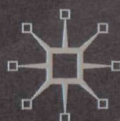




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Chapter 3

A Nonviolent Challenge to Conflict

Alastair McIntosh

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Introduction

So far, nobody has managed to rid the world of war using nonviolence. But neither have they done so using violence. Let us proceed from the basis of such mutual deficiency. We saw in the previous chapter how David Lonsdale laid out a 'realist' position on war – what he calls a 'rational, amoral approach.'ⁱ Whilst I would not wish to presume that this is necessarily his personal ethos, he has helpfully explained the value-free - one is tempted to say, 'valueless' - rationality of thinkers like Clausewitz who are driven by the singular premise that war is 'an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.' It follows, says David, that military ethics should be 'purely instrumentalist in nature.' The commander's estimate therefore becomes an arid calculus to ensure that a 'chosen approach to war does not undermine the whole project through moral outrage.' Rather than asking whether an action is 'right', the realist commander should ask, 'How will this action be perceived?' Victory is all, and from that logic we are moved to the abject conclusion: 'whilst realism will normally seek to exert substantial levels of control ... over violence, it will also tolerate extreme levels of violence (even nuclear war) should the need arise.'

In this chapter I suggest that such rationality misses the deeper meaning of what human life is. I shall define violence as violation of the soul including its extension into the body. Kinetic action will therefore be my main focus, but non-kinetic measures such as psy-ops must also be considered violent if they

disrupt or distort fundamental human values and alignment with Truth. I will start by outlining types of nonviolence and move on to arguing that the vicious spiral that violence sets up atrophies the soul. This will lead to exploring the power dynamics, psychology, and spiritual foundations of nonviolence, concluding with three short case studies of its application as a tool of security.

Types of Nonviolence

This chapter defines a 'pacifist' as one who recognises that conflict is real and normal in human societies, but who seeks to process it nonviolently. This does not mean passivity. It means active, sustained nonviolence. Note the awkwardness of that word. 'Nonviolence' is more than just the opposite of violence, such as might be achieved with words like love or relationship. 'Nonviolence' implies an active challenge to the ethos of violence. And yet, there can be no self-righteous triumphalism in this. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, 'I came to see the pacifist position not as sinless but as the lesser evil in the circumstances.'ⁱⁱ To paraphrase Gandhi: 'All life entails violence. Our duty is to minimise it.'ⁱⁱⁱ To the philosopher, talk of 'duty' – *deon* in the Greek - implies a 'deontological' position. But Gandhi's position, and that of most committed pacifists, goes very much deeper than such willpower alone. Deontology is too arid a basis to be a singular motivating force for the committed and costly action that nonviolence can call for. I shall therefore not emphasise it here.

Another pacifist approach is the 'consequentialist' or utilitarian outlook. Here nonviolence is vindicated by its *consequences*. An example is the writing of the scholar, Gene Sharp, sometimes called 'the Clausewitz of nonviolent warfare' or 'the Machiavelli of nonviolence.' His meticulous expositions of nonviolent civilian-based defence are justified purely in secular terms as 'a pragmatic choice.' Only in passing is inner motivation hinted at. For example, in a case study of India's independence movement, just five words are accorded to Gandhi's 'philosophy or frequent religious explanations.'^{iv}

In my estimate, both deontology and consequentialism are vital parts of the picture, but neither on their own grip the deepest viscerals. For this we need to add a third category – spirituality. This sets our little lives into a much greater framework of meaning. Spirituality resonates with 'virtue ethics' – the philosopher's more usual third category of normative principles. But it goes deeper: for the modern philosopher, whose vision is usually limited to rationality misses the point. The point is that virtue should not be considered an end in itself. Rather, it is the means by which a greater vision of spirituality is served.

To the secular mind spirituality is a delusion. That may be so; however I would urge that it must be studied if we are to grasp the motivation of the

world's greatest peace activists. Mairead Corrigan Maguire was the Northern Irish co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Her family suffered intimately from sectarian violence. She explains the spiritual imperative as follows:

Gandhi realized that the spirit of nonviolence begins within us and moves out from there. The life of active nonviolence is the fruit of an inner peace and spiritual unity already realized in us, and not the other way around.... As our hearts are disarmed by God of our inner violence, they become God's instruments for the disarmament of the world. Without this inner conversion, we run the risk of becoming embittered, disillusioned, despairing or simply burnt out, especially when our work for peace and justice appears to produce little or no result.^v

Let me now outline four types of pacifism as it appears in practice, my emphasis hereafter on the last of these.

- *Pacifism as cowardice.* We can dismiss further discussion of this with Gandhi's observation: 'It is better to be violent, if there is violence in our hearts, than to put on the cloak of non-violence to cover impotence.... There is hope for a violent man to become non-violent. There is no such hope for the impotent.'^{vi}
- *Pacifism as nuclear unilateralism.* Unilateralists often accept the necessity for conventional warfare but draw the line at weapons that are genocidal or threaten mutually assured destruction. This contingent pacifism is a variation of 'just war' theory, explored elsewhere in this volume.
- *Pacifism as Peacekeeping.* As the motto of the USAF's erstwhile Strategic Air Command had it, 'Peace is our Profession.' In my experience, this principle can be a bridgehead between principled soldiers and non-passive pacifists. Both are committed to confronting violence. Both refreshingly understand the need to engage with power. Peace as the end is the same. What differs is the means of achieving it. But the means can matter greatly. As Tacitus reported of the Roman conquest of Britain: 'they make a desolation and they call it peace.'^{vii}
- *Pacifism as Nonviolence.* If I might express this from a personal standpoint since there are many variants: we all have the moral right to kill proportionately in self defence. This is the right of 'just war'. The conscientious objector renounces that right. While both the soldier and the pacifist share in common a willingness to die for their values, *the pacifist refuses to kill for them.* If necessary the pacifist accepts the path of suffering and death. Superficially this may appear ineffectual. In practice, it sometimes yields a tremendous hidden power to transform conflict.

The Spiral of Violence

Violence starts with small and very normal beginnings. As a boy, I lost fights until my mid-teens. But one day a school bully positioned himself behind me in the music class. He set about making percussive jabs to my back. Half way through the teacher left the room and a berserker spirit set loose inside me. I turned round, calmly took my astonished adversary by his collar and tie, and laid in incessantly, pulverising his face. It was exhilarating, and I became the talk of the school. The bully and his deflated chums henceforth restricted their ministrations to other kids.

If violence can be so effective, pleasurable and even heroic, why dampen its powder by raising the spectre of nonviolence? The problem is that my story is not so stitched up as might first appear. For sure, I had made my own little world safer. In a small way I had become drunk on the ecstasy of destruction.^{viii} But it did nothing to address the roots of violence, the continued bullying of other children, or what happens when retributive violence remains normalised and even spreads infectiously when we're grown up.^{ix} Violence in the adult world perpetuates itself through 'the myth of redemptive violence' – the belief that greater violence is a legitimate and effective way of resolving lesser violence?^x Although it might be hoped that fire can extinguish fire like an explosive charge pitched by Red Adair at the base of a blazing oil wellhead, more commonly violence on violence simply fuels an escalating spiral. The expression, 'Spiral of Violence', came from Dom Hélder Câmara, a Catholic archbishop who spent his life amongst the poor and downtrodden of Brazil. He observed that the *primary violence* of social injustice (or 'structural evil') leads to the *secondary violence* of revolt by the afflicted. That precipitates the *tertiary violence* of retaliation and repression by the powerful whose interests are threatened. The additional stress on a society's socio-economic framework perpetuates more primary violence.^{xi} Israel-Palestine is one of many cases in point.

The challenge for modern humankind is that war has advanced faster than our cultural evolutionary ability to fully absorb its moral implications. Consider Winston Churchill. As a young officer in 1898, amidst much initial derring-do, he galloped into the Battle of Omdurman with pistol in hand and sabre by his side. It was one of the last cavalry charges of the British army, aimed at putting down the upstart Mahdist Islamic state against a cultural backdrop where the Ottoman Arabs had been slavers at the expense of the indigenous Sudanese. As Churchill described it in the first paragraph of *The River Wars*, the Nile was the Sudan's 'only channel of progress' along which 'European civilisation can penetrate the inner darkness.' To British eyes, recolonisation was noblesse oblige. The 50,000-strong enemy of 'Dervish skirmishers' defending Omdurman bore only light arms and flags inscribed with verses from the Qu'ran. To Churchill they were 'like the old representations of the Crusaders in the Bayeux tapestry.'^{xii} As Kitchener's forces turned on their

Maxim guns and the cavalry charged, 'each man *saw the world* along his lance ... or through the back-sight of his pistol' (my emphasis). Meanwhile, out on the Nile, 'the terrible machine, floating gracefully on the waters – a beautiful white devil – wreathed itself in smoke.'

Caught between the shock and awe of fusillade and gunboat diplomacy, 'the darker side of war' took hold. 'Bullets were shearing through flesh, smashing and splintering bone; blood spouted from terrible wounds; valiant men were struggling on through a hell of whistling metal, exploding shells, and spurting dust – suffering, despairing, dying.' Churchill could not hide his empathy with the enemy. 'It seemed an unfair advantage to strike thus cruelly when they could not reply,' but defeat for 'these brave men' was now merely 'a matter of machinery.' With some 10,000 'Arabs' dead to just 48 on the British side – a ratio of 200:1 - Churchill concluded:

Thus ended the battle of Omdurman – the most signal triumph ever gained by the arms of science over barbarians. Within the space of five hours the strongest and best-armed savage army yet arrayed against a modern European Power had been destroyed and dispersed, with hardly any difficulty, comparatively small risk, and insignificant loss to the victors.

But European civilisation wasn't done yet. Presented with film footage of the carpet bombing of the Ruhr in 1943, Churchill asked: 'Are we beasts? Are we taking this too far?'^{xiii} Two years later nuclear weapons decimated civilian-packed Japanese cities. War's spiral had been to the rhythm of technoculture; not human culture. Seen down a lance or the back-sight of a pistol it always looked justified. But seen through a broader lens Gandhi, when asked what he thought of 'European civilisation', had to say, 'I think it would be a good idea.'

Today the spiral of violence has ratcheted further. Radical Muslims trace much of their ongoing angst to the secondary effects of primary colonial violence and what they see as the West's continued tertiary attempts to repress it.^{xiv} In the West we forget that decolonisation is less than a lifetime old. It suits us to be short-sighted to the fact that the Islamic world just happens to be the neighbour we most deeply colonised. And the stakes escalate. When addressing a summit on nuclear proliferation in November 2004 Mohamed ElBaradei, then head of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, said that there had been 630 confirmed incidents of trafficking nuclear and radioactive materials since 1993. He warned:

We need to do all we can to work on the new phenomenon called nuclear terrorism, which was sprung on us after 9/11 when we realised terrorists had become more sophisticated and had shown an interest in nuclear and radioactive material.... We have a race against time because this was something we were not prepared for.^{xv}

It is this kind of development that makes violence a *spiral* and not just a circle. The ground qualitatively shifts so that today, as General Sir Rupert Smith puts it: 'Our opponents are formless, and their leaders and operatives are outside the structures in which we order the world and society.'^{xvi} Like at Omdurman, asymmetrical warfare is at play, but then the boot was firmly on the West's foot. Now that is less sure. On the one hand, the West still maintains its 'beautiful white devil' or rather, her gunboat successors lurking nuclear depths. On the other hand, the field is no longer one of pitched battles tilted to the mechanical advantage of industrial warfare. Instead it has sublimated to what Smith calls 'war amongst the people.'

Violence can now exert a globalised leverage that exceeds confident military capacity to ensure deterrence and containment. Suicide bombers or lightly armed assassins can terrorise civilian life. A pleasure craft sailed up the Hudson with a primitive nuclear device, a civilian airliner targeted into a Trident submarine docked on the Clyde, or even a fertiliser bomb on a coastal dyke as rising sea levels from climate change kick in could pluck the heart from densely populated homelands. As the IRA used to say: 'We only have to get lucky once. You have to be lucky all the time.'

The Bomb is therefore our generation's basic call to consciousness. For the first time in history we have at our finger tips utter destructive power, but matched to it, all the possibilities for greater understanding opened up by globalised communications. Now is the time to press the reset button at many levels of depth. To borrow Churchill's expression, it is time collectively to address our 'inner darkness'. This is not terrain for the comfortably complacent, for as Conrad famously wrote within a year of Omdurman: 'We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness. It was very quiet there.'^{xvii}

Atrophy of the Soul

Let us try and understand that uncanny quietness at Conrad's vortex; that macabre sense of the familiar having been rendered foreign, of home becoming 'un-homed' in the German sense of *unheimlich* that characterises 'trauma' - psychic injury - in all its 'mindlessness'; all its 'senselessness'.^{xviii} In March 2009 Susan Tsvangirai, wife of Zimbabwe's Prime Minister, died in a road accident. There was no suspicion of foul play. But the BBC reported Morgan Tsvangirai's closest aide, Finance Minister Tendai Biti, saying at the funeral: 'We're so traumatised, brutalised, we couldn't feel the pain. Why, why, why?'^{xix}

A lack of reporting context left it unclear whether Biti was referring to the specific trauma of the accident, or to the wider brutalisation of Zimbabwe under Mugabe. Whichever was in his mind, both merged to one in the world's media. The statement's depth needed no explanation. For violence unhealed

destroys the capacity to feel. Psychic numbing whether from childhood or later traumatic stress disables empathy and with it, the capacity to love and be loved. As poet Alice Walker says: 'Tears left unshed/ turn to poison/ in the ducts/ Ask the next soldier you see/ enjoying a massacre/ if this is not so.'^{xx}

We need to realise that *violence is violation*. The French word-origin is clear: *le viol* means rape. Newton's third law of motion is similarly lucid: 'To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.' And that's the trouble with violence. Yes, we can put on Tolkien's 'Ring of Power' and often get away with violence on a short temporal wavelength. It can appear effective in our archetypal battles against the Dark Lord. But on the wider horizon, violence ricochets around the echo chambers of the soul; like an addictive drug, it atrophies the soul.

In fourteen years of guest lecturing at British and overseas staff colleges I've been given the privilege of addressing more than five thousand soldiers. The vast majority are people of undoubted courage, integrity, selflessness and remarkable depth of community spirit. Their ethos commands my admiration to an extent that sweeps aside sense of paradox. One makes friends in such circumstances, and I observe that some are not immune to the consequences of Newton's third law. Observers might call it borderline Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), but I should prefer to call it sentient humanity. Said one soldier, freshly home from Afghanistan: 'I feel, unclean.' And another, back from routing Saddam's conscripts in the Euphratean marshes.... 'What did it feel like to have killed?' I impetuously asked. 'I'll tell you, Alastair,' he said, lowering his voice, this eminently decent man. 'I notice three things. I sleep less well than I used to. I get more irritable. And physically, I feel the cold more.' I could not help thinking that in Dante's *Inferno* Satan languishes in the ninth circle of Hell – not warmed, but frozen.^{xxi} That is the still vortex of the spiral of violence. 'It was very quiet there.' Chillingly *unheimlich*.

In making such an observation there can be no room for finger pointing. We are all complicit, even if unconsciously so. Every time I press my foot on the car's accelerator, I too am complicit with oil that was fought for. And let us be careful how we judge others in whose moccasins we have not walked. Looking back on the 20th century, we might say that we 'won' the First and Second World Wars, and that this proved the redemptive power of violence. Most certainly, nobody can deny the heroism of those darkest hours. But can 'we' really be so cocksure of our virtue if the lines of sight are widened beyond lance or pistol sights? Neither of the two world wars can be separated from the underlying cut and thrust of European imperialism. Germany's quest for *lebensraum* was unexceptional in the wider scheme of things. The root of its transgression was to foul the European nest by extrapolating from Maxim guns that had dispatched 'fuzzie wuzzies' at the rate of 600 rounds a minute.^{xxii} And what might have happened if, from Versailles onwards, the international community had applied its efforts to take away, instead of

aggravating, the causes that inflated Hitler's psychopathology into the psyche of his nation?

That is the trouble with the sword. Spiritually it truncates our enemy's possibility of redemption in this world and, politically, it lobotomises other foreign policy options. We use violence with insufficient understanding of karmic retribution – the principle that 'what goes around, comes around.' Britain's willingness to throw its weight about in Iraq and Afghanistan therefore cannot be disaggregated from our triumphalistic history. Neither can it be so from domestic security consequences for our future.

The Spectrum of Socially Expressed Power

I am aware that the military response to what I am saying might be, 'Yes ...but ...' These are thought-provoking points, but they don't address the moral imperative of peacekeeping in the 'real world'. In this I am forced to concede much to my detractors. But if the court-marshal might permit a short stay of execution, let me make this appeal. Power is socially expressed along a broad spectrum.^{xxiii} It progresses from:

- the hard sanction of military coercion, to
- the soft sanction of non-lethal policing, to
- the persuasive power of psychological convincement, to
- the spiritual power of 'metanoia' – which is inner transformation.

Only one foot belongs to the so-called 'real world'. The other belongs to the spiritually real world. Ought we not, then, walk with both feet, and play the full spectrum of violence or nonviolence as befits circumstances? The problem is the spectrum is asymmetric. Violence can always hope that nonviolence will tidy up its mess. But for nonviolence to sanction even 'surgical' violence would poison its inner integrity.

Let us recall our basic definition: 'violence is violation of the soul including its extension into the body.' Killing is a very ultimate action. It is not impossible to imagine how it could be justified within our definition; mercy killing would be a case in point. But generally, for the military peacekeeper or the pacifist alike the decision to kill or not to kill is the supreme conundrum. I can only answer as did the early Quaker, George Fox. When William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, asked whether he should continue to wear a sword, Fox replied: 'I advise thee to wear it as long as thou canst.' In other words, it is better to be prepared to fight than to renounce fighting before one is ready to live with the consequences of so doing. Later, Fox met Penn and saw that he was unarmed. 'William, where is thy sword?' Said he: 'Oh! I have taken thy advice; I wore it as long as I could.'^{xxiv} Of course, there could have been a cutting military riposte to the disarmed Penn. Namely: 'I advise thee to

unwear it as long as thou canst! At a 'real world' level, none of us have got adequate answers. We must therefore press our inquiry deeper.

Spiritual Dynamics of Nonviolence

The asymmetry between violence and nonviolence derives from the observation that, far from being a passive lack of violence, nonviolence is active spiritual force. For Gandhi, *ahimsa* or nonviolence was driven by what he called *Satyagraha* – variously translated from the Sanskrit as 'truth force', 'love force' or 'soul force'.^{xxv} He said, 'The badge of the violent is his weapon, spear, sword or rifle. God is the shield of the nonviolent.' This does not mean that the nonviolent will be physically shielded from dying. Many have died using nonviolence (though perhaps not so many as have died using violence). What it does mean is that with nonviolence we are shielded from spiritual death and even, perhaps, armed with spiritual power.^{xxvi} This is what gives nonviolence its oft-remarked out-of-the-blue dynamic that can transfigure conflict in unique and unpredictable ways.

Spiritual transformative capacity shows in the bearing or presence of a person. It is authored authority. It comes from a progressively deeper grounding in that level of being which includes, but utterly transcends, ego consciousness. The conscious 'I', the ego in our field of normal consciousness, may be considered as only the tip of who we are as people.^{xxvii} For the spiritually aware the deepest level of being – the soul – is always rooted in that of God within. This interconnects to our fellow humankind. As Hassidic Jewish mysticism teaches, *God is relationship*.^{xxviii} As Biblical Christian mysticism teaches, we are all branches of the 'True Vine' of life, 'participants of the divine nature' and therefore, 'members one of another' – because 'God is love'.^{xxix} Similar metaphysics unite the mystical traditions of all great faiths.

What obscures this from being self-evident is the narcissism of egocentricity where we deny our own psychological 'shadow' - our ego's alter-ego. This comprises all that we repress; all that awaits resolution, all that has not yet flowered into maturity. As the late Adam Curle, a wartime army officer turned veteran mediator in Biafra and elsewhere has explained:

... we displace the guilt from which we all suffer to some degree, onto the enemy. In the case of leaders, the guilt we commonly feel for the inadequacy of our lives, the repressed conflicts of infancy and veiled fear that we are denying the truth of our being, is supplemented by a more rational guilt for the misery and slaughter they are causing. For them to accept all this as 'my fault' would be too much for the already sensitive 'I' to bear. But luckily it can be legitimately projected outwards onto the foe: it is he who is to blame. They only did, and reluctantly, what was necessary to defend *their* innocent people from *his* brutal and unjustified aggression.^{xxx}

This process of compartmentalising, splitting off and projecting the shadow psychologically drives the demonisation of the enemy. The enemy may indeed be very real, but we must guard against also needing him to be so for our own virtuous self definition. To do this dooms us to perpetual conflict, for example, psychologically transmogrifying IRA into IRA-q or IRA-n. On this basis it was unsurprising that the perceived threat of militant Islam rose in proportion to the Berlin Wall's fall. Similarly, the politics of 'good state; bad state' is always the projection of a conflicted, compartmentalised mind.

The only way out is to ground both our ego and our shadow selves more and more into that of 'God within'. Such spirituality means facing the shadow and wrestling, at least metaphorically, with both our own demons and those of others. The aim of nonviolence is to call back power that is 'fallen' to its higher, God-given vocation. Theologically, all power is God-given and should be redeemed, not destroyed.^{xxxix} Conflict resolution requires commitment to such a difficult but life-giving journey. To varying degrees the world's great faiths testify to this.

War, Religion and Nonviolence

Within Islam, the central Qu'ranic text pertaining to war is Surah 2:190: 'Fight in the cause of God/ Those who fight you,/ But do not transgress the limits;/ For God loveth not transgressors.'^{xxxix} This is pure 'just war' theory, and yet, the *Hadiths* – the authoritative oral traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) – go further and make explicit the limits. These include: not to kill women and children, POWs to be treated humanely, no-one should be killed by burning, and not to mutilate the dead.^{xxxix} As Philip Stewart points out:

If the Islamic rules were followed today, much of modern warfare would be impossible, and terrorism would be unthinkable. There would be no attacks on civilians, no retaliation against innocent parties, no taking hostage of non-combatants, no incendiary devices.^{xxxix}

Strictly speaking, then, the problem with 'Islamic terrorism', like with its Christian equivalents, is not fundamentalism. The problem is that the terrorists are not fundamentalist enough. They appear unaware of Islam's considerable canon of witness and theology affirming nonviolence or highly proscribed violence.^{xxxix}

The Judeo-Christian tradition begins with the cultural context of Hebrew 'just war' teaching. The morality of this evolves historically. The rules of war laid down in Deuteronomy 20-21 are draconian, sanctioning slavery of the vanquished, the taking of women as booty, and absolute genocide. But many commentators interpret Moses' 'an eye for an eye ...' as an injunction that

aims to limit retribution.^{xxxvi} Later Jewish prophets look to a world beyond war. For Isaiah and Micah:

In days to come ... they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.^{xxxvii}

Jesus follows by totally repudiating violence.^{xxxviii} Jesus does not teach 'just war' theory; he teaches nonviolence. It includes nonviolent direct action as when he turned over the moneychangers' tables that violated the temple – making a whip for use not against people (as is often misinterpreted), but to drive out 'both the sheep and the cattle' - thereby rescuing them from sacrifice.^{xxxix} Christian pacifists who break into military bases and hammer nuclear submarines and jet fighters tread this 'ploughshares' path. They do not run away like terrorists would, but await arrest to take further stands of witness during their trial.^{xl}

Jesus told his followers to love their enemies, to pray for (or do good towards) those who mistreat them, and to turn the other cheek when struck.^{xli} He said: '... *until now* the kingdom of Heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.'^{xlii} In other words, a new fulfilment of the law is to take ascendancy henceforth. When the brothers James and John – *Boanerges*, or the 'Sons of Thunder' as they were called – asked Jesus to draw down 'fire from Heaven' to burn up their enemies he refused, and rebuked them.^{xliii} His dalliance with the sword was explicitly symbolic, serving only to fulfil prophesy.^{xliv} Jesus therefore told Peter: "Put your sword away. For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.... No more of this!"^{xlv} He also healed the severed ear of Malchus, the high priest's official, thereby symbolically restoring the enemy's capacity to listen – the prerequisite for peace.^{xlvi} He repudiated violence by absorbing suffering into his God-centred being, telling his would-be Master at Arms: "Shall I refuse to drink the cup of sorrow which the Father has given me to drink?"^{xlvii} And later telling Pilate, "My kingdom does not belong to this world; if my kingdom belonged to this world, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over..."^{xlviii}

In these ways love transcends mere utility and conquers evil and death. As the Indian-Spanish Hindu-Christian theologian, Raimon Panikkar, reminds us: 'Peace is participation in the harmony of the rhythm of Being.... Only forgiveness, reconciliation, ongoing dialogue, leads to Peace, and breaks the law of karma.'^{xlix} The Cross thereby stands as a cosmological symbol of nonviolence.^l

Hinduism can deepen our understanding of this cosmology. The opening line of its most sacred text, the Bhagavad Gita, commences: 'On the field of Truth, on the battlefield of life, what came to pass, Sanjaya . . . ?'^{li} What comes to pass in everyday life is here portrayed as being situated on the

wider battlefield of life, and that, in turn, is situated on the field of cosmic Truth – the *Dharma*. The Christian equivalent to *Dharma* would be the Grace of the Holy Spirit acting in Providence. As such, the *Bhagavad Gita* teaches us to step back from the daily tactical realities of what comes to pass, to know ourselves as standing upon the wider operational battlefield of life, and then to step back even further and see the whole shebang from the cosmological strategic perspective of a God's-eye view. And note who these characters were! Sanjaya was the eagle-eyed charioteer to Dhritarashtra, the *blind* king. Political power on its own is always blind. To stop its chariot from sinking in the mire requires spiritual vision.

Case Studies of Nonviolence

The former US president, Jimmy Carter has said, 'Historically and currently, we all realize that religious differences have often been a cause or a pretext for war. Less well known is the fact that ... religion can be a potent force in encouraging the peaceful resolution of conflict.'ⁱⁱ It is precisely because spiritual development means processing our individual and collective shadows that war and religion so often cross each other's paths. Equally, the threads of violence and nonviolence invariably intertwine. Nonviolence gains traction precisely because the Damoclean alternative, violence, is so terrible. Like violence, nonviolence does not always succeed. Some critics even see it as 'pathology' because, they argue, it weakens motivation for violent revolution.ⁱⁱⁱ Yet nonviolence is not devoid of political success. As Wink points out:

In 1989-90 alone, thirteen nations underwent nonviolent revolutions, all of them successful but one (China), and all of them nonviolent on the part of the revolutionaries except one (Romania, and there it was largely the secret police fighting the army, with the public maintaining nonviolent demonstrations throughout).^{iv}

Here I shall briefly profile three examples of non-violence in action: the Pashtun contribution to Indian independence as an example of Moslem nonviolence, nonviolent resistance to Nazism, and conciliation at the ending of the Biafra War.

Pashtun Resistance to the British Raj, 1930s

Throughout most of the 19th century and into the 20th, the Pashtun (or Pathan) peoples – the backbone of today's Taliban - were caught in the 'Great Game' buffer zone of the British and Russian empires. In 1893 Britain's drawing up of the Durand Line to delineate what is now modern Pakistan's north-west frontier with Afghanistan sliced through Pashtun territories. British efforts to suppress unwelcome political ideas that arose in resistance to such

intrusion included collective punishments against whole communities and a gross neglect of social measures, including education.^{iv} Ghaffar 'Badshah' Khan (1890 – 1988) was a devout Moslem landowner who used his influence to open schools (*madrassas*) that would raise popular political consciousness. When his father came under pressure to rein in his son from the British Chief Commissioner, the young Khan replied that 'educating the people and serving the nation is as sacred a duty as prayer.'^{vi} So began a series of prison sentences for the youth, some lasting years, during which time he discoursed with prisoners of others faiths and became inspired by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. He concluded: 'It is my inmost conviction that Islam is *amal, yakeen, muhabat* [service, faith and love] and without these the name "Muslim" is sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.'^{vii}

Badshah Khan's subsequent work for Indian independence as 'the Muslim Gandhi' led him to establish the *Khudai Khidmatgar* – the 'Servants of God'. These were a pacifist Mujahideen who chanted slogans such as *Allah-O-Akbar* ('God is Great') and were derogatorily called 'red shirts' by the British on account of their uniform. The membership oath included, 'I shall always live up to the principle of nonviolence,' and, 'All my services shall be dedicated to God; they shall not be for attaining rank or for show.'^{viii} Khan told them:

I am going to give you such a weapon that the police and the army will not be able to stand against it. It is the weapon of the Prophet, but you are not aware of it. That weapon is patience and righteousness. No power on earth can stand against it.^{ix}

In close coordination with Gandhi the *Khudai Khidmatgar* invoked a spiritual jihad of civil resistance including refusal to pay taxes, non-cooperation with the Raj, boycotts and pickets, general strikes and the mass commemoration of iconic events. By 1938 Pashtun membership exceeded 100,000. Nonviolence had held fast even in the face of imprisonment, torture, and at the Kissa Khani Bazaar massacre in 1930. Here the British killed more than 200 civilians who were protesting the arrest of leaders, including Khan, who had just been sentenced to three years for fomenting civil disobedience. Some of the *Khudai Khidmatgar* sustained as many as 21 bullets in the chest as they stepped forward, peacefully to interpose their bodies between the troops and the crowd.^x Gandhi subsequently told Khan, 'The Pathans are more brave and courageous than the Hindus. That is the reasons why the Pathans were able to remain nonviolent.'^{xi}

Notwithstanding the later tragedy of ethnic cleansing that resulted in the partition of India, Khan's pacifism never faltered. In 1983 he told his biographer: 'The present-day world can only survive the mass production of nuclear weapons through nonviolence. The world needs Gandhi's message of love and peace more today than it ever did before.'^{xii}

Note: Since this article was published I have been alerted to a stunning example of nonviolence in the Qur'an, Surah V:30-35, which I summarise as follows, from the Yusuf Ali edition. Abel says to Cain: "If you stretch out your hand to kill me, it is not for me to kill you, because I respect God, the Cherisher of the Worlds. You will only draw down sin upon yourself." In other words, Abel chooses to be killed rather than to kill on account of his love of Allah.

Norway 1942 and Berlin 1943

Like with violent defence, nonviolent civil defence requires awareness, commitment, training and strategy. These were largely lacking in Europe at the time of Hitler – an era that also lacked the internet, texting, and other means of rapid communication through which to organise. That said, organised nonviolent resistance was developed in Denmark and Holland,^{lxiii} and here I will give examples from Norway and Berlin.

In 1942 the Norwegian 'Minister-President', Vidkun Quisling, created a fascist teachers' corporation. Membership was to be compulsory and its leader was the head of the Norwegian storm troopers. The underground called for non-compliance. Over two-thirds of the country's twelve thousand teachers openly wrote letters of non-cooperation. Quisling threatened them with dismissal and closed the schools, but the children's education was re-organised at home.

To set an example the Nazis rounded up a thousand teachers and dispatched them to concentration camps. But the school children gathered to sing on railway platforms as the cattle trains passed through. Under conditions of extreme cold the Gestapo put the captured teachers through 'torture gymnastics', fed them starvation rations, and issued death threats. Very few capitulated. Across Norway people signalled their revulsion by, for example, wearing a paper clip in their lapels as a way of saying, 'stick together'. Realising that his measures were backfiring, Quisling gave in. After an eight months ordeal the teachers were sent home. Whilst giving a school address Quisling raged, 'You teachers have destroyed everything for me.'^{lxiv} For totalitarianism to work, it has to be total, but his veneer had cracked under the weight of superior moral authority.

In Berlin in 1943, as part of the 'Final Solution', the Jewish husbands of non-Jewish German women were rounded up and imprisoned in the Rosenstrasse. Some 6,000 wives appeared at the prison gates and, in defiance of SS guns, demanded their husbands' return. 'A decision to put one's life on the line for another can only come from the heart,' said one woman, who had expected the worst. 'One is ready, or not. One does it, or not.' Hit by embarrassment – which is always the Achilles heal of power's narcissism - the authorities negotiated. Goebbels did not want the German people's wider conformity to be jeopardised by him appearing to be in anything less than complete control. With Hitler's consent he ordered the husbands to be released. Although many were later individually re-arrested, by the end of the war such intermarried Jews nevertheless comprised 98 percent of the surviving German Jewish population that had not driven into hiding.^{lxv}

Both these cases show how, for oppression to succeed, it must acquire the acquiescence of the oppressed. Silence is the voice of that complicity. Nonviolent civil defence therefore seeks to break down this 'cultural

invasion^{lxvi} using truth force (*Satyagraha*) as its weapon. Hitler was very aware of this. As he said in *Mein Kampf*:

In the long run, government systems are not held together by the pressure of force, but rather by the belief in the quality and the truthfulness with which they represent and promote the interests of the people.^{lxvii}

This is why nonviolent strategy pays close attention to the psychology of compliance, conformity and obedience.^{lxviii} It uses 'political jiu-jitsu' to throw an opponent with their own weight, in particular, unseating from any moral high ground.^{lxix} If Germany and Europe generally had been more prepared with such principles during the 1930s world history might have taken a different course. Such is the imperative for nations to teach peace.

Biafra 1967-1970

Independence from the British in 1964 left Nigeria as a fledgling state sharply divided by ethnicity and religion. Two military coups in 1966 brought brutal civil war and a violent succession bid by the Eastern Region to declare independence from federal Nigeria as the Republic of Biafra. As federal Nigerian troops and bombing destroyed Biafran military capacity, famine gripped the Ibo people. Eventually the only question was whether reconciliation might be plucked from the jaws of potential genocide. The outcome 'may have been the most extraordinary post-civil war reconciliation to have occurred in modern history.'^{lxx} This was facilitated by Arnold Smith, secretary-general to the British Commonwealth, who called in a team of Quaker mediators headed by Adam Curle.

Curle, who in 1973 became the first Professor of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford, often distinguished between what he called 'mediable' and 'unmediable' violence.^{lxxi} For mediation to have a hope there has to be at least a possibility that both sides desire resolution. The mediator seeks to draw out and connect such desires. In the case of Biafra, it entailed:

- Opening lines of communication.
- Reducing suspicion, misperception and fears.
- Advocating for negotiated settlement.

Remarkably, Curle's team established the trust of both sides. The Biafran head of state, General Emeka Ojukwu, later attributed it to their 'absolute dedication to humanity' and 'an infinite capacity for neutrality.' His Nigerian counterpart, General Yakubu Gowon, said that he came to trust the mediators because: 'The basis is a belief in God and humanity.... They persisted right the way through and were accepted.'

Instead of victory celebrations, Gowon proclaimed that there were 'no victors, no vanquished'. He granted amnesties, called for three days of national prayer, and as Biafrans returned to their former federal posts he emphasised convergence on the 'three Rs': reconstruction, reintegration and reconciliation. Ignatius Kogbara, the Biafran representative in London said that the mediators' most important contribution had been that 'they tried to resolve the hardness of the heart.' Those words lay bare the essence of spiritually-informed nonviolent peacemaking.

Conclusion

Human life has an outer material expression and an inner spiritual constellation. Both are sides of the same coin. To understand war as being driven by politics, economics or science is only half the story. 'Do you know where wars come from?' asked the Indian Jesuit priest, Anthony de Mello. 'They come from projecting outside of us the conflict that is inside. Show me an individual in whom there is no inner self-conflict and I'll show you an individual in whom there is no violence.'^{lxxii}

God works on a long front. Not all its positions are visible to human view. That is why hope for peace in the world resides not just in pacifists. It also resides in principled soldiers. For example, General Sir Richard Dannatt who was until 2009 Head of the British Army and who, against the backdrop of a legally questionable war in Iraq, had the courage to tell the British people:

Honesty is what it is about. The truth will out. We have got to speak the truth. Leaking and spinning at the end of the day are not helpful.... In the Army we place a lot of store by the values we espouse ... courage, loyalty, integrity, respect for others; these are critical things. I think it is important as an Army entrusted with using lethal force that we do maintain high values and that there is a moral dimension to that and a spiritual dimension...^{lxxiii}

Neither brute violence nor naïve forms of pacifism on their own can tackle the toughest issues of our times. But whatever our station on the long front, it is perilous to neglect one's spiritual life. As Dannatt concluded in delivering the Windsor lecture, we must cultivate empathy with 'something far bigger than ourselves, something bigger and deeper than we can imagine or rationalize for ourselves.' We need it, he said, because 'ships without anchors on the sea bed in turbulent times run before the prevailing wind, and the rocks can be very unforgiving.'^{lxxiv}

As I have suggested, the principled soldier and the principled pacifist can find themselves occupying surprisingly similar territory. Such is the power of love that transcends the love of power.

Notes

ⁱ When taken together with the previous chapter – *A View From Realism* – some of the influences on either side of the 'mainstream' Just War Tradition (Chapter Four) can be seen.

ⁱⁱ Martin Luther King Jr. 'My Pilgrimage to Nonviolence' in Wink (ed.) *Peace is the Way: Writings on Nonviolence from the Fellowship of Reconciliation* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000), pp.64-71.

ⁱⁱⁱ Based on such passages as: Thomas Merton (ed.), *Gandhi on Non-Violence: A Selection from the Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, (NY: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1965), p.54 (1-292).

^{iv} Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle* (Boston: Extending Horizons Books, 2005), inside back cover (Clausewitz/Machiavelli), pp.19 & 111.

^v Mairead Corrigan Maguire, 'Gandhi and the Ancient Wisdom of Nonviolence,' in Wink, *Peace is the Way*, pp.159-162.

^{vi} Thomas Merton (ed.), *Gandhi on Non-Violence* (New York : New Directions, 1965), p.37 (1-240).

^{vii} Cornelius Tacitus, 'Agricola' in *Dialogus, Agricola, Germania*, Maurice Hutton (tr.), (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), p.221.

^{viii} See the chapter on 'The Pleasures of War' in Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing* (London: Granta, 2000), p.15.

^{ix} Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good: The Origins of Violence in Child-Rearing* (London: Virago, 1987); James Gillegan, *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic* (New York: Vintage, 1997).

^x Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1992).

^{xi} Hélder Câmara, *Spiral of Violence* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1971), p.60 – out of print, but online at <http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/general/spiral-of-violence.htm>

^{xii} Except where indicated, all quotations here are from the chapter, 'The Battle of Omdurman', in Winston Churchill, *The River War: An Historical Account of the Reconquest of the Soudan* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1899).

^{xiii} Martin Gilbert, *The Second World War* (London: Phoenix, new edn. 2000), pp.440-441).

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^{xvi} Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: the Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Penguin, 2006), p.372.

^{xvii} Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (London: Penguin, 1995), p.62.

^{xviii} Yolanda Gampel, "Reflections on the prevalence of the uncanny in social violence" in Antonius C.G.M. Robben and Marcela M. Suárez-Orozco, *Cultures under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.48-69.

^{xix} BBC News 10 March 2009, *Mugabe calls crash 'hand of God'*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7934931.stm> (accessed March 10 2009).

^{xx} Alice Walker, 'S M', in *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful* (London: Virago, 1985), p.10.

^{xxi} Dante, *Inferno*, Canto 34.

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^{xxiv} The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, *Quaker Faith and Practice* (London: The Yearly Meeting, 1994), 19:47.

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^{xxvii} Jolande Jacobi, *The Psychology of C G Jung* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1968).

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^{xxxi} Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, exegesis of Romans 13:1.

^{xxxii} Abdullah Yusuf Ali (trans.), *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Jeddah: Islamic Education Centre, 1946), p.75.

^{xxxiii} Respectively Bukhari 32, Bukhari 52, Bukhari 52 and Sira 388 – see Chapter 8, 'The Prophet at War' in P. J. Stewart, *Unfolding Islam* (Reading: Garnet, 1995), pp.75-87.

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- ^{xxxvi} 'Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot' – Deuteronomy 19:21 NRSV. I quote below from translations as indicated as befits clear expression.
- ^{xxxvii} Isaiah 2:2, 4 NRSV; Micah 4:1, 3.
- ^{xxxviii} Matthew 5:38-42. See exegesis of Christ's nonviolence in Wink, *Engaging the Powers*.
- ^{xxxix} Mark 11:15-17; John 2:13-22 NRSV.
- ^{xl} See, for example - Angie Zelter and contributors, *Trident on Trial: the case for people's disarmament* (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2001). For Trident Ploughshares see <http://www.tridentploughshares.org>
- ^{xli} Matthew 5:38-48.
- ^{xlii} Matthew 11:12 NRSV.
- ^{xliii} Mark 3:17; Luke 9:51-56.
- ^{xliv} Luke 22:35-38.
- ^{xlv} Matthew 26:52 GWT, KJV and Luke 22:51 ISV; cf. Mark 14:47 and John 18:10.
- ^{xlvi} Luke 22:51.
- ^{xlvii} John 18:11 WNT.
- ^{xlviii} John 18:36 TEV.
- ^{lix} Raimon Panikkar, 'Nine Sutras on Peace,' in Panikkar, *Cultural Disarmament*, pp.15-25, and an alternative translation from *Interculture* online at <http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/general/resources/1991-Panikkar-Nine-Sutras-on-Peace.pdf> (accessed 28 February, 2009).
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- ^{lxiii} Chapter on 'Denmark, the Netherlands, the Rosenstrasse: Resisting the Nazis' in Peter Ackerman and Jack Duvall, *A Force More Powerful: a Century of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), pp.207-239.
- ^{lxiv} Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle*, pp.135-141,
- ^{lxv} Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle*, pp.143-148.
- ^{lxvi} Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp.121-35.
- ^{lxvii} Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1940), p.388.
- ^{lxviii} Donald Pennington, Kate Gillen & Pam Hall, *Essential Social Psychology* (London: Arnold, 2001), pp.207-243 (especially the Milgram and Zimbardo experiments).
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- ^{lxx} Cynthia Sampson, "'To Make Real the Bond Between Us All": Quaker Conciliation During the Nigerian War,' in Johnston & Sampson, *Religion*, pp.88-118.
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- ^{lxxii} Anthony de Mello, *Awareness: the perils and opportunities of reality* (New York: Image Doubleday, 1992), p.182.
- ^{lxxiii} Sarah Sands, 'Sir Richard Dannatt: a very honest General,' *Daily Mail*, October 13, 2006, pp.12-13.
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Notes on Contributors

Dr Ted van Baarda is Associate Professor of Military Ethics at the Netherlands Defence College, Faculty of Military Science, in The Hague, The Netherlands. He is also a guest lecturer on military ethics at the Rwandan Military Academy. He was chief editor of *Military Ethics: The Dutch Approach* (2006) and *The Moral Dimension of Asymmetrical Warfare* (2009)

Surgeon Commander Duncan Blair is a General Practitioner in the Royal Navy with an interest in Pre-Hospital Emergency Care. He is currently working within the UK Developments, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) as a concepts and doctrine author on behalf of the Headquarters of Surgeon General's Department.

Dr David J. Lonsdale is Lecturer in Politics and International Studies at the University of Hull, UK. His main areas of research are strategic studies and military history, specializing in strategic theory and its application to historical and contemporary strategic settings. His recent publications include *Alexander the Great: Lessons in Strategy* (2007) and a contribution to a new collection of studies on Carl von Clausewitz.

Brigadier Philip McEvoy OBE was commissioned into the Army Legal Corps in 1982. In 1984 he attended the US Army Judge Advocate General's School and was appointed honorary member of the US Court of Military Review. As well as numerous staff appointments, he has served in Northern Ireland and Cyprus. He was appointed Colonel and then Brigadier Operational Law at the UK's Land Warfare Centre and in 2008 he was posted to the Army Prosecuting Service as Brigadier Prosecutions. With the formation of the Service Prosecuting Authority in January 2009 he became Deputy Director Service Prosecutions.

Dr Alastair McIntosh is Visiting Professor in the Department of Geography and Sociology, University of Strathclyde, Scotland, UK, and a Fellow of Scotland's Centre for Human Ecology. His books include *Soil and Soul* (2001) and *Hell and High Water: Climate Change, Hope and the Human Condition* (2008).

Dr Srinath Raghavan joined the Defence Studies Department of King's College London based at the Joint Services Command and Staff College in the UK Defence Academy, in April 2007. He completed his MA and PhD at the Department of War Studies, King's College London, UK. Prior to that, he spent six years as an officer in the Indian Army. He is currently a Senior Fellow for the Centre for Policy Research.

Professor Henry Shue is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for International Studies of the Department of Politics and International Affairs, University of Oxford, UK, as well as being Professor Emeritus of International Relations at Oxford. He edited *Nuclear Deterrence and Moral Restraint* (1989) and co-edited *Preemption* (2007) and *Just and Unjust Warriors* (2008).

Dr Paolo Tripodi is Professor of Military Ethics and Director of the Ethics Branch at the US Marine Corps University Lejeune Leadership Institute, Quantico. An international scholar, Dr Tripodi has held academic positions in Italy, the UK, Chile and Sweden. In addition to numerous articles, he is the author of *The Colonial Legacy in Somalia* (1999). He trained as an infantry officer and served as a First Lieutenant with the Carabinieri, the Italian Military Police.

General Sir Peter Wall is Commander-in-Chief of UK Land Forces. He has directed operations in Iraq and Afghanistan from the MOD and PJHQ and has commanded up to divisional level.

Dr Christopher P.M. Waters is Associate Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Windsor, Canada. An international law specialist, he has extensive field experience in the Balkan and Caucasus regions and has frequently engaged with military audiences on law of armed conflict issues.

Dr David Whetham is Senior Lecturer in Defence Studies, King's College London, based at the Joint Services Command and Staff College in the UK Defence Academy. His main research interests are focused on the ethical dimensions of warfare and the development of the laws of war. He is the author of *Just Wars and Moral Victories: Surprise, Deception and the Normative Framework of European War in the Later Middle Ages* (2009), and is also a practising magistrate in Swindon, Wiltshire, UK.

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David Whetham is Senior Lecturer in Defence Studies, King's College London, UK, and is based at the Joint Services Command and Staff College in the UK Defence Academy. His research focuses on the ethical dimensions of warfare and the development of the laws of war.

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