

The Anglican PEACEMAKER

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The mind's eye: wrangling.wordpress.com

Political affairs are complex and things not always what they seem. They operate at two levels. There is the pragmatic level of the struggle for power: which party wins an election, who becomes leader of the country. And there is the underlying struggle for ideas: between left and right, liberalism and autocracy, secularism and theocracy.

Ideas are now beginning to clash more intensely, accentuated by the financial crisis, resource competition and climate change. The best arguments remain with liberalism; but militarism, xenophobia and protectionism will remain enticing options for politicians under pressure.

In the west, real politics may well return with a vengeance as deficits are cut and choices have to be made about how the pain will be shared. Although the struggle may be beneficial, it might turn nasty and lead to widespread violence. Previous periods of economic stress do not augur well.

In the last TAP we focused on the general state of the world. This issue has a more personal theme, about how our minds see the world, react to competing ideas and make judgements; and the implications for peacemaking. It underlines the importance of seeing non-violence, not simply as another ideology but as an attitude and lifestyle which shows tenderness and love towards self and others, but not giving in to violence.

Tony Kempster

This year has seen the publication of several books on the way our minds work. Based on psychological research over the past two decades and written with the general reader in mind, they show that we are rarely the rational, logical creatures we assume ourselves to be.

The mind deceives us just like the tricks of an illusionist. Often, even when we believe we are thinking things through, we are jumping to conclusions; being radically influenced by chance words or images, and using prejudice and emotion rather than considered analysis to arrive at what are flawed conclusions. Further, the mind may go on to reinforce the beliefs by looking for supporting evidence while blinding itself to anything contradictory; so that they become lenses through which our perceptions of the world are filtered. We also unwittingly deceive ourselves about many things, that much better to fool others. At a communal level this can lead to national myths about power and past history.

All this is intriguing and also disturbing when considered in relation to our role as campaigners and peacemakers. This article examines some of the key issues with reference to five books.

Current revisionist thinking is also challenging our view of the world. We shall consider just one book because of its significance. In *The better angels of our nature: the decline of violence and its causes*, Steven Pinker reveals how, contrary to popular belief, humankind has become progressively less violent over millennia and decades. It shows how our perceptions can be distorted.

In his song *Magic*, Bruce Springsteen refers to some illusionist's tricks and talks about the inevitability of deceit:

*I've got a coin in my palm, I will make it disappear
I've a card up my sleeve – I will pull it out your ear
I've a rabbit in the hat, if you want to come and see
This is what will be, this is what will be!*

*I've a shining sword blade, all I need's a volunteer,
I'll cut you in half as we're bending ear to ear
And the freedom that you sought is like a ghost
among the trees.*

This is what will be; this is what will be!

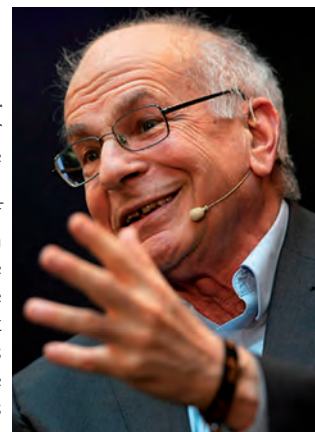
Bias and the mind of peace

A drama with two actors

In *Thinking fast and slow*, the Nobel Laureate, Daniel Kahneman distinguishes between the fast and slow systems in the brain. These correspond roughly to the distinction everybody is familiar with: thoughts that occur to you and thoughts that you have to generate.

The unconscious mind, always looking for ways to make sense of the world, is more concerned with the plausibility of things than whether they are actually true. It works instinctively allowing the mind to move on quickly to other things, but it is prone to make errors of judgement and form biased beliefs. Conscious thought works more slowly and carefully, but it is not without its limitations: it can only use the knowledge and experience available to it; so, for example it can't think statistically unless trained to do so.

Our mind also has a puzzling limitation: excessive confidence in what we think we know, and our apparent inability to acknowledge the full extent of our ignorance and the uncertainty of the world. The core of this illusion is that we understand the past, such that the future should be knowable. Further, we are prone to underestimate the role of chance happenings, particularly remote risks which are potentially catastrophic. Yet, how often do we hear peace activists and pundits speaking



Contents

"Bias and the mind of peace"	1
Chairperson's report	3
General Secretary's report	4
International page	6
Book Look	7
Diary of events. Notices	8
Film Look	9
Creating super soldiers	11
The art of peace	12

with absolute authority about the development of military conflicts around the world when experts in international politics admit they are unable to predict accurately what will happen and are surprised by momentous events like the Arab Spring.

And we are often unaware of our misconceptions. For example at the simplest level, when we think we are being forthright in meetings, we are in fact often frantically editing our opinions to fit in with the first few people that speak.

Kahneman explains where we can and cannot trust our intuitions, giving examples of the way our unconscious mind (in particular) creates errors and biases, and how we can tap into the benefits of slow thinking. Prayer and reflection can be very important, as can the "quietening of the mind" before meetings used by Quakers.

Further, he points out that it is much easier to identify a minefield when you observe others wandering into it than when you are about to do so yourself. Observers are less cognitively busy and more open to information than actors. It follows then that friends and close colleagues are very valuable, and organisations are better than individuals when it comes to avoiding errors, because they naturally think more slowly and have the power to impose orderly procedures.

Belief-dependent realism

The way we form beliefs from subjective, personal and emotional promptings is complex and tends to happen before we find supporting evidence for those beliefs. Conditioned to some extent by our genetic history, the brain is always trying to find patterns and meaning in the information that pours into it. Once beliefs are constructed, it rationalises them with explanations, often after the event; and then goes on to reinforce them by looking for supporting evidence while blinding itself to anything contradictory.

In *the believing brain*, Michael Shermer describes this process as "belief-dependent realism" – what we believe determines our reality, not the other way around. He provides real-world examples of how this process operates, from politics, economics and religion to conspiracy theories, the supernatural, and the paranormal.

This has special significance for those of us actively involved in political or social campaigning. Our effectiveness depends on the way we put our case; in particular how well its details are wrapped into a compelling message where the hypothetical is a reality to be grasped. Over time the skilful use of well-researched evidence should create the structures and opportunities which increase the likelihood of success, provided the campaigners can engage with their audience.

But things are rarely this simple. Success may be frustratingly difficult to achieve, especially when the cause is contentious and beset with many detracting voices, and biases can slip it. We may sometimes bolster our case by using information from prejudiced sources or by spinning the case by using information selectively or by concealing facts. Occasionally the deception will be deliberate and even considered virtuous. But more often it will be subliminal, conditioned by the nature of campaigning, emotional commitment involved and the way our minds work.

The organisations most likely to use information in a misleading way are those whose core members are inward looking and so strongly committed to their beliefs that they rarely listen to people who hold different views or try to understand the reasoning behind the views. Hearing only what they want to hear, their opinions are constantly being reinforced by communication with like-minded people – a bias amplified by today's media where the proliferation of news channels and specialist web sites weakens shared experience.

Campaigners are bound to misuse information sometimes. But if they do this habitually, their audience is likely to see through the deceit and reject their message.

How well campaigners know their audience is also an important factor in success. When we wish to influence others, we normally try to imagine what it would be like to be

them and pitch the case accordingly. But unfortunately, as Duncan Watts (2011) points out, we tend to bring our own prejudices and experiences to bear on this, often failing to see just how different they are from us. It follows that campaigners will find it more difficult to influence people with different outlooks to themselves – possibly the people they want to reach most of all.

Conditioned to deceive others

We also deceive ourselves the better to deceive others, and thereby reap the advantages. In *Deceit and self-deception*, Robert Trivers seeks to answer one of the most provocative and consequential questions to face humanity: why do we lie



to ourselves? In so doing he pictures deceit and self-deceit, at root, as different sides of the same coin. From environmental disasters to warfare, politics and religion, and the anxieties of our everyday social lives, he explains what really underlies a whole host of human problems.

One useful way to look at self-deception in everyday life is our use of language. Metaphor often flies below the radar and may have important unconscious effects. Euphemisms, for instance, may not just soften meaning but invert it. "Waterboarding" sounds like something you would like to do with your children on a Mediterranean holiday, and "stress positions" the perfect way to end a workout, while all of us could benefit from some good "sleep management". But each of these refers to a form of torture: repeated near-drowning, long-term painful bending and stretching, wholesale sleep deprivation. In the same vein are terms such as "extraordinary rendition", "enhanced interrogation" (torture), "friendly fire" and "Final Solution".

Think too of the deceit that led to 9/11 and all that followed. George W. Bush's administration made some serious errors of judgement in the period running up to 9/11, ignoring warnings and not taking appropriate security measures. After the event, his administration had a particular interest in focusing only on the enemy, not on any missed signals or failure to exercise caution. Absence of self-criticism converts attention from defence to offence.

A common theme in Trivers' examples is that deception has been selected because of its benefits at the individual level, but that this can lead to disastrous consequences at, say, industrial or national level. He suggests that self-deception has a major role in the initiation and justification of wars, and in the development of false historical narratives.

In the latter context we might cite the long collusion between Israeli and American politicians and academics to deny Palestine's brutal 1948 population displacement. There was no way that the Zionists could create a Jewish state in Palestine without doing large-scale ethnic cleansing of the Arab population. But a myth was subsequently created, of a voluntary flight by the Palestinians, which has only recently been disproved mostly by Israeli scholars.

But can we correct our own biases? Are we doomed to indulge in fantasies, inflate our egos, and show off? Is it even a good idea to battle self-deception? Trivers said that understanding is the first step and that self-deprecation and humour are among the ways of dealing with the problem of self-deception.

Lies that affect us all

In *Why leaders lie*, John Mearsheimer provides the first systematic analysis of lying at the highest levels. He identifies the different forms of lying, the reasons why lies are used as a tool of statecraft, the potential costs and the benefits. He argues that lying between state leaders has always been



'Self-deception has a major role in the initiation and justification of wars.'

WALKING IN THE DARK

► FROM THE CHAIRPERSON, NAT REUSS

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Writing my first report as Chair of the APF, I notice my concentration continually drifting towards our many gifted and talented past Chairs especially to Mary Roe whom I have the privilege of following in this role - Mary, thank you for all you have done. You have left some immense shoes for me to fill!

As I stop and listen to my inner life as I prepare to take up this position, I recognise feelings of inadequacy, insecurity and fear. I'm sure many of us have been in similar situations before, perhaps many times. Times, when comfortable coasting suddenly and abruptly comes to an end, and, all of a sudden, one is standing at a precipice, looking out and surveying an unfamiliar territory. Or to change the image, it's like someone turns the light off and you have to make your way in the dark all by yourself. All of a sudden, there are no external reference points. It's only you and faith in the triune God who makes his home in our inner most being.

This is one of the reasons why I have entitled this report "Walking in the dark". It describes this sense of disorientation,

of trying to navigate without any familiar markers pointing the way to go. The other reason for this title is that I find it illustrative in describing what it feels like to be searching for a more peaceable Christianity. In a darkened environment shrouded by the remnants of Christendom, Just War theory, nationalism or an apolitical version of the Christian faith, searching for a more peaceable Christianity can feel like walking in the dark, arms outstretched, feet shuffling slowly along, senses heightened and making painful discoveries often.

Thankfully, I am not alone and we are making this journey together, so there is help in our fellowship, friends who have been doing this for a long time and new friends who are just discovering this way. I return to my initial unease and note I don't now feel so overawed. What has done this? Perhaps it is in seeing us as a fellowship. A body of unique people of many ages, backgrounds and Church traditions and yet all sharing in this important calling, - to be a peacemaker. Maybe in our unique vocations I don't have to fill anyone else's shoes, maybe I just need to put my own shoes on, trusting in God and in who He has made each and every one of us to be.

It has just struck me that a reconciliation has just occurred. One not so much between two individuals but between the two parties located within me. The tendency to wander, worry and compare leading ultimately to the creation of someone for each occasion. A horses-for-courses identity. Where, in actual fact, there is a crying need both within the Church as well in the world for people to discover their true selves and the life God has created for them.

Linked to this theme of identity, Tony Kempster is highlighting several books in this issue of TAP on the theme of how our minds work and how leaders deceive and fail us. If I could be so bold as to label these collective failings as "defended styles" of leadership, the solution put forward by an Anglican priest Simon Walker in his book *Leading out of who you are* is for leaders to become "undefended". The crux of the matter is how one views their life. According to Walker, if a leader sees life as a possession then leadership becomes a matter of requiring more and doing what it takes to achieve that including, lying, deceit, corruption etc.

Living an "undefended" life, by contrast, views life as pure gift. Life is freely given and freely received. Life is given as gift with unconditional love and approval by God the life giver. Leadership then becomes a matter of joining in this movement,

knowing that in God there is an unending source of love, affection, acceptance and approval. In finding this at the source, there is freedom to be the person God has called you to be and to allow these characteristics to flow to others, rather than needing them from others.

I mention this not just as a reflection on the theme on this edition of TAP but also as a reflection on what sort of leadership would a pacifist exhibit? It seems to me that some of the insights in Simon Walker's book would prove helpful especially in the area of cultivating a whole-life discipleship of undefended living. To view not only our own lives but the lives of others, including our enemies as pure gift from the triune God is a firm foundation for a life of peacemaking. Life is a gift generously bestowed to us, but even in this short article I can feel myself denying that gift and being overawed by others.

The challenge, and I believe it to be a great one within post-modernity, is to be aware when we begin to compare ourselves to others, when we worry about the size of the shoes we need to fill or are expected to fill by the voices that can control our lives. Maybe the secret is linked to the insight that Henri Nouwen brings to us in his book *The return of the prodigal son*, when any such thoughts are characterised by Nouwen as thoughts which lead us away from the love of our Heavenly Father and into a "distant land". The challenge being that the love of God for us all is ever present, we should have no need for denying the life the Father has given us and seeking a distant land. But we still do. And the thing is according to Nouwen, that it's not just at the point of our "coming to our senses" that we cease living in the distant land, we journey to the "distant land" all the time. Every time we judge others, or dream up some other reality or are jealous, we head for the distant land and we leave behind the constant love of the Father who calls us beloved.

In conclusion, thank you Mary for all your work as Chair of APF. So I set out into uncharted territory save that for the love of the triune God who has gifted me this life and who calls me beloved and along with the prayers of all our friends in APF.

Every Blessing, Revd Nat Reuss.

Curate of All Saints Ripley, Derbyshire.

APF is 75 years old next year

The GB is now developing plans for events to celebrate this event. We are also producing an exhibition about the fellowship and will be looking for venues for this to be shown. Please contact the secretary if you would like further details or have any ideas. We also expect to have a celebratory service event, possibly in London. Additionally we are producing a new music CD to celebrate the anniversary, which will be available early in the year (details will be in the next issue of TAP).

"Occupy London" movement

APF is concerned solely with the rejection of war, and our members have many diverse views on other matters so it is questionable whether and how we respond to the Occupy London's demonstrations outside Saint Pauls and elsewhere. The officers are considering this at the moment. But we would also encourage our members to do what they personally feel is appropriate. The protests do present Christians with a wonderful opportunity for mission, hospitality, and evangelism. Besides assisting the demonstrators, we can also be careful not to demonise financiers. As Jim Wallis of the Sojourners said in an open letter to the Occupiers, published in October, "good people can get trapped in bad systems". In that letter, he also cautioned against "Utopian dreaming about things that will never happen... Don't be afraid to get practical and specific about how we can and must do things better than we have in recent years" he said.



Mary and Nat at the AGM

'Every time we judge others, or dream up some other reality or are jealous, we head for the distant land.'

Non-violence works

► FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY
TONY KEMPSTER GIVES HIS REPORT

Steven Pinker's conclusion that the world is becoming less violent raises the question of the role of religion, particularly in recent years. Secular commentators often dismiss religion as a malign force but there is significant evidence that its importance is increasing in today's campaigns for reform and democracy.



Historically, problems arise when religion becomes entangled with the state, when its nature changes radically. It loses its non-violent component and becomes a force for war rather than peace. This is not an exclusively Christian phenomenon. Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism – all the great religions have been betrayed in the hands of people seeking political power and corrupted in the name of nation states.

In recent years, however, as the grip of nation states and national governments continues to weaken, religious believers are recovering the ideology of non-violence. Faith-based non-violence is on the rise and, in adopting peaceful and non-coercive methods of reform and revolution, religious people have reasserted their belief in our common humanity, as well as in God. As Gandhi put it, "Non-violence requires a double faith: faith in God and also faith in man."

Many non-violent campaigns of resistance across the world today have been inspired and bolstered by individuals and groups rooted in religion. Driven by the action of Buddhist monks and nuns, Tibetans have been protesting non-violently against their Chinese occupiers. In Buddhist Burma, the Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi has refused to budge on the question of non-violence. She is a believing Buddhist and has said that this belief affects the way she thinks. In Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories this year, liberal and reform Jews have joined the demonstrations against the takeover of Palestinian homes by Israeli settlers. And then there is the important non-violent influences of Islamic writers in the countries experiencing the Arab Spring.

Democracy following the Arab Spring

Attitudes to the rise of Islam in the political processes following the Arab Spring are also important here. Islamic parties will almost certainly dominate in Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt and this is likely to be repeated whenever the democratic process takes its course.

In the west, this phenomenon has led to debate about the "problem" of the rise of Islam. Many voices warn that the Arab Spring will lead to an Islamic winter: The stereotypical images that took root in the aftermath of 9/11 are rising again. In the Arab world, a secular anti-democracy camp has emerged in Tunisia and Egypt, and its pretext for opposing democratization is that Islamists are likely to be the victors.

But the uproar which has accompanied the Islamist's gains is unhelpful: a calm well-informed debate about the rise of political Islam is long overdue. Wadah Khanfar, who was director general of the al-Jazeera network, says: "First we must define terms. "Islamist" is used in the Muslim world to describe Muslims who participate in the public sphere, using Islam as a basis for their actions and rejecting violence. This participation is not against democracy. In the west, however, the term routinely describes those who use violence as a means to an end."

Now there is a unique opportunity for the west to demonstrate that it will no longer support despotic regimes by supporting

instead the democratic process in the Arab world and by accepting the results of the democratic process, even when it is not the result they would have chosen.

The Greenbelt Arts Festival

Based on an article by Jay Clark from FoR England's *Peacelinks* 25: 4 by Jay Clark.

APF as a member of the Network of Christian Peace Organisations has had regular involvement in the Peace Zone at the Greenbelt festival for the past 20 years. But unfortunately because of other commitments this year we were not able to play a full part. Nevertheless, we have resolved to be closely involved next year with Sue Gilmurray representing us on the planning committee.

The planning group is very upbeat following this year's event and thinks that next year the Peace Zone should be able to gain more space in G-Source when the theme moves on from Palestine to general peace and justice issues.

The festival focused on Palestine and on the site once again was the demonstration wall showing the height of the actual separation wall. The Peace Zone also had a wall with the words "love your enemies" painted across it. Papered to the wall were the testimonies to the precepts of Jesus and Gandhi, personal stories from people affected by violence who had chosen a third way between retaliative violence and submission. The theme of the Peace Zone was "Jesus, prophet of Peace" and Walter Wink's ideas about non-violence. Centre stage was a slightly fey shop mannequin affectionately nicknamed Brian, who was used to demonstrate Wink's radical interpretation of turning the other cheek. Brian proved a wonderful way to get people's attention and create an avenue for conversation.

People were drawn to the fridge, a genuine fridge door covered in alphabet magnets with which visitors were encouraged to write a message of peace. These messages were then tweeted on the Peace Zone's Twitter account.

International conference of the Council on Christian Approaches to Defence and Disarmament (CCADD)

I am a member of the executive committee of CCADD and took part in the organization of its annual international conference which took place at the beginning of September in Birmingham. Thirty five delegates from around the world assembled at Fircroft College in the former home of the eminent Quaker, George Cadbury to reflect on the lessons to be learnt ten years after 9/11.

The keynote speaker for the political lessons that we have learnt was Lord Browne, former Secretary for Defence who gave a very frank discussion of the events of Britain's collusion with the USA following 9/11. He was complemented by a paper by Sir David Omand, former Intelligence and Security Co-ordinator, UK Cabinet Office and author of *Securing the State* (2010). With responsibility for co-ordinating the government response to terrorism in the UK, he presented a very level-headed approach to the problem.

At the end of the decade, it was noted that terrorism remained a deadly threat but it had never been the global force initially feared and was, in any case, much weakened. Lessons had been learnt both about the nature of the threat but also of war itself.

There were theological and ethical lessons here to be learnt on the importance of the Christian virtues of humility and prudence, while it was noted that prudential thinking – or practical wisdom – was itself a key component of Just War

'Non-violence requires a double faith: faith in God and also faith in man.'



thinking. There were also lessons on the primacy of ethics over strategy.

A highlight for me was the paper given by Asim Hafiz, a Muslim chaplain to the UK armed forces. He explained some of the difficulties of holding such a post and the reaction of people from his own religious community. His presentation conveyed a great deal of warmth and understanding of interfaith relationship.



Muslim Chaplain Asim Hafiz

These central themes on the limitations of power and importance of morality were also reflected in the excellent bible studies led by David McLoughlin, Newman College. During the conference delegates visited Coventry Cathedral for Sunday Eucharist and Warwick Castle to see its various programmes associated with the Wars of the Roses.

The papers for the conference are on the CCADD website www.ccadd.org.uk.

Council meeting of the International Peace Bureau (IPB)

APF is a member organization of IPB and I attended the Council meeting in Potsdam as a vice-president of IPB.

Two events took place were associated with the meeting. The ceremony to present its Sean McBride Peace Prize took place in the City Hall which was packed for the occasion, not only with peace activists but with lawyers from Germany and elsewhere and also a large group of Iraqis, some from Iraq itself, but mostly people living in exile in Germany. Al-Jazeera turned up with their TV cameras and there were several articles in the German press.

This year's prize was awarded jointly to Hanaa Edwar (Iraqi women's rights and democracy activist) and Peter Becker (German anti-nuclear lawyer), two individuals who have contributed in quite different ways to the advancement of democracy and human rights.

Hanaa became an activist as a student. She joined the Iraqi Women's league while very young, and was arrested after the Ba'athist-led coup in 1963. Escaping from prison, she moved to Germany to represent the Iraqi Women's League at the Women's International Democratic Federation in the 1970s. She is now very active on constitutional matters for bringing democracy to the country and women's rights. Further information about the recipients is at www.ipb.org.

It was also good to hear at the meeting that Michael Higgin's was elected president of Ireland. He has been one of the



Peter Becker



Hanaa Edwar at the IPB council meeting

strongest supporters of nuclear disarmament among Irish political circles. Michael was the first winner of the Sean McBride prize back in 1992.

The other event was an IPB history symposium on the life and work of the pacifist Alfred H. Fried, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1911 and a member of the IPB council. Throughout his life,

he worked tirelessly for the construction of an international legal order as a precondition for a peaceful world. These words have been echoed by others and are closely related to the conclusions of Steven Pinker in our opening article.

For a more detailed biography go to the official website of the Nobel Prize: www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/laureates/1911/fried-bio.html

The Peace Museum (Bradford) at Culture Fusion and "Playing for peace"

Our counsellor Clive Barrett is chair of the Peace Museum (Bradford) and I am a director of the organization.

The official opening of Culture Fusion in Bradford took place on 19 November. The building which is run for young people by the YMCA includes a peace pod which will be used by the Peace Museum as part of its education programme. This is a colourful and inviting learning space which already includes framed posters from the museum. Around the corner, in the "performance space" (which will be used by lots of groups), the "Playing for peace" exhibition (below) will be on display, probably until after the Olympics.

The museum is extending its education programme and has recently appointed a new member of staff to lead this. It already has school bookings for over 700 children by March.

The Centre for Reconciliation and Peace at Coventry University has produced an exhibition entitled "Playing for Peace" in collaboration of the Peace Museum. This shows the links between sport and peace and was designed especially for the London-Olympic year.

I attended its launch in Coventry Cathedral in October. The event was well attended and gained significant publicity because the exhibition was one of only seven projects nationwide to be awarded the 2012 Truce Related Inspire



David Moorcroft (second from right) and the exhibition designers

Mark. The official opening was performed by David Moorcroft, former 5000m World Record Holder and 2012 Olympic Ambassador for Coventry who spoke very well indeed. Several copies of the exhibition have been produced and will be shown at different venues around the UK. The exhibition can be seen at: www.coventry.ac.uk/cmsadmin/sportpeace/home.html.

9/11 anniversary event at MK Peace Pagoda and anti-arms demonstration at the ExCel Centre, London

The Nipponzan Myhoji Buddhist peace community in Milton Keynes held a special event to remember 9/11 on its 10th anniversary at which I spoke and sang.

Sue Gilmurray took part and sang at the demonstration organised by East London against the arms trade which was held at the London Docks, the day before the opening of the DSEi arms fair at the ExCel Centre. Ten years earlier a similar exhibition and demonstration took place there.

Defending the community by telling the story

Praise for Rowan William's visit to Zimbabwe

APF has been following closely the plight of the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe and the brave actions of the Bishop of Harare, Chad Gandiya; and with communication with Cloud Mabaudi and other APF members in the country, (see articles on the International page in TAP 9.3, 10.1 and 10.2). Zimbabwe inevitably grabbed the headlines on the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent pastoral visit to Central Africa which was judged a "resounding success" by the Bishop Gandiya. Dr Williams' confrontation of Robert Mugabe earned him the respect even of his detractors. We praise the archbishop of Canterbury for openly criticising Zimbabwe's lawlessness and comparing it with the "greed of



colonists and imperialists". In a brave appearance at Harare's national stadium on 9 October, Dr Williams told a crowd of more than 15,000 that it was tragic that so many lived in daily fear of attack if they failed to comply "with what the powerful require of them". His sermon comes as a split in Zimbabwe's Anglican church wreaks havoc on clergy and parishioners. It also made a direct appeal against a repeat of the turmoil at Zimbabwe's last election that left an estimated 250 people dead – widely blamed on Mugabe's Zanu-PF party. Although direct, Dr Williams was also gracious in his approach. In his sermon, he said: "I think here of the long periods in the history of my own Church in England, when we were compromised by the subservience of our governments, imprisoned by the comfort and privilege of our status; I think how slow we were to reach out to the poorest and the most oppressed in our own cities. He spoke of reconciliation and dialogue.

Balls for peace

In the last TAP we reported that APF was hoping to support the 'Balls for Peace' initiative of APF members in Kenya.



The Revd Elijah Nyaga is second left

Thirty footballs and 10 volley balls have been purchased. They are being used in conjunction with various tournaments for young people to stress the message of reconciliation and the importance of peace in local communities. The Revd Elijah Nyaga, APF Kenya, is shown at one of the groups. This unique approach to peace education is being well received. All 40 balls

have now been distributed. A new set of balls are being stitched as I write, so if you are 'stuck' for a Christmas gift, you might consider sponsoring one for £10. Just write to our Treasurer and we will send you a gift card for the person (good idea for birthdays as well!)

Sue Claydon, APF vice-chair

A concluding reflection on A City on Fire by Donna Hicks

Note: The Episcopal Peace Fellowship's Palestine/Israel Network met in Chicago IL from 16-18 October 2011. This is the reflection I shared before we broke into small groups to discern next steps for action.

We've been meeting since Sunday evening to get beyond talk to action. Some of you have seen the reflection I wrote in response to the Presiding Bishop's Pastoral Letter on Israeli-Palestinian Peace. In it I shared a parable that a traveller to the West Bank heard there but I edited out the last paragraph. Here's the story with the last paragraph:

There was a city on fire. People in the city were unable to put the fire out. Many were burned, and many died from their burns. This alarmed people in neighbouring cities. And they came to see what was happening in the city on fire. These visitors took pictures and talked about how awful the fire was. They offered comfort to the victims of the fire. They rebuilt sections of the city that had been burnt. Others went closer to the flames, wanting to touch them to see what it felt like to burn. They came and went, taking pictures, telling stories. Despite all the delegations, the fire continued to burn.

The man then wished us good day and walked away without shaking our hands. We found the rest of the group and left Qalqiliya on the next bus. We promised among ourselves to stay in touch with the people we'd met and to tell our community everything that we had seen and heard.

Elliot Colla, Georgetown University

When Grace Said thanked us last night for standing with the Palestinian community, I remembered the day Christian Peacemaker Teams in Hebron got called to two house demolitions. One was near Kiryat Arba, east of Hebron. There were only two of us in the office; the rest of the team was at an event at a school in the Palestinian-controlled section of Hebron. My team mate went off to Kiryat Arba. I went off to Sendas with our neighbor and translator Zleikhah Muhtaseb. We were there all day. From a nearby roof I shot picture after picture of the house being demolished and later we met with the family and walked to the site of other demolitions that day. While I was taking photos, Zleikhah was interviewing family members. We got back to the office exhausted around 6:00PM. Zleikhah sat down and translated all her notes from Arabic to English. It took a while. When she finished, I thanked her. She said, 'No thanks are necessary. It is my duty.' So when I heard Grace last night, I told her 'No thanks are necessary. It is my duty.' It is our duty to move beyond talk to action.

But back to the parable. 'To tell our community everything we had seen and heard.' What might that mean to us? What will we tell, what will we do, that goes beyond talk to action? Ponder it in silence for a few minutes.

Let us pray:

God of peace,
let us your people know,
that at the heart of turbulence
there is an inner calm that comes
from faith in you.
Keep us from being content with things as they are,
that from this central peace
there may come a creative compassion,
a thirst for justice,
and a willingness to give of ourselves
in the Spirit of Christ. Amen.

Taken from a New Zealand prayer book

EPF is APF's sister organisation in the US and Donna is a member of both organisations. She has been very active in supporting the Palestinian cause working with the Christian Peacemaker Teams.

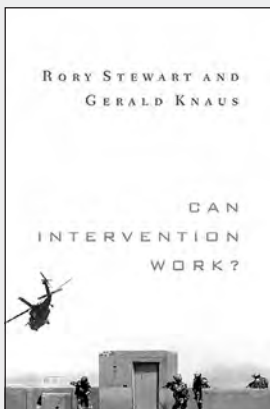
Book Look

► RECENT BOOKS REVIEWED

Rory Stewart and Gerald Knaus (2011)

Can intervention work?
Norton

The travel writer and Conservative MP for Penrith and the Borders, Rory Stewart and his co-author Gerald Knaus pose the question *Can intervention work?* Their argument – that intervention sometimes works and sometimes does not – is obviously true.



Readers will be left nodding their head at various points but ultimately, shrugging their shoulders.

In 1995 still stung by the memory of having done nothing while mass killings engulfed Rwanda, the year before, the USA and the international community intervened to stop the ongoing genocide in Bosnia. The results of the effort were impressive: the violence was halted and the subsequent peace-building operation guided the country towards a stable future. It seemed that a corner had been turned – we now had a blueprint for how to successfully intervene in conflicts and rebuild countries, one that we could apply in the future. Sixteen years later we find ourselves amid the wreckage of two unsuccessful interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. How did we get here?

The authors convey the importance of understanding local political culture, of understanding our own limitations, and of thinking in small and concrete terms. They also warn of the dangers of grand ambitions. They authors believe that the power, the knowledge and the legitimacy of the international community are limited. That intervention is intrinsically unpredictable, chaotic and uncertain. When it comes to deciding whether or not to intervene, the formula offered is one of “principled incrementalism and passionate moderation”. But what does this mean in practice? What for example was the right thing to do when the Libya crisis arose?

The pacifist position is clear on this but if military action is taken, one would like to hope, as those authors argue, that it is possible “to walk the tightrope between the horrors of over-intervention and non-intervention”. Whether the book actually helps us do that, however, is questionable since its authors seem to wish to look both ways at the same time: anti-interventionalist when it doesn't work, pro-interventionalist when it does.

If the only common theme in intervention is radical uncertainty, then the only rule must be humility and restraint and the use of all possible non-violent means of involvement.

Andrew Feinstein (2011)

The shadow world: inside the global arms trade
Hamish Hamilton

Andrew Feinstein is a former South African politician, who helped expose an infamous scandal involving \$100m in bribes allegedly paid to ANC politicians. He is now an author, campaigner and co-founder of Corruption Watch.



That the world is awash in weapons is not news. But the way weapons large and small flow from the US, Britain and other producers is astonishing, much of it shrouded in deceit and corruption (following our theme for this issue). Yet none of the sturdy facts deter policymakers of all political persuasions from pushing lethal technologies on to petty tyrants and intermittent allies in Africa, the Middle East, central Asia and just about everywhere else.

The shadow world is the harrowing behind-the-scenes tale of the global arms trade. Pulling back the curtain on this secretive world, Feinstein reveals the corruption and the cover-ups behind weapons' deals ranging from the largest in history – between the British and Saudi governments – to BAE's controversial transaction in South Africa, Tanzania and eastern Europe, and the revolving-door relationships that characterize the US Congressional-Military-Industrial Complex. He exposes in forensic detail both the government to government trade in arms and the shadow world of illicit weapons dealing – and lays bare the shocking and inextricable links between the two.

It begins with the 1999 multi-billion arms deal to South Africa, in which Britain's BAE Systems was a prominent player. It was later shown to have involved covert payments to leading ANC figures including Jacob Zuma, today's president of some \$300 million. Zuma was charged with 783 counts of racketeering, fraud and corruption. The case was dropped by the prosecution shortly before he was elected national leader in 2009. The book goes on to survey the entire world-wide arms trade. Almost every significant national government is involved, and few keep clean hands away from the deceit and corruption. Even if there is nothing substantially new in Feinstein's book, the author performs a service by highlighting anew the nature of business. It would be naive, however, to suggest that things are likely to change dramatically, especially when western societies are struggling against odds to sustain their wealth against the rising Asian economic tide. We see this in the way exporters are beginning to cash in on the Arab Spring. But, we must continue to lift the veil on this

shadow world, to demand that our taxes are not used to develop another deadly weapon for the material benefit of a tiny self-deserving elite, but are rather employed to enhance the lives of those who go hungry, who are without work or who suffer the deadly consequences of the trade in arms.

Mathew White (2011)

Atrocitology: humanity's 100 deadliest achievements
Canongate

This is a textbook for anyone interested in the scale of killing in wars. It is complementary with Steven Pinker's

book in that it documents man's inhumanity to man. From the first Punic War and the collapse of Mayan rule, to the reign of Peter the Great and the cataclysmic events of the Second World War, White's epic book spans centuries and civilisations as

it measures the hundred most violent events in human history.

While sceptical of any grand theory for the cause of human violence, he does share three key lessons gleaned from his careful statistical analysis: (1) chaos is more deadly than tyranny; (2) the world is even more disorganised than we realise and (3) wars kill more civilians than soldiers (in fact the army is usually the safest place to be). One can join the conversation on Twitter #Atrocitology.

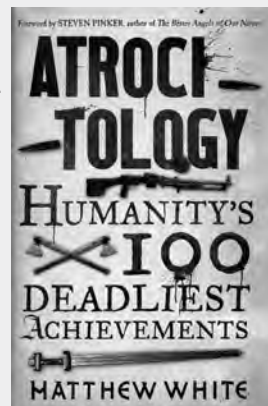
John Horgan (2011)

The end of war
McSweeney's

Ideas, like most things, are subject to fashion. Right now we are revisiting our contemporary notions about violence as indicated in our opening paper. In *The better angels of our nature*, Steven Pinker argues that we have misread the evidence, which in fact shows that we are becoming less violent as time moves on.

In *The end of war*, science writer John Horgan also challenges our views on violence. But, unlike Pinker, he narrows the lens mostly to war, and the possibility of eradicating it. He argues that there is no persuasive evidence for warlike activity being either ancient or hardwired into humanity in the first place.

He lays into the anthropology which allowed Barack Obama to observe that war “appeared with the first man”. We are he writes, as likely to be peaceful as violent, and the evidence is stronger for war being cultural, or situational. As such, his hopeful argument is that war is best seen as a problem amenable to both scientific analysis and solution.



Diary of Events

▶ LOCAL AND NATIONAL

28 December Holy Innocent Day events organised by APF under the auspice of the NCPO. The service at 11am in St Martins-in-the-Fields is entitled "A cry from the heart for the children of Africa and the Middle East". It will include music and song from these regions and also some pieces from the Iona Community. This will be followed after lunch at 2.00 by a 30-minute witness at the Innocent Victims' Memorial outside Westminster Abbey.

15 January Pax Christi - Peace Sunday. Theme: Education Young People in Justice and Peace. Materials will be ready in November and on website www.paxchristi.org.uk. Pax Christi, St Joseph's, Watford Way, London, NW4 4TY 0208 203 4884.

22 February Ash Wednesday 2012. An annual liturgy and

witness of repentance and resistance to nuclear war preparations will take place at the Ministry of Defence, London and other military sites. With Pax Christi, Christian CND, London Catholic Worker, Catholic Peace Action. Call Pax Christi (as above) for further details.

25 February Network for Peace annual general meeting. (Awaiting details).

15 May International Conscientious Objectors' Day event at 12 noon in Tavistock Square, London. www.wri-irg.org/co/15may.htm.

4 July Menwith Hill. Annual 'Independence FROM America' day. Organised by (CAAB), 59 Swarcliffe Road, Harrogate, HG1 4QZ. 01423 884076 <http://www.caab.org.uk>

Notices

Election of officers and members of the GB

At the AGM held in Bicester on 22 October, the following were elected. This was an important meeting because of the changeover of chairs.

The Revd Nathaniel Reuss was unanimously voted in and welcomed as chair; other officers and members were willing to continue. The retiring chair, Mrs Mary Roe was thanked most warmly for her commitment to APF and being an admirable chair. At a previous meeting the size of the GB had been reduced to 10 elected members (including officers and co-opted members). Following the election these were as follows.

Chair: Nat Reuss
 Joint vice-chair: Sue Claydon
 Joint vice-chair: David Ramanauskas
 General Secretary: Tony Kempster
 Treasurer: Roger Payne
 Membership Secretary: Sue Gilmurray
 Elected members: David Mumford
 Jenny Nicholson
 Meriel Pipkin
 Mary Roe

Co-opted members: Pararasan Arulanantham
 Andii Bowsher
 Joyce Smith
 John Stephenson
 Tom Willis

Frank McManus became a corresponding member; welcome to come to the AGM when he wished.

And we have a new centenarian. Anne Spalding, a very active member who joined during World War II, was 100 on 18th November. Congratulations Anne.

OFFICERS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Chairperson: The Revd Nat Reuss
 31 Porterhouse Road, Ripley, Derbyshire DE5 3FL 0784 034 325
nathanaelreuss@gmail.com

Vice-chairperson: Mrs Sue Claydon
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 PE15 0AH 013546 54214 sue.claydon@tesco.net

Vice-chairperson: David Ramanauskas
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 01422 330770 david.ramanauskas@christianpacifist.com

Honorary Secretary: Dr Tony Kempster
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 01908 510642 ajkempster@aol.com

Honorary Treasurer: Mr Roger Payne
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 01844 351959 rjpayne@o2.co.uk

Membership Secretary: Mrs Sue Gilmurray
 1 Wilford Drive, Ely CB6 1TL
 01353 668495 sue.gilmurray@anglia.ac.uk

If you would like to join the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship and are in agreement with the pledge:

'We communicant members of the Anglican Communion or Christians in communion with it, believing that our membership of the Christian Church involves the complete repudiation of modern war, pledge ourselves to renounce war and all preparation to wage war, and to work for the construction of Christian peace in the world.'

Then please (✓) box **one** in the form below.

If you are sympathetic to the view expressed in the pledge but feel unable to commit yourself to it, you may like to become an associate of the APF and receive the Fellowship's newsletter and notice of our various open events, then please (✓) box **two**.

Send your completed form to the Membership Secretary:- **Sue Gilmurray, 1, Wilford Drive, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 1TL.**

- I am in agreement with the pledge and wish to become a member of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship.
 I wish to become an Associate of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship.

Name and designation (Revd, Dr, Mr, Mrs etc):

please print clearly and give your Christian name first.

Address

..... **Year of birth** **Diocese**

I enclose a cheque for as my first subscription (*makes cheque payable to the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship*)

Please ✓ if you are a UK-income tax payer and want your donation to be treated as a Gift Aid donation.
 APF can then reclaim income tax paid on the donation.

Please ✓ if you want to make a regular monthly or annual subscription using a Standing Order

I heard of APF through **Signed** **Date**

Application for MEMBERSHIP

Film Look

► RECENT FILMS REVIEWED

The first two films illustrate deceit from different viewpoints.

Ides of March

Directed by George Clooney

The idea that American politics is a dirty, cutthroat business, whose practitioners are often unprincipled, well-heeled opportunists will come as news to very few people.

And this film will reinforce their view.

This film is set in the world of contemporary politics. Its central figure, Stephen Meyers is junior campaign manager for Pennsylvania governor Mike



Morris, a Democratic Party presidential hopeful embroiled in a tight primary race with Senator Ted Pullman of Arkansas. The result of the Democratic primary battle in Ohio, the setting for much of the film, will go a long way to determining the party's national candidate. All the characters are fictional and the author of the film's source, "Farragut North", playwright Beau Willimon says "they are an amalgamation of different people, I came across".

Echoes of the various campaigns and difficulties of Bill Clinton, John Edwards, Howard Dean and others are to be found in the film. The experiences are not plumbed to their depths but show just how small quite random events and sharp publicity can influence election successes.

"The Ides of March" also contains a hint of the popular disappointment with president Obama. "We'd been working for about a year on the screenplay in 2008," explains Clooney. "Then Obama was elected and there was such hope, everyone was so happy. It didn't seem the time was right to make the movie – people were too optimistic for such a cynical film. About a year later everybody got cynical again, and then we thought we could make the film." So this is how film follows reality.

The film emerged in cinemas in the middle of the Occupy Wall Street protests, and became a discussion point on a number of issues, including the inter-changeability of the of the two political parties neither of which addressed the issues that the demonstrators were rejecting.

The man who crossed Hitler

Directed by Justin Hardy

This was based on a true event – the tragedy of Hans Litten, a smart young Berlin lawyer who in 1931, hauled Germany's raging Fuhrer-to-be into a court for an afternoon of impudent questioning. His particular aim was to have him explain the apparent confusion in Nazi party policy between his own sworn disavowal of violence and the activities of the city's gangs of storm troopers. Two of their members stood accused of marching

with their fellows into a local communists' social evening for an evening of bludgeoning, knifing and shooting.

Litten couldn't touch Hitler for the killings, but by interrogating him as a witness he sought to prepare the ground for a perjury charge. At the very least, it would provide a courtroom ding-dong that would expose Hitler either as an unreformed thug to his big-money, bourgeois backers or as a turncoat wuss to the thousands of Brown Shirt maniacs who were out spreading mayhem and fear in his name.

Hitler came across as one might expect – the barely refrained contempt, the righteous menace, the distractedness from others. Even in the tearoom, full of whispers and glances, his voice rose above the conversational until he was addressing not people but the glorious, blazing future itself. Litten had been warned not to let Hitler make speeches, but he was soon in the witness box, to unquenchable, defeating cheers.

At the trial Hans, the practiced lawyer, runs rings round Hitler, who is frequently unable to answer



his questions. The Brown Shirts are convicted but it is a pyrrhic victory for two years later Hitler will become chancellor. Hans will be arrested and he will commit suicide in Dachau concentration camp.

The film had a sister documentary, "Hans Litten vs Adolf Hitler" which presented a bigger picture of the times. Litten was moved from camp to camp and tortured. He also wrote a poem which he read at a camp gathering in honour of Hitler's birthday, entitled "Thoughts are free". The reading of this makes a simple, powerful ending to the two films, which together bring light to an act of heroism all but swallowed by history.

The lady (2011)

Directed by Luc Besson

This is the story of the pro-democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi and her husband, Michael Aris. Despite distance, long separations, and a dangerously hostile regime, their love endures until the very end. A story of devotion and human understanding set against a background of political turmoil which continues today. The film is also the story of the peaceful quest of the woman who is at the core of Burma's democracy movement. Notwithstanding the fact that "The Lady" is entertaining and watchable, it lacks any feeling of authenticity. I guess that this is not surprising given that the director and screenwriter are both Westerners, and the lead is played by a non-Burmese actress (Michelle Yeoh).

It is now the late 80s, riots are rife in Burma, and,



as the daughter of a political martyr, Suu is begged by the intelligentsia to spearhead a democratic rebellion against the brutal, oppressive government. There is next to no emotional turmoil, she simply plunges headlong into the role of people's leader, and Aris supports her as one might a football team, not a beautiful woman whose life is clearly in danger. Issues are discussed in brief and simple terms, and the regime is personified in the Idi Amin-like figure of The General – a vindictive, superstitious despot who makes his judgements based on tarot readings.

Aung San Suu Kyi sacrificed her happiness and that of her family for a higher cause in her struggle against a dangerously hostile oppressive military regime, during which she was placed under house arrest in Burma for over a decade for her non-violent battle for human rights. Her husband Michael Aris, diagnosed with terminal prostate cancer, was unable to enter the country despite pleas from the UN secretary general and Pope John Paul II. By the time Suu Kyi was released he had died, the two having been unable to see each other for the last three years of his life. Despite this tragedy, Suu Kyi has continued to fight for democracy in her country and still does to the present day."

With secret filming in Burma, the biopic required remarkable commitment from the cast. Even in Thailand, "The lady" 10 week shoot had to be in secret. If the Thai authorities had learnt of its existence they would have tried to shut it down out of deference to their autocratic neighbour.

The lady does soften the harsher realities of Suu Kyi's incarceration. Yeoh is never less than beautiful, whereas malnutrition caused Sue Kyi's hair to fall out, and she developed spondylosis. The film also ends with the start of the monks' 2007 Saffron Revolution, but refrains from showing the bloody suppression that snuffed it out.

A year after completing "The lady", Yeoh says she finds it difficult to leave the role behind. "The philosophy of compassion, of love, of commitment, of patience – if I can aspire to just a little bit of that..." she muses. "I'm still feeling anxiety, because she represents so much to so many people".

unusual: due to the mistrust among great powers and because much is known; outright deceit is difficult to pull off, and sometimes backfires. Leaders more frequently lie to their own publics and democratic leaders do it more often than dictators.

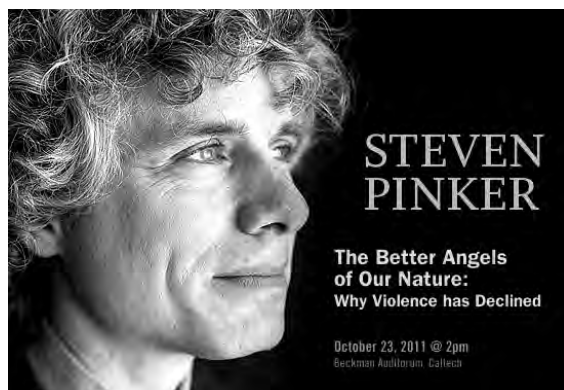
Mearsheimer paints a bleak picture suggesting that no politician holding high office, can afford to tell much of the truth much of the time. In a BBC interview the other week, David Cameron asserted, among other things, that his government's defence cuts leave Britain's armed forces strong, and that the Americans are unbothered about them. Both of these propositions are at best debatable, at worst flatly untrue. Yet they are the sort of things politicians of all democracies say all the time. If the prime minister had instead declared frankly, "The cuts we are imposing on Britain's armed forces will gravely weaken them, and the Americans are furious", he would have been judged to have made a gaffe of a seriousness that raised doubts about his fitness to govern. But to what extent do such politicians believe their lives?

International conflicts inevitably prompt an escalation of deceptions by governments, which plead the exigencies of emergencies to justify them. Roosevelt said in 1942 that he was perfectly willing to mislead and tell untruths if this would help with the war and did so. Other struggles, however, have prompted similar presidential behaviour to serve less desirable ends. Lyndon Johnson in August 1964 manufactured a supposed North Vietnam attack on the USS Maddox in Tonkin Gulf to justify escalating the Indochina War. JFK lied about his deal with the Soviets to remove missiles from Turkey in return for the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba. This helped to avert nuclear exchange; and, of course, Blair and Bush were creative with the truth over Iraq.

Mearsheimer suggests that fearmongering by American and allied governments will remain commonplace in the years ahead, as they struggle to reconcile their urge to police the world with public scepticism and shrinking economic power. "The leaders who are most likely to lie to their publics are those who head democracies bent on fighting wars of choice in distant places.... This is bad news that can only have a corrosive effect on democratic institutions... a formula for future debacles."

We are becoming less violent

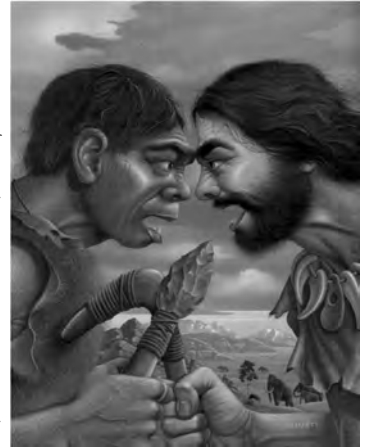
The better angels of our nature: the decline of violence in history and its causes has been described as Steven Pinker's most ambitious and significant book.



Pinker challenges one of our deepest but unexamined assumptions – that current and recent times have been the most violent in history. As evidence we cite contemporary homicide rates, the Holocaust, the death toll of the two world wars and the genocides orchestrated by Stalin, Mao Zedong and other tyrants. But Pinker argues that this view is radically mistaken. Violence between and within societies – both murder and warfare – has declined from prehistory to today. We are, he maintains, much less likely to die at someone's hands than ever before. And even the horrific carnage of the last century, when seen in the long view of history, is part of this trend.

He shows that violence has been in decline for long stretches of time, and we may be living in the most peaceful era in our species' existence. The decline has not been steady; it has not brought violence down to zero; and it is not guaranteed to continue. But it is persistent historical development, visible on scales from millennia to decades, from world wars and genocides to the spanking of children and the treatment of animals.

But why are our perceptions biased? Cognitive psychology tells us that the unaided human mind is vulnerable to many fallacies and illusions because of its reliance on its memory for vivid anecdotes rather



than systematic statistics. We are prone to think that modern life is more violent because historical records from recent eras are more complete, and because the human mind overestimates the frequency of vivid, memorable events. We also care more about violence today.

Pinker identifies a number of forces that were key factors in curbing mankind's capacity for inhumanity. These changes include the slow emergence of states capable of playing the role of Hobbes's Leviathan; the development of government, commerce, literacy and the mixing of ideas and peoples, all of which encourage people to inhibit their impulses, expand their empathy, extricate themselves from their parochial vantage points, and treat violence as a problem to be solved rather than as a contest to be won.

The fact that violence is so pervasive in history but nonetheless can be brought down, tells us that human nature includes both inclinations toward violence and inclinations toward peace – what Abraham Lincoln called "the better angels of our nature" – and that historical changes have increasingly favoured our better angels.

Today, the most famous of the better angels is empathy. It is being studied in children, chimpanzees, undergraduates and even single neurons, and has been lauded in bestselling books as the solution to humanity's problems. Indeed, an expansion of empathy – fostered by literacy, travel and cosmopolitanism – helps to explain why people today abjure cruel punishments and care more about the human costs of war.

But empathy cannot be the whole story. He proposes that the most important psychological contributor to the decline of violence over the long term may instead be reason: the cognitive faculties, honed by the exchange of ideas through language that allows us to understand the world and negotiate social arrangements. For all their foolishness, modern societies have been getting smarter; and all things being equal, a smarter world is a less violent world.

There are also direct links between reason and peace. On average, and holding all else constant, people with greater reasoning abilities commit fewer violent crimes, are more likely to cooperate in experimental games and have more classically liberal attitudes, such as opposition to racism and sexism. Similarly, societies with higher levels of educational and intellectual achievement are more receptive to democracy, and have lower rates of civil war.

Several of the reviews and articles in this issue have been chosen because they relate to some of these issues in this article.

Article by Dr Tony Kempster based on research for a book and also a paper for IPB.

Spirituality and “super soldiers”

A spiritual dimension to soldiering

In the Guardian's Face to Faith, General Richard Dannatt made a surprising plea for a spiritual dimension to soldiering (key points below).



High standards of leadership and an embedded understanding of core values provide a very sound moral baseline for the military. But, and this is a critical question, one wonders whether a sound moral baseline is enough? Should there not also be a spiritual dimension – or even a spiritual foundation to this moral dimension? Not surprisingly, I believe there should. A moral

baseline is very much a thing of the head, whereas a spiritual dimension is very much a thing of the heart. And, fundamentally, it is that word “believe” or “belief” that is at the heart of any spiritual dimension. For some, belief in the cause, belief in the leader or even, given the tribal nature of the British army, belief in the regiment, will be enough. But I disagree.

What really sustains, in my view, is something bigger than this. This first came home to me as a young platoon commander in Belfast in the early 1970s.

Let me read you part of an account by a British private soldier from my platoon, who had just shot his first enemy fighter in Afghanistan in 2006.

“Afterwards I sat there and I thought ‘Hang on. I just shot someone’. I had a brew and that. I didn’t get to sleep that night. I just lay there all night thinking, ‘I shot someone’. It’s something strange. A really strange feeling. You feel like, you know, a bit happy with yourself – I’ve done me job, it’s what I’ve come here for, know what I mean? He’s Taliban and I’ve got one of them. You feel quite chuffed about it. “Then you’re feeling, like, you know, well you know, sad. You’re thinking... well, you know... you know, the geezer’s another human being at the end of the day, like. Then you get the feeling, well, you know, it’s either him or me. And then you’re thinking...”

“I think people get, like, you know, religious then as well. You’re thinking, well, in the bigger picture, if there is like a Geezer up there and a Geezer downstairs, what does that mean to me now I’ve just shot someone? Is that me done for? Am I going to hell or what? And all of that went through me mind that night, for hour after hour after hour.”

There are young people out there tonight asking those questions, and that spiritual challenge must be responded to.

Response by APF counsellor, Canon Dr Paul Oestreicher

The Guardian of 18 November 2011

It calls for a special kind of military courage for a former chief of the general staff to cry out – as Richard Dannatt did (Face to Faith, 12 November) – for a spiritual answer to the good soldier in Afghanistan who had done what he is trained to do and was then impelled to write: “Afterwards I sat there and thought: hang on, I just shot someone... I didn’t get to sleep that night... I shot someone.” Faced with the good soldier’s pain, General Dannatt doubts whether what he calls “a sound moral baseline” is enough – belief in cause or leader or even his regiment. It calls, he thinks, for a “spiritual dimension... very much a thing of the heart”.

I have spent much of my personal and professional life as a priest, as a church diplomat and as a Quaker wrestling with that

question. Is there a faith-based answer to that private soldier, private in more than one sense? Both my Christian head and my heart tell me that this is a circle that cannot be squared. For too long killing has been going on in some god’s name.

“I am the enemy you killed, my friend” is the posthumous cry of the soldier in Wilfred Owen’s poem, sung poignantly at the end of Britten’s soul-searching War Requiem. Just once at Christmas both sides put down their rifles and played a game of football. The common soldiers, British and Germans, knew they had everything in common, but then went on to kill each other.

More of such indiscipline would have destroyed military morale. Yet with hindsight, the killing had all been pointless.

I’ve been privileged to speak of the required spiritual dimension to officers being trained to man our nuclear submarines, those men who, “when the chips are down and the reality of life and death confronts, are reaching out into the spiritual dimension, beyond the rational and beyond the moral”. That dimension must hold out the realistic hope of an end to the killing. The outlawing of slavery was not, as most thought, fanciful. Wilberforce achieved it. So it must be with war.

Albert Einstein made that plain long ago. He knew there was no limit to our ability to kill, that the enemy of our survival is war. As murder is condemned in public opinion and in law, so must collective murder be. For the one we go to prison, for the other we get a medal or a hero’s funeral.

As our streets are policed, so must our global village be in the future that we hold out to the good soldier’s children and theirs. It is a huge task but already in the planning. The Movement for the Abolition of War (www.abolishwar.org.uk) is not a group of dreamers. It calls for hard heads and brave hearts. It is for generals and privates and the rest of us whose taxes pay for the killing.

The good soldier is never given chance to question why, but (with apologies to Kipling) to kill or die. He need not do either, for as the soldier quoted by Richard Dannatt said: “You know... the geezer’s another human being.” To act on the sentiment is surely the spiritual dimension that the general longs for.

“Super soldiers”: the quest for the ultimate killing machine

A letter published by Sue Gilmurray in *The Independent*.

Much is being reported about the use of humanoid robots instead of soldiers in warfare but such are some years away. But scientists are reporting breakthroughs with the next best thing – the creation of “super soldiers” who feel less pain, less terror and whose bodies may be augmented by powerful machines (details of the techniques were discussed in an *Independent* article on 18 November 2011). There is a real danger that these techniques will actually produce squads of inhuman zombies with all that might entail.

Can somebody remind the Pentagon, currently spending \$400 million a year researching ways to “enhance” the human fighter, that the United States has pretensions to be civilized nation?

Research to produce a better-designed thumbscrew is a waste of time, since torture has become illegal. Money spent on developing an easier way of branding slaves is now futile, as slavery has been abolished.

In our modern civilization, the last bastion of barbarism is war, which legitimizes the killing and maiming of other human beings just for belonging to another nation or faith. It is becoming less and less defensible as a demonstrably counterproductive. (See Iraq and Afghanistan.) And this does not even begin to address the issue of the rights of the soldiers who are to be deprived of their own humanity.

Spend that \$400 million on training peacemakers instead.

‘Albert Einstein made that plain long ago. He knew there was no limit to our ability to kill, that the enemy of our survival is war.’

V for Vendetta

Demonstrators around the world are wearing masks inspired by Alan Moore's 30-year-old tale of uprising, "V for Vendetta". For some reason the image of his avenging hero has much potency today.



It is a sallow, smirking likeness of Guy Fawkes which was promoted as a piece of tie-in merchandise from a film version of V for Vendetta in 2006, which can be seen in disparate Occupy sit-ins this year – in New York, Moscow, Rome and elsewhere – as well as the repeated anti-government actions in Athens and the gatherings outside G20 and G8 conferences in London and L'Aquila in 2009. And recently there was a sort of official embalment of the mask as a symbol of popular feeling when Shepard Fairey altered his famous "Hope" image of Barack Obama to portray a protester wearing one.

The smile is particularly haunting and the cryptic nature of it is used to dramatic effect. But the important thing is that it turns demonstrations into performances. The mask is very operatic; it creates a sense of romance and drama. Protesting and protest marches can be very gruelling and quite dismal. They are things that have to be done, but that doesn't mean that they're tremendously enjoyable, whereas they should be. Art is very important in civil resistance particularly at demonstrations and the mask adds much to this.

It is appropriate that this generation of protesters have made their rebellion into something the public at large can engage with more readily than with half-hearted chants, with that traditional downtrodden sort of British protest. These people look like they are having a good time. And that sends out a tremendous message.

Guns into guitars

César López is a Columbian musician with an unusual way of trying to bring peace to his country. His primary instrument is not a Fender or a Gibson, or a Stradivarius or Steinway, but an AK-47. He calls his creations "La Escopettera", combining the Spanish word *escopeta* (rifle) and guitarra.



The gun-guitars are a powerful symbol, turning destruction into creation, Lopez says: "Every gun used has belonged to a human being who's still alive, who willingly gave it up for conversion. The significance would be different if they had lost the gun or died in violence, because the Escopettera is a symbol of life transformed. Every single one was used in combat. They have all belonged to the two irregular armed groups in the conflict in Columbia, the paramilitaries and the guerrillas. Every weapon would have taken, more or less, 300 victims."

The Gandhi Peace Museum in Delhi has requested an Escopettera for exhibition; Lopez has gifted one to Bob Geldof and hopes to present one to Sting next year.

The Anglican PEACEMAKER

December 2011

López's work is unashamedly political. His eighth and latest album, "Every bullet is a stray", was produced from workshop across Columbia. "There are 16 stories. Each story has a different topic: one is reparation for victims, another is violence against women. The songs are full of questions. He works with groups, with children, and when someone asks a question, even if it seems like a really obvious question, it obliges you to look at the topic in a different way".

Taken from New Internationalist, September 2011.

War horse: fact or fiction

Of more than 120 books Michael Morpurgo has written, War Horse is not his favourite – though he concedes his epitaph will read: "Michael Morpurgo wrote Steven Spielberg's War Horse." This is a major new exhibition at the National Army Museum, Chelsea exploring the true history behind the hugely popular 'War Horse' novel. It continues to August next year. A hands-on interactive exhibition for all the family, this compelling story is brought to life using exclusive material from Michael Morpurgo and the acclaimed stage production by the National Theatre, London now playing at the New London Theatre.



The exhibition examines the vital role of the horse in war and the millions of these 'patient heroes', interweaving it with Morpurgo's book, Handspring's astounding puppets from the play, and images from the new film version by Spielberg. Michael Morpurgo said of his book: "I am delighted but quite surprised at how it has now taken off, and why that should be now is an interesting question. I'm afraid it's the times we are living in. The cold war in which we grew up was not that kind of war; Vietnam was a foreign war and there was nothing like this public celebration and grieving over bodies in Northern Ireland, which was very different, in all the deeply unpleasant tangle of a civil war: Now we are seeing again, terribly, the bodies of young men coming home from a war for which they have no responsibility, and in which they can barely have seen the consequences when they joined up. When people cry for the war horses, for their suffering and death, they are really weeping for the men, for all of us, for all those who die in huge senseless wars. The horse gives us almost the excuse to cry."

It is the editorial policy of The Anglican Peacemaker to include a range of articles expressing a variety of opinions. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the editors nor of the APF. The editor for this edition was Tony Kempster. Letters and contributions for the next edition should be sent to the commissioning editor (details on page 8 by 14 March 2012).

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