anyone today can be considered to be educated without having studied the impact of science on society. Should we not include this topic in the education of both scientists and non-scientists?

Science has given us great power over the forces of nature. If wisely used, this power will contribute greatly to human happiness; if wrongly used, it will result in misery. In the words of the Spanish writer, Ortega y Gasset, “We live at a time when man, lord of all things, is not lord of himself”; or as Arthur Koestler has remarked, “We can control the movements of a spaceship orbiting about a distant planet, but we cannot control the situation in Northern Ireland.”

To remedy this situation, educational reforms are needed. Science and engineering students ought to have some knowledge of the history and social impact of science. They could be given a course on the history of scientific ideas; but in connection with modern historical developments, such as the industrial revolution, the global population explosion, the development of nuclear weapons, genetic engineering, and information technology, some discussion of social impact could be introduced. One might hope to build up in science and engineering students an understanding of the way in which their work is related to the general welfare of humankind. These elements are needed in science education if rapid technological development is to be beneficial rather

than harmful.

What is religion?

All known human societies have religions; and this is true not only of societies that exist today, but also of all past societies of which we have any record. Therefore it is reasonable to suppose that the tendency to be religious is an intrinsic part of human nature. It seems to be coded into our genes.

If evolutionary forces have produced the human tendency to be religious, then it must have had some survival value. My own belief is that religion helps us because it is a mechanism for the preservation and transmission of human cultures. All living organisms on earth hand on information from one generation to the next in the form of messages coded into their DNA and RNA. Humans are unique in having also evolved extremely efficient non-genetic methods for transmitting information from one generation to the next, through our highly developed languages.

Cultural evolution is responsible for the success of our species. We dominate the earth because of cultural evolution. Thus if religion is a mechanism for the preservation and transmission of particular cultures, it would confer a great advantage to those societies that possessed religions, and a tendency to be religious would be favored by the Darwinian forces of natural selection.

In evolution, changes in the genome of a species frequently occur when a previously existing structure in a slightly modified form proves to be useful for a new purpose. Darwin gives many examples of this mechanism of change,¹ and other researchers since his time provide many others. Many examples also exist in the field of ethology. For example, Tinbergen points out that the behavioral patterns of dogs are only slightly modified versions of similar patterns in wolves. In the slightly modified instinctive behavior of dogs, the dog accepts its human owner in the role of pack leader. Thus it is impossible to teach a sheepdog to drive the herd away from the shepherd, since wolves always drive their prey towards their pack leader.

Our nearest animal relatives, the chimpanzees, accept the authority of the alpha male, and it is reasonable to assume that the early humans from which we are descended did the same. It is a small step, a small modification of instinct, for humans to accept the authority of a particularly gifted leader after the leader's death. Essentially, the dead leader has been deified. This process gives an evolutionary advantage, which increases as the preservation and propagation of cultural traditions becomes increasingly important.

Looking at the religions that we see today and also those we know of through the historical record, we can see a similarity between gods and human

¹See Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, page 399, for his explanation of serial homologies.

leaders. Some religions have conferred on leaders the status of gods, either during their lives or after their deaths.

For example, the Egyptian physician-architect Imhotep, who lived in the 27th century B.C., was highly revered for his genius. He is credited with inventing the techniques of building with massive accurately-dressed stone blocks. These techniques were used in constructing the step-pyramid of Djoser during Imhotep's lifetime, and later used in constructing all subsequent pyramids. His skill as a physician was also greatly admired. After his death, Imhotep became the God of Medicine. His tomb became a place of pilgrimage for sick people seeking to be cured, more or less in the manner of Lourdes.

The Egyptian sun god Ra, was considered the father of all pharaohs, and thus the pharaohs were thought to be divine. Alexander the Great was deified both by the Persians and later by the Egyptians. Similarly, a deceased Roman emperor held worthy of the honor could be voted a state divinity by the Senate and elevated to the status of a god.

In the Christian religion, Jesus of Nazareth is believed to have been an historical person, but he is also thought of as one of the three aspects of God.

Thus in many religions, exceptionally gifted leaders are often deified, either during their lives or after their deaths. How is this related to the preservation and propagation of culture? The advice of especially gifted leaders is always worth following. This is more easily done if special status is given to them. A shrine to a genius makes it more easy to remember his doctrines.

The tendency to give great leaders a divine status would very effectively aid the transmission and preservation of culture. This characteristic would be favored by evolution, thus explaining why the tendency to be religious is such a universal aspect of human nature. I do not wish to force this view onto anyone, but it is my own belief.

Is there a conflict between science and religion?

Is there a conflict between science and religion? This is a frequently-asked question, and many different answers have been given. My own opinion is that there are two aspects to religion - ethics and cosmology. I think that when we talk about cosmology, there is often a conflict between science and religion. But with respect to ethics, there is very little room for conflict because science has almost nothing to say about ethics.

Why do I say "almost nothing" instead of "nothing"? It is often said that ethical principles cannot be derived from science, that they must come from somewhere else. Nevertheless, when nature is viewed through the eyes of modern science, we obtain some insights which seem almost ethical in character. Biology at the molecular level has shown us the complexity and beauty of



Figure 1.3: A statuette of Imhotep, the ancient Egyptian God of Medicine. In life, Imhotep was a polymath architect and physician who is credited with the invention of the techniques used for constructing the step-pyramid of Djoser and all subsequent pyramids.

even the most humble living organisms, and the interrelatedness of all life on earth. Looking through the eyes of contemporary biochemistry, we can see that even the single cell of an amoeba is a structure of miraculous complexity and precision, worthy of our respect and wonder.

Knowledge of the second law of thermodynamics, the statistical law favoring disorder over order, reminds us that life is always balanced like a tight-rope walker over an abyss of chaos and destruction. Living organisms distill their order and complexity from the flood of thermodynamic information which reaches the earth from the sun. In this way, they create local order; but life remains a fugitive from the second law of thermodynamics. Disorder, chaos, and destruction remain statistically favored over order, construction, and complexity.

It is easier to burn down a house than to build one, easier to kill a human than to raise and educate one, easier to force a species into extinction than to replace it once it is gone, easier to burn the Great Library of Alexandria than to accumulate the knowledge that once filled it, and easier to destroy a civilization in a thermonuclear war than to rebuild it from the radioactive ashes. Knowing this, we can form an almost ethical insight: To be on the side of order, construction, and complexity, is to be on the side of life. To be on the side of destruction, disorder, chaos and war is to be against life, a traitor to life, an ally of death. Knowing the precariousness of life, knowing the statistical laws that favor disorder and chaos, we should resolve to be loyal to the principle of long continued construction upon which life depends.

War is based on destruction, destruction of living persons, destruction of homes, destruction of infrastructure, and destruction of the biosphere. If we are on the side of life, if we are not traitors to life and allies of death, we must oppose the institution of war. We must oppose the military-industrial complex. We must oppose the mass media when they whip up war-fever. We must oppose politicians who vote for obscenely enormous military budgets at a time of financial crisis. We must oppose these things by working with dedication, as though our lives depended on it. In fact, they do.

But let us turn to religious ethics. Not only do they not conflict with science, but there is also a general agreement on ethical principles between the major religions of the world.

The central ethical principles of Christianity can be found in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. In the Sermon on the Mount, we are told that we must not only love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves; we must also love and forgive our enemies. This seemingly impractical advice is in fact of great practicality, since escalatory cycles of revenge and counter-revenge can only be ended by unilateral acts of kindness.

In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, we are told that our neighbor,

whom we must love, is not necessarily a member of our own ethnic group. Our neighbor may live on the other side of the world and belong to an entirely different race or culture; but he or she still deserves our love and care.

It is an interesting fact that the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”, appears in various forms in all of the world’s major religions. The Wikipedia article on the Golden Rule gives an impressive and fascinating list of the forms in which the rule appears in many cultures and religions. For example, in ancient China, both Confucius and Laozi express the Golden Rule, but they do it slightly differently: Zi Gong asked, saying, “Is there one word that may serve as a rule of practice for all one’s life?” The Master said, “Is not reciprocity such a word?” (Confucius) and “The sage has no interest of his own, but takes the interests of the people as his own. He is kind to the kind; he is also kind to the unkind: for Virtue is kind. He is faithful to the faithful; he is also faithful to the unfaithful: for Virtue is faithful.” (Laozi)

In the Jewish tradition, we have “The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus) In Islam: A Bedouin came to the prophet, grabbed the stirrup of his camel and said: O the messenger of God! Teach me something to go to heaven with it. The Prophet said: “As you would have people do to you, do to them; and what you dislike to be done to you, don’t do to them. This maxim is enough for you; go and act in accordance with it!” (Kitab al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 146)

The principle of reciprocity is an ancient one in human history, and it is thus embedded in our emotions. It is an important part of human nature. Reciprocity is the basis of non-market economies, and also the basis of social interactions between family members, friends and colleagues. In hunter-gatherer societies, it is customary to share food among all the members of the group. “Today I receive food from you, and tomorrow you will receive food from me.” Similarly, among friends in modern society, no payment is made for hospitality, but it is expected that sooner or later the hospitality will be returned.

According to Wikipedia “Reciprocity in Social Psychology refers to responding to a positive action with another positive action, rewarding kind actions. As a social construct, reciprocity means that in response to friendly actions, people are frequently much nicer and much more cooperative than predicted by the self-interest model; conversely, in response to hostile actions they are frequently much more nasty and even brutal.” As Wikipedia points out, reciprocity can also be negative, as in the case of escalatory cycles of revenge and counter-revenge.

The Buddhist concept of karma has great value in human relations. The word “karma” means simply “action”. In Buddhism, one believes that ac-



Figure 1.4: A painting illustrating the Parable of the Good Samaritan

tions return to the actor. Good actions will be returned, and bad actions will also be returned. This is obviously true in social relationships. If we behave with kindness and generosity to our neighbors, they will return our kindness. Conversely, a harmful act may lead to vicious circles of revenge and counter revenge, such as those we see today in the Middle East and elsewhere. These vicious circles can only be broken by returning good for evil.

However the concept of karma has a broader and more abstract validity beyond the direct return of actions to the actor. When we perform a good action, we increase the total amount of good karma in the world. If all people similarly behave well, the the world as a whole will become more pleasant and more safe. Human nature seems to have a built-in recognition of this fact, and we are rewarded by inner happiness when we perform good and kind actions. In his wonderful book, “Ancient Wisdom, Modern World”, the Dalai Lama says that good actions lead to happiness and bad actions to unhappiness even if our neighbors do not return these actions. Inner peace, he tells us, is incompatible with bad karma and can be achieved only through good karma, i.e. good actions.

In Buddhist philosophy, the concept of Karma, action and reaction, also extends to our relationship with nature. Both Hindu and Buddhist traditions emphasize the unity of all life on earth. Hindus regard killing an animal as a sin, and many try to avoid accidentally stepping on insects as they walk.

The Hindu and Buddhist picture of the relatedness of all life on earth has been confirmed by modern biological science. We now know that all living organisms have the same fundamental biochemistry, based on DNA, RNA, proteins and polysaccharides, and we know that our own human genomes are more similar to than different from the genomes of our close relations in the animal world.

The peoples of the industrialized nations urgently need to acquire a non-anthropocentric element in their ethics, similar to reverence for all life found in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, as well as in the teachings of Saint Francis of Assisi and Albert Schweitzer. We need to learn to value other species for their own sakes, and not because we expect to use them for our own economic goals.

Today a few societies still follow a way of life similar to that of our hunter-gatherer ancestors. Anthropologists are able to obtain a vivid picture of the past by studying these societies. Often the religious ethics of the hunter-gatherers emphasizes the importance of harmony with nature. For example, respect for nature appears in the tribal traditions of Native Americans. The attitude towards nature of the Sioux can be seen from the following quotations from “Land of the Spotted Eagle” by the Lakota (Western Sioux) chief, Standing Bear (ca. 1834-1908):

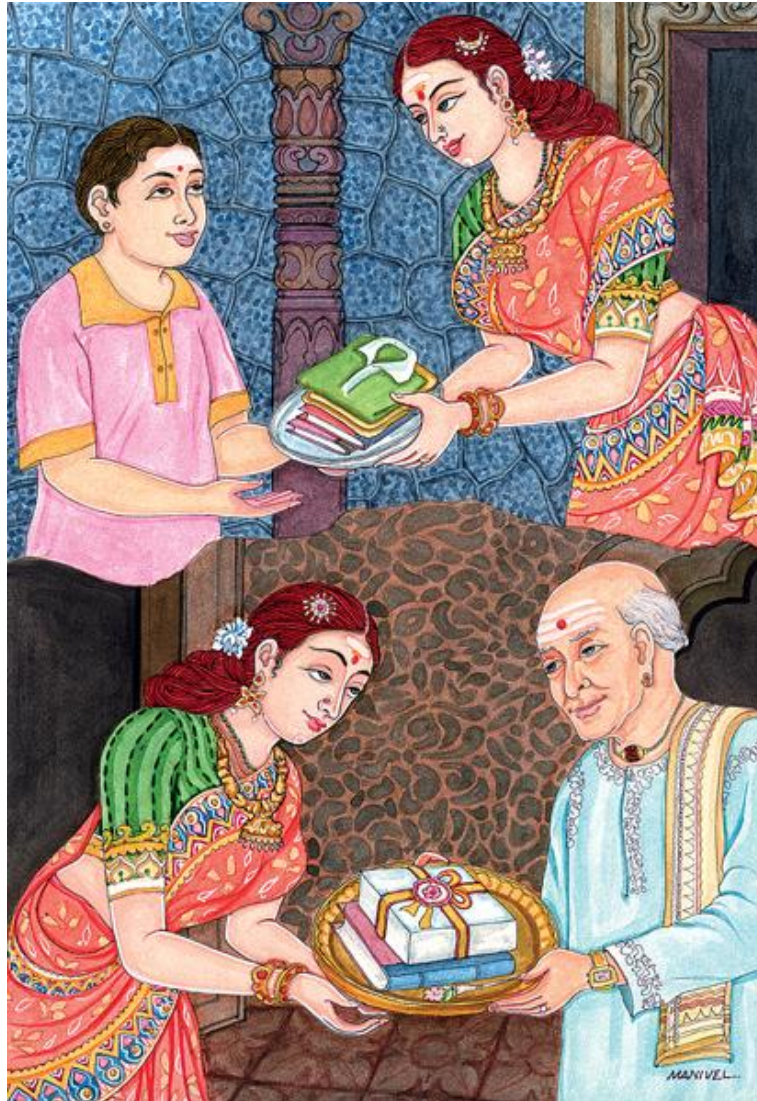


Figure 1.5: *This painting illustrates the concept of karma. A lady gives books and clothing to a poor student. Later she receives a gift from a neighbor. There may sometimes be a direct causal connection between such events, but often they are connected only by the fact that each act of kindness makes the world a better place. (Himalayan Academy Publications, Kapaa, Kauai, Hawaii.)*

“The Lakota was a true lover of Nature. He loved the earth and all things of the earth... From Waken Tanka (the Great Spirit) there came a great unifying life force that flowered in and through all things, the flowers of the plains, blowing winds, rocks, trees, birds, animals, and was the same force that had been breathed into the first man. Thus all things were kindred and were brought together by the same Great Mystery.”

“Kinship with all creatures of the earth, sky, and water was a real and active principle. For the animal and bird world there existed a brotherly feeling that kept the Lakota safe among them. And so close did some of the Lakota come to their feathered and furred friends that in true brotherhood they spoke a common tongue.”

“The animal had rights, the right of man’s protection, the right to live, the right to multiply, the right to freedom, and the right to man’s indebtedness, and in recognition of these rights the Lakota never enslaved the animal, and spared all life that was not needed for food and clothing.”

“This concept of life was humanizing and gave to the Lakota an abiding love. It filled his being with the joy and mystery of things; it gave him reverence for all life; it made a place for all things in the scheme of existence with equal importance to all. The Lakota could despise no creature, for all were one blood, made by the same hand, and filled with the essence of the Great Mystery.”

A similar attitude towards nature can be found in traditional Inuit cultures, and in some parts of Africa, a man who plans to cut down a tree offers a prayer of apology, telling the tree why necessity has forced him to harm it. This preindustrial attitude is something from which the industrialized North could learn. In industrial societies, land “belongs” to some one has the “right” to ruin the land or to kill the communities of creatures living on it if this happens to give some economic advantage, in much the same way that a Roman slaveowner was thought to have the “right” to kill his slaves. Preindustrial societies have a much less rapacious and much more custodial attitude towards the land and towards its non-human inhabitants.

We have received many gifts from modern technology, but if we are to build a happy, sustainable and war-free world we must combine our new scientific techniques with humanity’s ancient wisdom.

Complementarity

Can two contradictory statements both be true? The physicist Niels Bohr thought that this could happen, and he called such an occurrence “complementarity”. I think that I understand what Niels Bohr meant: Whenever we make a statement about the real world we are making a model which is simpler than what it is supposed to represent. Therefore every statement must to



Figure 1.6: *Chief Luther Standing Bear, author of “Land of the Spotted Eagle” and many other books.*

some extent be false because it is an oversimplification. In fact, a model of the world is an abstraction, and it is possible to make two conflicting abstractions, starting with the same real object.

If you say, “The eye is like a camera”, you are making an abstraction by concentrating on the way that the eye works and the way that a camera works. Both use a lens to form an image. If you say “The eye is like a small onion”, you are again making an abstraction, but this time concentrating the size and texture of the eye. It is somewhat round, elastic and damp. If you drop it on a stone floor, it will bounce rather than breaking. Both these abstractions have a certain degree of truth, although they are contradictory.

Similarly, science and religion are both abstractions, and both oversimplify the real world, which is much more complex than either of them. Which abstraction we should use depends on the problem that we wish to discuss. If we are talking about atomic spectra, then Schrödinger and Dirac should be our guides. But if the lecture is on how to achieve peace in the world, I would far rather hear it from Mahatma Gandhi than from either Schrödinger or Dirac.

Right hand, left hand

I vividly remember a speech made by His Holiness Pope John Paul II on the relationship between science and religion. I think that it was in 1981 or 1982. I was in Rome, attending a conference on quantum theory applied to chemistry. One of the topics at the conference was research on drugs that could be used for treating cancer. Because of this humanitarian aspect of the conference, the Italian professor who organized it succeeded in arranging for the participants to have an audience with the Pope, the day after Easter.

On Easter day itself I was walking through Rome, and I happened to meet some Swedish friends. They told me that they were about to join a march protesting against nuclear weapons. They would march through Rome, carrying antinuclear banners, and end at the Vatican in time to hear the Pope’s Easter address. I joined the march with my Swedish friends, and when we arrived at St. Peter’s Cathedral the entire square was full people, packed tightly, shoulder to shoulder so that one could almost not move. The atmosphere was a festive one, and our antinuclear banners were matched by religious banners carried by others in the throng. I had never seen such a large crowd in my life, but it was a happy crowd.

After a while the doors of the Vatican were opened, and the Pope came out onto the terrace accompanied by the College of Cardinals. He began to address us in Latin. We were so far away that we would not have been able to see or hear him, had it not been for loudspeakers and two large screens showing his image, with subtitles in Italian and in English.



Figure 1.7: *His Holiness Pope John Paul II*

At the end of the Pope's address to the crowd, the Cardinals went into the Vatican and the doors were ceremonially closed, but the Pope himself walked down the steps of the terrace and into the crowd, where he mingled with everyone, shook hands with as many as he could, and talked with as many as he could. This showed remarkable courage, since he had only recently recovered from almost-fatal gunshot wounds at the hands of a would-be assassin.

On the appointed day for our audience, which was the day after Easter, we ascended the stairway to the audience chambers at the top of the Vatican, passing the impressive and colorful Swiss Guards on the way, and also passing beautiful tapestries that covered the walls.

The Pope was very busy because of his obligations to the many pilgrims who had come to Rome to celebrate Easter. We were told that it would be at least an hour before the Pope could address us. During that time we were

free to wander about the audience chamber and to look at the tapestries. We would know when the Pope was about to arrive, because the lights would become brighter for the sake of the television, and because we would hear a choir singing. Then we should take our seats and wait for the Pope's arrival.

It happened just as we had been told. After an hour or so, the lights went up and we heard the choir singing. We took our seats, and a few minutes later the Pope arrived. As he began to speak with us he gave the impression of an energetic and physically strong person, with an extremely modest, attractive and charismatic personality.

The Pope spoke in English, both to us, and to a much larger public, since his address was televised. He talked about the relationship between science and religion, mentioning that one of the topics to which our conference had been devoted was the treatment of cancer. He said that science had done very much to improve human health and comfort. Science and technology have given us the material goods of our modern world. However, Pope John Paul told us, material goods are not enough to ensure happiness. It is possible to be very well off from a material standpoint, but at the same time, very miserable. He said that for happiness, we also need ethics and wisdom - the traditional wisdom of humanity. By "the traditional wisdom of humanity", I think that he meant the wisdom that is preserved in the world's religions, but he did not specifically mention religion.

When he had finished talking, the Pope came down to the floor of the audience chamber and shook hands with us. All through his speech a baby had been crying, and the Pope, who was undoubtedly used to such disturbances, made a point of kissing the baby. He shook my hand too. There was a Polish professor named Wlodzimierz Kolos with our group, and when the Pope came to the place where Kolos was standing, he stood and talked with the professor for about two minutes.

I was curious about what the Pope and Kolos had been saying to each other, but I did not have a chance to ask on that occasion. However, a year or so later I met Prof. Kolos at another conference, and I asked him. He replied, "I don't remember. I see the Pope so often that I don't remember what we said on that particular occasion."

I was astonished, and I asked Kolos to explain. He told me that when Pope John Paul took his summer vacations, he lived in a large villa near to Rome. He had the custom of inviting philosophers, theologians and scientists (many of them Polish) to visit him there for informal discussions. They always sat around a large table and talked about subjects like the relationship between science and religion. On those occasions, the Pope did not wear his robes of office, but only ordinary clothing. Every session ended with a discussion of the current situation in Poland.

Due to the Pope's efforts, the situation in Poland improved, and he also helped to make a reconciliation between science and the Catholic Church. I regard it as a great privilege to have seen his courage at Easter, and to have heard him speak. He is very justly regarded as one of the greatest Popes of all time.

I also had the privilege of hearing His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet speak on the same topic, the relationship between science and religion. The Dalai Lama was visiting Denmark, and I was invited to a lecture by him, arranged by the Danish-Tibetan Society.

The lecture took place at a very large hall called Forum, and such was the interest in his talk that the hall was completely filled. There were many flowers to greet the Dalai Lama, and many yellow-robed monks to assist him. When he began to talk, he gave the same impression as Pope John Paul II had done - energy and physical strength, combined with modesty and an attractive and charismatic personality.

Unfortunately, the acoustics of the hall were terrible, and it was difficult to hear what he said. The problem was made worse by his special accent as he spoke in English. Nevertheless, I managed to understand quite a bit of what he said.

The Dalai Lama told us that we need two hands for our tasks in life, the right hand and the left hand. Without both hands, we cannot cope properly with the problems of life. These two hands, both of which we need, are science and ethics. It was essentially the same message as that of Pope John Paul. The two hands are different, but both are needed.

How are science and religion related to war?

What is the relationship between science, religion and war? We mentioned that the world's major religions have at their core the principle of universal human brotherhood, which, if practiced, would be enough to make war impossible. However, the principle of loving and forgiving one's enemies is rarely practiced.

Many wars have been fought in the name of religion. We can think, for example, of the Crusades, or the Islamic conquests in the Middle East, North Africa and Spain, or the wars between Catholics and Protestants in Europe, or the brutal treatment of the native populations of Central and South America in the name of religion. The list by no means stops there.

What about science and technology? How are they related to war? As we start the 21st century and the new millennium, our scientific and technological civilization seems to be entering a period of crisis. Today, for the first time in history, science has given to humans the possibility of a life of comfort,



Figure 1.8: *Three-stage (fission-fusion-fission) bombs may be made enormously powerful at little extra cost, since the last stage uses ordinary unenriched uranium. A 58 megaton bomb was exploded by the Soviet Union in 1961. It was roughly 5,000 times as powerful as the nuclear weapons that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At present the total explosive power of the nuclear weapons in the world is approximately half a million times the power of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombs, enough to destroy human civilization and much of the biosphere.*

free from hunger and cold, and free from the constant threat of infectious disease. At the same time, science has given us the power to destroy civilization through thermonuclear war, as well as the power to make our planet uninhabitable through pollution and overpopulation. The question of which of these alternatives we choose is a matter of life or death to ourselves and our children.

Science and technology have shown themselves to be double-edged, capable of doing great good or of producing great harm, depending on the way in which we use the enormous power over nature, which science has given to us. For this reason, ethical thought is needed now more than ever before. The wisdom of the world's religions, the traditional wisdom of humankind, can help us as we try to ensure that our overwhelming material progress will be beneficial rather than disastrous.

The crisis of civilization, which we face today, has been produced by the rapidity with which science and technology have developed. Our institutions and ideas adjust too slowly to the change. The great challenge which history has given to our generation is the task of building new international political structures, which will be in harmony with modern technology. At the same time, we must develop a new global ethic, which will replace our narrow loyalties by loyalty to humanity as a whole.

In the long run, because of the enormously destructive weapons, which have been produced through the misuse of science, the survival of civilization can only be insured if we are able to abolish the institution of war.

Chapter 2

Tribalism

Ethology

In the long run, because of the terrible weapons that have already been produced through the misuse of science, and because of the even more terrible weapons that are likely to be invented in the future, the only way in which we can ensure the survival of civilization is to abolish the institution of war. But is this possible? Or are the emotions that make war possible so much a part of human nature that we cannot stop humans from fighting any more than we can stop cats and dogs from fighting? Can biological science throw any light on the problem of why our supposedly rational species seems intent on choosing war, pain and death instead of peace, happiness and life? To answer this question, we need to turn to the science of ethology - the study of inherited emotional tendencies and behavior patterns in animals and humans.

In *The Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin devoted a chapter to the evolution of instincts, and he later published a separate book on *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Because of these pioneering studies, Darwin is considered to be the founder of ethology.

Behind Darwin's work in this field is the observation that instinctive behavior patterns are just as reliably inherited as morphological characteristics. Darwin was also impressed by the fact that within a given species, behavior patterns have some degree of uniformity, and the fact that the different species within a family are related by similarities of instinctive behavior, just as they are related by similarities of bodily form. For example, certain elements of cat-like behavior can be found among all members of the cat family; and certain elements of dog-like or wolf-like behavior can be found among all members of the dog family. On the other hand, there are small variations in instinct among the members of a given species. For example, not all domestic dogs behave in the same way.

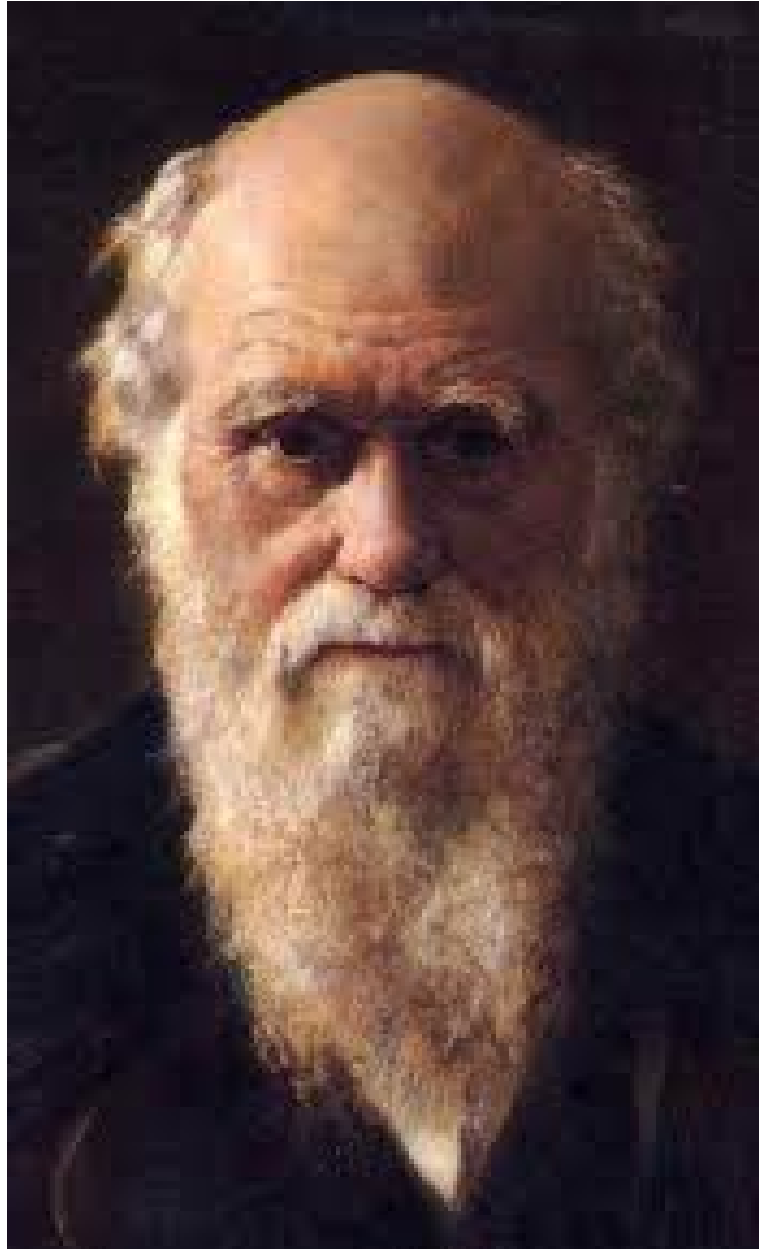


Figure 2.1: *Because of Charles Darwin's book "The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals", he is considered to be the founder of the field of Ethology, the study of inherited behavior patterns.*

“Let us look at the familiar case of breeds of dogs”, Darwin wrote in *The Origin of Species*, “It cannot be doubted that young pointers will sometimes point and even back other dogs the very first time they are taken out; retrieving is certainly in some degree inherited by retrievers; and a tendency to run round, instead of at, a flock of sheep by shepherd dogs. I cannot see that these actions, performed without experience by the young, and in nearly the same manner by each individual, and without the end being known - for the young pointer can no more know that he points to aid his master than the white butterfly knows why she lays her eggs on the leaf of the cabbage - I cannot see that these actions differ essentially from true instincts...”

“How strongly these domestic instincts habits and dispositions are inherited, and how curiously they become mingled, is well shown when different breeds of dogs are crossed. Thus it is known that a cross with a bulldog has affected for many generations the courage and obstinacy of greyhounds; and a cross with a greyhound has given to a whole family of shepherd dogs a tendency to hunt hares...”

Darwin believed that in nature, desirable variations of instinct are propagated by natural selection, just as in the domestication of animals, favorable variations of instinct are selected and propagated by kennelmen and stock breeders. In this way, according to Darwin, complex and highly developed instincts, such as the comb-making instinct of honey-bees, have evolved by natural selection from simpler instincts, such as the instinct by which bumble bees use their old cocoons to hold honey and sometimes add a short wax tube.

In the introduction of his book, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Darwin says “I thought it very important to ascertain whether the same expressions and gestures prevail, as has often been asserted without much evidence, with all the races of mankind, especially with those who have associated but little with Europeans. Whenever the same movements of the features or body express the same emotions in several distinct races of man, we may infer with much probability, that such expressions are true ones, - that is, are innate or instinctive.”

To gather evidence on this point, Darwin sent a printed questionnaire on the expression of human emotions and sent it to missionaries and colonial administrators in many parts of the world. There were 16 questions to be answered:

1. *Is astonishment expressed by the eyes and mouth being opened wide, and by the eyebrows being raised?*
2. *Does shame excite a blush when the colour of the skin allows it to be visible? and especially how low down on the body does the blush extend?*

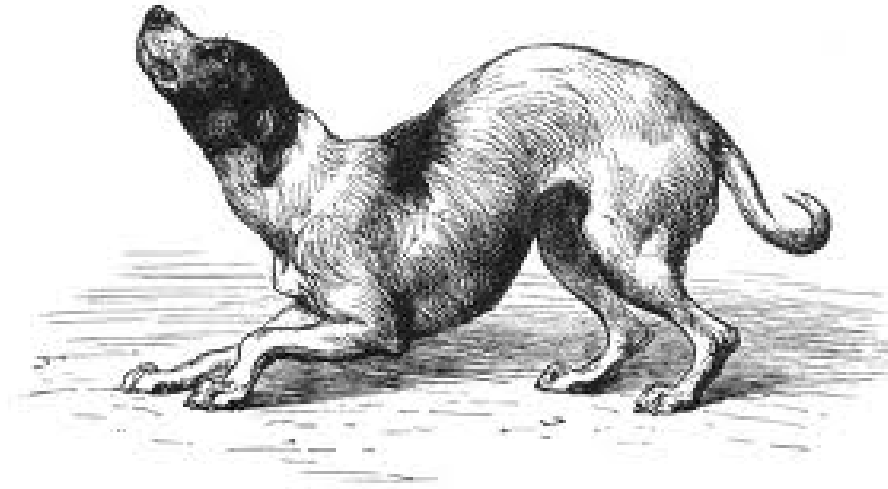


Figure 2.2: *A dog expressing affection towards its master.*

3. *When a man is indignant or defiant does he frown, hold his body and head erect, square his shoulders and clench his fists?*
4. *When considering deeply on any subject, or trying to understand any puzzle, does he frown, or wrinkle the skin beneath the lower eyelids?*

and so on.

Darwin received 36 replies to his questionnaire, many coming from people who were in contact with extremely distinct and isolated groups of humans. The results convinced him that our emotions and the means by which they are expressed are to a very large extent innate, rather than culturally determined, since the answers to his questionnaire were so uniform and so independent of both culture and race. In preparation for his book, he also closely observed the emotions and their expression in very young babies and children, hoping to see inherited characteristics in subjects too young to have been greatly influenced by culture. Darwin's observations convinced him that in humans, just as in other mammals, the emotions and their expression are to a very large extent inherited universal characteristics of the species.

The study of inherited behavior patterns in animals (and humans) was continued in the 20th century by such researchers as Karl von Frisch (1886-1982), Nikolaas Tinbergen (1907-1988), and Konrad Lorenz (1903-1989), three scientists who shared a Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology in 1973.

Karl von Frisch, the first of the three ethologists who shared the 1973 prize, is famous for his studies of the waggle-dance of honeybees. Bees guide each

other to sources of food by a genetically programmed signaling method - the famous waggle dance, deciphered in 1945 by von Frisch. When a worker bee has found a promising food source, she returns to the hive and performs a complex dance, the pattern of which indicates both the direction and distance of the food. The dancer moves repeatedly in a pattern resembling the Greek letter Θ . If the food-discoverer is able to perform her dance on a horizontal flat surface in view of the sun, the line in the center of the pattern points in the direction of the food. However, if the dance is performed in the interior of the hive on a vertical surface, gravity takes the place of the sun, and the angle between the central line and the vertical represents the angle between the food source and the sun.

The central part of the dance is, in a way, a re-enactment of the excited forager's flight to the food. As she traverses the central portion of the pattern, she buzzes her wings and waggles her abdomen rapidly, the number of waggles indicating the approximate distance to the food ¹. After this central portion of the dance, she turns alternately to the left or to the right, following one or the other of the semicircles, and repeats the performance. Studies of the accuracy with which her hive-mates follow these instructions show that the waggle dance is able to convey approximately 7 bits of information - 3 bits concerning distance and 4 bits concerning direction. After making his initial discovery of the meaning of the dance, von Frisch studied the waggle dance in many species of bees. He was able to distinguish species-specific dialects, and to establish a plausible explanation for the evolution of the dance.

Among the achievements for which Tinbergen is famous are his classic studies of instinct in herring gulls. He noticed that the newly-hatched chick of a herring gull pecks at the beak of its parent, and this signal causes the parent gull to regurgitate food into the gaping beak of the chick. Tinbergen wondered what signal causes the chick to initiate this response by pecking at the beak of the parent gull. Therefore he constructed a series of models of the parent in which certain features of the adult gull were realistically represented while other features were crudely represented or left out entirely. He found by trial and error that the essential signal to which the chick responds is the red spot on the tip of its parent's beak. Models which lacked the red spot produced almost no response from the young chick, although in other respects they were realistic models; and the red spot on an otherwise crude model would make the chick peck with great regularity.

In other experiments, Tinbergen explored the response of newly-hatched chicks of the common domestic hen to models representing a hawk. Since the chicks were able to recognize a hawk immediately after hatching, he knew that

¹The number of waggles is largest when the source of food is near, and for extremely nearby food, the bees use another dance, the "round dance".



Figure 2.3: *The red spot on the beak of the parent gull proved to be the crucial signal needed to activate the instinctive response of the chick.*

the response must be genetically programmed. Just as he had done in his experiments with herring gulls, Tinbergen experimented with various models, trying to determine the crucial characteristic that was recognized by the chicks, causing them to run for cover. He discovered that a crude model in the shape of the letter T invariably caused the response if pulled across the sky with the wings first and tail last. (Pulled backwards, the T shape caused no response.)

In the case of a newly-hatched herring gull chick pecking at the red spot on the beak of its parent, the program in the chick's brain must be entirely genetically determined, without any environmental component at all. Learning cannot play a part in this behavioral pattern, since the pattern is present in the young chick from the very moment when it breaks out of the egg. On the other hand (Tinbergen pointed out) many behavioral patterns in animals and in man have both an hereditary component and an environmental component. Learning is often very important, but learning seems to be built on a foundation of genetic predisposition.

To illustrate this point, Tinbergen called attention to the case of sheep-dogs, whose remote ancestors were wolves. These dogs, Tinbergen tells us, can easily be trained to drive a flock of sheep towards the shepherd. However, it is difficult to train them to drive the sheep away from their master. Tinbergen



Figure 2.4: *Nikolaas Tinbergen (1907-1988) on the left, with Konrad Lorenz (1903-1989). Together with Karl von Frisch (1886-1982) they shared the 1973 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine for their pioneering work in Ethology.*

explained this by saying that the sheep-dogs regard the shepherd as their “pack leader”; and since driving the prey towards the pack leader is part of the hunting instinct of wolves, it is easy to teach the dogs this maneuver. However, driving the prey away from the pack leader would not make sense for wolves hunting in a pack; it is not part of the instinctive makeup of wolves, nor is it a natural pattern of behavior for their remote descendants, the sheep-dogs.

As a further example of the fact that learning is usually built on a foundation of genetic predisposition, Tinbergen mentions the ease with which human babies learn languages. The language learned is determined by the baby’s environment; but the astonishing ease with which a human baby learns to speak and understand implies a large degree of genetic predisposition.

The third of the 1973 prizewinners, Konrad Lorenz, is more controversial, but at the same time very interesting in the context of studies of the causes of war and discussions of how war may be avoided. As a young boy, he was very fond of animals, and his tolerant parents allowed him to build up a large menagerie in their house in Altenberg, Austria. Even as a child, he became an expert on waterfowl behavior, and he discovered the phenomenon of imprinting. He was given a one day old duckling, and found, to his intense joy, that it transferred its following response to his person. As Lorenz discovered, young waterfowl have a short period immediately after being hatched, when they identify as their “mother” whomever they see first. In later life, Lorenz continued his studies of imprinting, and there exists a touching photograph



Figure 2.5: *Konrad Lorenz with geese who consider him to be their mother.*

of him, with his white beard, standing waist-deep in a pond, surrounded by an adoring group of goslings who believe him to be their mother. Lorenz also studied bonding behavior in waterfowl.

It is, however, for his controversial book *On Aggression* that Konrad Lorenz is best known. In this book, Lorenz makes a distinction between intergroup aggression and intragroup aggression. Among animals, he points out, rank-determining fights are seldom fatal. Thus, for example, the fights that determine leadership within a wolf pack end when the loser makes a gesture of submission. By contrast, fights between groups of animals are often fights to the death, examples being wars between ant colonies, or of bees against intruders, or the defense of a rat pack against strange rats.

Many animals, humans included, seem willing to kill or be killed in defense of the communities to which they belong. Lorenz calls this behavioral tendency a “communal defense response”. He points out that the “holy shiver” - the tingling of the spine that humans experience when performing a heroic act in defense of their communities - is related to the prehuman reflex for raising the hair on the back of an animal as it confronts an enemy - a reflex that makes the animal seem larger than it really is.

Konrad Lorenz and his followers have been criticized for introducing a cathartic model of instincts. According to Lorenz, if an instinct is not used, a pressure for its use builds up over a period of time. In the case of human aggression, according to Lorenz, the nervous energy has to be dissipated in some way, either harmlessly through some substitute for aggression, or else through actual fighting. Thus, for example, Lorenz believed that violent team sports help to reduce the actual level of violence in a society. This conclusion has been challenged by the distinguished ethologist Prof. R.A. Hinde and by many others in his field who believe that there is no experimental evidence for the cathartic model of aggression.²

Professor Hinde points out that unused instincts tend to atrophy; and he concludes that violent team sports or violence shown on television tend to

²In a 1985 letter to the author, Professor Hinde wrote; “Dear Dr. Avery, I found your pamphlet ‘The World as it is and the World as it could be’ a very inspiring document, and I hope that it will be widely circulated. But just one comment - amongst the suggestions for further reading you include Konrad Lorenz’s ‘On Aggression’. The message that comes from this book is that human aggressiveness is inevitably part of our human nature, and we must seek harmless outlets for it. This rests on a cathartic model of human behavior that is outdated. A more appropriate message is that we must find ways of rearing our children so that their propensity to show aggression is reduced, and provide individuals with environments in which any aggressive propensities are not called forth. I’m sure you would agree with this. I hope that you will forgive this slight reservation about what seems to me to be a totally admirable and important statement. With best wishes, Yours sincerely, Robert A. Hinde.

raise rather than lower the level of harmful violence in a society. Although the cathartic model of aggression is now widely considered to be incorrect (and on this point I certainly agree with Professor Hinde) it seems probable that the communal defense response discussed by Lorenz will prove to be a correct and useful concept. The communal defense mechanism can be thought of as the aspect of human emotions which makes it natural for soldiers to kill or be killed in defense of their countries. In the era before nuclear weapons made war prohibitively dangerous, such behavior was considered to be the greatest of virtues.

Generations of schoolboys have learned the Latin motto: “Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori” - it is both sweet and noble to die for one’s country. Even in today’s world, death in battle in defense of country and religion is still praised by nationalists. However, because of the development of weapons of mass destruction, both nationalism and narrow patriotism have become dangerous anachronisms.

In thinking of violence and war, we must be extremely careful not to confuse the behavioral patterns that lead to wife-beating or bar-room brawls with those that lead to episodes like the trench warfare of the First World War, or to the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The first type of aggression is similar to the rank-determining fights of animals, while the second is more akin to the team-spirit exhibited by a football side. Heroic behavior in defense of one’s community has been praised throughout the ages, but the tendency to such behavior has now become a threat to the survival of civilization, since tribalism makes war possible, and war with thermonuclear weapons threatens civilization with catastrophe.

In an essay entitled *The Urge to Self-Destruction*³, Arthur Koestler says:

“Even a cursory glance at history should convince one that individual crimes, committed for selfish motives, play a quite insignificant role in the human tragedy compared with the numbers massacred in unselfish love of one’s tribe, nation, dynasty, church or ideology... Wars are not fought for personal gain, but out of loyalty and devotion to king, country or cause...”

“We have seen on the screen the radiant love of the Führer on the faces of the Hitler Youth... They are transfixed with love, like monks in ecstasy on religious paintings. The sound of the nation’s anthem, the sight of its proud flag, makes you feel part of a wonderfully loving community. The fanatic is prepared to lay down his life for the object of his worship, as the lover is prepared to die for his idol. He is, alas, also prepared to kill anybody who represents a supposed threat to the idol.” The emotion described here by Koestler is the same as the communal defense mechanism (“militant enthusiasm”) described

³in *The Place of Value in a World of Facts*, A. Tiselius and S. Nielsson editors, Wiley, New York, (1970)

in biological terms by Lorenz.

In his book *On Aggression*, Konrad Lorenz gives the following description of the emotions of a hero preparing to risk his life for the sake of the group:

“In reality, militant enthusiasm is a specialized form of communal aggression, clearly distinct from and yet functionally related to the more primitive forms of individual aggression. Every man of normally strong emotions knows, from his own experience, the subjective phenomena that go hand in hand with the response of militant enthusiasm. A shiver runs down the back and, as more exact observation shows, along the outside of both arms. One soars elated, above all the ties of everyday life, one is ready to abandon all for the call of what, in the moment of this specific emotion, seems to be a sacred duty. All obstacles in its path become unimportant; the instinctive inhibitions against hurting or killing one’s fellows lose, unfortunately, much of their power. Rational considerations, criticisms, and all reasonable arguments against the behavior dictated by militant enthusiasm are silenced by an amazing reversal of all values, making them appear not only untenable, but base and dishonorable.

Men may enjoy the feeling of absolute righteousness even while they commit atrocities. Conceptual thought and moral responsibility are at their lowest ebb. As the Ukrainian proverb says: ‘When the banner is unfurled, all reason is in the trumpet.’”

“The subjective experiences just described are correlated with the following objectively demonstrable phenomena. The tone of the striated musculature is raised, the carriage is stiffened, the arms are raised from the sides and slightly rotated inward, so that the elbows point outward. The head is proudly raised, the chin stuck out, and the facial muscles mime the ‘hero face’ familiar from the films. On the back and along the outer surface of the arms, the hair stands on end. This is the objectively observed aspect of the shiver!”

“Anybody who has ever seen the corresponding behavior of the male chimpanzee defending his band or family with self-sacrificing courage will doubt the purely spiritual character of human enthusiasm. The chimp, too, sticks out his chin, stiffens his body, and raises his elbows; his hair stands on end, producing a terrifying magnification of his body contours as seen from the front. The inward rotation of the arms obviously has the purpose of turning the longest-haired side outward to enhance the effect. The whole combination of body attitude and hair-raising constitutes a bluff. This is also seen when a cat humps its back, and is calculated to make the animal appear bigger and more dangerous than it really is. Our shiver, which in German poetry is called a ‘heiliger Schauer’, a ‘holy’ shiver, turns out to be the vestige of a prehuman vegetative response for making a fur bristle which we no longer have. To the humble seeker for biological truth, there cannot be the slightest doubt that human militant enthusiasm evolved out of a communal defense response of our

prehuman ancestor.”

Lorenz goes on to say, “An impartial visitor from another planet, looking at man as he is today - in his hand the atom bomb, the product of his intelligence - in his heart the aggression drive, inherited from his anthropoid ancestors, which the same intelligence cannot control - such a visitor would not give mankind much chance of survival.”

There are some semantic difficulties connected with discussions of the parts of human nature that make war possible. In one of the passages quoted above, Konrad Lorenz speaks of “militant enthusiasm”, which he says is both a form of communal aggression and also a communal defense response. In their inspiring recent book *War No More*, Professor Robert Hinde and Sir Joseph Rotblat use the word “duty” in discussing the same human emotional tendencies. I will instead use the word “tribalism”.

I prefer the word “tribalism” because from an evolutionary point of view the human emotions involved in war grew out of the territorial competition between small tribes during the formative period when our ancestors were hunter-gatherers on the grasslands of Africa. Members of tribe-like groups are bound together by strong bonds of altruism and loyalty. Echos of these bonds can be seen in present-day family groups, in team sports, in the fellowship of religious congregations, and in the bonds that link soldiers to their army comrades and to their nation.

Warfare involves not only a high degree of aggression, but also an extremely high degree of altruism. Soldiers kill, but they also sacrifice their own lives. Thus patriotism and duty are as essential to war as the willingness to kill. As Arthur Koestler points out, “Wars are not fought for personal gain, but out of loyalty and devotion to king, country or cause...”

Tribalism involves passionate attachment to one’s own group, self-sacrifice for the sake of the group, willingness both to die and to kill if necessary to defend the group from its enemies, and belief that in case of a conflict, one’s own group is always in the right.

Population genetics

If we examine altruism and aggression in humans, we notice that members of our species exhibit great altruism towards their own children. Kindness towards close relatives is also characteristic of human behavior, and the closer the biological relationship is between two humans, the greater is the altruism they tend to show towards each other. This profile of altruism is easy to explain on the basis of Darwinian natural selection since two closely related individuals share many genes and, if they cooperate, the genes will be more effectively propagated.



Figure 2.6: *Sir Ronald Aylmer Fisher (1890-1962). Together with J.B.S Haldane he pioneered the theory of population genetics. Recent contributions to this theory have been made by W.D. Hamilton and E.O. Wilson.*

To explain from an evolutionary point of view the communal defense mechanism discussed by Lorenz - the willingness of humans to kill and be killed in defense of their communities - we have only to imagine that our ancestors lived in small tribes and that marriage was likely to take place within a tribe rather than across tribal boundaries. Under these circumstances, each tribe would tend to consist of genetically similar individuals. The tribe itself, rather than the individual, would be the unit on which the evolutionary forces of natural selection would act. The idea of group selection in evolution was proposed in the 1930's by J.B.S. Haldane and R.A. Fisher, and more recently it has been discussed by W.D. Hamilton and E.O. Wilson.

According to the group selection model, a tribe whose members showed altruism towards each other would be more likely to survive than a tribe

whose members cooperated less effectively. Since several tribes might be in competition for the same territory, intertribal aggression might, under some circumstances, increase the chances for survival of one's own tribe. Thus, on the basis of the group selection model, one would expect humans to be kind and cooperative towards members of their own group, but at the same time to sometimes exhibit aggression towards members of other groups, especially in conflicts over territory. One would also expect intergroup conflicts to be most severe in cases where the boundaries between groups are sharpest - where marriage is forbidden across the boundaries.

Formation of group identity

Although humans originally lived in small, genetically homogeneous tribes, the social and political groups of the modern world are much larger, and are often multiracial and multiethnic.

There are a number of large countries that are remarkable for their diversity, for example Brazil, Argentina and the United States. Nevertheless it has been possible to establish social cohesion and group identity within each of these enormous nations. India and China too, are mosaics of diverse peoples, but nevertheless, they function as coherent societies. Thus we see that group identity is a social construction, in which artificial "tribal markings" define the boundaries of the group. These tribal markings will be discussed in more detail below.

One gains hope for the future by observing how it has been possible to produce both internal peace and social cohesion over very large areas of the globe - areas that contain extremely diverse populations. The difference between making large, ethnically diverse countries function as coherent sociopolitical units and making the entire world function as a unit is not very great.

Since group identity is a social construction, it is not an impossible goal to think of enlarging the already-large groups of the modern world to include all of humanity.

Religion and ethnic identity

For the hominids that formed a bridge between present-day humans and the common ancestor of ourselves and the anthropoid apes, culture included not only rudimentary language, but also skills such as methods of tool-making and weapon making. Table 2.1 shows the most important hominid species, while Table 2.2 shows some of their cultural achievements.

An acceleration of human cultural development seems to have begun approximately 70,000 years ago. The first art objects date from that period, as

Table 2.1: Hominid species

genus and species	years before present	brain volume
Ardipithecus ramidus	5.8 to 4.4 million	
Australopithecus anamensis	4.2 to 3.9 million	
Australopithecus afarensis	3.9 to 3.0 million	375 to 550 cm ³
Australopithecus africanus	3 to 2 million	420 to 500 cm ³
Australopithecus aethiopicus	2.6 to 2.3 million	410 cm ³
Australopithecus robustus	2 to 1.5 million	530 cm ³
Australopithecus boisei	2.1 to 1.1 million	530 cm ³
Homo habilis	2.4 to 1.5 million	500 to 800 cm ³
Homo erectus	1.8 to 0.3 million	750 to 1225 cm ³
Homo sapiens (archaic)	0.5 to 0.2 million	1200 cm ³
Homo sapiens neand.	0.23 to 0.03 million	1450 cm ³
Homo sapiens sapiens	0.12 mil. to present	1350 cm ³

Table 2.2: Paleolithic cultures

name	years before present	characteristics
Oldowan	2.4 to 1.5 million	Africa, flaked pebble tools
Choukoutien	1.2 to 0.5 million	chopper tool culture of east Asia
Abbevillian	500,000 to 450,000	crude stone handaxes Africa, Europe, northeast Asia
Acheulian	400,000 to 200,000	skillfully shaped stone handaxes, some use of fire
Clactonian	450,000 to 250,000	fully developed flake tools
Mousterian	70,000 to 20,000	produced by Neanderthal man, retouched core and flake tools, wooden, spears, fire, burial of dead
Aurignacian	50,000 to 20,000	western Europe, fine stone blades, pins and awls of bone, fire, cave art
Solutrian	20,000 to 17,000	France and central Europe, long, pressure-flaked bifacial blades
Magdalenian	17,000 to 10,000	western Europe, reindeer hunting awls and needles of bone and antler

do migrations that ultimately took modern man across the Bering Strait to the western hemisphere. A land bridge extending from Siberia to Alaska is thought to have been formed approximately 70,000 years ago, disappearing again roughly 10,000 years before the present. Cultural and genetic studies indicate that migrations from Asia to North America took place during this period. Shamanism,⁴ which is found both in Asia and the new world, as well as among the Sami (Lapps) of northern Scandinavia, is an example of the cultural links between the hunting societies of these regions.

Before the acceleration of human cultural development just mentioned, genetic change and cultural change went hand in hand, but during the last 70,000 years, the constantly accelerating rate of information-accumulation and cultural evolution has increasingly outdistanced the rate of genetic change in humans. Genetically we are almost identical with our hunter-gatherer ancestors of 70,000 years ago, but cultural evolution has changed our way of life beyond recognition.

Humans are capable of cultural evolution because it is so easy to overwrite and modify our instinctive behavior patterns with learned behavior. Within the animal kingdom, humans are undoubtedly the champions in this respect. No other species is so good at learning as we are. During the early stages of cultural evolution, the tendency of humans to be religious may have facilitated the overwriting of instinctive behavior with the culture of the tribe. Since religions, like languages, are closely associated with particular cultures, they serve as marks of ethnic identity.

Tribal markings; ethnicity; pseudospeciation

In biology, a species is defined to be a group of mutually fertile organisms. Thus all humans form a single species, since mixed marriages between all known races will produce children, and subsequent generations in mixed marriages are also fertile. However, although there is never a biological barrier to marriages across ethnic and racial boundaries, there are often very severe cultural barriers.

Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, a student of Konrad Lorenz, introduced the word *pseudospeciation* to denote cases where cultural barriers between two groups of humans are so strongly marked that marriages across the boundary are difficult and infrequent. In such cases, he pointed out, the two groups function as though they were separate species, although from a biological standpoint this is nonsense. When two such groups are competing for the same land, the

⁴A shaman is a special member of a hunting society who, while in a trance, is thought to be able pass between the upper world, the present world, and the lower world, to cure illnesses, and to insure the success of a hunt.



Figure 2.7: *Scars help to establish tribal identity*

same water, the same resources, and the same jobs, the conflicts between them can become very bitter indeed. Each group regards the other as being “not truly human”.

In his book *The Biology of War and Peace*, Eibl-Eibesfeldt discusses the “tribal markings” used by groups of humans to underline their own identity and to clearly mark the boundary between themselves and other groups. One of the illustrations in the book shows the marks left by ritual scarification on the faces of the members of certain African tribes. These scars would be hard to counterfeit, and they help to establish and strengthen tribal identity. Seeing a photograph of the marks left by ritual scarification on the faces of African tribesmen, it is impossible not to be reminded of the dueling scars that Prussian army officers once used to distinguish their caste from outsiders.

Surveying the human scene, one can find endless examples of signs that mark the bearer as a member of a particular group - signs that can be thought of as “tribal markings”: tattoos; piercing; bones through the nose or ears; elongated necks or ears; filed teeth; Chinese binding of feet; circumcision, both male and female; unique hair styles; decorations of the tongue, nose, or naval; peculiarities of dress, fashions, veils, chadors, and headdresses; caste markings in



Figure 2.8: *An example of the dueling scars that Prussian army officers once used to distinguish their caste from outsiders.*

India; use or nonuse of perfumes; codes of honor and value systems; traditions of hospitality and manners; peculiarities of diet (certain foods forbidden, others preferred); giving traditional names to children; knowledge of dances and songs; knowledge of recipes; knowledge of common stories, literature, myths, poetry or common history; festivals, ceremonies, and rituals; burial customs, treatment of the dead and ancestor worship; methods of building and decorating homes; games and sports peculiar to a culture; relationship to animals, knowledge of horses and ability to ride; nonrational systems of belief. Even a baseball hat worn backwards or the professed ability to enjoy atonal music can mark a person as a member of a special “tribe”. Undoubtedly there many people in New York who would never think of marrying someone who could not appreciate the the paintings of Jasper Johns, and many in London who would consider anyone had not read all the books of Virginia Wolfe to be entirely outside the bounds of civilization.

By far the most important mark of ethnic identity is language, and within a particular language, dialect and accent. If the only purpose of language were communication, it would be logical for the people of a small country like Denmark to stop speaking Danish and go over to a more universally-understood international language such as English. However, language has another function in addition to communication: It is also a mark of identity. It establishes the boundary of the group.

Within a particular language, dialects and accents mark the boundaries of subgroups. For example, in England, great social significance is attached to accents and diction, a tendency that George Bernard Shaw satirized in his play, *Pygmalion*, which later gained greater fame as the musical comedy, *My Fair Lady*. This being the case, we can ask why all citizens of England do not follow the example of Eliza Doolittle in Shaw’s play, and improve their social positions by acquiring Oxford accents. However, to do so would be to run the risk of being laughed at by one’s peers and regarded as a traitor to one’s own local community and friends. School children everywhere can be very cruel to any child who does not fit into the local pattern. At Eton, an Oxford accent is compulsory; but in a Yorkshire school, a child with an Oxford accent would suffer for it.

Next after language, the most important “tribal marking” is religion. As mentioned above, it seems probable that in the early history of our hunter-gatherer ancestors, religion evolved as a mechanism for perpetuating tribal traditions and culture. Like language, and like the innate facial expressions studied by Darwin, religion is a universal characteristic of all human societies. All known races and cultures practice some sort of religion. Thus a tendency to be religious seems to be built into human nature, or at any rate, the needs that religion satisfies seem to be a part of our inherited makeup. Otherwise,



Figure 2.9: *Audrey Hepburn in the role of Shaw's heroine, Eliza Doolittle.*

religion would not be so universal as it is.

Religion is often strongly associated with ethnicity and nationalism, that is to say, it is associated with the demarcation of a particular group of people by its culture or race. For example, the Jewish religion is associated with Zionism and with Jewish nationalism. Similarly Islam is strongly associated with Arab nationalism. Christianity too has played an important role in many aggressive wars, for example in the Crusades, in the European conquest of the New World, in European colonial conquests in Africa and Asia, and in the wars between Catholics and Protestants within Europe. We shall see in a later chapter how the originators of the German nationalist movement (the precursors of the Nazis), used quasi-religious psychological methods.

Human history seems to be saturated with blood. It would be impossible to enumerate the conflicts with which the story of humankind is stained. Many of the atrocities of history have involved what Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt called “pseudospeciation”, that is to say, they were committed in conflicts involving groups between which sharply marked cultural barriers have made intermarriage difficult and infrequent. Examples include the present conflict between Israelis and Palestinians; “racial cleansing” in Kosovo; the devastating wars between Catholics and Protestants in Europe; the Lebanese civil war; genocide committed against Jews and Gypsies during World War II; recent genocide in Rwanda; current intertribal massacres in the Ituri Province of Congo; use of poison gas against Kurdish civilians by Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq; the

massacre of Armenians by Turks; massacres of Hindus by Muslims and of Muslims by Hindus in post-independence India; massacres of Native Americans by white conquerors and settlers in all parts of the New World; and massacres committed during the Crusades. The list seems almost endless.

Religion often contributes to conflicts by sharpening the boundaries between ethnic groups and by making marriage across those boundaries difficult and infrequent. However, this negative role is balanced by a positive one, whenever religion is the source of ethical principles, especially the principle of universal human brotherhood.

The religious leaders of today's world have the opportunity to contribute importantly to the solution of the problem of war. They have the opportunity to powerfully support the concept of universal human brotherhood, to build bridges between religious groups, to make intermarriage across ethnic boundaries easier, and to soften the distinctions between communities. If they fail to do this, they will have failed humankind at a time of crisis.

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Chapter 3

Nationalism, a False Religion

From tribalism to nationalism

70,000 years ago, our hunter-gatherer ancestors lived in tribes. Loyalty to the tribe was natural for our ancestors, as was collective work on tribal projects. Today, at the start of the 21st century, we live in nation-states to which we feel emotions of loyalty very similar to the tribal emotions of our ancestors.

The enlargement of the fundamental political and social unit has been made necessary and possible by improved transportation and communication, and by changes in the techniques of warfare. In Europe, for example, the introduction of canons in warfare made it possible to destroy castles, and thus the power of central monarchs was increased at the expense of feudal barons. At the same time, improved roads made merchants wish to trade freely over larger areas. Printing allowed larger groups of people to read the same books and newspapers, and thus to experience the same emotions. Therefore the size of the geographical unit over which it was possible to establish social and political cohesion became enlarged.

The tragedy of our present situation is that the same forces that made the nation-state replace the tribe as the fundamental political and social unit have continued to operate with constantly-increasing intensity. For this reason, the totally sovereign nation-state has become a dangerous anachronism. Although the world now functions as a single unit because of modern technology, its political structure is based on fragments, on absolutely-sovereign nation states - large compared to tribes, but too small for present-day technology, since they do not include all of mankind. Gross injustices mar today's global economic interdependence, and because of the development of thermonuclear weapons, the continued existence of civilization is threatened by the anarchy that exists today at the international level.

In this chapter, we will discuss nationalism in Europe, and especially the

conflicts between absolutely sovereign nation-states that led to the two World Wars. However, it is important to remember that parallel to this story, run others, equally tragic - conflicts in the Middle East, the Vietnam War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, conflicts between India and Pakistan, the Korean War, the two Gulf Wars, and so on. In all of these tragedies, the root the trouble is that international interdependence exists in practice because of modern technology, but our political institutions, emotions and outlook are at the stunted level of the absolutely sovereign nation-state. Although we focus here on German nationalism as an example, and although historically it had terrible consequences, it is not a danger today. Germany is now one of the world's most peaceful and responsible countries, and the threats to world peace now come from nationalism outside Europe.

Nationalism in Europe

There is no doubt that the founders of nationalism in Europe were idealists; but the movement that they created has already killed more than sixty million people in two world wars, and today it contributes to the threat of a catastrophic third world war.

Nationalism in Europe is an outgrowth of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the Romantic Movement. According to the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the ideas of the French Revolution, no government is legitimate unless it derives its power from the will of the people. Speaking to the Convention of 1792, Danton proclaimed that "by sending us here as deputies, the French Nation has brought into being a grand committee for the general insurrection of peoples."

Since all political power was now believed to be vested in the "nation", the question of national identity suddenly became acutely important. France itself was a conglomeration of peoples - Normans, Bretons, Provencaux, Burgundians, Flemings, Germans, Basques, and Catalans - but these peoples had been united under a strong central government since the middle ages, and by the time of the French Revolution it was easy for them to think of themselves as a "nation". However, what we now call Germany did not exist. There was only a collection of small feudal principalities, in some of which the most common language was German.

The early political unity of France enabled French culture to dominate Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries. Frederick the Great of Prussia and his court spoke and wrote in French. Frederick himself regarded German as a language of ignorant peasants, and on the rare occasions when he tried to speak or write in German, the result was almost incomprehensible. The same was true in the courts of Brandenburg, Saxony, Pomerania, etc. Each of

them was a small-scale Versailles. Below the French-speaking aristocracy was a German-speaking middle class and a German or Slavic-speaking peasantry.

The creators of the nationalist movement in Germany were young middle-class German-speaking students and theologians who felt frustrated and stifled by the narrow *kleinstädtisch* provincial atmosphere of the small principalities in which they lived. They also felt frustrated because their talents were completely ignored by the French-speaking aristocracy. This was the situation when the armies of Napoleon marched across Europe, easily defeating and humiliating both Prussia and Austria. The young German-speaking students asked themselves what it was that the French had that they did not have.

The answer was not hard to find. What the French had was a sense of national identity. In fact, the French Revolution had unleashed long-dormant tribal instincts in the common people of France. It was the fanatical support of the Marseillaise-singing masses that made the French armies invincible. The founders of the German nationalist movement concluded that if they were ever to have a chance of defeating France, they would have to inspire the same fanaticism in their own peoples. They would have to touch the same almost-forgotten cord of human nature that the French Revolution had touched.

The common soldiers who fought in the wars of Europe in the first part of the 18th century were not emotionally involved. They were recruited from the lowest ranks of society, and they joined the army of a king or prince for the sake of money. All this was changed by the French Revolution. In June, 1792, the French Legislative Assembly decreed that a Fatherland Alter be erected in each commune with the inscription, "The citizen is born, lives and dies for *la patrie*." The idea of a "Fatherland Alter" clearly demonstrates the quasi-religious nature of French nationalism.

The soldiers in Napoleon's army were not fighting for the sake of money, but for an ideal that they felt to be larger and more important than themselves - Republicanism and the glory of France. The masses, who for so long had been outside of the politics of a larger world, and who had been emotionally involved only in the affairs of their own village, were now fully aroused to large-scale political action. The surge of nationalist feeling in France was tribalism on an enormous scale - tribalism amplified and orchestrated by new means of mass communication.

This was the phenomenon with which the German nationalists felt they had to contend. One of the founders of the German nationalist movement was Johan Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), a follower of the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Besides rejecting objective criteria for morality, Fichte denied the value of the individual. According to him, the individual is nothing and the state is everything. Denying the value of the individual, Fichte compared the state to an organism of which the individual is a part:



Figure 3.1: *A portrait of Napoleon (as he liked to see himself).*



Figure 3.2: *A romantic figure representing Germany*

“In a product of nature”, Fichte wrote, “no part is what it is but through its relation to the whole, and it would absolutely not be what it is apart from this relation; more, if it had no organic relation at all, it would be absolutely nothing, since without reciprocity in action between organic forces maintaining one another in equilibrium, no form would subsist... Similarly, man obtains a determinate position in the scheme of things and a fixity in nature only through his civil association... Between the isolated man and the citizen there is the same relation as between raw and organized matter... In an organized body, each part continuously maintains the whole, and in maintaining it, maintains itself also. Similarly the citizen with regard to the State.”

Another post-Kantian, Adam Müller (1779-1829) wrote that “the state is the intimate association of all physical and spiritual needs of the whole nation into one great, energetic, infinitely active and living whole... the totality of human affairs... If we exclude for ever from this association even the most unimportant part of a human being, if we separate private life from public life even at one point, then we no longer perceive the State as a phenomenon of life and as an idea.”

The doctrine that Adam Müller sets forth in this passage is what we now call Totalitarianism, i.e. the belief that the state ought to encompass “the totality of human affairs”. This doctrine is the opposite of the Liberal belief

that the individual is all-important and that the role of the state ought to be as small as possible.

Fichte maintains that “a State which constantly seeks to increase its internal strength is forced to desire the gradual abolition of all favoritisms, and the establishment of equal rights for all citizens, in order that it, the State itself, may enter upon its own true right - to apply the whole surplus power of all its citizens without exception to the furtherance of its own purposes... Internal peace, and the condition of affairs in which everyone may by diligence earn his daily bread... is only a means, a condition and framework for what love of Fatherland really wants to bring about, namely that the Eternal and the Divine may blossom in the world and never cease to become more pure, perfect and excellent.”

Fichte proposed a new system of education which would abolish the individual will and teach individuals to become subservient to the will of the state. “The new education must consist essentially in this”, Fichte wrote, “that it completely destroys the will in the soil that it undertakes to cultivate... If you want to influence a man at all, you must do more than merely talk to him; you must fashion him, and fashion him, and fashion him in such a way that he simply cannot will otherwise than you wish him to will.”

Fichte and Herder (1744-1803) developed the idea that language is the key to national identity. They believed that the German language is superior to French because it is an “original” language, not derived from Latin. In a poem that is obviously a protest against the French culture of Frederick’s court in Prussia, Herder wrote:

“Look at other nationalities!
Do they wander about
So that nowhere in the world they are strangers
Except to themselves?
They regard foreign countries with proud disdain.
And you, German, alone, returning from abroad,
Wouldst greet your mother in French?
Oh spew it out before your door!
Spew out the ugly slime of the Seine!
Speak German, O you German!

Another poem, “The German Fatherland”, by Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860), expresses a similar sentiment:

“What is the Fatherland of the German?
 Name me the great country!
 Where the German tongue sounds
 And sings *Lieder* in God’s praise,
 That’s what it ought to be
 Call that thine, valiant German!
 That is the Fatherland of the German,
 Where anger roots out foreign nonsense,
 Where every Frenchman is called enemy,
 Where every German is called friend,
 That’s what it ought to be!
 It ought to be the whole of Germany!”

It must be remembered that when these poems were written, the German nation did not exist except in the minds of the nationalists. Groups of people speaking various dialects of German were scattered throughout central and eastern Europe. In many places, the German-speaking population was a minority. To bring together these scattered German-speaking groups would require, in many cases, the conquest and subjugation of Slavic majorities; but the quasi-religious fervor of the nationalists was such that aggression took on the appearance of a “holy war”. Fichte believed that war between states introduces “a living and progressive principle into history”. By war he did not mean a decorous limited war of the type fought in the 18th century, but “...a true and proper war - *a war of subjugation!*”

The German nationalist movement was not only quasi-religious in its tone; it also borrowed psychological techniques from religion. It aroused the emotions of the masses to large-scale political activity by the use of semi-religious political liturgy, involving myth, symbolism, and festivals. In his book “German Society” (1814), Arndt advocated the celebration of “holy festivals”. For example, he thought that the celebration of the pagan festival of the summer solstice could be combined with a celebration of the victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Leipzig.

Arndt believed that special attention should be given to commemoration of the “noble dead” of Germany’s wars for, as he said, “...here history enters life, and life becomes part of history”. Arndt advocated a combination of Christian and pagan symbolism. The festivals should begin with prayers and a church service; but in addition, the oak leaf and the sacred flame of ancient pagan tradition were to play a part.

In 1815, many of Arndt’s suggestions were followed in the celebration of the anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig. This festival clearly exhibited a mixing of secular and Christian elements to form a national cult. Men and women



Figure 3.3: *Celebration of the “German May” at Hambrach Castle*

decorated with oak leaves made pilgrimages to the tops of mountains, where they were addressed by priests speaking in front of alters on which burned “the sacred flame of Germany’s salvation”. This borrowing of psychological techniques from religion was deliberate, and it was retained by the Nazi Party when the latter adopted the methods of the early German nationalists. The Nazi mass rallies retained the order and form of Protestant liturgy, including hymns, confessions of faith, and responses between the leader and the congregation.¹

In 1832, the first mass meeting in German history took place, when 32,000 men and women gathered to celebrate the “German May”. Singing songs, wearing black, red, and gold emblems, and carrying flags, they marched to Hambrach Castle, where they were addressed by their leaders.

By the 1860’s the festivals celebrating the cult of nationalism had acquired a definite form. Processions through a town, involving elaborate national symbolism, were followed by unison singing by men’s choirs, patriotic plays, displays by gymnasts and sharp-shooters, and sporting events. The male choirs, gymnasts and sharp-shooters were required to wear uniforms; and the others attending the festivals wore oak leaves in their caps. The cohesion of the crowd was achieved not only by uniformity of dress, but also by the space in which the crowd was contained. Arndt advocated the use of a “sacred space” for mass

¹ The Nazi sacred symbols and the concept of the swastika or “gamma cross”, the eagle, the red/black/white color scheme, the ancient Nordic runes (one of which became the symbol of the SS), were all adopted from esoteric traditions going back centuries, shared by Brahmins, Scottish Masons, Rosicrucians, the Knights Templars and other esoteric societies.

meetings. The idea of the “sacred space” was taken from Stonehenge, which was seen by the nationalists as a typical ancient Germanic meeting place. The Nazi art historian Hubert Schrade wrote: “The space which urges us to join the community of the *Volk* is of greater importance than the figure which is meant to represent the Fatherland.”

Dramas were also used to promote a feeling of cohesion and national identity. An example of this type of propagandist drama is Kleist’s play, “Hermann’s Battle”, (1808). The play deals with a Germanic chieftain who, in order to rally the tribes against the Romans, sends his own men, disguised as Roman soldiers, to commit atrocities in the neighboring German villages. At one point in the play, Hermann is told of a Roman soldier who risked his own life to save a German child in a burning house. Hearing this report, Hermann exclaims, “May he be cursed if he has done this! He has for a moment made my heart disloyal; he has made me for a moment betray the august cause of Germany!... I was counting, by all the gods of revenge, on fire, loot, violence, murder, and all the horrors of unbridled war! What need have I of Latins who use me well?”

At another point in the play, Hermann’s wife, Thusnelda, tempts a Roman Legate into a romantic meeting in a garden. Instead of finding Thusnelda, the Legate finds himself locked in the garden with a starved and savage she-bear. Standing outside the gate, Thusnelda urges the Legate to make love to the she-bear, and, as the bear tears him to pieces, she faints with pleasure.

Richard Wagner’s dramas were also part of the nationalist movement. They were designed to create “an unending dream of sacred *völkisch* revelation”. No applause was permitted, since this would disturb the reverential atmosphere of the cult. A new type of choral theater was developed which “...no longer represented the fate of the individual to the audience, but that which concerns the community, the *Volk*... Thus, in contrast to the bourgeois theater, private persons are no longer represented, but only types.”

We have primarily been discussing the growth of German nationalism, but very similar movements developed in other countries throughout Europe and throughout the world. Characteristic for all these movements was the growth of state power, and the development of a reverential, quasi-religious, attitude towards the state. Patriotism became “a sacred duty.” According to Georg Wilhelm Fredrich Hegel, “The existence of the State is the movement of God in the world. It is the ultimate power on earth; it is its own end and object. It is an ultimate end that has absolute rights against the individual.”

Nationalism in England (as in Germany) was to a large extent a defensive response against French nationalism. At the end of the 18th century, the liberal ideas of the Enlightenment were widespread in England. There was much sympathy in England with the aims of the French Revolution, and a



Figure 3.4: *Wagner's dramas were part of the quasi-religious cult of German nationalism*

similar revolution almost took place in England. However, when Napoleon landed an army in Ireland and threatened to invade England, there was a strong reaction towards national self-defense. The war against France gave impetus to nationalism in England, and military heroes like Wellington and Nelson became objects of quasi-religious worship. British nationalism later found an outlet in colonialism.

Italy, like Germany, had been a collection of small principalities, but as a reaction to the other nationalist movements sweeping across Europe, a movement for a united Italy developed. The conflicts between the various nationalist movements of Europe produced the frightful world wars of the 20th century. Indeed, the shot that signaled the outbreak of World War I was fired by a Serbian nationalist.

War did not seem especially evil to the 18th and 19th century nationalists because technology had not yet given humanity the terrible weapons of the 20th century. In the 19th century, the fatal combination of space-age science and stone-age politics still lay in the future. However, even in 1834, the German writer Heinrich Heine was perceptive enough to see the threat:

“There will be”, Heine wrote, “Kantians forthcoming who, in the world to come, will know nothing of reverence for aught, and who will ravage without mercy, and riot with sword and axe through the soil of all European life to dig out the last root of the past. There will be well-armed Fichtians upon the ground, who in the fanaticism of the Will are not restrained by fear or self-advantage, for they live in the Spirit.”

The two world wars

In 1870, the fiercely nationalistic Prussian Chancellor, Otto von Bismark, won revenge for the humiliations which his country had suffered under Napoleon Bonaparte. In a lightning campaign, Prussia's modern army overran France and took Emperor Napoleon III prisoner. The victorious Prussians demanded from France not only the payment of a huge sum of money - five billion francs - but also the annexation of the French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. In 1871, Kaiser Wilhelm I was proclaimed Emperor of all Germany in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. The dreams of the German nationalists had been realized! The small German-speaking states of central Europe were now united into a powerful nation dominated by Prussia.

Bismark had provoked a number of wars in order to achieve his aim - the unification of Germany under Prussia; but after 1871 he strove for peace, fearing that war would harm his new creation. “I am bored”, Bismark remarked to his friends, “The great things are done. The German Reich is made.”

In order to preserve the status quo in Europe, Bismark now made alliances



Figure 3.5: *Otto von Bismarck*

not only with Austria-Hungary and Italy, but also with Russia. To make alliances with both Austria-Hungary and Russia required considerable diplomatic skill, since the two empires were enemies - rivals for influence in the Balkan Peninsula. Several small Balkan states had broken away from the decaying Turkish Empire. Both the Hapsburg Emperors and the Romanoff Czars were anxious to dominate these small states. However, nationalist emotions were even more frenzied in the Balkans than they were elsewhere in Europe. Nationalism was a cause for which 19th century Europeans were willing to kill each other, just as three centuries earlier they had been willing to kill each other over their religious differences.

Serbia was an independent state, but the fanatical Serbian nationalists were far from satisfied. Their real aim was to create an independent Pan-Serbia (or Yugoslavia) which would include all the Slavic parts of Austria-Hungary. Thus, at the turn of the century, the Balkans were a trouble spot, much as the Middle East is a trouble spot today.

Kaiser Wilhelm I was a stable monarch, but in 1888 he died and the German throne passed to his son, Frederick III, who was incurably ill with cancer of the throat. After reigning only 90 days, Frederick also died, and his 29 year old son became the new German Emperor - Kaiser Wilhelm II. Wilhelm II

had been born with a withered arm, and as a boy he had been constantly told that he must become a great warrior. His adult behavior sometimes showed tendencies towards both paranoia and megalomania.

In 1890, Wilhelm dismissed Otto von Bismark (“dropping the pilot”). Bismark was now on the side of peace, and he might have guided Germany safely through the troubled waters of European politics if he had been allowed to continue; but Wilhelm wanted to play Bismark himself.

Wilhelm’s first act was to break off Germany’s alliance with Russia. Czar Alexander III, against his principles, then formed an alliance with republican France. Realizing that he had blundered, Wilhelm tried to patch up relations with the Czar, but it was too late. Europe was now divided into two armed camps - Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy, opposed by Russia and France.

Wilhelm’s government then began to build a huge modern navy, much to the consternation of the English. The government of England felt that it was necessary for their country to have control of the sea, since England was a densely-populated island, dependent on imports of food. It was not only with respect to naval power that England felt threatened: After being united in 1871, Germany had undergone an industrial revolution; and German industries were pouring out steel and high-quality manufactured goods that threatened England’s dominance of world trade. Commercial and naval competition with the rising German Empire drove England into an informal alliance with Russia and France - the Triple Entente.

Meanwhile the situation in the Balkans became increasingly troubled, and at the end of July, 1914, the Austrian Foreign Minister, Count Brechtold, used the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife as a pretext for crushing the Serbian Pan-Slavic movement. Russia mobilized against Austria in defense of the Serbs, and the Austrian government interpreted the mobilization as a declaration of war. Germany was linked to Austria by an alliance, while France was linked to Russia. In this way, both France and Russia were drawn into the conflict.

On August 2, Wilhelm demanded free passage of German troops through Belgium. The Belgians refused. They gave warning that an invasion would be resisted, and they appealed to England for support of their country’s neutrality. On August 4, Britain sent an ultimatum to the Kaiser: Unless he halted the invasion of Belgium, Britain would enter the war. The invasion of Belgium rolled on. It was now too late to stop the great death-machine, and as it gained momentum, Sir Edward Grey spoke the sad and prophetic words. “The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.”

None of the people who started the First World War had the slightest idea what it would be like. The armies of Europe were dominated by the old feudal



landowning class, whose warlike traditions were rooted in the Middle Ages. The counts and barons who still ruled Europe's diplomatic and military establishments knew how to drink champagne, dance elegantly, ride horses, and seduce women. They pranced off to war in high spirits, the gold on their colorful uniforms glittering in the sunshine, full of expectations of romantic cavalry charges, kisses stolen from pretty girls in captured villages, decorations, glory and promotion, like characters in "The Chocolate Soldier" or "Die Fledermaus". The romantic dreams of glory of every small boy who ever played with toy soldiers were about to become a thrilling reality!

But the war, when it came, was not like that. Technology had taken over. The railroads, the telegraph, high explosives and the machine gun had changed everything. The opposing armies, called up by means of the telegraph and massed by means of the railroads, were the largest ever assembled up to that time in the history of the world. In France alone, between August 2 and August 18, 1914, the railway system transported 3,781,000 people under military orders. Across Europe, the railways hurled more than six million highly armed men into collision with each other. Nothing on that scale had ever happened before, and no one had any idea of what it would be like.

At first the Schlieffen Plan seemed to be working perfectly. When Kaiser Wilhelm had sent his troops into battle, he had told them: "You will be home before the leaves are off the trees", and at first it seemed that his prediction would be fulfilled. However, the machine gun had changed the character of war. Attacking infantry could be cut down in heaps by defending machine gunners. The war came to a stalemate, since defense had an advantage over attack.

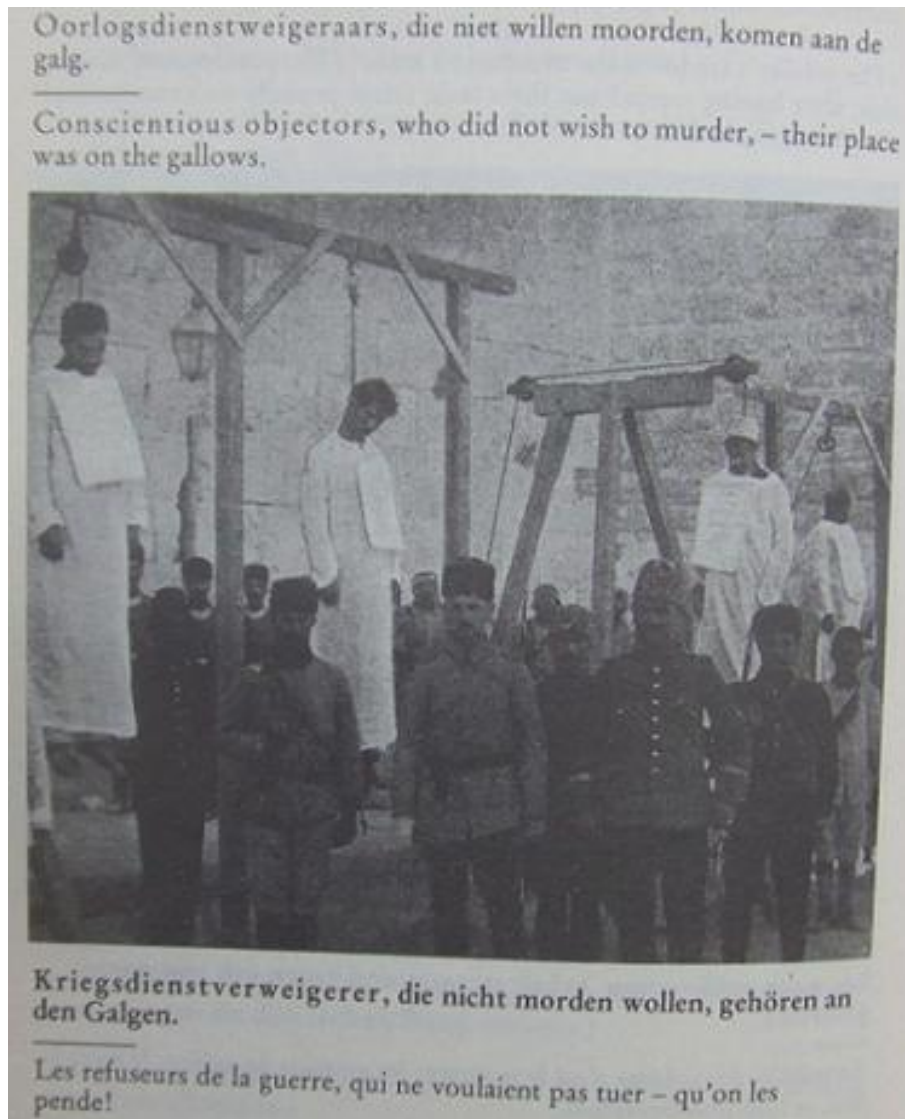


Figure 3.6: *The fate of conscientious objectors.*



Figure 3.7: *World War I casualties.*

On the western front, the opposing armies dug lines of trenches stretching from the Atlantic to the Swiss border. The two lines of trenches were separated by a tangled mass of barbed wire. Periodically the generals on one side or the other would order their armies to break through the opposing line. They would bring forward several thousand artillery pieces, fire a million or so high explosive shells to cut the barbed wire and to kill as many as possible of the defenders, and then order their men to attack. The soldiers had to climb out of the trenches and struggle forward into the smoke. There was nothing else for them to do. If they disobeyed orders, they would be court-martialed and shot as deserters. They were driven forward and slaughtered in futile attacks, none of which gained anything. Their leaders had failed them. Civilization had failed them. There was nothing for them to do but to die, to be driven forward into the poison gas and barbed wire and to be scythed down by machine gun fire, for nothing, for the ambition, vanity and stupidity of their rulers.

At the battle of Verdun, 700,000 young men were butchered in this way, and at the battle of Somme, 1,100,000 young lives were wasted. On the German side, the soldiers sang "Lili Marlein" - "She waits for a boy who's far away..." and on the other side, British and American soldiers sang:

"There's a long long trail a-winding
into the land of my dreams
where the nightingale is singing
and the pale moon beams.
There's a long long night of waiting
until my dreams all come true,
'til the day that I'll be going
down that long long trail with you."

For millions of Europe's young men, the long, long trail lead only to death in the mud and smoke; and for millions of mothers and sweethearts waiting at home, dreams of the future were shattered by a telegram announcing the death of the boy for whom they were waiting.

When the war ended four years later, ten million young men had been killed and twenty million wounded, of whom six million were crippled for life. The war had cost 350,000,000,000 1919 dollars. This was a calculable cost; but the cost in human suffering and brutalization of values was incalculable. It hardly mattered whose fault the catastrophe had been. Perhaps the Austrian government had been more to blame than any other. But blame for the war certainly did not rest with the Austrian people nor with the young Austrians who had been forced to fight. However, the tragedy of the First World War was that it created long-lasting hatred between the nations involved; and in

this way it lead, only twenty years later, to an even more catastrophic global war.

The First World War brought about the downfall of four emperors: the Russian Czar, the Turkish Sultan, the Austro-Hungarian Emperor and the German Kaiser. The decaying and unjust Czarist government had for several years been threatened by revolution; and the horrors of the war into which the Czar had led his people were enough to turn them decisively against his government. During 1915 alone, Russia lost more than two million men, either killed or captured. Finally the Russian soldiers refused to be driven into battle and began to shoot their officers. In February, 1917, the Czar abdicated; and on December 5, 1917, the new communist government of Russia signed an armistice with Germany.

The German Chief of Staff, General Ludendorff, then shifted all his troops to the west in an all-out offensive. In March, 1918, he threw his entire army into a gigantic offensive which he called "the Emperor's Battle". The German army drove forward, and by June they were again on the Marne, only 50 miles from Paris. However, the Allies counterattacked, strengthened by the first American troops, and using, for the first time, large numbers of tanks. The Germans fell back, and by September they had lost more than a million men in six months. Morale in the retreating German army was falling rapidly, and fresh American troops were landing in France at the rate of 250,000 per month. Ludendorff realized that the German cause was hopeless and that if peace were not made quickly, a communist revolution would take place in Germany just as it had in Russia.

The old feudal Prussian military caste, having led Germany into disaster, now unloaded responsibility onto the liberals. Ludendorff advised the Kaiser to abdicate, and a liberal leader, Prince Max of Baden, was found to head the new government. On November 9, 1918, Germany was proclaimed a republic. Two days later, an armistice was signed and the fighting stopped.

During the last years of the war the world, weary of the politics of power and nationalist greed, had looked with hope towards the idealism of the American President, Woodrow Wilson. He had proposed a "peace without victory" based on his famous Fourteen Points". Wilson himself considered that the most important of his Fourteen Points was the last one, which specified that "A general association of nations must be formed... for the purpose of affording mutual guaranties of political independence and territorial integrity of great and small states alike."

When Wilson arrived in Europe to attend the peace conference in Paris, he was wildly cheered by crowds of ordinary people, who saw in his idealism new hope for the world. Unfortunately, the hatred produced by four years of horrible warfare was now too great to be overcome. At the peace conference,

the aged nationalist Georges Clemenceau was unswerving in his deep hatred of Germany. France had suffered greatly during the war. Half of all French males who had been between the ages of 20 and 32 in 1914 had been killed; much of the French countryside had been devastated; and the retreating German armies had destroyed the French coal mines. Clemenceau was determined to extract both revenge and financial compensation from the Germans.

In the end, the peace treaty was a compromise. Wilson was given his dream, the League of Nations; and Clemenceau was given the extremely harsh terms which he insisted should be imposed on Germany. By signing the treaty, Germany would be forced to acknowledge sole responsibility for having caused the war; it would be forced to hand over the Kaiser and other leaders to be tried as war criminals; to pay for all civilian damage during the war; to agree to internationalization of all German rivers and the Kiel Canal; to give France, Belgium and Italy 25 million tons of coal annually as part of the reparations payments; to surrender the coal mines in Alsace-Lorraine to France; to give up all foreign colonies; to lose all property owned by Germans abroad; and to agree to Allied occupation of the Rhineland for fifteen years.

The loss of coal, in particular, was a death-blow aimed at German industry. Reading the terms of the treaty, the German Chancellor cried: "May the hand wither that signs such a peace!" The German Foreign Minister, Count Ulrich von Brockendorff-Rantzau, refused to sign, and the German government made public the terms of the treaty which it had been offered.

French newspapers picked up the information, and at 4 a.m. one morning, a messenger knocked at the door of the Paris hotel room where Herbert Hoover (the American war relief administrator) was staying, and handed him a copy of the terms. Hoover was so upset that he could sleep no more that night. He dressed and went out into the almost deserted Paris streets, pacing up and down, trying to calm himself. "It seemed to me", Hoover wrote later, "that the economic consequences alone would pull down all Europe and thus injure the United States." By chance, Hoover met the British economist, John Maynard Keynes, who was walking with General Jan Smuts in the pre-dawn Paris streets. Both of them had received transcripts of the terms offered to Germany, and both were similarly upset. "We agreed that it was terrible", Hoover wrote later, "and we agreed that we would do what we could... to make the dangers clear."

In the end, continuation of the blockade forced the Germans to sign the treaty; but they did so with deeply-felt bitterness. Describing the signing of the Versailles treaty on June 28, 1919, a member of the American delegation wrote: "It was not unlike when in olden times the conqueror dragged the conquered at his chariot wheel."

While he participated in the peace negotiations, Wilson had been absent

from the United States for six months. During that time, Wilson's Democratic Party had been without its leader, and his Republican opponents made the most of the opportunity. Republican majorities had been returned in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. When Wilson placed the peace treaty before the Senate, the Senate refused to ratify it. Wilson desperately wanted America to join the League of Nations, and he took his case to the American people. He traveled 8,000 miles and delivered 36 major speeches, together with scores of informal talks urging support for the League. Suddenly, in the middle of this campaign, he was struck with a cerebral thrombosis from which he never recovered.

Without Wilson's leadership, the campaign collapsed. The American Senate for a second time rejected the peace treaty, and with it the League of Nations. Without American participation, the League was greatly handicapped. It had many successes, especially in cultural and humanitarian projects and in settling disputes between small nations; but it soon became clear that the League of Nations was not able to settle disputes between major powers.

Postwar Germany was in a state of chaos - its economy in ruins. The nation was now a republic, with its capital in Weimar, but this first experiment in German democracy was not running smoothly. Many parts of the country, especially Bavaria, were swarming with secret societies led by former officers of the German army. They blamed the republican government for the economic chaos and for signing a disgraceful peace treaty. The "war guilt" clause of the treaty especially offended the German sense of honor.

In 1920 a group of nationalist and monarchist army officers led by General Ludendorff staged an army revolt or "Putsch". They forcibly replaced the elected officials of the Weimar Republic by a puppet head of state named Dr. Kapp. However, the republic was saved by the workers of Berlin, who turned off the public utilities.

After the failure of the "Kapp Putsch", Ludendorff went to Bavaria, where he met Adolf Hitler, a member of a small secret society called the National Socialist German Workers Party. (The name was abbreviated as "Nazi" after the German pronunciation of the first two syllables of "National"). Together, Ludendorff and Hitler began to plot another "Putsch".

In 1921, the Reparations Commission fixed the amount that Germany would have to pay at 135,000,000,000 gold marks. Various western economists realized that this amount was far more than Germany would be able to pay; and in fact, French efforts to collect it proved futile. Therefore France sent army units to occupy industrial areas of the Ruhr in order to extract payment in kind. The German workers responded by sitting down at their jobs. Their salaries were paid by the Weimar government, which printed more and more paper money. The printing presses ran day and night, flooding Germany with



Figure 3.8: *Hitler addresses a rally at Dortmund in 1932*

worthless currency. By 1923, inflation had reached such ruinous proportions that baskets full of money were required to buy a loaf of bread. At one point, four trillion paper marks were equal to one dollar. This catastrophic inflation reduced the German middle class to poverty and destroyed its faith in the orderly working of society.

The Nazi Party had only seven members when Adolf Hitler joined it in 1919. By 1923, because of the desperation caused by economic chaos, it had grown to 70,000 members. On November 8, 1923, there was a meeting of nationalists and monarchists at the Bürgerbräu beer hall in Munich. The Bavarian State Commissioner, Dr. Gustav von Kahr, gave a speech denouncing the Weimar Republic. He added, however, that the time was not yet ripe for armed revolt.

In the middle of Kahr's speech, Adolf Hitler leaped to the podium. Firing two revolver bullets into the ceiling Hitler screamed that the revolution was on - it would begin immediately! He ordered his armed troopers to bar the exits, and he went from one Bavarian leader to the other, weeping with excitement, a beer stein in one hand and a revolver in the other, pleading with them to support the revolution. At this point, the figure of General Ludendorff suddenly appeared. In full uniform, and wearing all his medals, he added his pleading to that of Hitler. The Bavarian leaders appeared to yield to Hitler and Ludendorff; and that night the Nazis went into action. Wild disorder reigned in Munich. Republican newspapers and trade union offices were smashed, Jewish homes were raided, and an attempt was made to seize the railway station and the post office. However, units of policemen and soldiers were forming to resist the Nazis. Hitler realized that the Bavarian government officials under Kahr



Figure 3.9: *A portrait of Adolf Hitler*

had only pretended to go along with the revolution in order to escape from the armed troopers in the beer hall.

At dawn, Hitler grouped his followers together for a parade to show their strength and to intimidate opposition. With swastika flags flying, the Nazis marched to the main square of Munich. There they met troops of Bavarian government soldiers and policemen massed in force. A volley of shots rang out, and 18 Nazis fell dead. Many other Nazis were wounded, and the remainder scattered. Hitler broke his shoulder diving for the pavement. Only General Ludendorff remained standing where he was. The half-demented old soldier, who had exercised almost dictatorial power over Germany during the last years of the war, marched straight for the Bavarian government troops. They stepped aside and let him pass.

Adolf Hitler was arrested and sentenced to five years in prison. After serving less than a year of his sentence, he was released. He had used the time in prison to write a book, *Mein Kampf*.

Lessons from the First World War

We have recently marked the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. It is important for society to look back at this catastrophic event, which still casts a dark shadow over the future of human civilization. We must learn the bitter lessons which it has to teach us, in order to avoid a repetition of the disaster.

As we have seen, World War I had its roots in the fanatical and quasi-religious nationalist movements that developed in Europe during the 19th century. Nationalism is still a potent force in today's world, but in an era of all-destroying weapons, instantaneous worldwide communication, and global economic interdependence, fanatical nationalism has become a dangerous anachronism. Of course, we should continue to be loyal to our families, our local groups and our nations. But this must be supplemented by a wider loyalty to the human race as a whole.

Hearing Beethoven's 9th Symphony, with Schiller's words, most of us experience a feeling that resembles patriotism, but is broader: "All men are brothers!" Not just some, but all. The choral movement of the symphony is like a national anthem of humanity. All humans are brothers and sisters! All! All nations and races have contributed to the great monument of human civilization. It is a treasure that we all hold in common. We must join hands and work together for our common future. Human unity has become more and more essential, because of the serious problems that we are facing, for example climate change, vanishing resources, and threats to food security. The problems are soluble, but only within a framework of peace and cooperation.

Secondly, we can remember that the First World War started as a small operation by the Austrian government to punish the Serbian nationalists; but it escalated uncontrollably into a global disaster. Today, there are many parallel situations, where uncontrollable escalation might produce a world-destroying conflagration.

Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu has frequently stated that, with or without US backing, Israel intends to bomb Iran, an act that would be not only criminal but also insane. Why criminal? Because it would violate both the UN Charter and the Nuremberg Principles. Why insane? Because the Middle East is already a deeply troubled region, and a military attack on Iran could escalate uncontrollably into a general war in the Middle East. Perhaps it could even escalate into World War III. Netanyahu has told the people of Israel that the attack would involve only about 500 Israeli deaths and that it would be over in a month. One is reminded of Kaiser Wilhelm's words to his departing troops: "You will be home before the leaves are off the trees!"

In general, aggressive interventions, in Syria, Ukraine, the Korean Peninsula and elsewhere, all present dangers for uncontrollable escalation into large and disastrous conflicts, which might potentially threaten the survival of human civilization.

Another lesson from the history of World War I comes from the fact that none of the people who started it had the slightest idea of what it would be like. Science and technology had changed the character of war. The politicians and military figures of the time ought to have known this, but they didn't. They ought to have known it from the million casualties produced by the use of the breach-loading rifle in the American Civil War. They ought to have known it from the deadly effectiveness of the Maxim machine gun against the native populations of Africa, but the effects of the machine gun in a European war caught them by surprise.

Today, science and technology have again changed the character of war beyond all recognition. In the words of the Nobel Laureate biochemist, Albert Szent Györgyi, "The story of man consists of two parts, divided by the appearance of modern science.... In the first period, man lived in the world in which his species was born and to which his senses were adapted. In the second, man stepped into a new, cosmic world to which he was a complete stranger.... The forces at man's disposal were no longer terrestrial forces, of human dimension, but were cosmic forces, the forces which shaped the universe. The few hundred Fahrenheit degrees of our flimsy terrestrial fires were exchanged for the ten million degrees of the atomic reactions which heat the sun.... Man lives in a new cosmic world for which he was not made. His survival depends on how well and how fast he can adapt himself to it, rebuilding all his ideas, all his social and political institutions."

Few politicians or military figures today have any imaginative understanding of what a war with thermonuclear weapons would be like. Recent studies have shown that in a nuclear war, the smoke from firestorms in burning cities would rise to the stratosphere where it would remain for a decade, spreading throughout the world, blocking sunlight, blocking the hydrological cycle and destroying the ozone layer. The effect on global agriculture would be devastating, and the billion people who are chronically undernourished today would be at risk. Furthermore, the tragedies of Chernobyl and Fukushima remind us that a nuclear war would make large areas of the world permanently uninhabitable because of radioactive contamination. A full-scale thermonuclear war would destroy human civilization and much of the biosphere.

Finally, we must remember the role of the arms race in the origin of World War I, and ask what parallels we can find in today's world. England was the first nation to complete the first stages of the Industrial Revolution. Industrialism and colonialism are linked, and consequently England obtained an extensive colonial empire. In Germany, the Industrial Revolution occurred somewhat later. However, by the late 19th century, Germany had surpassed England in steel production, and, particularly at the huge Krupp plants in Essen, Germany was turning to weapons production. The Germans felt frustrated because by that time there were fewer opportunities for the acquisition of colonies.

According to the historian David Stevensen (1954 -), writing on the causes of World War I, "A self-reinforcing cycle of heightened military preparedness... was an essential element in the conjuncture that led to disaster... The armaments race... was a necessary precondition for the outbreak of hostilities."

Today, the seemingly endless conflicts that threaten to destroy our beautiful world are driven by what has been called "The Devil's Dynamo". In many of the larger nations of the world a military-industrial complex seems to have enormous power. Each year the world spends roughly 1,700,000,000.000 US dollars on armaments, almost 2 trillion. This vast river of money, almost too large to be imagined, pours into the pockets of weapons manufacturers, and is used by them to control governments. This is the reason for the seemingly endless cycle of threats to peace with which the ordinary people of the world are confronted. Threats are needed to justify the diversion of such enormous quantities of money from urgently needed social projects into the bottomless pit of war.

What is to be done?

No single person can achieve the changes that we need, but together we can do it. The problem of building a stable, just, and war-free world is difficult, but it is not impossible. The large regions of our present-day world within which war has been eliminated can serve as models. There are a number of large countries with heterogeneous populations within which it has been possible to achieve internal peace and social cohesion, and if this is possible within such extremely large regions, it must also be possible globally.

In the long run, the survival of human civilization can only be ensured by abolition of the institution of war.

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Chapter 4

Targeting Civilians

The bombardment of Copenhagen

Between 2 September and 5 September, 1807, the civilian population of Copenhagen was subjected to a bombardment by British military forces, without any declaration of war. The purpose of the bombardment was to induce terror in the population, and to thereby force the surrender of the Danish fleet, which the British feared might otherwise fall into the hands of Napoleon. It was one of the first occasions on which civilians were deliberately targeted in this manner. 0

Copenhagen was almost undefended, since the Danish army was positioned at the southern boundary of the country, ready to repel a possible attack by Napoleon's army. British troops and artillery were thus easily able to surround the city, while the British fleet occupied the harbor. On the first night of the bombardment, 5000 rounds were fired into the city, on the second night 2000, and on the third night 7000. New incendiary rockets developed by William Congreve were also used. More than 2000 civilians were killed by the bombardment, and about 30 percent of Copenhagen's buildings were destroyed. This barbaric event initiated the practice of state-sponsored terror, in which innocent civilians are deliberately targeted.

The erosion of ethical principles during World War II

When Hitler invaded Poland in September, 1939, US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt appealed to Great Britain, France, and Germany to spare innocent civilians from terror bombing. "The ruthless bombing from the air of civilians in unfortified centers of population during the course of the hostilities", Roosevelt said (referring to the use of air bombardment during World War I) "...has sickened the hearts of every civilized man and woman, and has profoundly shocked the conscience of humanity." He urged "every Government



Figure 4.1: *The bombardment of Copenhagen, 1807.*

which may be engaged in hostilities publicly to affirm its determination that its armed forces shall in no event, and under no circumstances, undertake the bombardment from the air of civilian populations or of unfortified cities.”

Two weeks later, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain responded to Roosevelt’s appeal with the words: “Whatever the lengths to which others may go, His Majesty’s Government will never resort to the deliberate attack on women and children and other civilians for purposes of mere terrorism.”

Much was destroyed during World War II, and among the casualties of the war were the ethical principles that Roosevelt and Chamberlain announced at its outset. At the time of Roosevelt and Chamberlain’s declarations, terror bombing of civilians had already begun in the Far East. On 22 and 23 September, 1937, Japanese bombers attacked civilian populations in Nanjing and Canton. The attacks provoked widespread protests. The British Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Cranborne, wrote: “Words cannot express the feelings of profound horror with which the news of these raids has been received by the whole civilized world. They are often directed against places far from the actual area of hostilities. The military objective, where it exists, seems to take a completely second place. The main object seems to be to inspire terror by the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians...”

On the 25th of September, 1939, Hitler’s air force began a series of intense attacks on Warsaw. Civilian areas of the city, hospitals marked with the Red



Figure 4.2: *Guernica*

Cross symbol, and fleeing refugees all were targeted in a effort to force the surrender of the city through terror. On the 14th of May, 1940, Rotterdam was also devastated. Between the 7th of September 1940 and the 10th of May 1941, the German Luftwaffe carried out massive air attacks on targets in Britain. By May, 1941, 43,000 British civilians were killed and more than a million houses destroyed.

Although they were not the first to start it, by the end of the war the United States and Great Britain were bombing of civilians on a far greater scale than Japan and Germany had ever done. For example, on July 24-28, 1943, British and American bombers attacked Hamburg with an enormous incendiary raid whose official intention "the total destruction" of the city.

The result was a firestorm that did, if fact, lead to the total destruction of the city. One airman recalled, that "As far as I could see was one mass of fire. 'A sea of flame' has been the description, and that's an understatement. It was so bright that I could read the target maps and adjust the bomb-sight." Another pilot was "...amazed at the awe-inspiring sight of the target area. It seemed as though the whole of Hamburg was on fire from one end to the other and a huge column of smoke was towering well above us - and we were on 20,000 feet! It all seemed almost incredible and, when I realized that I was looking at a city with a population of two millions, or about that, it became almost frightening to think of what must be going on down there in Hamburg."

Below, in the burning city, temperatures reached 1400 degrees Fahrenheit, a temperature at which lead and aluminum have long since liquefied. Powerful winds sucked new air into the firestorm. There were reports of babies being torn by the high winds from their mothers' arms and sucked into the flames.



Figure 4.3: *Dresden*

Of the 45,000 people killed, it has been estimated that 50 percent were women and children and many of the men killed were elderly, above military age. For weeks after the raids, survivors were plagued by "...droves of vicious rats, grown strong by feeding on the corpses that were left unburied within the rubble as well as the potatoes and other food supplies lost beneath the broken buildings."

The German cities Kassel, Pforzheim, Mainz, Dresden and Berlin were similarly destroyed, and in Japan, US bombing created firestorms in many cities, for example Tokyo, Kobe and Yokohama. In Tokyo alone, incendiary bombing caused more than 100,000 civilian casualties.

The nuclear arms race

On August 6, 1945, at 8.15 in the morning, a nuclear fission bomb was exploded in the air over the civilian population of Hiroshima in an already virtually defeated Japan. The force of the explosion was equivalent to fifteen thousand tons of TNT. Out of a city of two hundred and fifty thousand, one hundred thousand were killed immediately, and another hundred thousand were hurt. Many of the injured died later from radiation sickness. A few days later, Nagasaki was similarly destroyed.

The tragic destruction of the two Japanese cities was horrible enough in itself, but it also marked the start of a nuclear arms race that continues to cast a very dark shadow over the future of civilization. Not long afterwards, the Soviet Union exploded its own atomic bomb, creating feelings of panic in the United States. President Truman authorized an all-out effort to build superbombs based on thermonuclear reactions, the reactions that heat the sun and stars.

In March, 1954, the US tested a thermonuclear bomb at Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Ocean. It was 1000 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb. The Japanese fishing boat, Lucky Dragon, was 135 kilometers from the Bikini explosion, but radioactive fallout from the explosion killed one crew member and made all the others seriously ill. The distance to the Marshall Islands was equally large, but even today, islanders continue to suffer from the effects of fallout from the test, for example frequent birth defects.

Driven by the paranoia of the Cold War, the number of nuclear weapons on both sides reached truly insane heights. At the worst point, there were 50,000 nuclear weapons in the world, with a total explosive power roughly a million times the power of the Hiroshima bomb. This was equivalent to 4 tons of TNT for every person on the planet - enough to destroy human civilization many times over - enough to threaten the existence of all life on earth

At the end of the Cold War, most people heaved a sigh of relief and pushed

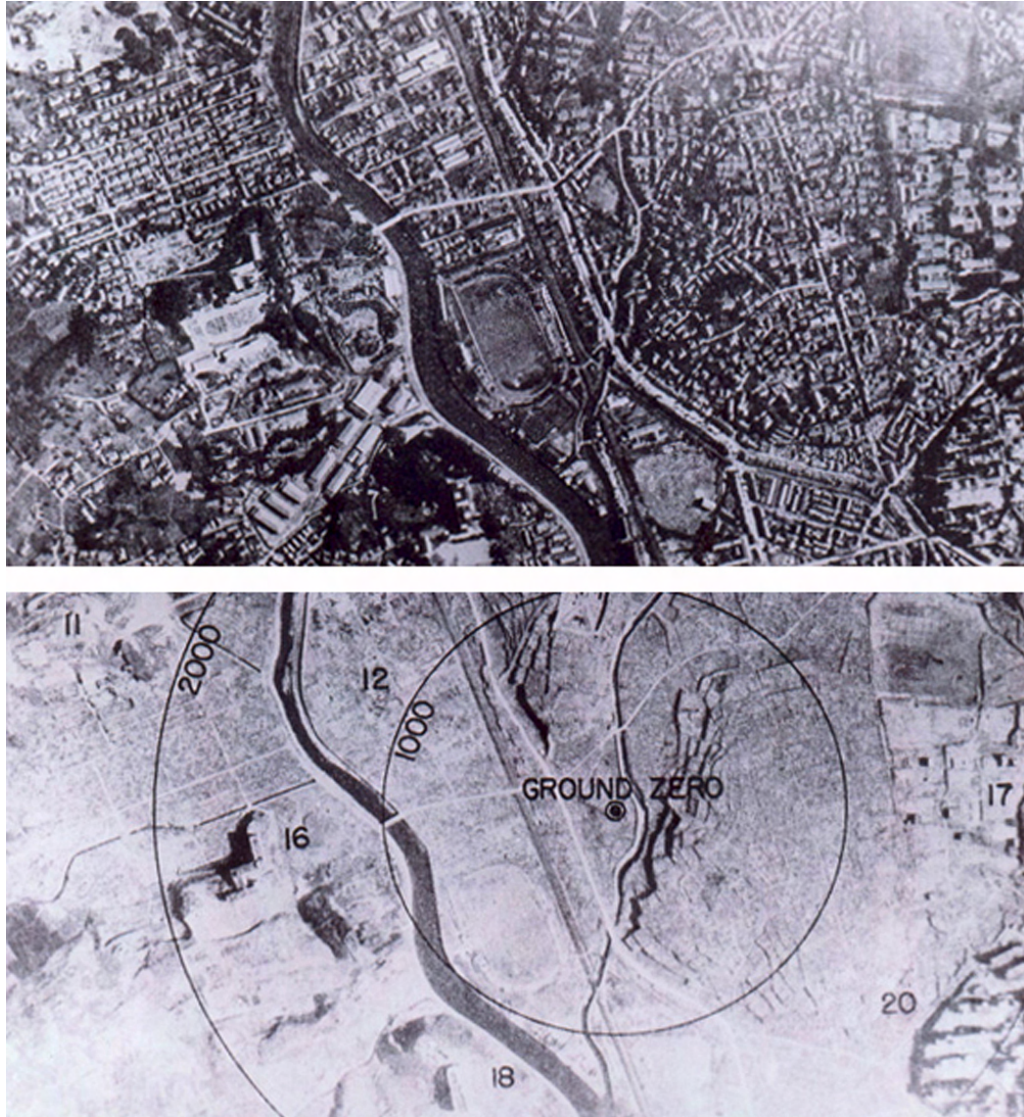


Figure 4.4: *Nagasaki, before and after the bomb*



Figure 4.5: *Birth defects continue to be common on the Marshall Islands half a century after the Bikini tests*

the problem of nuclear weapons away from their minds. It was a threat to life too horrible to think about. People felt that they could do nothing in any case, and they hoped that the problem had finally disappeared.

Today, however, many thoughtful people realize that the problem of nuclear weapons has by no means disappeared, and in some ways it is even more serious now than it was during the Cold War. There are still 27,000 nuclear weapons in the world, many of them hydrogen bombs, many on hair-trigger alert, ready to be fired with only a few minutes warning. The world has frequently come extremely close to accidental nuclear war. If nuclear weapons are allowed to exist for a long period of time, the probability for such a catastrophic accident to happen will grow into a certainty.

Current dangers also come from proliferation. Recently, more and more nations have come to possess nuclear weapons, and thus the danger that they will be used increases. For example, if Pakistan's less-than-stable government should fall, its nuclear weapons might find their way into the hands of terrorists, and against terrorism deterrence has no effect.

Thus we live at a special time in history - a time of crisis for civilization. We did not ask to be born at a moment of crisis, but such is our fate. Every person now alive has a special responsibility: We owe it, both to our ancestors and to future generations, to build a stable and cooperative future world. It must be a war-free world, from which nuclear weapons have been completely abolished. No person can achieve these changes alone, but together we can build the world that we desire. This will not happen through inaction, but it can happen through the dedicated work of large numbers of citizens.

Civilians have for too long played the role of passive targets, hostages in the power struggles of politicians. It is time for civil society to make its will felt. If our leaders continue to enthusiastically support the institution of war, if they will not abolish nuclear weapons, then let us have new leaders.

Chapter 5

The Devil's Dynamo

Why is the military-industrial complex sometimes called “The Devil's Dynamo”?

The military-industrial complex involves a circular flow of money. The money flows like the electrical current in a dynamo, driving a diabolical machine. Money from immensely rich corporate oligarchs buys the votes of politicians and the propaganda of the mainstream media. Numbed by the propaganda, citizens allow the politicians to vote for obscenely bloated military budgets, which further enrich the corporate oligarchs, and the circular flow continues.

The Industrial Revolution and Colonialism

The devil's dynamo of today has led to a modern version of colonialism and empire. It is therefore interesting to look at the first global era of colonialism: In the 18th and 19th centuries, the continually accelerating development of science and science-based industry began to affect the whole world. As the factories of Europe poured out cheap manufactured goods, a change took place in the patterns of world trade: Before the Industrial Revolution, trade routes to Asia had brought Asian spices, textiles and luxury goods to Europe. For example, cotton cloth and fine textiles, woven in India, were imported to England. With the invention of spinning and weaving machines, the trade was reversed. Cheap cotton cloth, manufactured in England, began to be sold in India, and the Indian textile industry withered, just as the hand-loom industry in England itself had done a century before.

The rapid development of technology in the west also opened an enormous gap in military strength between the industrialized nations and the rest of the world. Taking advantage of their superior weaponry, the advanced industrial nations rapidly carved the remainder of the world into colonies, which



Figure 5.1: *The “Conquistadors” in Central and South America exhibited almost unbelievable treachery and cruelty towards the people of the region.*

acted as sources of raw materials and food, and as markets for manufactured goods. Throughout the American continent, the native Indian population had proved vulnerable to European diseases, such as smallpox, and large numbers of them had died. The remaining Indians were driven westward by streams of immigrants arriving from Europe.

The sometimes genocidal wars waged by industrial nations against the inhabitants of Asia, Africa and the Western Hemisphere often involved almost unimaginable cruelty. We can think, for example of the atrocities committed by the army of Leopold II in Belgian Congo, where more than ten million people were killed out of a total population of 20 million. (In Leopold’s Congo human hands became a sort of currency. This was because the men in Leopold’s army were ordered to cut off the hands of their victims to prove that they had not wasted bullets.) We can also think of distribution of smallpox-infected blankets to the Amerinds, or the unbelievable treachery and cruelty of Conquistadors in Central America and South South America.

Often the industrialized nations made their will felt by means of naval bombardments: In 1854, Commodore Perry forced Japan to accept foreign traders by threatening to bombard Tokyo. In 1856, British warships bombarded Canton in China to punish acts of violence against Europeans living in the city. In 1864, a force of European and American warships bombarded Choshu in Japan, causing a revolution. In 1882, Alexandria was bombarded, and in 1896, Zanzibar.

Much that was beautiful and valuable was lost, as mature traditional cultures collapsed, overcome by the power and temptations of modern industrial civilization. For the Europeans and Americans of the late 19th century and early 20th century, progress was a religion, and imperialism was its crusade.

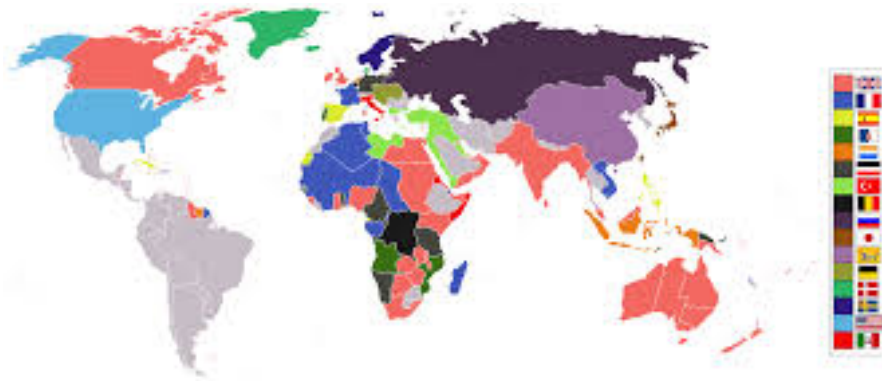


Figure 5.2: A map showing colonies at the end of the 19th century





Figure 5.3: *“Whatever happens, we have got The Maxim gun, and they have not”*

Between 1800 and 1875, the percentage of the earth’s surface under European rule increased from 35 percent to 67 percent. In the period between 1875 and 1914, there was a new wave of colonial expansion, and the fraction of the earth’s surface under the domination of colonial powers (Europe, the United States and Japan) increased to 85 percent, if former colonies are included.

The unequal (and unfair) contest between the industrialized countries, armed with modern weapons, and the traditional cultures with their much more primitive arms, was summarized by the English poet Hilaire Belloc in a sardonic couplet: “Whatever happens, we have got The Maxim gun, and they have not.”

The Maxim gun was one of the world’s first automatic machine guns. It was invented in the United States in 1884 by Hiram S. Maxim. The explorer and colonialist Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904) was extremely enthusiastic about Maxim’s machine gun, and during a visit to the inventor he tried firing it, demonstrating that it really could fire 600 rounds per minute. Stanley commented that the machine gun would be “a valuable tool in helping civilization to overcome barbarism”

During the period between 1880 and 1914, British industrial and colonial dominance began to be challenged. Industrialism had spread from Britain to Belgium, Germany and the United States, and, to a lesser extent, to France, Italy, Russia and Japan. By 1914, Germany was producing twice as much steel as Britain, and the United States was producing four times as much. . New techniques in weaponry were introduced, and a naval armaments race began among the major industrial powers. The English found that their old navy was obsolete, and they had to rebuild. Thus, the period of colonial expansion

between 1880 and 1914 was filled with tensions, as the industrial powers raced to arm themselves in competition with each other, and raced to seize as much as possible of the rest of the world.

The English economist and Fabian, John Atkinson Hobson (1858-1940), offered a famous explanation of the colonial era in his book "Imperialism: A Study" (1902). According to Hobson, the basic problem that led to colonial expansion was an excessively unequal distribution of incomes in the industrialized countries. The result of this unequal distribution was that neither the rich nor the poor could buy back the total output of their society. The incomes of the poor were insufficient, and rich were too few in number. The rich had finite needs, and tended to reinvest their money. As Hobson pointed out, reinvestment in new factories only made the situation worse by increasing output.

Hobson had been sent as a reporter by the Manchester Guardian to cover the Second Boer War. His experiences had convinced him that colonial wars have an economic motive. Such wars are fought, he believed, to facilitate investment of the excess money of the rich in African or Asian plantations and mines, and to make possible the overseas sale of excess manufactured goods. Hobson believed imperialism to be immoral, since it entails suffering both among colonial peoples and among the poor of the industrial nations. The cure that he recommended was a more equal distribution of incomes in the manufacturing countries.

Outlawing war

Industrial and colonial rivalry contributed to the outbreak of the First World War, to which the Second World War can be seen as a sequel. The Second World War was terrible enough to make world leaders resolve to end the institution of war once and for all, and the United Nations was set up for this purpose. Article 2 of the UN Charter requires that "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state."

The Nuremberg principles, which were used in the trial of Nazi leaders after World War II, explicitly outlawed "Crimes against peace: (i) Planning, preparation, initiation or waging of war of aggression or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances; (ii) Participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the acts mentioned under (i)."

With the founding of the United Nations at the end of the Second World War, a system of international law was set up to replace the rule of military force. Law is a mechanism for equality. Under law, the weak and the powerful

are in principle equal. The basic purpose of the United Nations is to make war illegal, and if war is illegal, the powerful and weak are on equal footing, much to the chagrin of the powerful. How can one can one construct or maintain an empire if war is not allowed? It is only natural that powerful nations should be opposed to international law, since it is a curb on their power. However, despite opposition, the United Nations was quite successful in ending the original era of colonialism, perhaps because of the balance of power between East and West during the Cold War. One by one, former colonies regained their independence. But it was not to last. The original era of colonialism was soon replaced by neocolonialism and by “The American Empire”.

The military-industrial complex

The two world wars of the 20th Century involved a complete reordering of the economies of the belligerent countries, and a dangerous modern phenomenon was created - the military-industrial complex.

In his farewell address (January 17, 1961) US President Dwight David Eisenhower warned of the dangers of the war-based economy that World War II had forced his nation to build: “...We have been compelled to create an armaments industry of vast proportions”, Eisenhower said, “...Now this conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in American experience. The total influence - economic, political, even spiritual - is felt in every city, every state house, every office in the federal government. ...We must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society. ... We must stand guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted.”

This farsighted speech by Eisenhower deserves to be studied by everyone who is concerned about the future of human civilization and the biosphere. As the retiring president pointed out, the military-industrial complex is a threat both to peace and to democracy. It is not unique to the United States but exists in many countries. The world today spends roughly 1.7 trillion (i.e. 1.7 million million) US dollars each year on armaments. It is obvious that very many people make their living from war, and therefore it is correct to speak of war as a social, political and economic institution. The military-industrial complex is one of the main reasons why war persists, although everyone realizes that war is the cause of much of the suffering of humanity.

Chapter 6

Racism, Colonialism and Exceptionalism

It seems to be possible for nations, and the majority of their citizens, to commit the worst imaginable atrocities, including torture, murder and genocide, while feeling that what they are doing is both noble and good. Some understanding of how this is possible can be gained by watching the 3-part BBC documentary, “The History of Racism”.

The series was broadcast by BBC Four in March 2007. and videos of the broadcasts are available on the Internet. Watching this eye-opening documentary can give us much insight into the link between racism and colonialism. We can also begin to see how both racism and colonialism are linked to US exceptionalism and neocolonialism.

Looking at the BBC documentary we can see how often in human history economic greed and colonial exploitation have been justified by racist theories. The documentary describes almost unbelievable cruelties committed against the peoples of the Americas and Africa by Europeans. For example, in the Congo, a vast region which King Leopold II of Belgium claimed as his private property, the women of villages were held as hostages while the men were forced to gather rubber in the forests. Since neither the men nor the women could produce food under these circumstances, starvation was the result.

Leopold’s private army of 90,000 men were issued ammunition, and to make sure that they used it in the proper way, the army was ordered to cut off the hands of their victims and send them back as proof that the bullets had not been wasted. Human hands became a kind of currency, and hands were cut off from men, women and children when rubber quotas were not fulfilled. Sometimes more than a thousand human hands were gathered in a single day. During the rule of Leopold, roughly 10,000,000 Congolese were killed, which was approximately half the population of the region.



According to the racist theories that supported these atrocities, it was the duty of philanthropic Europeans like Leopold to bring civilization and the Christian religion to Africa. Similar theories were used to justify the genocides committed by Europeans against the native inhabitants of the Americas. Racist theories were also used to justify enormous cruelties committed by the British colonial government in India. For example, during the great famine of 1876-1878, in which ten million people died, the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, oversaw the export from India to England of a record 6.4 million hundredweight of wheat.

Meanwhile, in Europe, almost everyone was proud of the role which they were playing in the world. All that they read in newspapers and in books or heard from the pulpits of their churches supported the idea that they were serving the non-Europeans by bringing them the benefits of civilization and Christianity. Kipling wrote: "Take up the White Man's burden, Send forth the best ye breed, Go bind your sons to exile, To serve your captives' need; To wait in heavy harness, On fluttered folk and wild, Your new-caught, sullen peoples, Half-devil and half-child." On the whole, the mood of Europe during this orgy of external cruelty and exploitation, was self-congratulatory.

Can we not see a parallel with the self-congratulatory mood countries that export violence, murder, torture and neocolonialism to the whole world, and justify it by thinking of themselves as "exceptional"?

The world urgently needs a new ethic, in which loyalty to humanity as a whole is fundamental. Racism, colonialism and exceptionalism can have no place in the future if humanity is to survive in an era of thermonuclear



weapons.

Chapter 7

Religion: Part of the Problem? Or the Answer?

From tribalism to universal brotherhood

Early religions tended to be centered on particular tribes, and the ethics associated with them were usually tribal in nature. However, as was mentioned in Chapter 2, the more cosmopolitan societies that began to form after the neolithic agricultural revolution required a more universal code of ethics.

In the 6th century B.C., Prince Gautama Buddha founded a new religion in India, with a universal (non-tribal) code of ethics. Among the sayings of the Buddha are the following:

“Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love.”

“Let a man overcome anger by love; let him overcome evil by good.”

“All men tremble at punishment. All men love life. Remember that you are like them, and do not cause slaughter.”

One of the early converts to Buddhism was the emperor Ashoka Maurya, who reigned in India between 273 B.C. and 232 B.C. After his conversion, he resolved never again to use war as an instrument of policy. He became one of the most humane rulers in history, and he also did much to promote the spread of Buddhism throughout Asia.

In Christianity, which is built on the foundations of Judaism, the concept of universal human brotherhood replaces narrow loyalty to the tribe. The universality of Christian ethical principles, which we see especially in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, make them especially relevant to our own times. Today, in a world of thermonuclear weapons, the continued existence of civilization depends on whether or not we are able to look on all of humanity as a single family.

In the Christian Gospel According to Mathew, the following passage occurs:



Figure 7.1: *A statue of the Buddha*

“You have heard it said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy. But I say unto you: Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that spitefully use you and persecute you.” This echos the sayings of Buddha, “Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love”, and “Let a man overcome anger by love; let him overcome evil by good.”

The seemingly impractical advice given to us by both Jesus and Buddha - that we should love our enemies and return good for evil - is in fact of the greatest practicality, since acts of unilateral kindness and generosity can stop escalatory cycles of revenge and counter-revenge such as those which characterize the present conflict in the Middle East and the recent troubles in Northern Ireland. Amazingly, Christian nations, while claiming to adhere to the ethic of love and forgiveness, have adopted a policy of “massive retaliation”, involving systems of thermonuclear missiles whose purpose is to destroy as much as possible of the country at which retaliation is aimed. It is planned that entire populations shall be killed in a “massive retaliation”, innocent children along with guilty politicians. The startling contradiction between what Christian nations profess and what they do was obvious even before the advent of nuclear weapons, at the time when Leo Tolstoy, during his last years, was exchanging letters with a young Indian lawyer in South Africa.

Tolstoy, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King; Nonviolence

One of the functions of good literature is to help us to put ourselves imaginatively into the skin of another person. Good literature (and for that matter, good cinema and television) ought to broaden the range of human sympathy, allowing us to share the feelings of other people who are very different from ourselves.

It is an interesting fact that Leo Tolstoy, who is generally considered to have been one of the greatest novelists of all time, was deeply aware of ethical problems. Leo Tolstoy was born in 1828. While he was still a child, his parents died, and he became Count Tolstoy, with responsibility for the family estate at Yasnaya Polyana. As a young man, he was attracted to the gay and worldly social life of Moscow, but his diary during this period shows remorse over his pursuit of sensual pleasures. Disgusted with himself, he entered the army, and during idle periods he began his career as a writer. While still a soldier, he published a beautiful nostalgic work entitled “Childhood” as well as a number of skillful stories describing army life.

At the age of 28, Tolstoy left the army and spent a brief period as a literary idol in St. Petersburg. He then became concerned about lack of education among Russian peasants, and he travelled widely in Europe, studying edu-

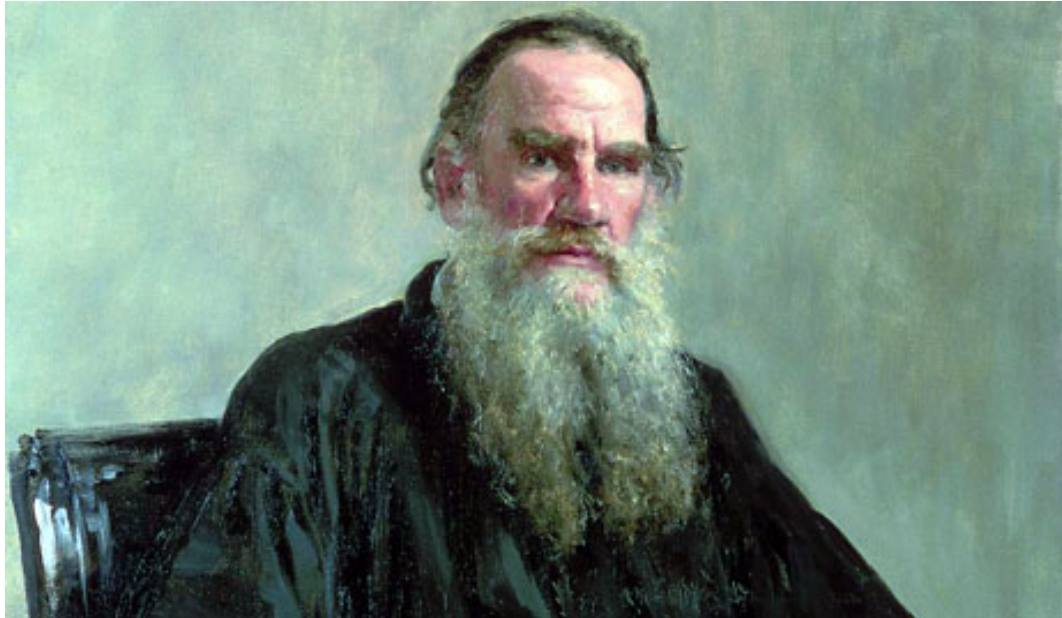


Figure 7.2: *Tolstoy as an old man*

cational theory and methods. Returning to Yasnaya Polyana, he established schools for the peasants, published an educational magazine and compiled a number of textbooks whose simplicity and attractiveness anticipated modern teaching methods.

Tolstoy married in 1862 at the age of 34. His wife, Sonya Bers, shared his wide intellectual interests, and they had a happy family life with thirteen children. During this period, Tolstoy managed his estate with much success, and he produced his great literary masterpieces “War and Peace” and “Anna Karenina”. He modeled the characters in “War and Peace” after members of his own family. For example, Tolstoy’s famous heroine, Natassia, is modeled after his sister-in-law, Tanya Bers. Pierre in “War and Peace” and Levin in “Anna Karenina” reflect Tolstoy’s own efforts to understand the meaning of life, his concern with the misery of the Russian peasants, and his ultimate conclusion that true happiness and peace of mind can only be found in a simple life devoted to the service of others.

By the time Tolstoy had finished “Anna Karenina”, he had become very dissatisfied with the life that he was leading. Despite having achieved in great measure all of the goals for which humans usually strive, he felt that his existence lacked meaning; and in 1879 he even contemplated suicide. He looked for life’s purpose by systematically studying the writings of scientists and philosophers, but he could not find an answer there that satisfied him.

Finally Tolstoy found inspiration in the humble and devout lives of the

peasants. He decided that the teachings of Jesus, as recorded in the New Testament, could provide the answer for which he was searching. Tolstoy published an account of his spiritual crisis in a book entitled "A Confession", in which he says:

"I searched for enlightenment everywhere in the hard-won accumulated knowledge of mankind. I searched passionately and long, not in a lazy way, but with my whole soul, day and night - I searched like a drowning man looking for safety - and found nothing."

"I searched all the sciences, and not only did I find nothing, but I also came to the conclusion that everyone who, like myself, had searched in the sciences for life's meaning had also found nothing."

"I then diligently studied the teachings of Buddhism and Islam in the holy books of those religions; but most of all I studied Christianity as I met it in the holy Scriptures and in the living Christians around me..."

"I began to approach the believers among the poor, simple ignorant people - pilgrims, monks and peasants... The whole life of Christians of our own circle seemed to be a contradiction of their faith. By contrast, the whole life of Christians of the peasant class was an affirmation of the view of life which their religious faith gave to them. I looked more and more deeply into the faith of these people, and the more deep my insight became, the more I became convinced that they had a genuine belief, that their faith was essential to them, and that it was their faith alone which gave their life a meaning and made it possible for them to live... I developed a love for these simple people."

Moved by the misery of the urban poor whom he encountered in the slums of Moscow, Tolstoy wrote: "Between us, the rich and the poor, there is a wall of false education, and before we can help the poor, we must first tear down that wall. I was forced to the conclusion that our own wealth is the true cause of the misery of the poor."

Tolstoy's book, "What Then Must We Do?", tells of his experiences in the slums and analyses the causes of poverty. Tolstoy felt that the professed Christian belief of the Czarist state was a thin cosmetic layer covering a structure that was fundamentally built on violence. Violence was used to maintain a huge gap between the rich and the poor, and violence was used in international relations. Tolstoy felt especially keenly the contradiction between Christianity and war. In a small book entitled "The Kingdom of God is Within Us" he wrote:

"All other contradictions are insignificant compared with the contradiction which now faces humankind in international relations. and which cries out for a solution, since it brings the very existence of civilization into danger. This is the contradiction between the Christian conscience and war."

"All of the Christian peoples of the world, who all follow one and the same

spiritual life, so that any good and fruitful thought which is put forward in any corner of the world is immediately communicated to all of Christendom, where it arouses feelings of pride and happiness in us regardless of our nationality; we who simply love the thinkers, humanitarians, and poets of other countries; we who not only admire their achievements, but also feel delight in meeting them and greet them with friendly smiles - we will all be forced by the state to participate in a murderous war against these same people - a war which if it does not break out today will do so tomorrow.”

“...The sharpest of all contradictions can be seen between the government’s professed faith in the Christian law of the brotherhood of all humankind, and the military laws of the state, which force each young man to prepare himself for enmity and murder, so that each must be simultaneously a Christian and a gladiator.”

Tolstoy’s writings on Christianity and on social questions were banned by the public censor, and he was excommunicated from the Russian Orthodox Church. However, his universally recognized stature as one of the world’s greatest writers was undiminished, and his beliefs attracted many followers, both inside and outside of Russia.

In 1894, the young Indian lawyer, Mohandas K. Gandhi, (who was then working for the civil rights of Indians in South Africa), read Tolstoy’s books on Christianity and was greatly influenced by them. Gandhi wrote a review of “The Kingdom of God is Within Us”, and in 1909 he sent Tolstoy an account of the activities of the civil rights movement in South Africa. He received a reply in which Tolstoy said:

“...The longer I live, and especially now, when I vividly feel the nearness of death, the more I want to tell others what I feel so particularly clearly and what to my mind is of great importance - namely that which is called passive resistance, but which is in reality nothing else but the teaching of love, uncorrupted by false interpretations. That love - i.e. the striving for the union of human souls and the activity derived from that striving - is the highest and only law of human life, and in the depth of his soul every human being knows this (as we most clearly see in children); he knows this until he is entangled in the false teachings of the world. This law was proclaimed by all - by the Indian as by the Chinese, Hebrew, Greek and Roman sages of the world. I think that this law was most clearly expressed by Christ, who plainly said that ‘in this alone is all the law and the prophets’...”

“...The peoples of the Christian world have solemnly accepted this law, while at the same time they have permitted violence and built their lives on violence; and that is why the whole life of the Christian peoples is a continuous contradiction between what they profess, and the principles on which they order their lives - a contradiction between love accepted as the law of life, and

violence which is recognized and praised, acknowledged even as a necessity in different phases of life, such as the power of rulers, courts, and armies..."

"This year, in the spring, at a Scripture examination in a girls' high school in Moscow, the teacher and the bishop present asked the girls questions on the Commandments, and especially on the sixth. After a correct answer, the bishop generally put another question, whether murder was always in all cases forbidden by God's law; and the unhappy young ladies were forced by previous instruction to answer 'not always' - that murder was permitted in war and in the execution of criminals. Still, when one of these unfortunate young ladies (what I am telling is not an invention, but a fact told to me by an eye witness) after her first answer, was asked the usual question, if killing was always sinful, she, agitated and blushing, decisively answered 'Always', and to all the usual sophisms of the bishop, she answered with decided conviction that killing always was forbidden in the Old Testament and forbidden by Christ, not only killing, but every wrong against a brother. Notwithstanding all his grandeur and arts of speech, the bishop became silent and the girl remained victorious."

Tolstoy believed that violence can never under any circumstances be justified, and that therefore an individual's resistance to governmental violence must be passive and non-violent. He also believed that each individual ought to reduce his needs to a minimum in order to avoid exploiting the labor of others.

Tolstoy gave up meat, alcohol, tobacco, and hunting. He began to clean his own room, wore simple peasant clothes, worked in the fields, and made his own boots. He participated in famine relief, and he would have liked to give away all of his great wealth to feed the poor, but bowing to the protests of his family, he gave his wealth to them instead.

Because he had been unable to convert his family to his beliefs, Tolstoy left home secretly on a November night in 1910, accompanied, like King Lear, by his youngest daughter. He died of pneumonia a few days later at a remote railway junction.

In the hands of Gandhi, non-violent passive resistance became a practical political force. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in 1869 in Porbandar, India. His family belonged to the Hindu caste of shopkeepers. (In Gujarati "Gandhi" means "grocer".) However, the family had risen in status, and Gandhi's father, grandfather, and uncle had all served as prime ministers of small principalities in western India.

In 1888, Gandhi sailed for England, where he spent three years studying law at the Inner Temple in London. Before he left India, his mother had made him take a solemn oath not to touch women, wine, or meat. He thus came into contact with the English vegetarians, who included Sir Edward Arnold



Figure 7.3: *Gandhi and his wife Kasturbai in 1902*

(translator of the Bhagavadgita), the Theosophists Madame Blavatsky and Annie Besant, and the Fabians. Contact with this idealistic group of social critics and experimenters helped to cure Gandhi of his painful shyness, and it also developed his taste for social reform and experimentation.

Gandhi's exceptionally sweet and honest character won him many friends in England, and he encountered no racial prejudice at all. However, when he travelled to Pretoria in South Africa a few years later, he experienced racism in its worst form. Although he was meticulously well dressed in an English frock coat, and in possession of a first-class ticket, Gandhi was given the choice between travelling third class or being thrown off the train. (He chose the second alternative.) Later in the journey he was beaten by a coach driver because he insisted on his right to sit as a passenger rather than taking a humiliating position on the footboard of the coach.

The legal case which had brought Gandhi to South Africa was a dispute between a wealthy Indian merchant, Dada Abdullah Seth, and his relative, Seth Tyeb (who had refused to pay a debt of 40,000 pounds, in those days a huge sum). Gandhi succeeded in reconciling these two relatives, and he persuaded them to settle their differences out of court. Later he wrote about this experience:

“Both were happy with this result, and both rose in public estimation. My

joy was boundless. I had learnt the true practice of law. I had learnt to find out the better side of human nature and to enter men's hearts. I realized that the true function of a lawyer was to unite parties riven asunder. The lesson was so indelibly burnt into me that a large part of my time during my twenty years of practice as a lawyer was occupied in bringing about compromises of hundreds of cases. I lost nothing thereby - not even money, certainly not my soul."

Gandhi was about to return to India after the settlement of the case, but at a farewell party given by Abdullah Seth, he learned of a bill before the legislature which would deprive Indians in South Africa of their right to vote. He decided to stay and fight against the bill.

Gandhi spent the next twenty years in South Africa, becoming the leader of a struggle for the civil rights of the Indian community. In this struggle he tried "...to find the better side of human nature and to enter men's hearts". Gandhi's stay in England had given him a glimpse of English liberalism and English faith in just laws. He felt confident that if the general public in England could be made aware of gross injustices in any part of the British Empire, reform would follow. He therefore organized non-violent protests in which the protesters sacrificed themselves so as to show as vividly as possible the injustice of an existing law. For example, when the government ruled that Hindu, Muslim and Parsi marriages had no legal standing, Gandhi and his followers voluntarily went to prison for ignoring the ruling.

Gandhi used two words to describe this form of protest: "satyagraha" (the force of truth) and "ahimsa" (non-violence). Of these he later wrote: "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. All that I have done is to try experiments in both on as vast a scale as I could. In so doing, I sometimes erred and learnt by my errors. Life and its problems have thus become to me so many experiments in the practice of truth and non-violence."

In his autobiography, Gandhi says: "Three moderns have left a deep impression on my life and captivated me: Raychandbhai (the Indian philosopher and poet) by his living contact; Tolstoy by his book 'The Kingdom of God is Within You'; and Ruskin by his book 'Unto the Last'."

Ruskin's book, "Unto the Last", which Gandhi read in 1904, is a criticism of modern industrial society. Ruskin believed that friendships and warm interpersonal relationships are a form of wealth that economists have failed to consider. He felt that warm human contacts are most easily achieved in small agricultural communities, and that therefore the modern tendency towards centralization and industrialization may be a step backward in terms of human happiness. While still in South Africa, Gandhi founded two religious utopian communities based on the ideas of Tolstoy and Ruskin. Phoenix Farm

(1904) and Tolstoy Farm (1910). At this time he also took an oath of chastity (“*bramacharya*”), partly because his wife was unwell and he wished to protect her from further pregnancies, and partly in order to devote himself more completely to the struggle for civil rights.

Because of his growing fame as the leader of the Indian civil rights movement in South Africa, Gandhi was persuaded to return to India in 1914 and to take up the cause of Indian home rule. In order to reacquaint himself with conditions in India, he travelled tirelessly, now always going third class as a matter of principle.

During the next few years, Gandhi worked to reshape the Congress Party into an organization which represented not only India’s Anglicized upper middle class but also the millions of uneducated villagers who were suffering under an almost intolerable burden of poverty and disease. In order to identify himself with the poorest of India’s people, Gandhi began to wear only a white loincloth made of rough homespun cotton. He travelled to the remotest villages, recruiting new members for the Congress Party, preaching non-violence and “firmness in the truth”, and becoming known for his voluntary poverty and humility. The villagers who flocked to see him began to call him “Mahatma” (Great Soul).

Gandhi organized demonstrations whose purpose was to show the British public that although the British raj gave India many benefits, the toll exacted was too high, not only in terms of money, but also in terms of India’s self-respect and self-sufficiency. All of Gandhi’s demonstrations were designed to underline this fact. For example, in 1930 Gandhi organized a civil-disobedience campaign against the salt laws. The salt laws gave the Imperial government a monopoly and prevented Indians from making their own salt by evaporating sea water. The majority of Indians were poor farmers who worked long hours in extreme heat, and salt was as much a necessity to them as bread. The tax on salt was essentially a tax on the sweat of the farmers.

Before launching his campaign, Gandhi sent a polite letter to the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, explaining his reasons for believing that the salt laws were unjust, and announcing his intention of disregarding them unless they were repealed. Then, on March 12 1930, Gandhi and many of his followers, accompanied by several press correspondents, started on a march to the sea to carry out their intention of turning themselves into criminals by making salt. Every day, Gandhi led the procession about 12 miles, stopping at villages in the evenings to hold prayer meetings. Many of the villagers joined the march, while others cast flower petals in Gandhi’s path or sprinkled water on his path to settle the dust.

On April 5, the marchers arrived at the sea, where they spent the night in prayer on the beach. In the morning they began to make salt by wading

into the sea, filling pans with water, and letting it evaporate in the sun. Not much salt was made in this way, but Gandhi's action had a strong symbolic power. A wave of non-violent civil disobedience demonstrations swept over India, so extensive and widespread that the Imperial government, in danger of losing control of the country, decided to arrest as many of the demonstrators as possible. By midsummer, Gandhi and a hundred thousand of his followers were in prison, but nevertheless the civil disobedience demonstrations continued.

In January, 1931, Gandhi was released from prison and invited to the Viceroy's palace to talk with Lord Irwin. They reached a compromise agreement: Gandhi was to call off the demonstrations and would attend a Round Table Conference in London to discuss Indian home rule, while Lord Irwin agreed to release the prisoners and would change the salt laws so that Indians living near to the coast could make their own salt.

The salt march was typical of Gandhi's non-violent methods. Throughout the demonstrations he tried to maintain a friendly attitude towards his opponents, avoiding escalation of the conflict. Thus at the end of the demonstrations, the atmosphere was one in which a fair compromise solution could be reached. Whenever he was in prison, Gandhi regarded his jailers as his hosts. Once, when he was imprisoned in South Africa, he used the time to make a pair of sandals, which he sent to General Smuts, the leader of the South African government. Thus Gandhi put into practice the Christian principle, "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you."

Gandhi's importance lies in the fact that he was a major political leader who sincerely tried to put into practice the ethical principles of religion. In his autobiography Gandhi says: "I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet with all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means."

Gandhi believed that human nature is essentially good, and that it is our task to find and encourage whatever is good in the character of others. During the period when he practiced as a lawyer, Gandhi's aim was "to unite parties riven asunder", and this was also his aim as a politician. In order for reconciliation to be possible in politics, it is necessary to avoid escalation of conflicts. Therefore Gandhi used non-violent methods, relying only on the force of truth. "It is my firm conviction", he wrote, "that nothing can be built on violence."

To the insidious argument that "the end justifies the means", Gandhi answered firmly: "They say 'means are after all means'. I would say 'means are after all everything'. As the means, so the end. Indeed the Creator has given us control (and that very limited) over means, none over end... The means may be likened to a seed, and the end to a tree; and there is the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree. Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of

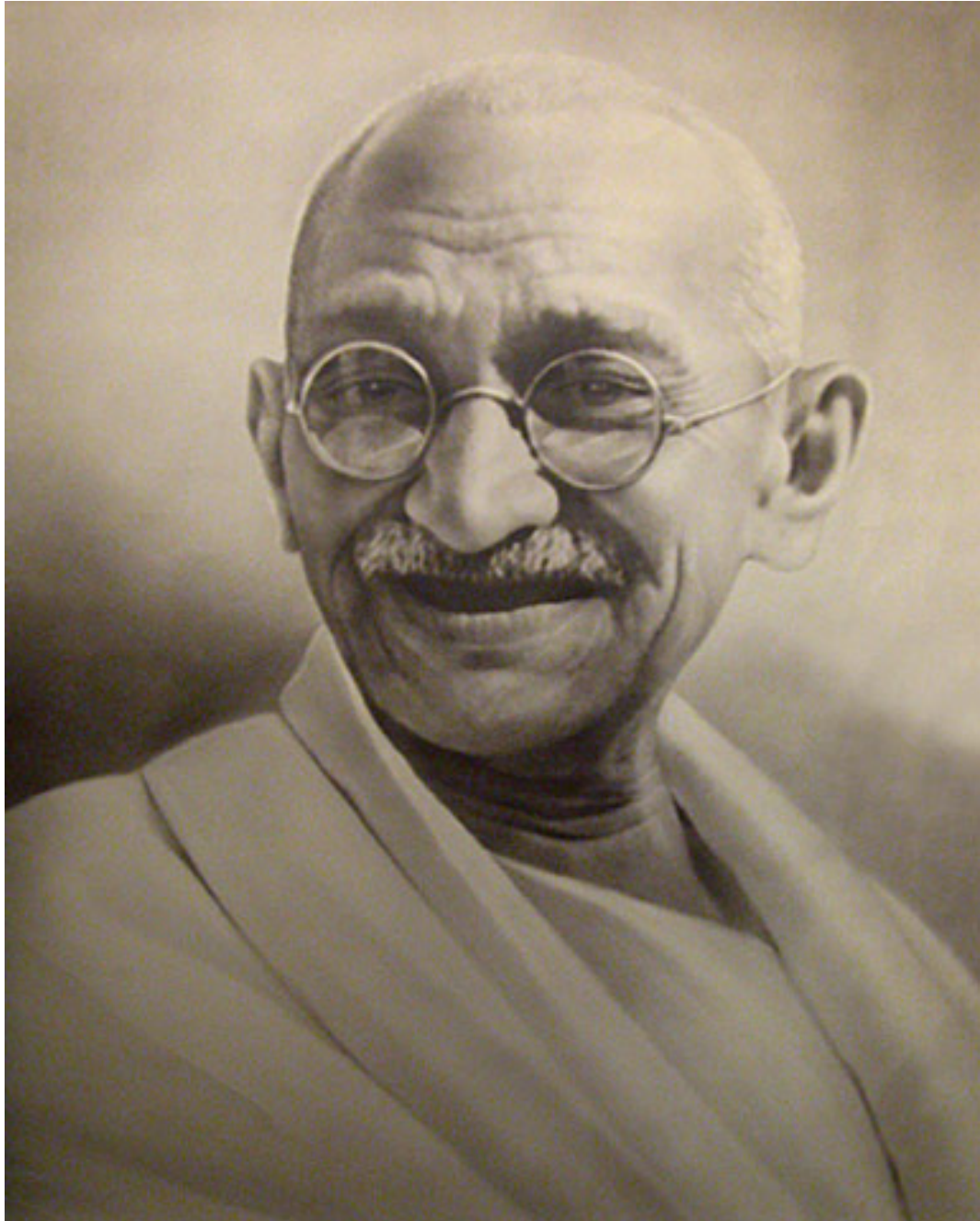


Figure 7.4: *Gandhi said, “The means may be likened to a seed, and the end to a tree; and there is the same inviolable connection between means and end as there is between the seed and the tree. Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of life.”*

life.” In other words, a dirty method produces a dirty result; killing produces more killing; hate leads to more hate. But there are positive feedback loops as well as negative ones. A kind act produces a kind response; a generous gesture is returned; hospitality results in reflected hospitality. Hindus and Buddhists call this principle “the law of karma”.

Gandhi believed that the use of violent means must inevitably contaminate the end achieved. Because Gandhi’s methods were based on love, understanding, forgiveness and reconciliation, the non-violent revolution which he led left very little enmity in its wake. When India finally achieved its independence from England, the two countries parted company without excessive bitterness. India retained many of the good ideas which the English had brought - for example the tradition of parliamentary democracy; and the two countries continued to have close cultural and economic ties.

Another example of a successful non-violent revolution is the black civil rights movement in America, led by Martin Luther King, Jr. The son of a southern Baptist minister, King received his Ph.D. in theology from Boston University in 1955. During his studies, he had admired Thoreau’s essay “On the Duty of Civil Disobedience”, and he had also been greatly moved by the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.

Martin Luther King Jr. had been pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery Alabama for only a year when he was chosen to lead a boycott protesting segregation in the Montgomery busses. Suddenly thrust into this situation of intense conflict, he remembered both the Christian principle of loving one’s enemies and Gandhi’s methods of non-violent protest. In his first speech as President of the Montgomery Improvement Association (a speech which the rapid pace of events had forced him to prepare in only twenty minutes, five of which he spent in prayer), he said:

“Our method will be that of persuasion, not coercion. We will only say to people, ‘Let your conscience be your guide’. Our actions must be guided by the deepest principles of our Christian faith. Love must be our regulating ideal. Once again we must hear the words of Jesus echoing across the centuries: ‘Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you.’ If we fail to do this, our protest will end up as a meaningless drama on the stage of history, and its memory will be shrouded by the ugly garments of shame. In spite of the mistreatment that we have confronted, we must not become bitter and end up by hating our white brothers. As Booker T. Washington said, ‘Let no man pull you down so low as to make you hate him.’”

“If you will protest courageously, and yet with dignity and Christian love, when the history books are written in future generations, the historians will have to pause and say, ‘There lived a great people - a black people - who

injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization.’ This is our challenge and our overwhelming responsibility.”

This speech, which Dr. King made in December 1955, set the tone of the black civil rights movement. Although the protesters against racialism were often faced with brutality and violence; although many of them, including Dr. King were unjustly jailed; although the homes of the leaders were bombed; although they constantly received telephone calls threatening their lives; although many civil rights workers were severely beaten, and several of them killed, they never resorted to violence in their protests against racial discrimination. Because of this adherence to Christian ethics, public opinion shifted to the side of the civil rights movement, and the United States Supreme Court ruled bus segregation to be unconstitutional.

In 1959, while recovering from an almost-fatal stabbing, Martin Luther King Jr. visited India at the invitation of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Dr. King and his wife Coretta were warmly welcomed by Nehru, who changed his schedule in order to meet them. They had an opportunity to visit a religious community or “ashram” that Gandhi had founded, and they discussed non-violence with many of Gandhi’s disciples.

In 1964, the change in public opinion produced by the non-violent black civil rights movement resulted in the passage of the civil rights act. In the same year, Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. He accepted it, not as an individual, but on behalf of all civil rights workers; and he immediately gave all the prize money to the movement.

In 1967, a year before his assassination, Dr. King forcefully condemned the Viet Nam war in an address at a massive peace rally in New York City. He felt that opposition to war followed naturally from his advocacy of non-violence. In his book, “Strength to Love”, Dr. King wrote: “Wisdom born of experience should tell us that war is obsolete. There may have been a time when war served a negative good by preventing the spread of an evil force, but the power of modern weapons eliminates even the possibility that war may serve as a negative good. If we assume that life is worth living, and that man has a right to survival, then we must find an alternative to war... I am convinced that the Church cannot be silent while mankind faces the threat of nuclear annihilation. If the church is true to her mission, she must call for an end to the nuclear arms race.”

Concerning the Christian principle of loving one’s enemies, Dr. King wrote: “Why should we love our enemies? Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that... Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend. We never get rid of an enemy by meeting hate with hate; we get rid



Figure 7.5: *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speaking in Washington D.C.*

of an enemy by getting rid of enmity... It is this attitude that made it possible for Lincoln to speak a kind word about the South during the Civil War, when feeling was most bitter. Asked by a shocked bystander how he could do this, Lincoln said, 'Madam, do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?' This is the power of redemptive love."

To a large extent, the black civil rights movement of the '50's and '60's succeeded in ending racial discrimination in America. If the methods used had been violent, the movement could easily have degenerated into a nightmare of interracial hatred; but by remembering the Christian message, "Love your enemy; do good to them that despitefully use you", Martin Luther King Jr. raised the ethical level of the civil rights movement; and the final result was harmony and understanding between the black and white communities. Later the nonviolent methods of Gandhi and King were successfully applied to the South African struggle against Apartheid.

The examples that we have considered here - the Indian civil rights movement in South Africa, the Indian independence movement, and the black civil rights movement in the United States - all show that non-violent protest can sometimes be a very effective method for resisting governmental violence and for changing unjust laws. As Gandhi pointed out, the end achieved inevitably reflects the means used. Therefore, if harmony and understanding are to be the end result of a political movement, then non-violent methods must be used.

There is, however, another question that we should try to answer: To what extent can violence be eliminated altogether from a society and replaced by the rule of love? Tolstoy was completely uncompromising in his condemnation of violence; and he even went so far as to maintain that there are no circumstances whatever under which violence can be justified, even in law-enforcement. Tolstoy's arguments are logically consistent, and consistent also with the words and spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. However, one feels that he may be exaggerating for the sake of clarity.

Tolstoy tells us that the only thing needed for a new order - "the Kingdom of God" - to be established on Earth is for all men and women to abandon violence and to follow the rule of love. He is right, of course, but when we read his words, we cannot help noticing the word "all". If *all* humans abandon violence and follow the rule of love, a new order will come; but what if some of us become as gentle as lambs, while others remain unregenerate wolves? Will not the wolves eat the lambs? This is the difficulty that has always blocked progress towards a non-violent society. It is the problem that lies at the root of the arms race. It is the riddle that we somehow must solve if we are to save civilization from a third world war.

Although no real society is completely free from violence, some societies are much less violent than others. For example, feudal Japan was a very

violent society, as was the American west in the days when everyone carried a gun. Scandinavia, as it is described in the Sagas, was also extremely violent. By contrast, one can also think of societies where the level of violence is very low, for example Bhutan, Tibet or Nepal (until recently), modern Scandinavia, modern Switzerland, or the Arapesh society described by Margaret Mead, to name only a few.

Many of the world's nations have reduced their level of internal violence considerably during the last few hundred years. A few centuries ago, a gentleman in France or England carried a sword, and a child could be hanged for stealing a handkerchief. Today it is usually no longer necessary for citizens to carry personal weapons, and in many countries both torture and the death penalty have been abolished. On the other hand, very little progress has been made towards solving the problem of international violence.

While the level of violence *within* many nations has decreased, the level of international violence has greatly increased because of modern weapons: The two world wars that have taken place during this century have produced destruction and death on a scale previously unknown; and humanity is threatened with the possibility of a third world war that could dwarf the other two. Thus it is imperative that we achieve at an international level the same degree of order and good government that has been achieved locally in such places as (for example) Scandinavia.

In the Sagas, one can hardly find a page that is free from violence, and yet in modern Scandinavia the citizens are so law-abiding that they will not cross a street against a red light, even if there is neither an automobile nor a policeman anywhere in sight. This obedience to laws is not derived from fear, but from a belief that the laws are beneficial. The fact that it has been possible to achieve such a degree of internal peace and order in what was once one of the world's most violent societies can make us optimistic as we work to make the same transition at the international level.

Violence within a society is a symptom that something is wrong, just as violence within a family is a symptom that something is wrong. A good government does not need torture or the death penalty or an excessively numerous police force in order to govern, just as good parents do not need the threat of physical violence in order to control their children. The power of a good government rests on the consent of the governed, just as the authority of good parents rests on the love and respect that their children feel for them.

The achievement of good government is not a trivial problem. In those places in the world where it exists today, it has been built up only through much effort and thought. Nevertheless, the fact that there are countries where a great measure of peace and happiness have been achieved locally shows that the problem is not insoluble.



Figure 7.6: *His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet*

What we need to do is to concentrate more effort and intelligence on the problem of achieving good government globally. This problem should not really be beyond the ability of mankind to solve. Humans are, after all, very intelligent. In fact, the acuteness of the present crisis is due to the rapid technological development that human ingenuity has produced. The intelligence of mankind has seen very deeply into the secrets of nature. Can we not use the same intelligence to achieve good government at a global level?

In his excellent and highly readable book, *Ancient Wisdom, Modern World: Ethics for the New Millennium*, the Dalai Lama writes:

“..At present and for the conceivable future, the UN is the only global institution capable of influencing and formulating policy on behalf of the international community. Of course, many people criticize it on the grounds that it is ineffective, and it is true that time and again we have seen its resolutions ignored, abandoned and forgotten. Nevertheless, in spite of its shortcomings, I for one continue to have the highest regard not only for the principles on which it was founded but also for the great deal that it has achieved since its inception

in 1945. We need only ask ourselves whether or not it has helped to save lives by defusing potentially dangerous situations to see that it is more than the toothless bureaucracy some people say it is. We should also consider the great work of its subsidiary organizations, such as UNICEF, United Nations High Commission for Refugees, UNESCO and the World Health Organization...”

“I see the UN, developed to its full potential, as being the proper vehicle for carrying out the wishes of humanity as a whole. As yet it is not able to do this very effectively, but we are only just beginning to see the emergence of a global consciousness (which is made possible by the communications revolution). And in spite of tremendous difficulties, we have seen it in action in numerous parts of the world, even though at the moment there may be only one or two nations spearheading these initiatives. The fact that they are seeking the legitimacy conferred by a United Nations mandate suggests a felt need for justification through collective approbation. This, in turn, I believe to be indicative of a growing sense of a single, mutually dependent, human community.”

Another example of religious leadership in addressing global problems was given by H.H. Pope John Paul II. In his Christmas address on 25 December, 2002, the Pope said that efforts for peace were urgently needed “in the Middle East, to extinguish the ominous smouldering of a conflict which, with the joint efforts of all, can be avoided.” Although he did not specifically name the countries involved, it was clear that his remarks referred to the threatened invasion of Iraq by the United States and England. This interpretation was strengthened by senior Vatican officials who reiterated Catholic teaching that “preventative” war is unjustifiable. In an interview with Rome’s *La Repubblica*, Archbishop Renato Martino, prefect of the Council for Justice and Peace, stated that “unilateralism is not acceptable”.

Pope John Paul II was not an exception among the Roman Catholic Popes of the 20th century. All of them have spoken strongly against the institution of war. Especially notable are H.H. Pope Paul IV who made a one-day visit to the United Nations where his speech included the words “no more war, war never again”, and H.H. Pope John XXIII, author of the eloquent encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*. One can think also of the Ecumenical Council *Vatican II*, which denounced the arms race as an “utterly treacherous trap for humanity”, questioned the method of deterrence as a safe way to preserve a steady peace, and condemned war as a “crime against God and man himself”.

Other powerful voices have been raised by the World Conference of Religions for Peace, which met for the first time in October 1970 in Kyoto Japan.¹ At this meeting, more than 1000 religious leaders gathered to discuss the grave

¹Subsequent World Assemblies of the WCRP have been held in Louvain, Belgium, (1974); Princeton New Jersey, (1979); Nairobi, Kenya, (1984); Melbourne, Australia, (1989); Riva del Garde, Italy, (1994); and Amman, Jordan, (1999).

dangers posed by modern war. Among them were representatives of the Baha'i, Mahayana and Treveda Buddhists, Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Orthodox Christians, Confucianists, representatives of several streams of Hinduism, a number of communities of Indigenous faith, Shiite and Sunni Muslims, Jainists, Reform Jews, Shintos, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, and representatives of a number of new religions.

The WCRP sponsors many projects related to conflict resolution, the world's children, development, disarmament and security, human rights, and peace education. For example, in the field of peace education, WCRP sponsors a project in Israel called "Common Values/Different Sources" which brings together Jews, Muslims and Christians to study sacred texts together in search of shared values, eventually resulting in a book for classroom use. In England and Germany, another WCRP project analyzes school textbooks' treatment of religious traditions that are foreign to the books' intended audiences.

Dr. Edy Korthals Altes, a former Ambassador of the Netherlands to Poland and Spain and an Honorary President of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, has expressed his vision of our current global situation in the following words: "We need a new concept of security. The old concept dates back to the Romans who said 'If you want peace, prepare for war'. The new concept I would propose is exactly the opposite, 'If you want peace, prepare for peace'. While this may sound simplistic, it is difficult to put into practice since the application of justice and solidarity in international political and economic relations require sacrifices from 'those who have'. I would give three reasons why the old concept of 'security' is no longer valid: a) The extreme vulnerability of modern society; b) The tremendous destructive power of modern arms and terrorism; c) The interdependence between nations. These three elements are closely interconnected. It is therefore imperative to apply justice and solidarity in our international relations. If not, disaster looms!"

Dr. Altes feels that economic reforms are needed if global peace is to be achieved. "Not only economic justice is involved", he writes, "but also political justice. A clear example of which is the current situation in the Middle East. There must also be justice in the economic world situation where 1/5 of the world population enjoys a high standard of living while 1/5 lives in terrible poverty, millions dying every year from hunger. This 'North South gap' is increasing!"

Discussing "myths that underlie our present economic system", he points to

1. "The notion that each person has unlimited material needs. We are told to 'consume more' which is totally contra to any religion. What is more, it is a self-defeating program that is contrary to humanity in general.

The New Testament is clear ‘you shall not live on bread alone.’ Our deeper needs are not for material goods but for inner growth.”

2. “Unlimited growth. The economy, my firm, my salary should all grow. In a finite planet, this is total nonsense. This maxim of growth has brought about great ecological damage.”
3. Idolatry of the Free Market. I am in favor of a free market, but one that is set in the context of social and human conditions. We need to apply means to avoid the ‘law of the jungle’ in the market place.”

No enumeration of religious voices raised in the cause of peace would be complete without mention of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), all of whom refuse to give any support whatever to the institution of war. Although they are fundamentally opposed to war as being completely contrary to Christian ethics, the Quakers are active in caring for the victims of war, and in 1947 the American Friends Service Committee and the Friends Service Council were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, the writings of the Dalai Lama, the messages of Pope John Paul II and other Popes, the anti-war convictions of the Quakers, and the many projects of the World Conference of Religions for Peace all illustrate the potentialities of the world’s religions as powerful forces for mobilizing public opinion in the cause of peace. One hopes that the voice of religion in this cause will become still more powerful in the future. Each week, all over the world, congregations assemble and are addressed by their leaders on ethical issues. But all too often there is no mention of the astonishing and shameful contradiction between the institution of war (especially the doctrine of “massive retaliation”), and the principle of universal human brotherhood, loving and forgiving one’s enemies, and returning good for evil. At a moment of history when the continued survival of civilization is in doubt because of the incompatibility of war with the existence of thermonuclear weapons, our religious leaders ought to use their enormous influence to help to solve the problem of war, which is after all an ethical problem.

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Chapter 8

Human Nature: An Evolutionary Paradox

Today, human greed and folly are destroying the global environment. As if this were not enough, there is a great threat to civilization and the biosphere from an all-destroying thermonuclear war. Both of these severe existential threats are due to faults our inherited emotional nature.

From the standpoint of evolutionary theory, this is a paradox. As a species, we are well on the road to committing collective suicide, driven by the flaws in human nature. But isn't natural selection supposed to produce traits that lead to survival? Today, our emotions are not leading us towards survival, but instead driving us towards extinction. What is the reason for this paradox?

Some stories from the Bible

The Old Testament is the common heritage of the three Abrahamic religions, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Some of the stories which it contains can be seen as attempts to explain the paradoxes of human emotional nature: Why are we born with emotions that drive us to commit the seven deadly sins? Why are pride, envy, wrath, gluttony, lust, sloth and greed so much a part of human nature? The story of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden attempts to answer this question, as do stories about the role of Satan in the world.

According to the biblical account, Adam and Eve ate apples from the Tree of Knowledge and were therefore expelled from the Garden of Eden. This story can be seen as containing elements of historical truth. Humans were originally hunter-gatherers. Populations were so sparse that gathering roots, berries and fruits from their environment gave them enough to eat. Occasionally they obtained additional protein from the meat of animals that they were able to kill. Then agriculture was invented. Populations rapidly became so dense that



Figure 8.1: *The garden of Eden*).

humans were no longer able to live simply by gathering fruit from the Garden of Eden. Expelled from the garden, they were henceforth forced to sweat for their daily bread.

What about “original sin” and the role of the Devil in the world? In the Bible, the Devil, or Satan, appears as a fallen angel who tempts humans to commit sins, i.e to break the rules of their societies. The existence of Satan is the biblical explanation of the presence of evil in the world. An alternative explanation is given by the doctrine of “original sin”, which maintains that humans are born with a sinful nature. Like the story of the Garden of Eden, these biblical concepts may also chronicle true historical events in human evolution. A sinful human is sometimes described as “behaving like an animal”. In fact, what is regarded a sin in humans can be a necessary survival trait in an animal. It would be ridiculous to say “Thou shalt not steal” to a mouse or “Thou shalt not kill” to a tiger.

Our emotions have an extremely long evolutionary history. Both lust and rage are emotions that we share with many animals. However, with the rapid advance of human cultural evolution, our ancestors began to live together in progressively larger groups, and in these new societies, our inherited emotional nature was often inappropriate. What once was a survival trait became a sin which needed to be suppressed by morality and law. Today we live in a world

Figure 8.2: *Satan*.

that is entirely different from the one into which our species was born. We face the problems of the 21st century: exploding populations, vanishing resources, and the twin threats of catastrophic climate change and thermonuclear war. We face these severe problems with our poor cave-man's brain, with an emotional nature that has not changed much since our ancestors lived in small tribes, competing for territory on the grasslands of Africa.

On aggression

The Nobel laureate ethologist Konrad Lorenz is best known for his controversial book *On Aggression*. In this book, Lorenz makes a distinction between intergroup aggression and intragroup aggression. Among animals, he points out, rank-determining fights are seldom fatal. Thus, for example, the fights that determine leadership within a wolf pack end when the loser makes a gesture of submission. By contrast, fights between groups of animals are often fights to the death, examples being wars between ant colonies, or of bees against intruders, or the defense of a rat pack against strange rats.

Many animals, humans included, seem willing to kill or be killed in defense of the communities to which they belong. Lorenz calls this behavioral tendency a “communal defense response”. He points out that the “holy shiver”, the tingling of the spine that humans experience when performing an heroic act in defense of their communities, is related to the prehuman reflex for raising the hair on the back of an animal as it confronts an enemy, a reflex that makes the animal seem larger than it really is.



Figure 8.3: *An illustration from Darwin's book, "The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals". Here a cat raises its back and fur when confronting an enemy to make itself seem larger and more dangerous. This reflex was later discussed by the ethologist Konrad Lorenz.*

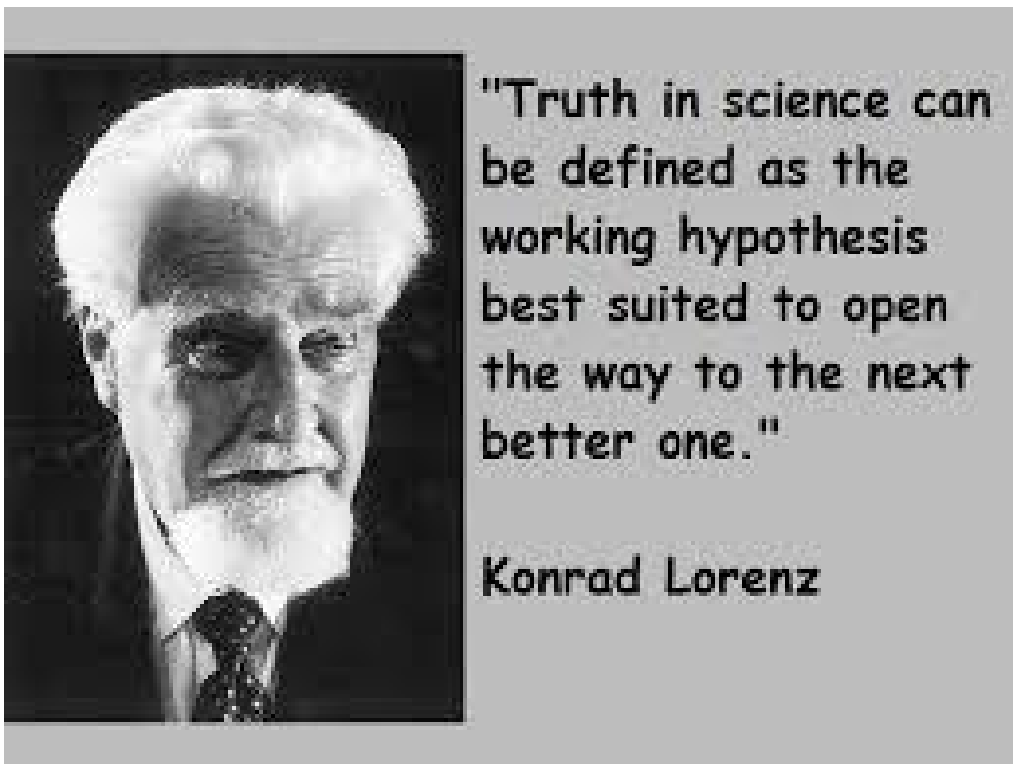


Figure 8.4: *Konrad Lorenz.*

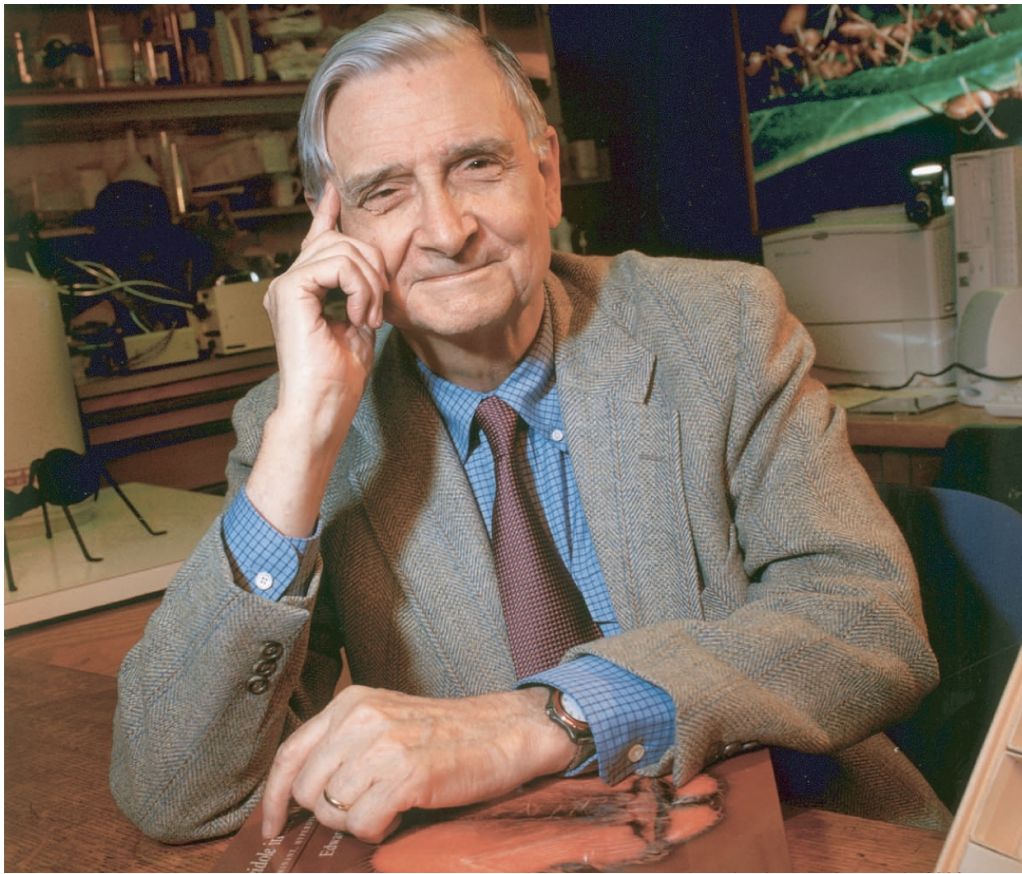


Figure 8.5: *Professor E.O. Wilson of Harvard is famous for his books on Sociobiology.*



Figure 8.6: *Professor Richard Dawkins of Oxford, controversial author of “The Selfish Gene” and many other books. He has contributed much to the debate on relationships between science, religion, aggression and altruism.*

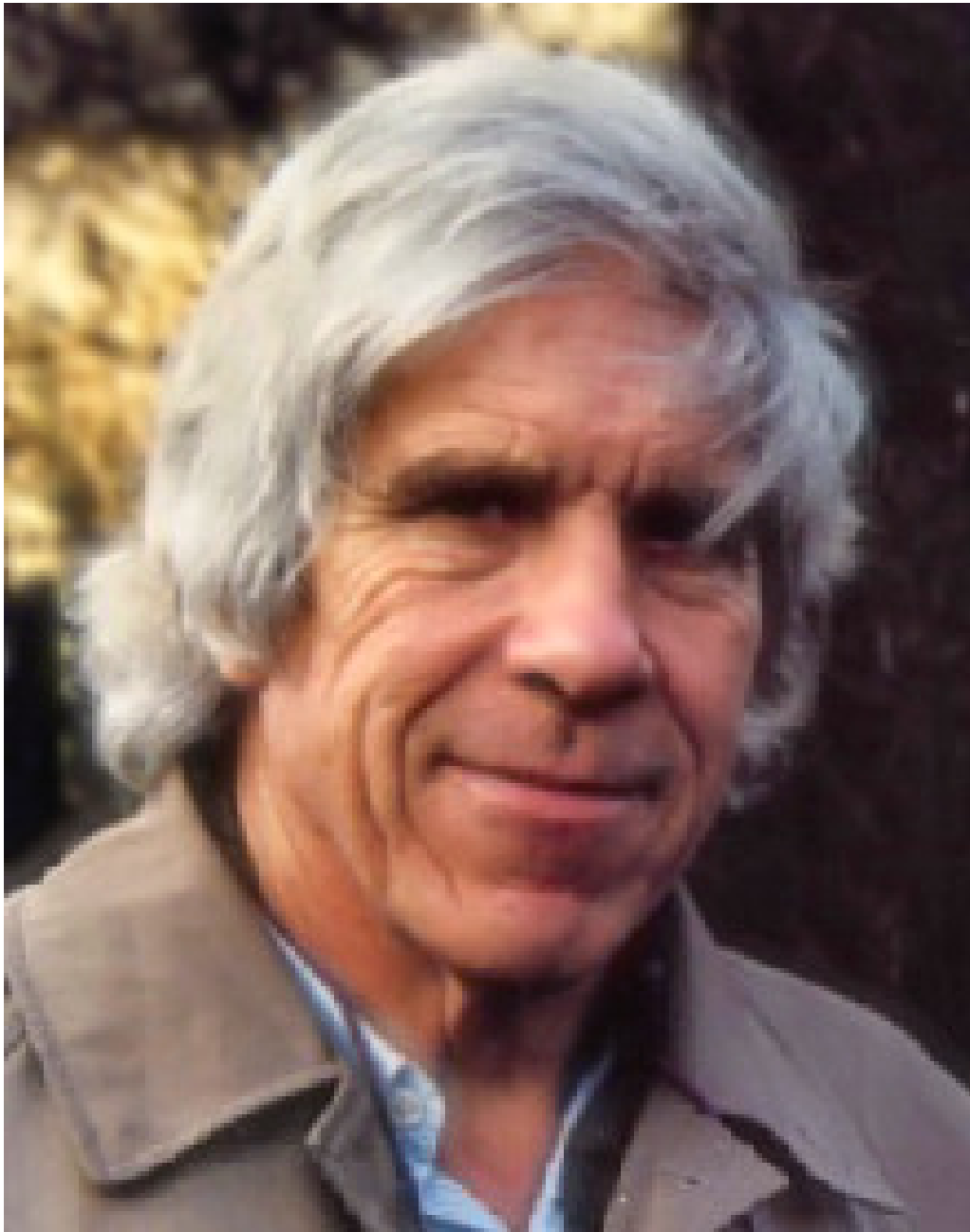


Figure 8.7: *William Donald Hamilton was a Royal Society Research Professor at Oxford University until his death in 2000. He contributed importantly to our understanding of altruism from the standpoint of genetics.*

Many of the great ethical teachers of history lived at a time when cultural evolution was changing humans from hunter-gatherers and pastoral peoples to farmers and city dwellers. To live and cooperate in larger groups, humans needed to overwrite their instinctive behavior patterns with culturally determined behavior involving a wider range of cooperation than previously.

This period of change is marked by the lives and ideas of a number of great ethical teachers - Moses, Buddha, Lao Tse, Confucius, Socrates, Aristotle, Jesus, and Saint Paul. Mohammed lived at a slightly later period, but it was still a period of transition for the Arab peoples, a period during which their range cooperation needed to be enlarged.

Most of the widely practiced religions of today contain the principle of universal human brotherhood. This is contained, for example, in Christianity, in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The Sermon on the Mount tells us that we must love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves. When asked "But who is my neighbor?", Jesus replied with the Parable of the Good Samaritan, which says that our neighbor may belong to a different ethnic group than ourselves, or may be separated from us by geographical distance. Nevertheless, he is still our neighbor and he still deserves our love and assistance. To this, Christianity adds that we must love and forgive our enemy, and do good to those who persecute us, a principle that would make war impossible if it were only followed. Not only in Christianity, but also in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, the principles of compassion and universal human brotherhood hold a high place.

Some concluding remarks

We started this chapter by saying that human nature is an evolutionary paradox because natural selection is supposed to produce traits that lead to survival, but today our emotions are driving humanity towards destruction. The explanation for this paradox is the enormous and constantly accelerating speed of cultural evolution, especially scientific and technological advances. Genetic evolution is completely unable to keep up with this astonishing rate of change, which might be called an information explosion. Fortunately, human behavior is very malleable, and we can hope that it will be possible to adapt to the rapidly changing conditions of life if proper use is made of our almost miraculous modern communications technologies.

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Chapter 9

Some Contributions of Islamic Culture

At a time when the corporate-controlled media of Europe and the United States are doing their utmost to fill us with poisonous Islamophobia, it is perhaps a useful antidote to remember the great role that Islamic civilization played in preserving, enlarging and transmitting to us the knowledge and culture of the ancient world.

After the burning of the great library at Alexandria and the destruction of Hellenistic civilization, most of the books of the classical Greek and Hellenistic philosophers were lost. However, a few of these books survived and were translated from Greek, first into Syriac, then into Arabic and finally from Arabic into Latin. By this roundabout route, fragments from the wreck of the classical Greek and Hellenistic civilizations drifted back into the consciousness of the West.

The Roman empire was ended in the 5th century A.D. by attacks of barbaric Germanic tribes from northern Europe. However, by that time, the Roman empire had split into two halves. The eastern half, with its capital at Byzantium (Constantinople), survived until 1453, when the last emperor was killed vainly defending the walls of his city against the Turks.

The Byzantine empire included many Syriac-speaking subjects; and in fact, beginning in the 3rd century A.D., Syriac replaced Greek as the major language of western Asia. In the 5th century A.D., there was a split in the Christian church of Byzantium; and the Nestorian church, separated from the official Byzantine church. The Nestorians were bitterly persecuted by the Byzantines, and therefore they migrated, first to Mesopotamia, and later to south-west Persia. (Some Nestorians migrated as far as China.)

During the early part of the middle ages, the Nestorian capital at Gondisapur was a great center of intellectual activity. The works of Plato, Aristotle,

Hippocrates, Euclid, Archimedes, Ptolemy, Hero and Galen were translated into Syriac by Nestorian scholars, who had brought these books with them from Byzantium.

Among the most distinguished of the Nestorian translators were the members of a family called Bukht-Yishu (meaning "Jesus hath delivered"), which produced seven generations of outstanding scholars. Members of this family were fluent not only in Greek and Syriac, but also in Arabic and Persian.

In the 7th century A.D., the Islamic religion suddenly emerged as a conquering and proselytizing force. Inspired by the teachings of Mohammad (570 A.D. - 632 A.D.), the Arabs and their converts rapidly conquered western Asia, northern Africa, and Spain. During the initial stages of the conquest, the Islamic religion inspired a fanaticism in its followers which was often hostile to learning. However, this initial fanaticism quickly changed to an appreciation of the ancient cultures of the conquered territories; and during the middle ages, the Islamic world reached a very high level of culture and civilization.

Thus, while the century from 750 to 850 was primarily a period of translation from Greek to Syriac, the century from 850 to 950 was a period of translation from Syriac to Arabic. It was during this latter century that Yuhanna Ibn Masawiah (a member of the Bukht-Yishu family, and medical advisor to Caliph Harun al-Rashid) produced many important translations into Arabic.

The skill of the physicians of the Bukht-Yishu family convinced the Caliphs of the value of Greek learning; and in this way the family played an extremely important role in the preservation of the western cultural heritage. Caliph al-Mamun, the son of Harun al-Rashid, established at Baghdad a library and a school for translation, and soon Baghdad replaced Gondisapur as a center of learning.

The English word "chemistry" is derived from the Arabic words "al-chimia", which mean "the changing". The earliest alchemical writer in Arabic was Jabir (760-815), a friend of Harun al-Rashid. Much of his writing deals with the occult, but mixed with this is a certain amount of real chemical knowledge. For example, in his Book of Properties, Jabir gives a recipe for making what we now call lead hydroxycarbonate (white lead), which is used in painting and pottery glazes:

Another important alchemical writer was Rhazes (c. 860 - c. 950). He was born in the ancient city of Ray, near Teheran, and his name means "the man from Ray". Rhazes studied medicine in Baghdad, and he became chief physician at the hospital there. He wrote the first accurate descriptions of smallpox and measles, and his medical writings include methods for setting broken bones with casts made from plaster of Paris. Rhazes was the first person to classify substances into vegetable, animal and mineral. The word "al-kali", which appears in his writings, means "the calcined" in Arabic. It is



Figure 9.1: A 12th century manuscript by Ibn Bukht-Yishu

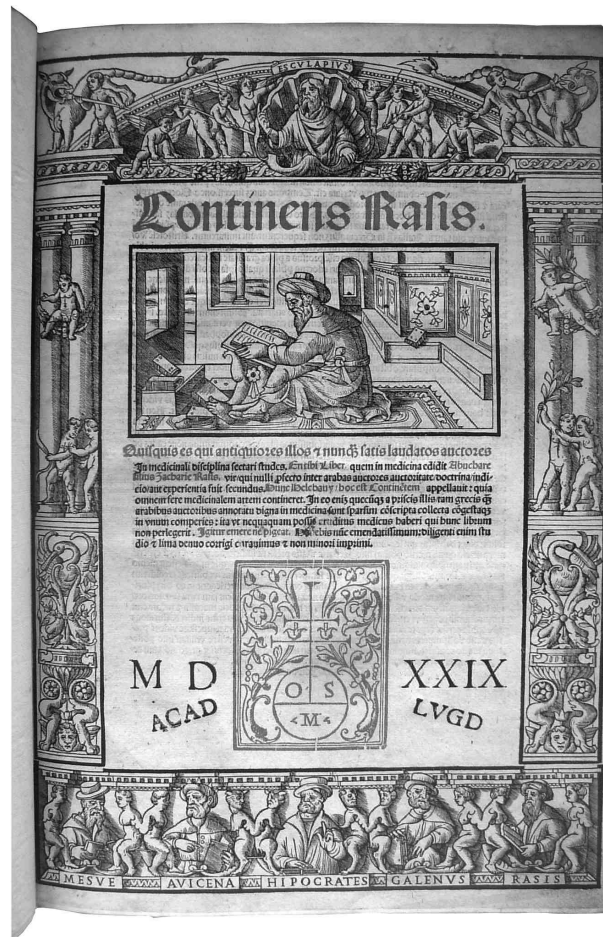


Figure 9.2: A Latin translation of the works of Rhazes

the source of our word “alkali”, as well as of the symbol K for potassium.

The greatest physician of the middle ages, Avicenna, (Abu-Ali al Hussain Ibn Abdullah Ibn Sina, 980-1037), was also a Persian, like Rhazes. More than a hundred books are attributed to him. They were translated into Latin in the 12th century, and they were among the most important medical books used in Europe until the time of Harvey. Avicenna also wrote on alchemy, and he is important for having denied the possibility of transmutation of elements.

In mathematics, one of the most outstanding Arabic writers was al-Khwarizmi (c. 780 - c. 850). The title of his book, *Ilm al-jabr wa'd muqabalah*, is the source of the English word “algebra”. In Arabic al-jabr means “the equating”. Al-Khwarizmi’s name has also become an English word, “algorism”, the old word for arithmetic. Al-Khwarizmi drew from both Greek and Hindu sources, and through his writings the decimal system and the use of zero were

transmitted to the West.

One of the outstanding Arabic physicists was al-Hazen (965-1038). He did excellent work in optics, and in this field he went far beyond anything done by the Greeks. Al-Hazen studied the reflection of light by the atmosphere, an effect which makes the stars appear displaced from their true positions when they are near the horizon; and he calculated the height of the atmospheric layer above the earth to be about ten miles. He also studied the rainbow, the halo, and the reflection of light from spherical and parabolic mirrors. In his book, *On the Burning Sphere*, he shows a deep understanding of the properties of convex lenses. Al-Hazen also used a dark room with a pin-hole opening to study the image of the sun during an eclipse. This is the first mention of the camera obscura, and it is perhaps correct to attribute the invention of the camera obscura to al-Hazen.

Another Islamic philosopher who had great influence on western thought was Averroes, who lived in Spain from 1126 to 1198. His writings took the form of thoughtful commentaries on the works of Aristotle. He shocked both his Muslim and his Christian readers by maintaining that the world was not created at a definite instant, but that it instead evolved over a long period of time, and is still evolving.

In the 12th century, parts of Spain, including the city of Toledo, were reconquered by the Christians. Toledo had been an Islamic cultural center, and many Muslim scholars, together with their manuscripts, remained in the city when it passed into the hands of the Christians. Thus Toledo became a center for the exchange of ideas between east and west; and it was in this city that many of the books of the classical Greek and Hellenistic philosophers were translated from Arabic into Latin.

It is interesting and inspiring to visit Toledo. A tourist there can see ample evidence of a period of tolerance and enlightenment, when members of the three Abrahamic religions, Christianity, Judaism and Islam, lived side by side in harmony and mutual respect, exchanging important ideas which were to destined to become the foundations of our modern civilization. One can also see a cathedral, a mosque and a synagogue, in each of which craftsmen from all three faiths worked cooperatively to produce a beautiful monument to human solidarity.



Figure 9.3: *The cathedral of Toledo. In building and decorating it, craftsmen from all three Abrahamic religions worked side by side to produce a beautiful monument to human solidarity.*

Chapter 10

Institutional and Cultural Inertia

Why do we not respond to the crisis?

Today we are faced with multiple interrelated crises, for example the threat of catastrophic climate change or equally catastrophic thermonuclear war, and the threat of widespread famine. These threats to human existence and to the biosphere demand a prompt and rational response; but because because of institutional and cultural inertia, we are failing to take the steps that are necessary to avoid disaster.

Institutional inertia

Our collective failure to respond adequately to the current crisis is very largely due to institutional inertia. For example, international relations are still based based on the concept of absolutely sovereign nation states, even though this concept has become a dangerous anachronism in an era of instantaneous global communication and economic interdependence. Within nations, systems of law and education change very slowly, although present dangers demand rapid revolutions in outlook and lifestyle. Our financial system is deeply embedded and resistant to change. Our entire industrial infrastructure is based on fossil fuels; but if the future is to be saved, the use of fossil fuels must stop.

The failure of the recent COP20 climate conference in Lima to produce a strong final document can be attributed to the fact that the nations attending the conference felt themselves to be in competition with each other, when in fact they ought to have cooperated in response to a common danger. The heavy hand of the fossil fuel industry also made itself felt at the conference.

Until the development of coal-driven steam engines in the 19th century



Figure 10.1: *Coalbrookdale by Night* by Philip James de Loutherbourg, painted 1801. This shows Madeley Wood (or Bedlam) Furnaces, which belonged to the Coalbrookdale Company from 1776 to 1796. Until the start of the Industrial Revolution, humans lived more or less in harmony with their environment.

humans lived more or less in harmony with their environment. Then, fossil fuels, representing many millions of years of stored sunlight, were extracted and burned in two centuries, driving a frenzy of growth of population and industry that has lasted until the present. But today, the party is over. Coal, oil and gas are nearly exhausted, and what remains of them must be left in the ground to avoid existential threats to humans and the biosphere. Big coal and oil corporations base the value of their stocks on ownership of the remaining resources that are still buried, and they can be counted on to use every trick, fair or unfair, turn those resources into money.

In general corporations represent a strong force resisting change. By law, the directors of corporations are obliged to put the profits of stockholders above every other consideration. No room whatever is left for an ecological or social conscience. Increasingly, corporations have taken control of our mass media and our political system. They intervene in such a way as to make themselves richer, and thus to increase their control of the system.

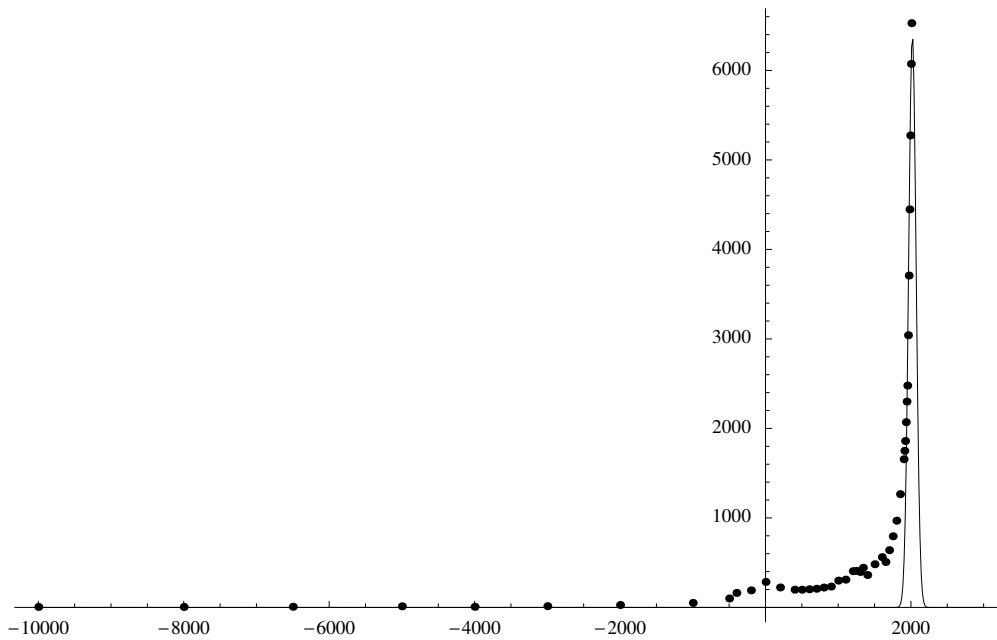


Figure 10.2: *Population growth and fossil fuel use, seen on a time-scale of several thousand years. The dots are population estimates in millions from the US Census Bureau. Fossil fuel use appears as a spike-like curve, rising from almost nothing to a high value, and then falling again to almost nothing in the space of a few centuries. When the two curves are plotted together, the explosive rise of global population is seen to be simultaneous with, and perhaps partially driven by, the rise of fossil fuel use. This raises the question of whether the world's population is headed for a crash when the fossil fuel era has ended. (Author's own graph)*

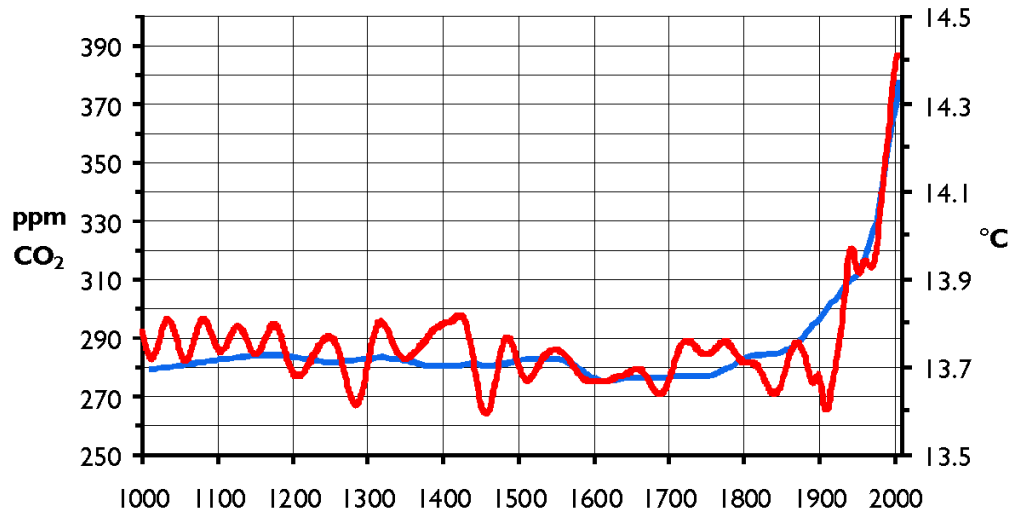


Figure 10.3: *The Hanno graph used by the United Nations Climate Change Compendium 2009. Source: wattsupwiththat.com*

Polite conversation and cultural inertia

Each day, the conventions of polite conversation contribute to our sense that everything is as it always was. Politeness requires that we do not talk about issues that might be contrary to another person's beliefs. Thus polite conversation is dominated by trivia, entertainment, sports, the weather, gossip, food, and so on. Worries about the distant future, the danger of nuclear war, the danger of uncontrollable climate change, or the danger of widespread famine seldom appear in conversations at the dinner table, over coffee or at the pub. In conversations between polite people, the situation is exactly the same as in the mass media. We obtain the false impression that all is well with the world. But in fact, all is not well. We have to act promptly and adequately to save the future.

Shooting Santa Claus

No one wants to shoot Santa Claus. That goes without saying! Who would want to harm that jolly old man, with his reindeer and sleigh, and his workshop at the North Pole? Who would want to prevent him from bringing happiness to everyone? Who would want to stop him from making the children's eyes light up like stars? Surely no one!

But the sad truth today is that we have to get rid of Santa somehow, before he kills us, and before he kills most of the plants and animals with which we



Figure 10.4: *Both solar energy and wind energy are now cheaper than fossil fuels, especially if the enormous governmental subsidies to the fossil fuel industry are taken into account. These subsidies urgently need to be eliminated, or better yet, shifted to the support of renewable energy infrastructure.*



Figure 10.5: *Is Santa a really nice old man? Of course he is! But today the consumerism that he represents threatens to destroy the global environment.*

share our world. Perhaps shooting is too harsh. Perhaps we should just forget Santa and all that he stands for, with his red suit, invented by the advertising department of Coca-Cola.

This is what Santa stands for: The customer is always right. Your wish is our command. You have a right to whatever you desire. If you feel like taking a vacation on the other side of the world, don't hesitate, just do it. If you feel like buying a SUV, just do it. Self-fulfillment is your birthright. Spending makes the economy grow, and growth is good. Isn't that right?

But sadly that isn't right. We have to face the fact that endless economic growth on a finite planet is a logical impossibility, and that we have reached or passed the sustainable limits to growth.

In today's world, we are pressing against the absolute limits of the earth's carrying capacity, and further growth carries with it the danger of future col-

lapse. In the long run, neither the growth of industry nor that of population is sustainable; and we have now reached or exceeded the sustainable limits.

The size of the human economy is, of course, the product of two factors: the total number of humans, and the consumption per capita. Let us first consider the problem of reducing the per-capita consumption in the industrialized countries. The whole structure of western society seems designed to push its citizens in the opposite direction, towards ever-increasing levels of consumption. The mass media hold before us continually the ideal of a personal utopia, filled with material goods.

Every young man in a modern industrial society feels that he is a failure unless he fights his way to the “top”; and in recent years, women too have been drawn into the competition. Of course, not everyone can reach the top; there would not be room for everyone; but society urges us all to try, and we feel a sense of failure if we do not reach the goal. Thus, modern life has become a competition of all against all for power and possessions.

When possessions are used for the purpose of social competition, demand has no natural upper limit; it is then limited only by the size of the human ego, which, as we know, is boundless. This would be all to the good if unlimited industrial growth were desirable; but today, when further industrial growth implies future collapse, western society urgently needs to find new values to replace our worship of power, our restless chase after excitement, and our admiration of excessive consumption.

If you turn on your television set, the vast majority of the programs that you will be offered give no hint at all of the true state of the world or of the dangers which we will face in the future. Part of the reason for this willful blindness is that no one wants to damage consumer confidence. No one wants to bring on a recession. No one wants to shoot Santa Claus.

But sooner or later a severe recession will come, despite our unwillingness to recognize this fact. Perhaps we should prepare for it by reordering the world's economy and infrastructure to achieve long-term sustainability, i.e. steady-state economics, population stabilization, and renewable energy.

Religious conservatism

All known human societies have religions; and this is true not only of societies that exist today, but also of all past societies of which we have any record. Therefore it seems reasonable to suppose that the tendency to be religious is an intrinsic part of human nature. It seems to be coded into our genes. If evolutionary forces have produced the human tendency to be religious, then it must have some survival value. My own belief is that religion helps us because it is a mechanism for the preservation and transmission of human cultures.

All living organisms on earth hand on information from one generation to the next in the form of messages coded into their DNA and RNA. Humans are unique in having also evolved extremely efficient non-genetic methods for transmitting information from one generation to the next through our highly developed languages.

Cultural evolution is responsible for the success of our species. We dominate the earth because of cultural evolution. Thus, if religion is a mechanism for the preservation and transmission of particular cultures, it must have conferred a great advantage to those societies that possessed religion, and a tendency to be religious would have been favored by the Darwinian forces of natural selection. This perhaps explains why it is now a universal part of human nature.

Throughout history, until recent times, the conservative role of religions in transmitting and preserving our cultural heritage has been a great advantage. However, the dangers that we are experiencing today demand quick changes in our patterns of thought and in our lifestyles; and here the conservatism of religion may be a disadvantage. For example, at a time when the exploding global population contributes to the severity of most of the dangers that we face, religious opposition to birth control has become inappropriate.

Furthermore, human history is drenched with blood from wars have been fought in the name of religion. We can think, for example, of the Crusades, or the Islamic conquests in the Middle East, North Africa and Spain, or the wars between Catholics and Protestants in Europe, or the brutal treatment of the indigenous populations of Africa, and the Americas in the name of religion. The list by no means stops there. This is because religion is so closely associated with ethnicity and nationalism.

The religious leaders of today have the opportunity to contribute importantly to the solution of the problem of war. They have the opportunity to powerfully support the concept of universal human brotherhood, to build bridges between religious groups by making intermarriage across ethnic boundaries easier, and to soften the distinctions between communities. If they fail to do this, they will have failed humankind in a time of crisis.

Although religion may be a part of the problems that we face today, it can potentially be part of the solution. Because of the all-destroying modern weapons developed through the misuse of science, we urgently need religious ethics, i.e. the traditional wisdom of humankind. Not only do the fundamental ethical principles of the world's great religions agree with each others, but they also do not conflict in any way with science. If practiced, these principles would make war impossible, thus eliminating one of the greatest dangers that we face today, the cause of much of the suffering that humans experience.

The central ethical principles of Christianity can be found in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. In the Sermon on

the Mount, we are told that we must not only love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves; we must also love and forgive our enemies. This seemingly impractical advice is in fact of great practicality, since escalatory cycles of revenge and counter-revenge can only be ended by unilateral acts of kindness. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, we are told that our neighbor, whom we must love, is not necessarily a member of our own ethnic group. Our neighbor may live on the other side of the world and belong to an entirely different race or culture; but he or she still deserves our love and care.

Contrast this with the idea of “massive retaliation” which is part of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence! In nuclear retaliation, the victims would include people of every kind: women, men, old people, and infants, completely irrespective to any degree of guilt that they might have. As the result of such an attack, many millions of people in neutral countries would also die. This type of killing has to be classified as genocide.

When a suspected criminal is tried for a wrongdoing, great efforts are made to clarify the question of guilt or innocence. Punishment only follows if guilt can be established beyond any reasonable doubt. Contrast this with the totally indiscriminate mass slaughter that results from a nuclear attack!

Thus both the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, and the very existence of nuclear weapons, are completely contrary to the central ethical principles of Christianity; and not only to the principles of Christianity, but to those of every other major religion.

It is an interesting fact that the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”, appears in various forms in all of the world’s major religions. Wikipedia’s article on the Golden Rule gives a fascinating list of the forms in which the rule appears in many cultures and religions.

The Buddhist concept of karma has great value in human relations. The word “karma” means simply “action”. In Buddhism, one believes that actions will return to the actor. Good actions will be returned, and bad actions will also be returned. This is obviously true in social relationships. If we behave with kindness to our neighbors, they will return our kindness. Conversely, a harmful act may lead to vicious circles of revenge and counter-revenge. These vicious circles can only be broken by returning good for evil. However, the concept of karma has a broader and more abstract validity, beyond the direct returns of actions to the actor:

When we perform a good action, we increase the total amount of good karma in the world. If all people similarly behave well, the world as a whole will become more pleasant and more safe. Human nature seems to have a built-in recognition of this fact, and we are rewarded by inner happiness when we perform good and kind actions. In his wonderful book, “Ancient Wisdom, Modern World”, the Dalai Lama says that good actions lead to happiness and

bad actions to unhappiness, even if our neighbors do not return these actions. Inner peace, he tells us, can only be achieved through good actions.

In Buddhist philosophy, the concept of karma, action and reaction, also extends to our relationship with nature. Both Hindu and Buddhist traditions emphasize the unity of all life on earth. Most Hindus regard killing an animal as a sin, and many try to avoid accidentally stepping on insects as they walk. The Hindu and Buddhist picture of the relatedness of all life on earth has been confirmed by modern biological science. We now know that all living organisms have the same fundamental biochemistry, and we know that our own genomes are more similar to than different from the genomes of our close relations in the animal world.

The peoples of the industrialized nations urgently need to acquire a non-anthropocentric element in their ethics, similar to the reverence for all life found in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, as well as in the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi and Albert Schweitzer. We need to value other species for their own sakes, and not because we expect to use them for our own economic goals. (The simple life-style that we associate with St. Francis can also teach us much. St. Francis and St. Claire and many others who have followed in their footsteps lived lives of voluntary poverty and service, close to the ideals of Jesus himself, who said “Lay not up treasures on earth...”.)

Today a few societies follow a way of life similar to that of our hunter-gatherer ancestors. Anthropologists are able to obtain a vivid picture of the past by studying these societies. Usually the religious ethics of the hunter-gatherers emphasize the importance of harmony with nature. As the expansion of industry threatens to produce an ecological mega-catastrophe, we can learn much from societies that live in balance with the natural world.

We can see from this discussion that religious conservatism cuts both ways. In some respects, it damages our response to the current crisis, for example when it supports war or opposes birth control. On the other hand, the ethical principles of the world's great religions can help to save us.

Our responsibility to future generations and to the biosphere

All of the technology needed for the replacement of fossil fuels by renewable energy is already in place. Although renewable sources currently supply only 19% of the world's energy requirements, they are growing rapidly. For example, wind energy is growing at the rate of 30% per year. Because of the remarkable properties of exponential growth, this will mean that wind will soon become a major supplier of the world's energy requirements, despite bitter opposition from the fossil fuel industry.

Both wind and solar energy have can now compete economically with fossil fuels, and this situation will become even more pronounced if more countries put a tax on carbon emissions, as Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Costa Rica, the United Kingdom and Ireland already have done.¹

Much research and thought have also been devoted to the concept of a steady-state economy. The only thing that is lacking is political will. It is up to the people of the world to make their collective will felt.²

History has given to our generation an enormous responsibility towards future generations. We must achieve a new kind of economy, a steady-state economy. We must stabilize global population. We must replace fossil fuels by renewable energy. We must abolish nuclear weapons. We must end the institution of war. We must reclaim democracy in countries where it has been lost. We must replace nationalism by a just system of international law. We must prevent degradation of the earth's environment. We must act with dedication and fearlessness to save the future of the earth for human civilization and for the plants and animals with which we share the gift of life.

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Chapter 11

Ethics for the Future

Abolition of the institution of war will require the construction of structures of international government and law to replace our present anarchy at the global level. Today's technology has shrunken the distances, which once separated nations; and our present system of absolutely sovereign nation-states has become both obsolete and dangerous.

Besides a humane, democratic and just framework of international law and governance, we urgently need a new global ethic, - an ethic where loyalty to family, community and nation will be supplemented by a strong sense of the brotherhood of all humans, regardless of race, religion or nationality. Schiller expressed this feeling in his "Ode to Joy", the text of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Hearing Beethoven's music and Schiller's words, most of us experience an emotion of resonance and unity with its message: All humans are brothers and sisters - not just some - all! It is almost a national anthem of humanity. The feelings which the music and words provoke are similar to patriotism, but broader. It is this sense of a universal human family, which we need to cultivate in education, in the mass media, and in religion.

Educational reforms are urgently needed, particularly in the teaching of history. As it is taught today, history is a chronicle of power struggles and war, told from a biased national standpoint. Our own race or religion is superior; our own country is always heroic and in the right.

We urgently need to replace this indoctrination in chauvinism by a reformed view of history, where the slow development of human culture is described, giving adequate credit to all those who have contributed. Our modern civilization is built on the achievements of ancient cultures. China, India, Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt, Greece, the Islamic world, Christian Europe, and Jewish intellectual traditions all have contributed. Potatoes, corn and squash are gifts from the American Indians. Human culture, gradually built up over thousands of years by the patient work of millions of hands and minds, should be pre-



sented to students of history as a precious heritage - far too precious to be risked in a thermonuclear war.

In the teaching of science too, reforms are needed. Graduates in science and technology should be conscious of their responsibilities. They must resolve never to use their education in the service of war, or in any way which might be harmful to society or to the environment.

In modern societies, mass media play an extremely important role in determining behavior and attitudes. This role can be a negative one when the media show violence and enemy images, but if used constructively, the mass media can offer a powerful means for creating international understanding. If it is indeed true that tribalism is part of human nature, it is extremely important that the mass media be used to the utmost to overcome the barriers between nations and cultures. Through increased communication, the world's peoples can learn to accept each other as members of a single family.

In today's world, we are pressing against the absolute limits of the earth's carrying capacity, and further growth carries with it the danger of future collapse. In the long run, neither the growth of industry nor that of population is sustainable; and we have now reached or exceeded the sustainable limits.

The size of the human economy is, of course, the product of two factors: the total number of humans, and the consumption per capita. Let us first con-



sider the problem of reducing the per-capita consumption in the industrialized countries. The whole structure of western society seems designed to push its citizens in the opposite direction, towards ever-increasing levels of consumption. The mass media hold before us continually the ideal of a personal utopia, filled with material goods.

Every young man in a modern industrial society feels that he is a failure unless he fights his way to the “top”; and in recent years, women too have been drawn into the competition. Of course, not everyone can reach the top; there would not be room for everyone; but society urges us all to try, and we feel a sense of failure if we do not reach the goal. Thus, modern life has become a competition of all against all for power and possessions.

When possessions are used for the purpose of social competition, demand has no natural upper limit; it is then limited only by the size of the human ego, which, as we know, is boundless. This would be all to the good if unlimited industrial growth were desirable; but today, when further industrial growth implies future collapse, western society urgently needs to find new values to replace our worship of power, our restless chase after excitement, and our admiration of excessive consumption.

The values which we need, both to protect nature from civilization and to protect civilization from itself, are perhaps not new. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that we need to rediscover ethical values which were once a part of human culture, but which were lost in the process of industrialization, when technology allowed us to break traditional environmental constraints.

Our ancestors were hunter-gatherers, living in close contact with nature, and respecting the laws and limitations of nature. There are many hunter-gatherer societies existing today, from whose values and outlook we could learn much. Similarly, we could learn from stable traditional agricultural societies which have reached equilibrium with their environment. In such societies one can usually find, expressed as a strong ethical principle, the rule that the land must not be degraded, but must be left fertile for the use of future generations.

It would be wise for the industrialized countries to learn from the values of the older, traditional cultures, but what usually happens is the reverse: The unsustainable, power-worshipping, consumption-oriented values of western society are so strongly propagandized by television, films and advertising that they sweep aside the wisdom of older societies. Today, the whole world seems to be adopting values, fashions, and standards of behavior presented by the mass media of western society. This is unfortunate, since besides showing us unsustainable levels of affluence and economic waste, the western mass media depict values and behavior patterns that are hardly worthy of imitation. Let us hope that in the future, industrial society will put aside its arrogance, and listen to the quiet voice of wisdom from societies that are in closer contact with nature.

What about the problem of population stabilization? Again it is a question of values. It is now recognized that one of the most important ways to slow the global population explosion is to give women better education and equal rights. This is not only desirable for increased human happiness, and for the sake of the uniquely life-oriented point of view that women can give us, but in addition, improved education and status for women have shown themselves to be closely connected with lowered birth rates.

Sir Partha Dasgupta of Cambridge University has pointed out that the changes needed to break the cycle of overpopulation and poverty are all desirable in themselves. Besides education and higher status for women, they include state-provided social security for old people, provision of water supplies near to dwellings, provision of health services to all, abolition of child labor, and general development.

In the world of the future, a future of changed values, women will take their places beside men in positions of responsibility, children will be educated rather than exploited, non-material human qualities, such as kindness, politeness, knowledge and musical and artistic ability will be valued more highly, and people will derive a larger part of their pleasure from conversation and from the appreciation of unspoiled nature. These are the values that we need for the future - a future that belongs not only to ourselves, but to our children and grandchildren.

In the world as it is today, 1.6 trillion dollars are wasted on armaments



each year; and while this is going on, children in the developing countries sift through garbage dumps searching for scraps of food. In today's world, the competition for jobs and for material possessions makes part of the population of the industrial countries work so hard that they damage their health and neglect their families; and while this is going on, another part of the population suffers from unemployment, becoming vulnerable to depression, mental illness, alcoholism, drug abuse and crime.

In the world of the future, which we now must build, the institution of war will be abolished, and the enormous resources now wasted on war will be used constructively. In the future world as it can be if we work to make it so, a stable population of moderate size will live without waste or luxury, but in comfort and security, free from the fear of hunger or unemployment. The world which we want will be a world of changed values, where human qualities will be valued more than material possessions. Let us try to combine wisdom and religious ethics from humanity's past with today's technology to build a sustainable, livable and equitable future world.

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Chapter 12

Against the Institution of War

As we start the 21st century and the new millennium, our scientific and technological civilization seems to be entering a period of crisis. Today, for the first time in history, science has given to humans the possibility of a life of comfort, free from hunger and cold, and free from the constant threat of infectious disease. At the same time, science has given us the power to destroy civilization through thermonuclear war, as well as the power to make our planet uninhabitable through pollution and overpopulation. The question of which of these alternatives we choose is a matter of life or death to ourselves and our children.

Science and technology have shown themselves to be double-edged, capable of doing great good or of producing great harm, depending on the way in which we use the enormous power over nature, which science has given to us. For this reason, ethical thought is needed now more than ever before. The wisdom of the world's religions, the traditional wisdom of humankind, can help us as we try to insure that our overwhelming material progress will be beneficial.

The crisis of civilization, which we face today, has been produced by the rapidity with which science and technology have developed. Our institutions and ideas adjust too slowly to the change. The great challenge which history has given to our generation is the task of building new international political structures, which will be in harmony with modern technology. At the same time, we must develop a new global ethic, which will replace our narrow loyalties by loyalty to humanity as a whole.

In the long run, because of the enormously destructive weapons, which have been produced through the misuse of science, the survival of civilization can only be insured if we are able to abolish the institution of war.

While in earlier epochs it may have been possible to confine the effects of war mainly to combatants, in our own century the victims of war have increasingly been civilians, and especially children. For example, according to

Quincy Wright's statistics, the First and Second World Wars together cost the lives of 26 million soldiers, but the toll in civilian lives was much larger: 64 million.

Since the Second World War, despite the best efforts of the U. N., there have been over 150 armed conflicts; and, if civil wars are included, there are on any given day an average of 12 wars somewhere in the world. In the conflicts in Indo-China, the proportion of civilian victims was between 80% and 90%, while in the Lebanese civil war some sources state that the proportion of civilian casualties was as high as 97%.

Civilian casualties often occur through malnutrition and through diseases, which would be preventable in normal circumstances. Because of the social disruption caused by war, normal supplies of food, safe water and medicine are interrupted, so that populations become vulnerable to famine and epidemics. In the event of a catastrophic nuclear war, starvation and disease would add greatly to the loss of life caused by the direct effects of nuclear weapons.

The indirect effects of war are also enormous. Globally, preparations for war interfere seriously with the use of tax money for constructive and peaceful purposes. Today, despite the end of the Cold War, the world spends roughly a trillion (i.e. a million million) US dollars each year on armaments. This enormous flood of money, which is almost too large to imagine, could have been used instead for urgently needed public health measures.

The World Health Organization lacks funds to carry through an anti-malarial program on as large a scale as would be desirable, but the entire program could be financed for less than the world spends on armaments in a single day. Five hours of world arms spending is equivalent to the total cost of the 20-year WHO campaign, which resulted in the eradication of smallpox. For every 100,000 people in the world, there are 556 soldiers, but only 85 doctors. Every soldier costs an average of 20,000 US dollars per year, while the average spent per year on education is only 380 US dollars per school-aged child. With a diversion of funds consumed by three weeks of military spending, the world could create a sanitary water supply for all its people, thus eliminating the cause of almost half of all human illness.

A new and drug-resistant form of tuberculosis has recently become widespread, and is increasing rapidly in the former Soviet Union. In order to combat this new form of tuberculosis, and in order to prevent its spread to Western Europe, WHO needs 450 million US dollars, an amount equivalent to 4 hours of world arms spending. By using this money to combat tuberculosis in the former Soviet Union, WHO would be making a far greater contribution to global peace and stability than is made by spending the money on armaments.

Today's world is one in which roughly ten million children die each year from diseases related to poverty. Besides this enormous waste of young lives



Figure 12.1: *The World Health Organization could carry out its vitally important work much more effectively if it were given more money.*

through malnutrition and preventable disease, there is a huge waste of opportunities through inadequate education. The rate of illiteracy in the 25 least developed countries is 80%, and the total number of illiterates in the world is estimated to be 800 million. Meanwhile every 60 seconds the world spends roughly 2 million U. S. dollars on armaments.

It is plain that if the almost unbelievable sums now wasted on armaments were used constructively, most of the pressing problems now facing humanity could be solved, but today the world spends more than 20 times as much per year on weapons as it does on development.

Because the world spends 1.7 thousand billion dollars each year on armaments, it follows that very many people make their living from war. This is the reason why it is correct to speak of war as a social institution, and also the reason why war persists, although everyone realizes that it is the cause of much of the suffering that inflicts humanity. We know that war is madness, but it persists. We know that it threatens the future survival of our species, but it persists, entrenched in the attitudes of historians, newspaper editors and television producers, entrenched in the methods by which politicians finance their campaigns, and entrenched in the financial power of arms manufacturers, entrenched also in the ponderous and costly hardware of war, the fleets of warships, bombers, tanks, nuclear missiles and so on.

Science cannot claim to be guiltless: In Eisenhower's farewell address, he warned of the increasing power of the industrial-military complex, a threat to democratic society. If he were making the same speech today, he might speak of the industrial-military-scientific complex. Since Hiroshima, we have known that new knowledge is not always good. There is a grave danger that nuclear

weapons will soon proliferate to such an extent that they will be available to terrorists and even to the Mafia. Chemical and biological weapons also constitute a grave threat. The eradication of smallpox in 1979 was a triumph of medical science combined with international cooperation. How sad it is to think that military laboratories cultivate smallpox and that the disease may soon be reintroduced as a biological weapon!

The institution of war seems to be linked to a fault in human nature, to our tendency to exhibit altruism towards members of our own group but aggression towards other groups if we perceive them to be threatening our own community. This tendency, which might be called "tribalism", was perhaps built into human nature by evolution during the long prehistory of our species, when we lived as hunter-gatherers in small genetically homogeneous tribes, competing for territory on the grasslands of Africa. However, in an era of nerve gas and nuclear weapons, the anachronistic behavior pattern of tribal altruism and intertribal aggression now threatens our survival.

Fortunately, our behavior is only partly determined by inherited human nature. It is also, and perhaps to a larger extent, determined by education and environment; and in spite of all the difficulties just mentioned, war has been eliminated locally in several large regions of the world. Taking these regions as models, we can attempt to use the same methods to abolish war globally. For example, war between the Scandinavian nations would be unthinkable today, although the region once was famous for its violence. Scandinavia is especially interesting as a model for what we would like to achieve globally, because it is a region in which it has been possible not only to eradicate war, but also poverty; and at the same time, death from infectious disease has become a rarity in this region.

If we consider the problem of simultaneously eliminating poverty, war and frequent death from infectious disease, we are lead inevitably to the problem of population stabilization. At the time when poverty, disease and war characterized Scandinavia, the average fertility in the region was at least 6 children per woman-life. Equilibrium was maintained at this high rate of fertility, because some of the children died from disease without leaving progeny, and because others died in war. Today, poverty and war are gone from the Nordic countries, and the rate of premature death from infectious disease is very low. The simultaneous elimination of poverty, disease and war would have been impossible in Scandinavia if the rate of fertility had not fallen to the replacement level. There would then have been no alternative except for the population to grow, which it could not have continued to do over many centuries without environmental degradation, bringing with it the recurrence of poverty, disease and war.

In Scandinavia today, democratic government, a high level of education,



Figure 12.2: *Scandinavia was once a region that was famous for its violence. Today, war within Scandinavia would be unthinkable. This fact demonstrates the malleability of human nature. Under changed circumstances, and with changed education, people who were once extremely violent have become very peaceful. Scandinavia's low birth-rate has contributed to this transition.*

economic prosperity, public health, high social status for women, legal, economic and educational equality for women, a low birth rate, and friendly cooperation between the nations of the region are mutually linked in loops of cause and effect. By contrast, we can find other regions of the world where low status of women, high birth rates, rapidly increasing population, urban slums, low educational levels, high unemployment levels, poverty, ethnic conflicts and the resurgence of infectious disease are equally linked, but in a vicious circle. The three age-old causes of human suffering, poverty, infectious disease and war are bound together by complex causal relationships involving also the issues of population stabilization and woman's rights. The example of Scandinavia shows us that it is possible to cure all these diseases of society; but to do so we must address all of the problems simultaneously.

Abolition of the institution of war will require the construction of structures of international government and law to replace our present anarchy at the global level. Today's technology has shrunken the distances, which once separated nations; and our present system of absolutely sovereign nation-states has become both obsolete and dangerous.

Professor Elie Kedourie of the University of London has given the following definition of nationalism: "...a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the 19th century. It pretends to supply a criterion for the determination of the unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively its own, for the legitimate exercise of power in the state, and for the right organization of a society of states. Briefly, the doctrine holds that humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is national self-government."

A basic problem with this doctrine is that throughout most of the world, successive waves of migration, conquest and intermarriage have left such a complicated ethnic mosaic that attempts to base political divisions on ethnic homogeneity often meet with trouble. In Eastern Europe, for example, German-speaking and Slavic-speaking peoples are mixed together so closely that the Pan-German and Pan-Slavic movements inevitably clashed over the question of who should control the regions where the two populations lived side by side. This clash was one of the main causes of the First World War.

Similarly, when India achieved independence from England, a great problem arose in the regions where Hindus and Moslems lived side by side; and even Gandhi was unable to prevent terrible violence from taking place between the two communities. This problem is still present, and it has been made extremely dangerous by the acquisition of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan.

More recently, nationalist movements in Asia and Africa have derived their

force and popularity from a reaction against the years of European political and economic domination. Thus, at first sight, they seem to deserve our sympathy and support. However, in building states, the new nationalists have often used hate for outsiders as mortar. For example, Israel is held together by hostility towards its Arab neighbors, while the Pan-Arab movement is held together by hostility towards Israel; and in this inflamed political climate of mutual fear and hatred, even clandestine nuclear weapons appear to either side to be justified.

A basic problem rooted in nationalist mythology exists in the concept of sanctions, which treat nations as if they were individuals. We punish nations as a whole by sanctions, even when only the leaders are guilty, even though the burdens of the sanctions often fall most heavily on the weakest and least guilty of the citizens, and even though sanctions often have the effect of uniting the citizens of a country behind the guilty leaders.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the concept of the absolutely sovereign nation-state is an anachronism in a world of thermonuclear weapons, instantaneous communication and economic interdependence. Probably our best hope for the future lies in developing the United Nations into a World Federation. The strengthened United Nations should have a legislature with the power to make laws which are binding on individuals, and the ability to arrest and try individual political leaders for violations of these laws. The World Federation should also have the military and legal powers necessary to guarantee the human rights of ethnic minorities within nations.

A strengthened UN would need a reliable source of income to make the organization less dependent on wealthy countries, which tend to give support only to those interventions of which they approve. A promising solution to this problem is the so-called "Tobin tax", named after the Nobel-laureate economist James Tobin of Yale University. Tobin proposed that international currency exchanges should be taxed at a rate between 0.1 and 0.25%. He believed that even this extremely low rate of taxation would have the effect of damping speculative transactions, thus stabilizing the rates of exchange between currencies. When asked what should be done with the proceeds of the tax, Tobin said, almost as an afterthought, "Let the United Nations have it". The volume of money involved in international currency transactions is so enormous that even the tiny tax proposed by Tobin would provide the World Federation with between 100 billion and 300 billion dollars annually. By strengthening the activities of various UN agencies, such as WHO, UNESCO and FAO, the additional income would add to the prestige of the United Nations and thus make the organization more effective when it is called upon to resolve international political conflicts.

A federation is, by definition, a limited union of states, where the federal



Figure 12.3: *Today, the existence of all-destroying modern weapons makes war prohibitively dangerous. If human civilization is to survive, the institution of war must be abolished. This will require effective governance at the global level. The United Nations must be strengthened and given many times the amount of money that it presently has. The UN must also be given the power to make laws that are binding on individuals.*

government has the power to make laws which are binding on individuals, but where the laws are confined to interstate matters, and where all powers not expressly delegated to the federal government are reserved for the several states. In other words, in a federation, each of the member states runs its own internal affairs according to its own laws and customs; but in certain agreed-on matters, where the interests of the states overlap, authority is specifically delegated to the federal government.

For example, if the nations of the world considered the control of narcotics to be a matter of mutual concern; if they agreed to set up a commission with the power to make laws preventing the growing, refinement and distribution of harmful drugs, and with the power to arrest individuals for violating those laws, then we would have a world federation in the area of narcotics control.

If, in addition, the world community considered terrorism to be a matter of mutual concern; if an international commission were also set up with the power to make global anti-terrorist laws, and to arrest individuals violating those laws, then we would have a world federation with somewhat broader powers. If the community of nations decided to give the federal authority the additional power to make laws defining the rights and obligations of multinational corporations, and the power to arrest individuals violating those laws, then we would have a world federation with still broader powers; but these

powers would still be carefully defined and limited.

In 1998, in Rome, representatives of 120 countries signed a statute establishing a Permanent International Court, with jurisdiction over war crimes and genocide. Four years were to pass before the necessary ratifications were gathered, but by Thursday, April 11, 2002, 66 nations had ratified the Rome agreement, 6 more than the 60 needed to make the court permanent. The jurisdiction of the Permanent International Court is at present limited to a very narrow class crimes. The global community will have a chance to see how the court works in practice, and in the future, the community may decide to broaden its jurisdiction.

In setting up a federation, the member states can decide which powers they wish to delegate to it; and all powers not expressly delegated are retained by the individual states. We are faced with the problem of constructing a new world order which will preserve the advantages of local self-government while granting certain carefully-chosen powers to larger regional or global authorities. Which things should be decided locally, or regionally, and which globally?

In the future, overpopulation and famine are likely to become increasingly difficult and painful problems in several parts of the world. Since various cultures take widely different attitudes towards birth control and family size, the problem of population stabilization seems to be one which should be solved locally. At the same time, aid for local family planning programs, as well as famine relief, might appropriately come from global agencies, such as WHO and FAO. With respect to large-scale migration, it would be unfair for a country which has successfully stabilized its own population, and which has eliminated poverty within its own borders, to be forced to accept a flood of migrants from regions of high fertility. Therefore the extent of immigration should be among the issues to be decided locally.

Security, and controls on the manufacture and export of armaments will require an effective authority at the global level. It should also be the responsibility of the international community to intervene to prevent gross violations of human rights. Since the end of the Cold War, the United Nations has more and more frequently been called upon to send armed forces to troubled parts of the world. In many instances, these calls for U. N. intervention have been prompted by clear and atrocious violations of human rights, for example by "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia and by genocide in Rwanda. In the examples just named, the response of the United Nations would have been much more effective, and many lives would have been saved, if the action which was finally taken had come sooner. Long and complex diplomatic negotiations were required to muster the necessary political and physical forces needed for intervention, by which time the original problems had become much more severe. For this reason, it has been suggested that the U. N. Secretary General, the

Security Council and the General Assembly ought to have at their disposal a permanent, highly trained and highly mobile emergency force, composed of volunteers from all nations. Such an international police force would be able to act rapidly to prevent gross violations of human rights or other severe breaches of international law.

In evaluating the concept of an international police force directly responsible to the United Nations, it is helpful to examine the way in which police act to enforce laws and to prevent violence and crime at local and national levels. Within a community which is characterized by good government, police are not highly armed, nor are they very numerous. Law and order are not maintained primarily by the threat of force, but by the opinion of the vast majority of the citizens that the system of laws is both just and necessary. Traffic stops when the signal light is red and moves when it is green whether or not a policeman is present, because everyone understands why such a system is necessary. Nevertheless, although the vast majority of the citizens in a well-governed community support the system of laws and would never wish to break the law, we all know that the real world is not heaven. The total spectrum of human nature includes evil as well as a good. If there were no police at all, and if the criminal minority were completely unchecked, every citizen would be obliged to be armed. No one's life or property would be safe. Robbery, murder and rape would flourish.

Within a society with a democratic and just government, whose powers are derived from the consent of the governed, a small and lightly armed force of police is able to maintain the system of laws. One reason why this is possible has just been mentioned - the force of public opinion. A second reason is that the law acts on individuals. Since obstruction of justice and the murder of policemen both rank as serious crimes, an individual criminal is usually not able to organize massive resistance against police action.

Edith Wynner, one of the pioneers of the World Federalist movement, lists the following characteristics of police power in a well-governed society:

1. "A policeman operates within a framework of organized government having legislative, executive and judicial authority operating on individuals. His actions are guided by a clearly stated criminal code that has the legislative sanction of the community. Should he abuse the authority vested in him, he is subject to discipline and court restraint."
2. "A policeman seeing a fight between two men does not attempt to determine which of them is in the right and then help him beat up the one he considers wrong. His function is to restrain violence by both, to bring them before a judge who has authority to determine the rights of the dispute, and to see that the court's decision is carried out."

3. "In carrying out his duties, the policeman must apprehend the suspected individual without jeopardizing either the property or the lives of the community where the suspect is to be arrested. And not only is the community safeguarded against destruction of property and loss of life but the rights of the suspect are also carefully protected by an elaborate network of judicial safeguards."

Edith Wynner also discusses the original union of the thirteen American colonies, which was a confederation, analogous to the present United Nations. This confederation was found to be too weak, and after eleven years it was replaced by a federation, one of whose key powers was the power to make and enforce laws which acted on individuals. George Mason, one of the architects of the federal constitution of the United States, believed that "such a government was necessary as could directly operate on individuals, and would punish those only whose guilt required it", while James Madison (another drafter of the U. S. federal constitution) remarked that the more he reflected on the use of force, the more he doubted "the practicability, the justice and the efficacy of it when applied to people collectively, and not individually". Finally, Alexander Hamilton, in his "Federalist Papers", discussed the confederation with the following words: "To coerce the states is one of the maddest projects that was ever devised... Can any reasonable man be well disposed towards a government, which makes war and carnage the only means of supporting itself - a government that can exist only by the sword? Every such war must involve the innocent with the guilty. This single consideration should be enough to dispose every peaceable citizen against such a government... What is the cure for this great evil? Nothing, but to enable the... laws to operate on individuals, in the same manner as those of states do."

The United Nations is at present a confederation rather than a federation, and thus it acts by attempting to coerce states, a procedure which Alexander Hamilton characterized as "one of the maddest projects that was ever devised". Whether this coercion takes the form of economic sanctions, or whether it takes the form of military intervention, the practicability, the justice and the efficacy of the UN's efforts are hampered because they are applied to people collectively and not individually. It is obvious that the United Nations actions to stop aggression of one state against another in the Korean War and in the Gulf War fail to match the three criteria for police action listed above. What is the cure for this great evil? "Nothing", Hamilton tells us, "but to enable the laws to act on individuals, in the same manner as those of states do."

Historically, confederations have always proved to be too weak; but federations have on the whole been very successful, mainly because a federation has the power to make laws which act on individuals. At the same time,



Figure 12.4: *This painting shows a debate during the drafting of the Constitution of the United States. After achieving independence from England, the 13 former colonies became a confederation. However, this proved to be too weak, and in 1788, a federal constitution was ratified. Under the Federal Constitution of the United States, Congress has the power to make laws that are binding on individuals. This is the most important power of federations, and the reason why they are so successful.*

a federation aims at leaving as many powers as possible in the hands of local authorities. Recent examples of federations include the United States of America, the United States of Brazil, the United States of Mexico, the United States of Venezuela, the Argentine Nation, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of Canada, the Union of South Africa, Switzerland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the European Federation. Thus we are rich in historical data on the strengths and weaknesses of federations, and we can make use of this data as we attempt to construct good government at the global level.

Looking towards the future, we can perhaps foresee a time when the United Nations will have been converted to a federation and given the power to make international laws which are binding on individuals. Under such circumstances, true international law enforcement will be possible, incorporating all of the needed safeguards for lives and property of the innocent. One can hope for a future world where the institution of war will be abolished, and where public

opinion will support international law to such an extent that a new Hitler or a future Melosovic will not be able to organize large-scale resistance to arrest, a world where international law will be seen by all to be just, impartial and necessary, a well-governed global community within which each person will owe his or her ultimate loyalty to humanity as a whole.

Besides a humane, democratic and just framework of international law and governance, we urgently need a new global ethic, - an ethic where loyalty to family, community and nation will be supplemented by a strong sense of the brotherhood of all humans, regardless of race, religion or nationality. Schiller expressed this feeling in his "Ode to Joy", the text of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Hearing Beethoven's music and Schiller's words, most of us experience an emotion of resonance and unity with its message: All humans are brothers and sisters - not just some - all! It is almost a national anthem of humanity. The feelings which the music and words provoke are similar to patriotism, but broader. It is this sense of a universal human family, which we need to cultivate in education, in the mass media, and in religion.

Educational reforms are urgently needed, particularly in the teaching of history. As it is taught today, history is a chronicle of power struggles and war, told from a biased national standpoint. Our own race or religion is superior; our own country is always heroic and in the right.

We urgently need to replace this indoctrination in chauvinism by a reformed view of history, where the slow development of human culture is described, giving adequate credit to all those who have contributed. Our modern civilization is built on the achievements of ancient cultures. China, India, Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt, Greece, the Islamic world, Christian Europe, and Jewish intellectual traditions all have contributed. Potatoes, corn and squash are gifts from the American Indians. Human culture, gradually built up over thousands of years by the patient work of millions of hands and minds, should be presented to students of history as a precious heritage - far too precious to be risked in a thermonuclear war.

In the teaching of science too, reforms are needed. Graduates in science and technology should be conscious of their responsibilities. They must resolve never to use their education in the service of war, or in any way which might be harmful to society or to the environment.

In modern societies, mass media play an extremely important role in determining behavior and attitudes. This role can be a negative one when the media show violence and enemy images, but if used constructively, the mass media can offer a powerful means for creating international understanding. If it is indeed true that tribalism is part of human nature, it is extremely important that the mass media be used to the utmost to overcome the barriers between nations and cultures. Through increased communication, the world's

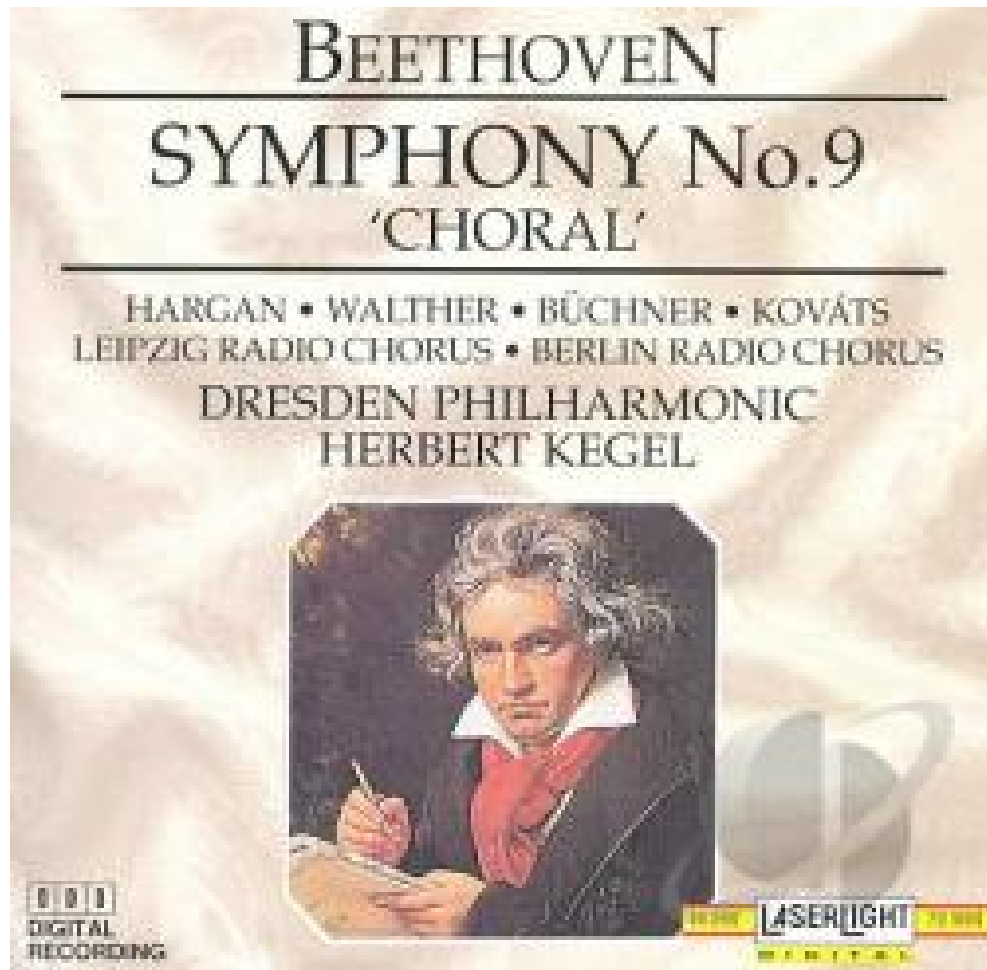


Figure 12.5: *Beethoven's 9th symphony is almost a national anthem of humanity, All people belong to a great family. Not just some. ALL!*

peoples can learn to accept each other as members of a single family.

Finally, let us turn to religion, with its enormous influence on human thought and behavior. Christianity, for example, offers a strongly stated ethic, which, if practiced, would make war impossible. In Mathew, the following passage occurs: "Ye have heard it said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy. But I say unto you: Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that spitefully use you and persecute you."

This seemingly impractical advice, that we should love our enemies, is in fact of the greatest practicality, since acts of unilateral kindness and generosity can stop escalatory cycles of revenge and counter-revenge such as those which characterize the present conflict in the Middle East and the recent troubles of Northern Ireland. However, Christian nations, while claiming to adhere to the ethic of love and forgiveness, have adopted a policy of "massive retaliation", involving systems of thermonuclear missiles whose purpose is to destroy as much as possible of the country at which the retaliation is aimed. It is planned that entire populations shall be killed in a "massive retaliation", innocent children along with the guilty politicians. The startling contradiction between what the Christian nations profess and what they do was obvious even before the advent of nuclear weapons, at the time when Leo Tolstoy, during his last years, was exchanging letters with a young Indian lawyer in South Africa. In one of his letters to Gandhi, Tolstoy wrote:

"The whole life of the Christian peoples is a continuous contradiction between that which they profess and the principles on which they order their lives, a contradiction between love accepted as the law of life, and violence, which is recognized and praised, acknowledged even as a necessity."

"This year, in the spring, at a Scripture examination at a girls' high school in Moscow, the teacher and the bishop present asked the girls questions on the Commandments, and especially on the sixth. After a correct answer, the bishop generally put another question, whether murder was always in all cases forbidden by God's law; and the unhappy young ladies were forced by previous instruction to answer 'Not always' - that murder was permitted in war and in the execution of criminals. Still, when one of these unfortunate young ladies (what I am telling is not an invention but a fact told to me by an eye witness) after her first answer, was asked the usual question, if killing was always sinful, she, agitated and blushing, decisively answered 'Always', and to the usual sophisms of the bishop, she answered with decided conviction that killing was always forbidden in the Old Testament and forbidden by Christ, not only killing but every wrong against a brother. Notwithstanding all his grandeur and arts of speech, the bishop became silent and the girl remained victorious."



Figure 12.6: *Count Leo Tolstoy said “The sharpest of all contradictions can be seen between the government’s professed faith in the Christian law of the brotherhood of all humankind, and the military laws of the state, which force each young man to prepare himself for enmity and murder, so that each must be simultaneously a Christian and a gladiator.”*

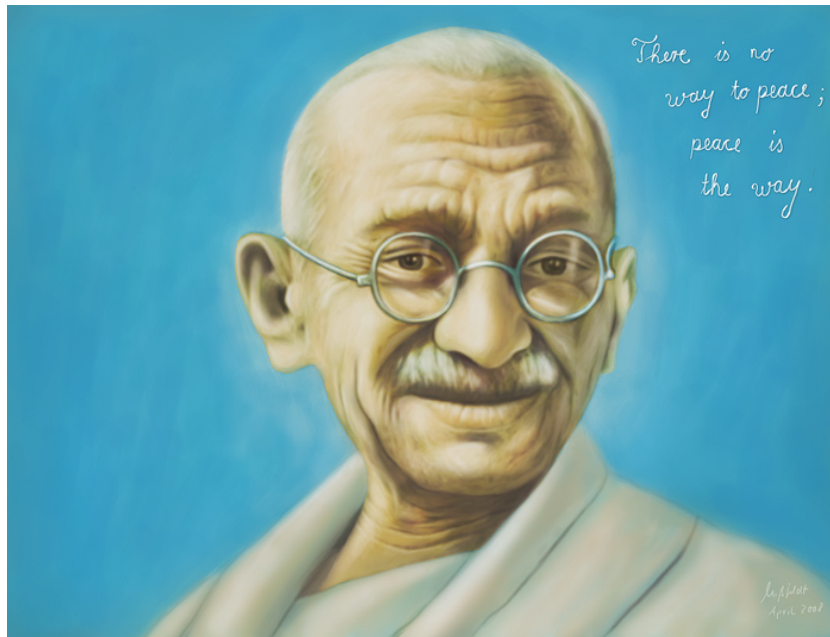


Figure 12.7: Mahatma Gandhi said “Those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is.”

As everyone knows, Gandhi successfully applied the principle of non-violence to the civil rights struggle in South Africa, and later to the political movement, which gave India its freedom and independence. The principle of non-violence was also successfully applied by Martin Luther King, and by Nelson Mandela. It is perhaps worthwhile to consider Gandhi’s comment on the question of whether the end justifies the means: “The means may be likened to a seed”, Gandhi wrote, “and the end to a tree; and there is the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.” In other words, a dirty method produces a dirty result; killing produces more killing; hate leads to more hate. Everyone who reads the newspapers knows that this is true. But there are positive feedback loops as well as negative ones. A kind act produces a kind response; a generous gesture is returned; hospitality results in reflected hospitality. Buddhists call this principle of reciprocity “the law of karma”.

The religious leaders of the world have the opportunity to contribute importantly to the solution of the problem of war. They have the opportunity to powerfully support the concept of universal human brotherhood, to build bridges between religious groups, to make intermarriage across ethnic boundaries easier, and to soften the distinctions between communities. If they fail to do this, they will have failed humankind at a time of crisis.

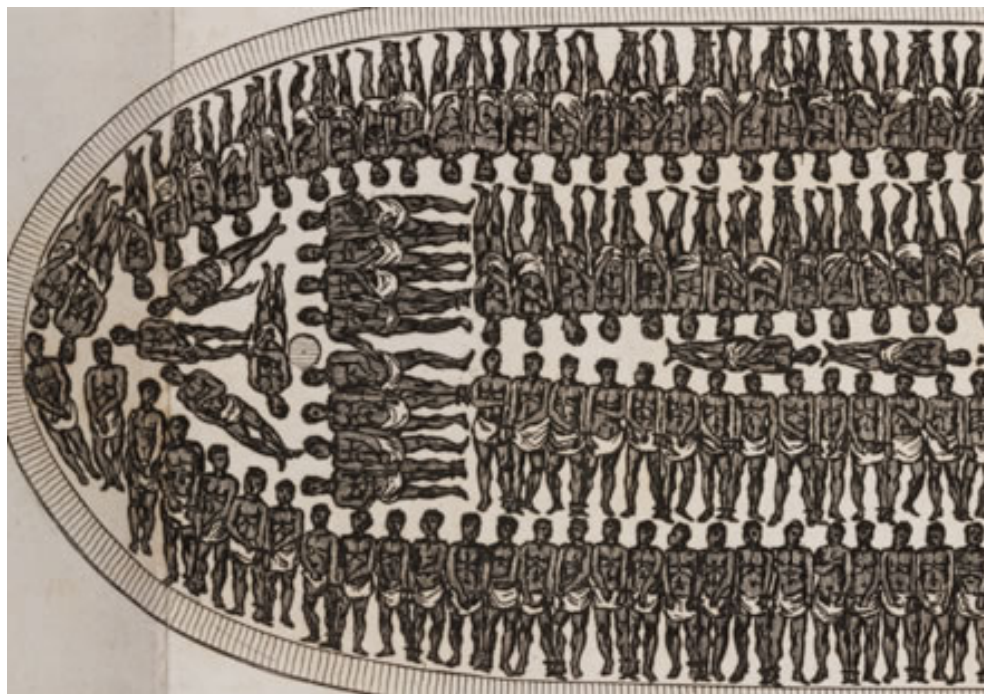


Figure 12.8: *Diagram of a slave ship. We can hope and work for a time when war, like slavery, will exist only as a dark memory, fading into the past.*

It is useful to consider the analogy between the institution of war and the institution of slavery. We might be tempted to say, "There has always been war, throughout human history; and war will always continue to exist." As an antidote for this kind of pessimism, we can think of slavery, which, like war, has existed throughout most of recorded history. The cultures of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome were all based on slavery, and, in more recent times, 13 million Africans were captured and forced into a life of slavery in the New World. Slavery was as much an accepted and established institution as war is today. Many people made large profits from slavery, just as arms manufacturers today make enormous profits. Nevertheless, in spite of the weight of vested interests, slavery has now been abolished throughout most of the world.

Today we look with horror at drawings of slave ships, where human beings were packed together like cord-wood; and we are amazed that such cruelty could have been possible. Can we not hope for a time when our descendants, reading descriptions of the wars of the twentieth century, will be equally amazed that such cruelty could have been possible? If we use them constructively, the vast resources now wasted on war can initiate a new era of happiness and prosperity for the family of man. It is within our power to let this happen.

The example of the men and women who worked to rid the world of slavery can give us courage as we strive for a time when war will exist only as a dark memory fading into the past.

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